

FINAL REPORT



FCG International Ltd

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Mid-term Evaluation
(MTE) of the
Decentralised Forest
and other Natural
Resources
Management
Programme –
Introduction Project

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ACRONYMS

CF(M)	Community Forest (Management)
CFMG	Community Forest Management Group
CS	Council Secretary
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DC	District Commissioner
DCTAO	District Chiefs and Traditional Affairs Officer
DDCC	District Development Coordinating Committee
DFO	District Forestry Officer
DFONRMP	Decentralised Forest and Other Natural Resources Programme
DIPTT	District Integrated Planning Task Team
DPSU	District Project Support Unit
DS	Decentralisation Secretary
FD	Forestry Department
FNRM	Forest and Other Natural Resources Management
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HH	Household
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
JFM	Joint Forest Management
KM	Knowledge Management
MA&D	Market Analysis & Development
MFA Finland	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NAC	National Advisory Committee
NR	Natural Resources
NW (province)	North-Western Province
PCTAO	Provincial Chiefs and Traditional Affairs Officer
PDCC	Provincial Development Coordinating Committee
PFO	Provincial Forestry Officer
PLGO	Provincial Local Government Officer
PMCU	Project Management Coordinating Unit
PSC	Provincial Steering Committee
S.I.	Statutory Instrument
SMART indicator	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound indicator
TA	Technical Advisor
WDC	Ward Development Committee

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Composition of the Evaluation Team

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PICTORIAL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The Decentralised Forest and Other Natural Resources Programme-Introduction Project is a first phase of a programme designed for a 12-year period. The project is a collaboration between the Government of the Republic of Zambia and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The introduction phase runs from 2015 to 2017. This 3-year project works on 3 main components: (i) Institutional Development for Natural Resource Sector Devolution; (ii) Sustainable Forest and other Natural Resources Management; and (iii) Rural Entrepreneurship and Alternative Livelihoods (with a separate Component IV covering project management). The project is implemented in 3 districts in Muchinga province and 3 districts in NW province. The project is managed by a Project Management Coordination Unit in Lusaka and District Project Support Units in 4 of the 6 districts. The project is linked to Zambia's ongoing decentralisation process and uses a multi-sector integrated approach for planning and implementation of activities. Oversight is provided by Provincial Steering Committees in each province and a National Advisory Committee.

This report presents the results of the Mid Term Evaluation of this project, undertaken in the period September – November 2016.

Relevance

The project is very relevant with regard to GRZ policies on forestry and decentralisation. It is also consistent with needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, who all confirm the need for sustainable NRM through more control and enterprise development.

A “classic” development project like DFONRMP appears however not to be consistent with the new 2016 MFA Finland policy and related Zambia Country Strategy, which will focus on Private Sector Development.

Efficiency

Overall efficiency of the project is good. An integrated approach through multi-sector district teams makes optimal use of the expertise available at district level – for instance, staff from Community Development lead on gender mainstreaming and identifying vulnerable groups. By working in a limited number of pilot sites, the project is avoiding spreading resources too thin on the ground.

THE FORESTS ACT, 2015

Community Forest Management

29. (1) A community forest management group may be formed by a group of persons who are—

- (a) members of a village in or near a forest;
- (b) managing a forest or part of a forest; or
- (c) desirous of managing a forest or part of a forest.

(2) A community forest management group shall be formed for the purpose of communal control, use and management of a forest.

The project pilots new Forestry legislation for Community Forest Management (CFM)



The District Integrated Planning Task Team in Nakonde district

Main efficiency challenges relate to the remoteness of the project pilot sites, the fact that two of the original districts were split up (so the DPSU of the original districts now needs to cover two districts) and the high reporting demands, with quarterly technical and financial reports to be submitted to the Provincial Steering Committees. Also, some of the livelihoods activities so far undertaken were not very demand driven and/or did not have a clear link with sustainable forest management.



Remote intervention zones – Nakonde district is a 2-day drive from Lusaka

Effectiveness

Component 1 – Institutional aspects includes policy work such as support to developing a Statutory Instrument for CFM. This S.I. is crucial since it regulates CFM details and is required for the approval of local level CFM agreements. A draft exists, but there is a risk that the process of finalising and approving the S.I. may still take long and hence it could delay completion of the CFM process.

This component also relates to the project's embedding in, and support to, the decentralisation process. The project has been effective by adopting a pragmatic approach that considers the actual situation in each district. Where possible, active support is provided e.g. by supporting DDCC meetings and providing resources for establishment of Ward Development Committees.



Component 2 deals with Integrated Sustainable Forest and other natural resources management. The focus here lies squarely on piloting the CFM opportunities provided through the new Forestry Act. An effective 7-step CFM methodology has been developed and a broad range of stakeholders is being trained in this. The process is being applied in 16 pilot sites. Buy-in is strong at all levels, including at the level of the communities who are already showing signs of taking control of the forests identified for CFM, for instance by turning away timber prospectors.

The process is advancing well, but given that it turns de facto open access forests into community-controlled forests, there is a risk of conflicts between the communities and outsiders. So far this has been avoided through a very inclusive process with strong involvement of the traditional leadership.

A few aspects need to receive more attention such as, inter alia, the question on how a CFM agreement relates to a mining concession from a juridical point of view and the issue of benefit sharing arrangement.

Component 3 deals with enterprise development and alternative livelihoods. Some livelihoods activities (like fish ponds, livestock, nurseries and beekeeping) have already been supported but the project is now focusing on building capacity for Market Analysis & Development (based on an FAO method). While this is still ongoing, it seems prospects for viable enterprises are good, and beneficiaries already show signs of increased business acumen.

It is somewhat surprising that (sustainable) charcoal production has so far received little attention.



**Fish ponds supported by the project
in Nakonde district**
(this pond was recently drained by thieves who
stole almost all fingerlings)



**Good opportunities exist for enterprise development for
forest-based products**

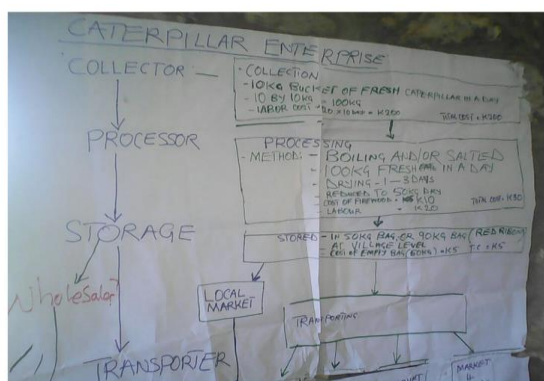
Overall effectiveness of the project's activities depends in particular on how the CFM work and Enterprise development work reinforce one another. This is very clear for enterprises based on forest products that thrive under sustainable forest management (like mushrooms, caterpillars, honey). There is also a link with, for example fish ponds, if those ponds depend on a water source which is protected / regulated by a community forest. It is less clear however for other alternative livelihoods activities like village chickens.

Impact

Given the project is only 1 year into its implementation phase, it is too early to expect real impact. But prospects are good:

- A total of around 25,000 hectares of forest resources are currently in the process of being brought under CFM, with the total number of HHs in the target communities around 5,700.
- 1,205 Beneficiaries (of which 535 are women) are so far directly involved in the enterprise and alternative livelihoods activities.

And as below picture indicates, there appear to be good markets for forest-based products like caterpillars.



Sustainability

By working as much as possible with existing structures and by aligning with the decentralisation process, sustainability prospects are improved, as also confirmed by stakeholders, who are confident that they will be able to continue activities providing they are given sufficient time and resources. The strong buy-in at all levels also contributes to good sustainability prospects.

An issue of concern is the low staffing capacity at most district departments. Many positions at district level are not staffed and it is unlikely that this situation will change in the near future.

With regard to technical, economic and socio-cultural sustainability, the main challenges are remoteness to markets, lack of access to credits, and the fact that the project has so far not given much attention to charcoal production, which these days can be considered a socio-cultural ingrained livelihoods activity.

The main issue however that undermines sustainability prospects is the change in MFA Finland development policy, which makes it highly unlikely that DFONRMP will continue to be funded beyond the Introduction project. 3 years is too short for a project that pilots new legislation and uses an innovative integrated approach to development that is linked to the decentralisation process.



During a visit to a pilot site in Shiwang'andu, women did all the talking and the lady in the picture was clearly in charge of the fish ponds

HRBA and Cross-Cutting Objectives

DFONRMP is applying some elements of a rights-based approach by the fact that it is focused on community forest management, and is embedded in and supporting the decentralisation process. Supporting the legal right of communities to their forests is also an element of a HRBA. This governance work, getting the forest law into practice, could contribute to very positive outcomes in rights and livelihoods.

Gender mainstreaming and attention for vulnerable groups has been spearheaded by district staff from Ministry of Community Development. Women are well represented in the activities, including in leadership positions.

The main challenge relates to ensuring vulnerable groups are actively involved. This is particularly important given that they often have highest dependency on forest resources such as mushrooms, caterpillars and firewood.

Component 4 - Project Management, M&E, Action Research and Knowledge Management

At the overall level, the project is managed by a **Project Management Coordination Unit** based in Lusaka. Feedback on the performance of the PMCU has been very positive and indicates strong relationship management. They have also set up good project management systems, and have a good eye for efficiency issues.

Four **District Project Support Units** facilitate project implementation at district level, which is done through District Integrated Planning Task Teams. This system works well for planning and implementation, but there are still challenges in reporting and proper financial accounting.

The project has adopted a decentralised planning and budgeting system. So far, the project has been too optimistic in its annual planning and budgeting, leading to substantial under-expenditure. This is not so much a sign of under-performance, but of not sufficiently considering the complex environment in which the project operates and the limited staffing capacity at district departments involved in the project.

The project has developed a comprehensive **M&E framework**, which is called "results-based" but in practice the project is not really managed based on results. Budgets are means-based and reports are largely activity-based. The logical framework is also not very conducive for results-based management (RBM) with many indicators not very SMART. Given that both MFA Finland and GRZ are moving towards RBM, this is a missed opportunity.

The main governance structures are the **Provincial Steering Committees** in each province. This is a good approach, in line with the envisaged role of provinces in the decentralisation process. The PSCs provide oversight through regular (first quarterly, now bi-annual) meetings that are well attended. A challenge is still their limited involvement in actual field level monitoring.

A **National Advisory Committee** is responsible for providing general policy guidance to the project. It has so far met once, but with good high level representation, indicating strong commitment for the project

No **Action Research** has yet been undertaken. With regard to **Knowledge Management (KM)**, the project has developed a communication matrix and produced some interesting project briefs (example on the right). More attention for KM will be required once more lessons have been learnt that need to be shared with a broad audience.

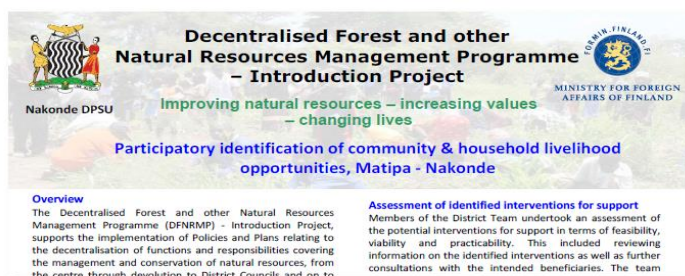


TABLE WITH SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
Relevance			
The project is piloting new Forestry legislation on Community Forest Management	Very relevant	None	
The project is aligned with, and supports, the ongoing decentralisation process	Very relevant	None	
The project is consistent with MFA Finland development policy of 2012, but less so with MFA Finland new development policy of 2016, and the related new Country Strategy for Zambia, which focuses on private sector development	Consistency of DFONRMP with long term MFA Finland strategy for Zambia is not very clear, but continuation in its present project form, as originally intended, is highly unlikely.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) GRZ and Embassy of Finland / MFA Finland should discuss how support can be continued in one form or another beyond the current Introduction phase, given that initial plan from both sides was for a 12-year programme. This issue is discussed further under Sustainability. 2) Given that Finland's new focus in Zambia will be on PSD, it is all the more important that the project continues with a main thrust on CFM since it is difficult to see how this aspect of the project can be supported in future under the new MFA Finland policy. Conversely, some form of support for the enterprise component could be envisaged given that the PSD support would focus on MSMEs, which are the sort of enterprises supported under the project. 	<p>GRZ / MFA Finland</p> <p>Whole project</p>
Efficiency			
Project has made adjustments to increase efficiency such as working in a limited number of pilot sites. It also pays attention to efficiency issues such as related to transport. Some stakeholders feel project is advancing slow, but given that it is piloting new things, it is important not to move too fast since that might undermine stakeholder buy-in.	Good overall efficiency, good pace of implementation of activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) The project should for now continue to work in the pilot sites. Expanding to other sites / communities / districts should only be considered once the processes and structures have been consolidated in the pilot sites, signs of positive impact are consolidated, and lessons learnt have been documented. 4) The project should strengthen collaboration and coordination with other projects in the provinces, both with a view of future scaling up and with a view of complementing one another's expertise and resources. 5) Where transport is a limiting factor, DIPTTs should assess available other transport means within their departments and where possible use those for project activities (with fuel costs paid by the project). This not only increased efficiency, but also confirms strong commitment for the project from all involved sectors. 	<p>Whole project</p> <p>PMCU</p> <p>DIPTTs</p>
Working in 6 instead of 4	There is not enough	6) It is recommended not to set up new DPSUs in the two new districts Ikelenge and	PMCU

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
districts has been somewhat challenging for the DPSUs covering 2 districts, but this should become less of a problem with DIPTTs taking more responsibility.	ground to recommend increase in DPSUs, but some adaptation needed if Chinsali is split up again.	Shiwang'andu. The PMCU should instead closely monitor DPSU performance and where needed provide additional support. This could come from PMCU members, from other DPSUs, or through additional short term TA. 7) If Chinsali district is split up again into 2 districts within the project's lifetime, the project will have to find pragmatic ways of dealing with this situation. It should consider transferring the current DPSU from Chinsali to the new district capital since both pilot sites are likely to be in the new district. If possible, the current DIPTT members in Chinsali should continue to be involved in the work in the pilot sites.	PMCU / PSC
Effectiveness			
Component 1 – Institutional development			
Project focuses on providing rules and regulations that translate clauses of the new Forestry Act to the local level. An approved Statutory Instrument will be important for progress with CFM	Good effectiveness of this component for now, but will be compromised if S.I. finalisation and subsequent approval is delayed. Approval process is ultimately in the hands of the GRZ.	8) Finalisation and approval of the Statutory Instrument that regulates CFM is considered a high priority. The current draft S.I., as developed with support from the project, needs to be critically reviewed, possibly by external experts, and then be submitted for approval by Government as soon as possible. a) Critical review of the S.I. should consider, inter alia, whether it sufficiently addresses issues of benefit sharing, mining concessions in CFs, and how possible commercial logging in CFs is to be regulated. 9) It is recommended that the Director of the Forestry Department, where needed with support from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands and NR, takes the lead in ensuring the S.I. is finalised and approved as soon as possible. 10) If the S.I. approval is delayed beyond the end of 2016, the Director of Forestry Department should consider giving provisional approval to CFM agreements, with final approval conditional on compliance with final S.I.	PMCU / FD FD / PS Lands FD
By-laws at district level were foreseen, but PSC has indicated their formal approval may take too long	It is better to focus on informal support at district level	11) It is recommended that the CFM process is supported at district level by Council resolutions rather than by formal by-laws (this is in line with a recommendation emanating from discussions in the PSC).	District Councils
The project has taken a pragmatic approach to aligning with, and supporting, the decentralisation process, applying an integrated approach around forestry and NR issues that involve a broad range of sectors.	This has led to good effectiveness and good embedding in the decentralisation process. Continued support to the process will further strengthen effectiveness.	12) The project should continue to support the decentralisation process. Specifically, it is recommended to support: a) the establishment and functioning of Ward Development Committees in the project areas; these should be promoted as platforms for exchange between communities as well as linking communities to their ward councillor, with the project in particular supporting governance and development issues related to CFM and enterprise development. i) The PLGOs should take a lead role in this process b) more active involvement of the Council and individual councillors in project activities e.g. by giving them a role in project monitoring and reporting at district level, having	PLGOs

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
		<p>them participate in training workshops, etc.</p> <p>c) if possible, the DIPTT should transform into a (sub-)committee on NRM of the Council, both to strengthen the link with the Council and to promote sustainability.</p>	DIPTTs / Councils
The devolution plan for forestry is still only available in draft. The Decentralisation Secretariat sees the project as important to help finalise the plan.	Given the project's pilot role it will be important that lessons learnt inform the devolution plan.	13) It is recommended that the project actively contributes to the forestry devolution plan based on lessons learnt from the project's experience in working at district level in the two provinces (which represent two extremes in terms of forest resources). This should however not distract from the project's main focus on the CFM and enterprise development work in the pilot districts.	
Component 2 – Integrated Sustainable Forest and other NRM			
This component pilots the CFM provisions of the new Forestry Act. A streamlined process has been set up and is being implemented in 16 pilot sites.	The process is effective, has good buy-in from all and has good scaling up potential. But it is too early to conclude that it will indeed lead to sustainable FRM.	<p>14) Rather than scaling up the process of CFM rapidly to other areas, the focus should first be on completing the full process in current pilot sites and ensuring that high quality standards are maintained during all steps.</p> <p>15) Scaling up of CFM during the latter stages of the project should increasingly be fully led by the DIPTT, with strong support from provincial staff, in particular the PFOs. The role of the PMCU and DPSU should be mostly one of quality control, and providing financial resources required for the scaling up</p>	<p>Whole project</p> <p>DIPTTs / PFOs</p>
Communities show strong interest in CFM, and have shown to already exercise more control of the forests earmarked for CFM.	Good buy-in on community rights, but important they also comply with their responsibilities under CFM.	16) The project should carefully monitor whether communities are complying with their responsibilities as outlined in the (still to be developed) CF management plans. It should ultimately not shy away from suspending support to communities that do not show a clear commitment in this respect.	PMCU M&E advisor / DIPTTs
Some issues in the CFM process have not been well addressed yet, such as how to manage possible conflicts, mining concessions and the role of charcoal production.	These issues need to be addressed more explicitly.	<p>17) With the project bringing in fundamental changes in access to forest resources (from de facto open access to community-controlled access), conflicts may arise. It is therefore recommended to address conflict resolution mechanisms more explicitly in the CFM agreements and to train stakeholders in conflict management.</p> <p>18) Where issues such as how CF rights relate to mining concessions and to licensing for commercial logging are not covered sufficiently in the Forestry Act or S.I., these should be addressed in the CFM agreements.</p> <p>19) Charcoal production is an important rural income earner and options for sustainable charcoal production should be researched more in detail, and results should inform the CF management plans (see also under component 3).</p>	<p>PMCU / CFM consultants</p> <p>Whole project</p> <p>Whole project</p>
Component 3 – Rural Entrepreneurship and Alternative Livelihoods			

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
Some activities already undertaken, with some (like fish ponds) providing good prospects for economic benefits, while for others this is less clear. The project is now training stakeholders in Market Analysis & Development	The Market Analysis & Development (MA&D) training will ensure that enterprise development will be based on viable value chains.	None	
Charcoal production issue has been largely ignored so far	This requires more attention	<p>20) Enterprise development options based on sustainable charcoal production should be researched by the project. This should include, inter alia :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) testing recently developed interventions for sustainable charcoal production at producer and community level; b) Investigate, develop and test locally adapted incentives and localised permit systems for linking charcoal production to sustainable levels of forest production; c) Train charcoal producers in technical and business skills and management, and sustainable resource use; <p>21) So far, the community nurseries are producing mostly pine seedlings. Good for timber but not for charcoal. The project should consider promoting tree species that are (also) suitable for charcoal production.</p>	<p>PMCU / M&E advisor (action research)</p> <p>MA&D trainers</p> <p>PFOs / DFOs</p>
The project has not yet provided financial services (credit facility), but is proposing to support roll out of Village Banks. MFA Finland has requested more info on this before it can decide on whether part of the budget can be used for this.	There is a need for credit facility, and Village Banks seem like an appropriate approach.	<p>22) The project should expedite the process of getting the Village Bank scheme approved and rolled out in the target district. MFA Finland should be given all relevant information as soon as possible and it should take a decision before the end of the year on whether a part of the project budget can be used for this purpose.</p> <p>23) Given the tendency for community members to default on donor-funded loans it is important that if the MFA does provide funding to the village bank scheme, it should not be visible to the communities where the funding originates.</p>	<p>PMCU / MFA Finland</p> <p>Whole project</p>
Overall effectiveness			
Overall effectiveness depends in particular on the complementarity between components 2 and 3. There are different opinions on how these reinforce one another.	Link between the two is strongest where enterprise development is based on forest products that requires sustainable FM.	<p>24) The project should focus on completing the CFM process in the pilot sites, and this should be followed up with support for forest-based enterprises in the CFs.</p> <p>25) Alternative livelihoods options should continue to be considered, but only if it is well justified that it contributes to reducing pressure on forest resources (as per criteria outlined in section 4.3.4).</p>	Whole project

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
Impact			
Project has key elements in place that are important for potential impact, but too early to expect real impact already. If positive impacts of project are achieved, they will for now be limited to pilot sites, with unsustainable NRM continuing outside those sites.	Work in pilot sites to continue and signs of impact to be monitored closely. Scaling up will be important, once piloting proves successful	26) Once clear positive impact is visible in the pilot sites, probably by second half of 2017, scaling up based on identified best practices should be given high priority: a) Within the target districts, this can be mostly funded by the project, and may include engaging other stakeholders beyond the district authorities to accelerate the pace of scaling up b) Within other areas in the countries this should be achieved by widely sharing lessons learnt, including organising exchange visits to the project's pilot sites.	DIPTTs PMCU / PSC / NAC
Sustainability			
Good stakeholder buy-in, good capacity development, good alignment with decentralisation process, good inclusive approach (including involving traditional leaders) make stakeholders generally confident of good sustainability if resources are available.	All these provide good prospects for sustainability.	None	
Technical, economic, socio-cultural aspects are generally well covered, but a few issues have not received enough attention	Good sustainability prospects if specific issues are addressed	27) The project should ensure good quality control of all technical, socio-cultural and economic aspects of in particular its livelihoods and enterprise activities a) For income generating activities, a value chain analysis with positive outcome should be a prerequisite b) Other alternative livelihoods activities should be based on a clear demand from the target beneficiaries c) The project should ensure appropriate technical choices are made e.g. use of beehives that can be locally produced, providing tree seedlings that can be used for charcoal production, improved technology for charcoal production. Where possible capacity should be built to produce required equipment locally.	DIPTTs / PMCU
New MFA Finland development policy introduced in 2016 makes it highly unlikely that the	If this issue is not addressed, then overall sustainability	28) It is strongly recommended to approve an extension to the Introduction project, ideally with a period of 2 years to allow sufficient time to measure the impact of CFM and document lessons learnt.	MFA Finland

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
project will be continued beyond this Introduction phase. Yet, given the limited resources that districts receive from the central government (with no real increases expected in the coming years), the funding provided by MFA Finland is considered crucial for the implementation of the project activities for some time to come.	prospects are weak.	<p>29) MFA Finland should as soon as possible indicate whether an extension of the current phase is possible, for how long, and whether there are possibilities for a project budget increase (if only a no-cost extension is possible, it will likely mean that it can't be more than 6 months to 1 year, which will limit the project's ability to prove that CFM, combined with enterprise development, can lead to lasting positive impacts).</p> <p>30) The project should propose a draft budget to the PSCs and NAC based on the agreed extension period. It should be given the mandate to move budgets from one line item to another, provided a clear justification is given for the proposed changes.</p>	<p>MFA Finland</p> <p>PMCU</p>
Even with an extension period, prospects for sustainability are still not very strong. It is only in the long term (i.e. after the initially intended 12 years) that the need for additional support will reduce.	Even with an extension of the project, external support will be needed beyond it to ensure sustainability and to support scaling up of best practices.	<p>31) A sustainability strategy is required, addressing at least the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assessment if and how some aspects of the project (such as those related to MSME development) can still be supported by MFA Finland under their new Country Strategy. b) Assessment of the resources that GRZ can put towards continued support for CFM in the target districts / provinces c) Liaising with other programmes / projects / Cooperating Partners to assess in how far they can continue (some of) the project's activities, as well as funding scaling up based on best practices. d) Explore other funding opportunities e.g. GCF e) Assess ways to gradually reduce TA inputs during the extension period and increasingly transfer full responsibility for the project's planning and implementation at province and district level to government staff, in particular from the 3 key ministries. f) A detailed strategy to share lessons learnt broadly within the target districts / provinces and nation-wide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) This should be the main focus of the last half year / year of the project ii) Can include exchange visits (between communities, between projects, between district staff, etc.), communication and training material, use of community radio / TV, national iii) The budget for the last year needs to incorporate these. 	<p>Led by PMCU; Approval by PSCs/NAC</p>
HRBA and Cross-Cutting Objectives			
The focus on CFM implies a rights-based approach; communities are already exercising these rights	Project follows rights based approach, it is early to say whether the	<p>32) The PSCs should follow up that the HRBA & Cross-cutting Objectives Strategy is applied in practice, with allocations of funding, training and relevant activities.</p> <p>33) The project should ensure (via emphasising this in awareness raising activities) that communities understand that DFONRMP can support them to exercise their rights (control</p>	<p>PSC</p> <p>Whole project</p>

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
<p>Leading role of district staff of Min. of Community Development has ensured good gender mainstreaming.</p> <p>Vulnerable groups have been identified but not clear how project will ensure their involvement in the project.</p>	<p>cross-cutting objectives are being mainstreamed in practice beyond the good intentions. A significant risk exists for vulnerable groups who are not necessarily active in the community forest groups, and could potentially be shut out and lose their right to forest benefits.</p>	<p>over forest resources), but that they also have responsibilities (sustainable forest resources management).</p> <p>34) The project should carefully map the likely impacts on vulnerable groups in the project areas. They should be encouraged to participate actively in project activities and to benefit from alternative livelihood supports if they are found to have been negatively impacted by the community forestry activities.</p>	<p>DIPTTs</p>
Component 4 - Project Management, M&E, Action Research and Knowledge Management			
<p>Feedback on the PMCU and on DPSUs performance has generally been positive. They have maintained good relations with all stakeholders, and the PMCU has set up good project mgt systems. The main challenge has been under-expenditure compared to annual budgets. The main exception is the underperformance of the TA in Chinsali (who is being replaced).</p>	<p>Good overall project management, with under-expenditure more a sign of not sufficiently considered the complex working environment, (including low staffing levels at district departments), than of underperformance of the project.</p>	<p>35) Assuming an extension of the project is approved, the project management should ensure that the work plans and budgets for the coming years are more realistic, with budgets gradually shifting from CFM to Enterprise Development to scaling up and sharing lessons learnt.</p> <p>36) Where under-expenditure still occur, clear explanations for the reasons behind these should be provided in the financial reports to the PSCs</p> <p>37) Given the importance of capacity building (not only for CFM and MA&D, but also within the context of the decentralisation process i.e. the functioning of WDCs), this issues merits specific attention in the budgeting. The PMCU should assess if the current TA budget is sufficient to cover the training needs, and if needed propose (well justified) adjustments.</p>	<p>PMCU / DIPTTs</p> <p>PMCU / DIPTTs</p> <p>PMCU</p>
<p>Provincial Steering Committees provide good oversight through regular meetings, with good participation. PSC members have so far not</p>	<p>PSC is providing oversight but this could be strengthened through more active field</p>	<p>38) To promote active and efficient involvement of the PSCs in project monitoring, it is recommended that every half year a limited number of PSC members undertakes one field level monitoring visit and reports back on its findings to the full PSC. This should be a standard item on the PSC agenda. A budget to support this has already been set aside</p>	<p>PSC</p>

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lead responsible
participated much in field level monitoring.	monitoring.		
The National Advisory Committee has so far met once, with good participation from high level stakeholders, showing good commitment.	The role of the NAC will become more important once more lessons learnt are available to support scaling up.	39) NAC meetings need to be held at least annually. It should focus on strategic aspects such as: a) promoting the continued support for the project's activities through identifying ways that GRZ and others can provided resources after the end of this Introduction project. b) To broaden the discussions and increase the audience for lessons learnt, the NAC meetings could be transformed into national workshops on CFM, where not only DFONRMP but also projects share their experience.	NAC
The project has developed a comprehensive M&E framework, which is said to be results-based. However, the project is not managed or monitored based on RBM principles, but rather on means-based budgets and activity-based reports. The logframe is also not very conducive for RBM since many indicators are not SMART. Given that both MFA Finland and GRZ are moving towards RBM, it is a missed opportunity that the project is not applying RBM principles.	Project is currently not managed based on results, but there are opportunities to strengthen RBM in the project.	40) Report to the PSC (and NAC) should be increasingly based on RBM principles. The focus should shift from reporting on progress with activities to reporting on progress towards the results defined in the project logframe. a) With results-based reporting, the reporting frequency for technical reports can be reduced from quarterly to bi-annual, in line with the frequency of PSC meetings. This will also help reduce the amount of time the PMCU spends on reports. b) The semi-annual report should focus on progress towards outputs, whereas the annual report should report progress on outputs, component objectives (somewhat confusingly called "results" in the logframe) and project purpose. It should also include a section on risks (see below), on lessons learnt, and some detailed success stories that illustrate progress made over the year. i) Activity progress can still be included on the principle of "reporting by exception" i.e. only report on activities where progress is significantly different from what was planned. In the semi-annual report this information will be required to justify any proposed changes in the budget for the second half of the year. ii) Main risks and mitigating actions should be monitored and reported upon on an annual basis, in line with the new bilateral project manual procedures of MFA Finland. c) Financial reports should continue to be produced quarterly, providing all details that the PSCs have requested. 41) Although ideally the indicators in the logframe would have to be reviewed to ensure they are all SMART, a more pragmatic way forward is for the M&E advisor of the PMCU to develop simple indicator sheets that explain for each indicator how it is exactly defined and how it is measured, calculated and reported. a) Any indicators that require baseline data that might be difficult to obtain should be reviewed to see if they can be formulated in a different way. b) Indicator targets should be broken down per province where possible, so that each PSC can accurately monitor progress towards the expected results for that province.	PMCU / M&E advisor PMCU / M&E advisor PMCU / Finance Mgr PMCU / M&E advisor

So far no real action research undertaken but research areas identified	How much action research can still be undertaken depends on extension of project. Topics to be prioritised.	<p>42) The main topic to be researched as soon as possible should be the options to promote sustainable charcoal production in (and around) community forests.</p> <p>43) The project will need to carefully consider whether more action research will be possible once the extension period is known. If time allows, an important second topic would be the effect of sustainable management of the forest resources in the CFs on water flows and water quality in streams originating in the CF (this would help make the link explicit between, for example, sustainable forest management and fish ponds that depend on a water sources originating in the CF).</p>	PMCU
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1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Introduction project of the Decentralised Forest and Other Natural Resources Management Programme (DFONRMP), funded by the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA Finland). The project is implemented in two provinces in Zambia: Muchinga Province and North-Western Province.

DFONRMP was designed as a 12-year programme, with the Introduction Project running for a 3-year period from beginning of 2015 to the end of 2017. The scope of this MTE covers the Introduction Project from its start to September 2016. The MTE was undertaken by a team of 3 consultants from FCG International Ltd.: two team members based in Zambia who undertook field visits to both provinces and met all stakeholders based in Zambia; and one FCG home office coordinator based in Finland who held interviews with staff from MFA Finland and from Indufor, the company managing the project on behalf of MFA Finland.

The main objectives of the MTE, according to the ToR, are to:

- 1) Provide the competent authorities of the Governments of Finland and Zambia with qualified views on relevance and feasibility of the project design; implementation methods used to reach set objectives; evidence of project results including processes that are likely to lead to results and conclusions in light of the overall performance of the project.
- 2) Provide to the competent authorities' recommendations on how to ensure and improve performance, relevance, impact and sustainability including if necessary, adjustments in project management and implementation strategies. Recommendations should be prioritized in view of the period remaining for implementation.
- 3) Provide key lessons learnt and give guidance to the competent authorities giving analytical views on the usability of these lessons during current phase and give analytical views on cardinal issues for consideration in possible future programmes.

The MTE followed the guidelines of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland and the results presented in this report are structured in line with the OECD criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, and adding the specific MFA criteria on HRBA and cross-cutting objectives. The methodology of the MTE consisted of a desk study, field visits to the two provinces with meetings with a wide range of provincial and district level stakeholders and with beneficiaries in the various pilot sites of the project, and meetings with national level stakeholders in Lusaka and in Finland.

Since the start of the DFONRMP- Introduction project, MFA Finland has adopted a new development policy, which makes it highly unlikely that DFONRMP will, as initially intended, have subsequent phases after this Introduction phase. The MTE has therefore paid particular attention to the aspect of sustainability, which would normally have not been so prominent if the programme would be running for 12 years.

The report starts in chapter 2 with a short description of the DFONRMP-Introduction project. This is followed by a presentation of the findings in chapter 3, which are, where possible, illustrated with examples (evidence), presented in blue boxes. Chapter 4 presents the conclusions and recommendations, with the recommendations presented in blue boxes and numbered sequentially for easy referencing.

2 DESCRIPTION OF DFONRMP

The Decentralized Forest and other Natural Resources Management Programme – Introduction project is a three year, €4.38 million collaboration between the Government of Finland and Government of the Republic of Zambia. The initial design was that the ‘introduction phase’ of the 12- year programme is likely to expand both geographically and thematically after 2-3 years of implementation.

The programme is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and its overall goal of is to contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequality and improvement of environmental conditions through devolved integrated sustainable forest and other natural resources management, and supporting alternative livelihoods that will help local communities shift towards more sustainable income generating activities in Northwestern and Muchinga provinces. The Introduction project operates in the districts of Chinsali, Shiwang’andu and Nakonde in Muchinga Province and Kasempa, Ikelenge and Mwinilunga of North-Western Province.

As part of the implementation strategy, a consortium consisting of Indufor (Finland) and ORGUT (Sweden) was awarded a three-year contract to provide technical assistance to the Integrated Forestry and Natural Resource Management Programme in Zambia. Indufor is the lead firm in the consortium.

The project is implemented through the Forestry department using an integrated approach; key ministries that are part of the project include Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs. The three ministries complement each other in terms of their areas of expertise. At district level, the project has adopted an integrated approach that involves a lot more actors such as departments of agriculture, livestock, community development including line Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and private sector; the latter more especially on enterprise development. The integrated approach fits in with the ongoing implementation of the decentralization plan that will eventually see all key sectors falling under the local council.

Activities of the Introductory project include: development of decentralized forest management systems, training of government staff and local communities in participatory forest management, integrated natural resource assessment and land use planning, improving information management systems, and promoting small scale forestry and other natural resource-based livelihood models. The project is also focusing on supporting the creation of an enabling policy and regulatory framework for participatory forest management and strengthening of local capacity for marketing forest and non-wood forest products. This involves piloting the operationalization of the Forestry act of 2015 which provides for community forestry and provides an opportunity to draw lessons which will significantly form basis for scaling up and out by the department of Forestry.

The programme targets forest dependent individuals and households including women, vulnerable groups and households living in extreme poverty. The beneficiaries also include traditional authorities, district government administration, locally active NGOs and private sector enterprises.

In terms of Management and coordination, the ‘Introductory project’ depends largely on existing structures such as the Provincial Development Coordinating Committee (PDCC), District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC), Ward Development Committees (WDCs), and traditional leadership.

At national level, day to day project management is a responsibility of the Project Management Coordinating Unit (PMCU). The PMCU is headed by a National Coordinator (who is a full time Department of Forestry staff but attached to the project) and a Chief Technical Advisor, supported by a Financial Manager, M&E advisor and admin assistant.

The PMCU is overseen by the National Advisory Committee whose responsibility is to provide oversight support to the project team for efficiency and effectiveness in planning implementation and learning and sharing. Members of the NAC include high level representatives of the 3 core ministries as well as representatives of a number of other Ministries, of civil society and private sector and of MFA / Embassy of Finland. The NAC draws membership from the 3 core ministries and is represented by Permanent Secretaries and Directors in the three ministries.

At provincial level, a Provincial Steering Committee (PSC) comprising the Provincial Permanent Secretary; who is also the chairperson of the committee; Provincial Heads of Forestry, Local Government and Chiefs and Traditional Affairs and representatives of other sectors and from NGOs is in place for each of the two provinces. Their main role is to provide oversight support to District Project Support Units (DPSU) and their district implementing teams.

At both province and district levels, the project is integrated within the decentralization approach and the Provincial Development Coordinating Committee (PDCC) and the District Development Coordinating committee (DDCC) are the platforms used for information sharing and learning about the project.

At local level, traditional leaders play a critical role in community engagement; working together with other community leaders who are democratically selected from among the members. Within the community, user groups are formed and individual members choose group/s to belong to based on interest, capacity and opportunities for market.

Implementation is guided by the District Integrated Planning Task Teams (DIPTT) whose role is to build local capacity guided by decentralised regulations in terms of establishing legal recognition and protection of local forest management areas and benefit-sharing arrangements.

The project takes a human rights-based approach and aims to increase democratic ownership and accountability, effectiveness and impact, as well as openness in use and management of forest and other natural resources involving local communities. Furthermore, the programme is aiming to support greater involvement of civil society in forest management and natural resource management activities, for example, in areas of enterprise development through value chain analysis and market linkages.

Most of the rural population is highly dependent on forest resources for food security, e.g. non-wood forest resources (nuts, fruit, mushroom, caterpillars), on wood resources for constructions and as source of energy. Also in poverty stricken rural areas, extraction of trees for charcoal production and timber offer the main source of income. The use and management of forest and other natural resources in Zambia are complex and challenging for most stakeholders, especially for the local communities. This project is therefore aimed at developing a mechanism that can address the difficulties faced by local stakeholders in forest and natural resources management and contribute to the sustainable use and management of forest and other natural resources.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

Relevance with regard to GRZ development policy

Since the initial formulation of the project, there have been major changes in the policy and legal framework of the forestry sector in Zambia, which have significantly strengthened the enabling environment for the implementation of the project. It concerns the new Forestry Policy of 2014 and the Forestry Act of 2015. The latter provides for the first time in Zambia a legal framework for transfer of forest user rights to communities. Previously, the forestry legislation only allowed Joint Forest Management (JFM), which did not include the possibility to transfer full user rights of forest resources to a community. Experience of previous projects with JFM have shown that this arrangement was not very effective in promoting sustainable forest management, nor in ensuring that benefits from exploitation of the forest resources would benefit the communities living around them. While JFM is still foreseen in the new Forestry Act, it is the CFM provisions that are most relevant to the project. The project's purpose is consistent with these provisions as it aims to support devolved integrated sustainable forest. Component 2 of the project is in fact fully based on the opportunities for CFM provided by the new legislation.

The choice of working in North-Western Province and Muchinga province is also relevant. These are provinces which are at the extreme end with regard to forestry resources. NW still has huge tracts of largely unspoiled forest, whereas much of Muchinga province (Nakonde district in particular) has seen much of its forest resources depleted over the last decades. It means that by testing CFM in these provinces, lessons will be learnt that will be relevant for the whole country.

Box 1 - CFM in Forest Act

The 2015 Forest Act introduces the concept of Community Forest Management in its articles 29 to 35. It covers the creation of Community Forest Management Groups (CFMG), the general provisions for such a group to obtain user rights for a forest identified by them as the area they want to manage as a Community Forest, and the rights and obligations of a CFMG that have to ensure that the forest is sustainably managed.

The rights include collection of timber and non-timber forest products, tourism and education activities, establishing plantation, and outsourcing for specific silvicultural operations.

The obligations as listed in the Forestry Act relate to ensuring sustainable management of the forest, including supporting the enforcement of provisions in relation to illegal harvesting, and entering into partnerships with others in support of sustainable conservation and management of the forest.

Apart from the forestry legislation, the implementation of the project is also strongly aligned with the ongoing decentralisation process in the country. The (revised) decentralisation policy of 2013 aims at empowering and developing the capacity of (district-level) councils and local communities through devolution of power and decision making authority and functions. The Cabinet circular 10 of 2014 provides guidance and modalities for the implementation of the national decentralisation policy. It indicates that the main focus for development and service delivery will remain at district level, but decision-making and financial authority will shift from the representative bodies of the central government to the (elected) local government (councils). Sector departments which currently fall under central government will be accountable to the local government. The provincial tier will be responsible for oversight of development and monitoring the implementation of national government programmes, and ensuring strong linkages between the district level to the national level. The policy also foresees a strong involvement of traditional leaders.

The process of implementing the decentralisation policy is currently ongoing. The project is strongly aligned with this process: its main focus for planning and implementing activities is the district level, with oversight of the project provided through Provincial Steering Committees in the two

provinces where the project operates. Institutionally the project is linked not only to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, but also the Ministry of Local Government (coordinating the decentralisation process) and the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs. At all three main tiers of the project (district, provincial, national) these 3 key Ministries are directly involved in the project's decision making and oversight structures.

Below the district level, the project is supporting the formation of Ward Development Committees, which are the lowest tier within the proposed decentralised structure of government. It also involves traditional leaders strongly in its activities, both directly at field level and through their (or their representative's) involvement in workshops and trainings.

Stakeholders consulted confirm that the project is well embedded in the decentralisation process, and is in fact considered an important testing ground for how the decentralisation process is working out in practice, with Decentralisation Secretariat expressing strong interest in learning from the project experience.

Relevance with regard to MFA Finland development policy

New MFA Finland Development Policy 2016

The project was planned during the previous government's development policy (2012), which emphasised issues such as gender, climate change, rights and civil society support. In 2016 the new Finnish Development Policy was published^[1], which has a much stronger emphasis on strengthening of the private sector in order to create decent jobs. In addition there has been a serious reduction in the development cooperation budget, including the budget for activities in Zambia, which has had serious implications for the future of DFONRMP.

The project was planned under the period of the Millennium Development Goals. In September 2015 the UN also resolved to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and set 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and both Finland and Zambia are signatories. In particular, SDG 15 is relevant to this project: *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.*

New MFA Finland draft country strategy for Zambia

A new draft country strategy for Zambia has been developed by MFA Finland (2016). While still in draft form, it is expected to be approved and published shortly. It clearly states that support to agriculture as well as environment and natural resources sectors will be phased out, while cooperation will focus in the future on private sector development activities (as well as focused support to the more vulnerable groups in society). The most important direct consequence of this new strategy (and the cuts to development funding) is the fact that it is highly unlikely that there will be a second phase for the DFONRMP programme in its current form. The draft Strategy notes that **"this support will be phased out** as the current programmes come to their end in 2018 and 2019" (p.10). While the programme was designed for a 12-year period, with the current Introduction project intended as the first 3-year phase, feedback from the MFA Finland and Embassy during the Inception period made it clear that the MTE team should work on the assumption that the programme in its present form will come to an end after the initial phase. While the forestry sector will remain important in the relationship between MFA Finland and Zambia, the way that relationship will take shape will be fundamentally different and will in principle no longer be based on "classic" development cooperation programmes like DFONRMP.

The draft Country Strategy still covers forestry to some extent –

“Finland’s support in Zambia will fall within the following two priority areas: improving the economies of developing countries to ensure more decent jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being, as well as democratic and better-functioning societies. The two other priority areas, enhancing the rights and status of women and girls and increased food security, better access to water and energy and **sustainable use of natural resources will also be incorporated into the two selected impacts.**” (page 8)

Under **Outcome 2.2:** Strengthened participatory governance, it is stated that “Finland will operate in participatory governance at local levels in the environment sector by continuing to support Zambia in the environmentally, economically and socially sustainable management of natural resources in local levels”.

The MFA Finland is currently trying to identify other channels for forestry development activities, and is studying the opportunities for private sector support, especially from Finland. However, the MTE team considers that this is unlikely to be an option for the community level beneficiaries of DFONRMP, as it would be more focused on commercial forestry.

Relevance for stakeholders and beneficiaries

Very positive feedback was received from stakeholders involved about the relevance of the project. At national level, stakeholders indicate the importance of the project in terms of piloting the new Forestry legislation and working at a practical level within the decentralisation process. They are not only interested in what the project achieves, but also in lessons learnt that will be useful for upscaling the CFM process and for fine-tuning the decentralisation process.

At district level, the stakeholders see the project as an important multi-stakeholder approach to development, and emphasised in particular the relevance of components 2 and 3 for development. It also brings some dynamics to important coordination structures like the DDCC, which have generally not been functioning well. It is also seen as providing good support to the ongoing decentralisation process, with council representatives clearly indicating the importance of the project to support the process through establishment of WDCs. For the different sectors involved in the implementation of the project’s activities, the project brings in much needed resources that allows them to undertake activities that are seen as relevant for the respective sector and for the project alike. Support to capacity building in decentralisation, CFM and enterprise development is also seen as highly relevant.

Feedback from one Chief and from one Chief’s representative indicates they find both CFM and enterprise development very important for their subjects. They see the destruction of the natural resources in their chiefdoms and feel that CFM is the right way forward to halt this destruction while providing potential to improve people’s livelihoods.

Provincial stakeholders also see the relevance of the project and indicated that their involvement in the project design has helped ensure that the project addresses issues they see as important. They also confirm that their role in the project is in line with their envisaged role in the decentralised government structures that are currently being built.

Beneficiaries indicated that the project is very relevant for them, with the CFM component seen as the most important, because it will help them control and protect the forest resources that provide important livelihoods benefits, such as firewood, medicinal plants, timber, food. It will also help them control access to those forest resources by outsiders, which is something that is currently very difficult to do, leading to a situation where no one feels responsible for the management of the forests (tragedy of the commons). The alternative livelihoods activities help them to diversify away from often unsustainable livelihoods activities such as slash and burn agriculture and charcoal production. While the projects have not yet led to direct tangible benefits such as increased income,

the beneficiaries are confident that more control over their forest resources, combined with support for enterprise development, will deliver significant benefits.

3.2 Efficiency

Pilot sites

The project was initially designed to start with activities in all 29 chiefdoms in the two provinces. During the inception phase it was concluded that resources would likely be spread too thin on the ground if this approach was followed. It was therefore decided to identify pilot sites where the work on CFM and Enterprise development would initially be focused. These sites were identified through a participatory landscape approach at district level. Such an approach allows for an integrated analysis of all natural resources within a landscape, how these resources are used, how they are interdependent, and how they are influenced by factors outside the landscape. Based on this approach a total of 16 pilot sites were identified.

This narrowing down on the number of intervention sites has been agreed with all key stakeholders, and the general feedback received indicates that it has contributed to good efficiency. There appears to be a good balance now between the capacities available at district level through the District Integrated Planning Task Teams and the number of sites they have to support. One should not forget that CFM is a new approach and that the project is piloting this with stakeholders and beneficiaries that all have to learn how it works and what it can deliver. Hence a relatively intensive process is required at each pilot site, something that would not be possible if all chiefdoms had to be covered from the start.

Quality and quantity of outputs

In terms of quality of outputs produced, the overall findings are positive. The approaches developed for CFM and Enterprise Development, and the related capacity building activities, have been received positively by stakeholders. Making use of the same consultant teams for consecutive trainings is both efficient and effective, especially since it is also tried to have the same participants in the training whenever possible. The trainings are highly appreciated by participants and are considered appropriate for the context.

The multi-sector approach has also contributed to good quality of outputs by combining expertise of different sectors. While working through a multidisciplinary team may at times require more time, it helps identify and mobilise available expertise at the local level.

Box 2 - Efficient use of locally available expertise

- In all districts visited by the MTE team, it was mentioned that the involvement of district staff from the Ministry of Community Development in the District Integrated Planning Task Teams has made sure that there is expertise in the teams with regard to gender mainstreaming and identifying vulnerable groups.
- Some of the district staff from the Ministry of Agriculture has good experience in participator mapping. Their expertise was very useful during resource mapping exercises as part of the CFM process.

While the overall quality of DIPTT outputs is good, there have been a few examples that show that there is still space for further improvement (next box). They indicate that the teams are not always sufficiently considering the appropriateness of alternative livelihoods activities, in terms of (i) the need for these to be strongly demand-driven and (ii) how the activities are linked to the CFM component i.e. how they support or promote sustainable use of (community) forest resources.

Box 3 - Examples of sub-optimal outputs

- Fish ponds have been promoted in several places, with the underlying idea that they require good

water quantity and quality. Ideally they would be positioned in places where the water source comes from a community forest, thus clearly linking the activity to CFM. But for the fish ponds visited by the MTE team this was not the case.

- An activity to promote early maturing cassava in Chipupa did not lead to any tangible outputs, apparently because this was not a demand-driven activity.

In terms of the quantity of outputs so far produced, an overview of the current status of the indicators in the logframe (prepared by the project's M&E advisor) shows good progress on most measurable indicators¹. In fact, given initial start-up problems such as lack of transport and late recruitment of local staff, the MTE team is impressed with the number of activities implemented.

Where the project is behind targets in the CFM component, this is partly due to the choice of working only in a limited number of pilot sites (16 pilot sites, compared to original idea of working in 30 sites) and to doubtful indicators or indicator targets. For example, output indicator O2.1.1 relates to "3 methodologies and guidelines for sustainable integrated FNRM tested and documented". The project has instead developed 1 clear methodology/process for CFM and one could question why 3 methodologies would be required. In the view of the MTE team it would have made more sense to have 1 methodology developed and piloted and *where needed revised* based on the results of piloting it.

For the Enterprise Development component, the fact that a financial services scheme has not yet been introduced² means that some indicator targets that depend on the availability of such financial services have not been met. This is clearly an urgent issue (further discussed in section 4.3.3).

The project is also behind a number of indicator targets for 2016 that relate not to actual activities by the DIPTTs or to trainings, but to administrative aspects such as the number of monitoring reports submitted to the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) and number of applied research notes.

Challenging intervention areas

The project is working in two remote provinces, and within those provinces within some of the remotest districts (Ikelle / Nakonde), and then again within the districts in some remote pilot sites (Chipupa, Makasa). This makes for a logistical challenging situation, aggravated by the fact that two of the original 4 districts have been split up into 2 districts, leading to a situation whereby the project has to work in 6 districts, while resource allocations in the project budget were based on 4 districts.

The project has dealt with this situation in various ways e.g. by working only in a number of pilot sites instead of trying to cover all chiefdoms in the districts (as already explained above) and by promoting good coordination between DIPTT members in terms of joint field visits.

With only 4 TA positions for the district level foreseen in the budget, two of the TA (Chinsali and Mwinilunga) have been given the responsibility to work in two districts. Finding the right balance in supporting the work in two districts has proven to be somewhat challenging, especially for the TA based in Chinsali, who seemed to have been more successful in facilitating the work of the DIPTT in the second district Shiwang'andu than in Chinsali itself (the contract with this TA has now been ended and a new TA is being recruited). The TA in Mwinilunga shared similar concerns about the workload and sharing his attention between two districts, with CFM in particular demanding a lot of his time (he will also be replaced soon, but for health reasons rather than performance issues).

¹ Not all indicators in the logframe are SMART. See discussion in section 4.7

² The assessment by the project of Village Banking was submitted to the Embassy on 20th November

Project vehicles were also only foreseen for 4 districts. This problem has been solved through allocation of vehicles from the Ministry of Lands to the 2 districts, with the project financing the maintenance and operation of those vehicles. This appears to be a satisfactory solution for now, although there are some worries that some of these vehicles are rather old and will have maintenance costs, given also the bad state of many of the roads in the remoter areas.

While in Chinsali, the MTE team was informed that the current Chinsali district will again be split up into two districts. The preparatory work for this split has already been completed, so stakeholders in the district expect this change to take place sooner rather than later. The current two pilot sites in Chinsali would apparently fall in the new district (Mulilansolo), so this change will definitely have consequences for the project.

Project management efficiency

During the inception phase it was decided to base the PMCU in Lusaka. This has clear advantages in terms of direct links with the key Ministries, but does mean that visits to the provinces of the PMCU require a lot of travel time. One remedial action taken is reducing the frequency of the PSC meeting from quarterly to bi-annual. This is also considered an efficiency measure in terms of reducing the cost for the PSC meetings which are considerably higher than foreseen in the original project budget.

Reporting requirements take up a significant amount of time of project management, in particular for the PMCU which has to make regular follow ups with DPSUs to get their reports in, and has to collate all information into quarterly technical and financial reports. Technical reports are quite detailed, reporting back on all activities listed in the work plan, rather than reporting against overall progress against the results (outputs / outcomes) in the project's logical framework. In practice, only biannual reports are required by the MFA Finland. See Annex 4 for a more detailed analysis of the logframe.

Good attention for efficiency is visible in small measures such as ensuring that printer toner is used most efficiently and that printing/copying is normally done double-sided. Vehicle and fuel use is also closely monitored.

GRZ and MFA Finland contributions to the project

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA Finland) provides the main financial resources for the project, with funds totalling €4,384,732 (slightly down from €4,500,000, which is the amount mentioned in the project document; difference relates to expenditure for project appraisal phase). Funds are advanced by the consultancy company that won the TA contract (Indufor) and reimbursed to them by MFA Finland. So far this system has been working satisfactory, with the only issue being the problem that Indufor has no legal status in Zambia and so it cannot open a bank account. A pragmatic solution was adopted of having the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) open a separate bank account in his name where the funds are transferred.

According to the project document, the contribution of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) can be both a financial contribution as well as in-kind, with financial contributions reflected in the government's annual budget. While some small budgets for the project were included in the "yellow book" (the annual budget of the government), these have not (yet) materialised. This situation should be considered in light of the difficult financial situation that GRZ finds itself in.

The government has supported the project through various other in-kind means:

- Provision of several vehicles (although some of these vehicles were originally also funded by MFA Finland for another project)
- Provision of drivers for all project vehicles
- Provision of fuel during initial stages of the project
- Provision of office space for the DPSUs and for the PMCU

- Salaries of all government staff, which includes a dedicated National Project Coordinator
- DPSU and PSC members often use their own government vehicles during monitoring visits.

3.3 Development effectiveness

3.3.1 Component 1 – Institutional development

The component on institutional development started during the inception phase by undertaking a policy review and engaging a broad range of stakeholders to create awareness and build capacity with regards to the new Forest Act and in particular the opportunities it offers for the project to promote CFM. This approach has contributed to a good understanding and buy-in at all levels of the legislative enabling environment for the project.

With a new Forestry Policy and Forestry Act approved before the start of the project, it meant the policy focus of the project is not on national level supportive legislation, but on translating the CFM clauses in the policy and Act into legal instruments (Statutory Instrument, district by-laws and local rules and regulations) that support the application of the new policy and Act.

A draft Statutory Instrument (S.I.) has been prepared by the project but still requires further discussion before it can be tabled for official approval. The S.I. is a key piece of legislation since it is required for the Forestry Department to be able to approve any CFM agreements that formally transfer user rights of a demarcated forest to a community. The current draft S.I. is based on similar regulations in countries which are more advanced in CFM (such as Malawi, where the project's CTA has gained considerable experience in CFM). Two important elements of the S.I. that seem not very well clarified in the current draft S.I. are the issue of benefit sharing arrangements (between the community, the Chief and the Forestry Department) and the issue of licensing for commercial timber extraction.

Development of district level by-laws related to CFM and/or broader NRM issues have so far not been considered under the project. The focus within districts is instead on developing CFM agreements as part of the overall CFM process that is implemented in the pilot sites. This is further discussed under component 2 (section 3.3.2).

Apart from the policy work, the other main aspect of the Institutional Development component is the overall embedding in, and support to, the ongoing decentralisation process in the country. As already discussed in the section on Relevance, the project has aligned itself with this process. In line with the decentralisation policy, the main implementation structure for the project is at district level: the District Integrated Planning Task Teams (DIPTT). Also, oversight for the project is provided at province level, which is also in line with the envisaged role of provinces in the decentralisation process.

With the decentralisation process still very much a work in progress, the project is following a pragmatic approach that considers the actual situation in each district. Whereas (elected) councils will ultimately be responsible for the coordination of all development in the district, the actual situation is such that in most districts the District Development Coordinating Committees, chaired by the District Commissioner (representing the central government at district level), are still seen as the main coordination structure. The DIPTTs therefore also still function more as a sort of sub-committee to the DDCC than as a sub-committee of the council. In most cases, the representatives of the different relevant sectors in the DIPTT are also still formally accountable to their respective Ministries rather than to the Council, although this is now changing, with the rate of change very much defined by the commitment and interest of both the DC's office and the Council.

Box 4 – Gradual shift from DC to Council

In Chinsali district, both the DC and the Town Clerk (the equivalent of Council Secretary in town areas) expressed strong commitment to the decentralisation process. The sector departments under the DC's

office are now required to report to the Council and to provide weekly activity plans to the same. The newly elected Mayor (equivalent of Council Chair) also expressed his commitment to ensure the Council becomes more involved in the project. He proposed the project to present itself in the next Council meeting.

As the name implies, the DIPTT is a multi-sector planning and coordination structure for the project. It applies an integrated approach to planning and implementation of activities, centred around natural resources and in particular forest resources. This multi-sector integrated approach is highly appreciated by all stakeholders involved. It not only makes optimal use of available expertise in the district (as already pointed under the section on Efficiency); it also helps develop a different mindset of those involved. Where formerly a sector-oriented approach was the norm, the members of the DIPTT now see the benefits of working together with other sectors to optimise development planning. This is something that will also benefit the overall decentralisation process.

Although the DDCC is, for now, still the main coordinating structure at district level, it hasn't functioned very effectively in most districts. The project has brought some dynamics back to the DDCC functioning, by providing some resources for its functioning, and by reporting in the DDCC on all activities undertaken by the DIPTT.

Below the district level, the decentralisation policy foresees in the establishment of Ward Development Committees (WDCs), which are a forum for the promotion of community involvement in development planning and decision making. These WDCs are seen as very important for the project to provide the link between the district level and the work on CFM and enterprise development at the local level. As such, the project is actively supporting the development of WDCs in the wards of the project's pilot sites. This activity is considered very important by all stakeholders interviewed during the field visits. Through the WDCs, the project will also have a mechanism to support a more direct liaison between the communities and the newly elected councillors (each ward has elected one councillor).

The project's support to the decentralisation process is also considered very important by the national Decentralisation Secretariat (DS), which sees the project's work in the districts and its support in setting up WDCs as a good testing ground for the implementation of the decentralisation policy. The same Secretariat, as well as the Forestry Department, would also like to see the project support the finalisation of the devolution plan for the Forestry sector. This plan is available in draft version, but is currently very much focusing on administrative aspects rather than technical aspects.

3.3.2 Component 2 – Integrated Sustainable Forest and other NRM

During the inception phase, the project has aligned this component with the new Forestry policy of 2014 and Forestry Act of 2015. This means the project is now focusing on implementing the provisions in the Forestry Act for Community Forest Management. Lessons learnt from previous forestry projects indicate that a key challenge in promoting sustainable forest management at community level was the lack of legislation that allowed formal transfer of forest resources user rights to communities. Now that such legislation is in place, the chances of successful promotion of Community Forest Management have significantly increased.

A 7-step methodology has been developed to support CFM in line with the provisions of the Forestry Act. These steps are:

- 1) Awareness raising
- 2) Defining the boundaries of the proposed Community Forest
- 3) Setting up the community structures – CF Management Group
- 4) Develop CF management rules and forest management plan
- 5) Develop a CF agreement for approval by the Forestry Department (with the forest management plan as a key reference document for the agreement)
- 6) Implement the management plan

7) Joint monitoring, evaluation and documenting lessons learnt.

This methodology is currently being applied in a total of 16 pilot sites in the two provinces, with the most advanced ones at stage 4 to 5. Stakeholders in the districts have been trained in the application of this methodology through a (still ongoing) training trajectory with external consultants. Feedback on the training has been very positive, especially the fact that it is based on a very practical approach and involves a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

Buy-in is clearly also strong at community level, in spite of an initial strong suspicion in the communities that the project came to grab their land and forest resources rather than support them. The project managed to overcome this suspicion, in particular through a strong engagement and involvement of traditional leaders, and the communities are now showing a very strong interest in getting their forests recognised as a Community Forest.

Box 5 - Strong community interest in CFM

- Once the communities had overcome their initial suspicion, their increased interest in CFM led them to identifying larger areas for CF than initially agreed. For the 16 pilot sites, the total area increased from around 15,700 ha to 25,000 ha.
- In most districts, other communities have now also started to ask for support from the project for designating a Community Forest, with the requests often channelled through the traditional leadership.

There are some clear signs that communities are already taking control over their CF, even though this control is not yet formalised.

Box 6 - Signs of communities taking control

- In a CF in Shiwang'andu there have been no forest fires this year (but many in surrounding areas)
- In a CF in Nakonde, the community has apprehended someone who wanted to cut trees. He was "pardoned" because he said he didn't know the boundary of the CF
- In a CF in Kasempa, the community turned away timber prospectors, indicating that the forest was now under their control and that they will only deal with them through formal arrangements under CFM
- In Mwinilunga, the Chief has already engaged with other communities under his chieftom to adopt the CFM practices; learning is happening informally between community members in a project community and those members falling outside the project areas.

By involving traditional leaders in all steps of the CF process, and by involving neighbouring communities in defining the boundaries of a proposed Community Forest, the project has so far avoided any potential conflicts over the exclusive use of a CF for a limited group of people, but this might still change in future when for example a large number of people from outside the community who have always collected mushrooms in the CF are now suddenly refused access (or forced to pay some levy or license fee). This requires attention for conflict management, which does not appear to be part of the training curriculum. The draft CF agreement developed by the project foresees a role for Government in "mediation of conflicts" but how exactly this would take shape is not clear.

While the process looks promising and is advancing well in most pilot sites, there are a number of challenges with regard to the CFM implementation. An issue of concern is the quality of the CFM process as delivered by the DIPTTs. During the training workshops it became clear for example that some of the CF management groups are built around the people involved in alternative livelihoods activities like fish ponds, rather than on existing formal and informal forest user groups. This relates to a broader issue with regard to different perceptions on what the exact objectives are of the project's CFM work and the work on enterprise development in component 3 and how these 2 components are interlinked. This issue is further discussed in section 3.3.4.

Other challenges include:

- In North-Western Province, mining concessions may be a threat to community forests. It is currently not clear whether any of the areas where CFs are being established also have mining concessions. It is also not clear what will happen in case a CF is overlapping with a mining concession and if the holder of that concession wants to activate it.
- The fact that there is not yet a formal S.I. that regulates approval and implementation of CF agreements may lead to delays in approval of agreements and hence delay in formal transfer of user rights to communities. A substantial delay will undermine the momentum currently being built with the communities.
- Neither the draft S.I. nor the draft agreements developed by the project are very explicit about some important issues such as benefit sharing and charcoal production.
- The project is aiming for simple management plans that communities can understand and implement themselves. Yet, there might be a need for some more technical or scientific information to ensure that the management plan is based on a sound understanding of the available forest resources and the potential for sustainable use of those resources (timber resources in particular). How the project will deal with this is not yet clear.

3.3.3 Component 3 – Rural Entrepreneurship and Alternative Livelihoods

The objective of this component is to support development of small-scale forestry and other natural-resources based livelihoods activities and enterprises, through capacity building, linking producers to markets and provision of financial services.

So far the project has supported a number of livelihoods / enterprise activities that include fish ponds, beekeeping, conservation farming, early maturing cassava (intercropped with beans), tree nurseries, livestock. These activities have not yet delivered any substantial income to the communities, but prospects for some of these are good. The same holds for other enterprise development that is currently being investigated, such as drying of mushrooms.

Box 7 - Promising enterprise development

- A community in Nakonde supported with fish ponds focuses on producing and selling fingerlings. They confirmed the market is very good. Unfortunately they had a setback recently when most of their fingerlings were stolen overnight. The fact however that they continue to work on the fish ponds indicates that they are convinced it will bring them income.
- Another community in Nakonde indicated that a lot of mushrooms grow in their forest (now being developed as a CF) during a short period in the rainy season. They can make up to ZMW 200 per day selling them in Nakonde town. If they have equipment to dry the mushrooms, they can sell for a much longer period over the year.
- There have been earlier projects on pine nurseries / woodlots. Communities that at the time were not interested are now seeing how communities that did participate are reaping the benefits now, and so now they show a strong interest in support from DFONRMP for the same.

The livelihoods activities so far implemented have not been based on a specific enterprise development approach, but the project is now building enterprise development capacity on the basis of an FAO-developed approach for micro and small enterprise development called "Market Analysis and Development" (MA&D). A wide range of stakeholders is now being trained in this methodology. Feedback on the training has been very positive, and knowledge and skills acquired are already leading to new initiatives amongst community members.

Box 8 - Increased business acumen

- In Chinsali district, women are already organising into cooperatives for bulk transportations of

caterpillars

- In Shiwang'andu, community members have concluded that they should bring their produce to good markets. They plan to transport products like onions to the border with Congo instead of selling to middle men. They have calculated that the difference in net profit is more than 300 ZMW / 30 kg bag
- In Mwinilunga's Makasa's CF area, caterpillars are abundant but no serious business attention has been given to it. As the community said: "Usually we harvest for local consumption but also we receive a lot of outsiders who come to camp in these forests and they buy cheaply. With this approach to maximising benefits from our forests while managing it sustainably, we can do more in terms of increasing incomes by bulking and exploiting markets outside the province."
- Beekeepers indicated that they have always sold their honey (unprocessed) to a local company. They now plan to exploit other avenues by engaging with the honey value chain to see how they can maximise benefits from the enterprise. They want to look beyond this local company and explore options of value addition and linking up with markets outside Kabompo.

Somewhat surprisingly, the charcoal business has not yet received much attention from the project. Yet charcoal production is an important income generating activity in many of the areas where the project works and is, in its current unregulated form, a major contributor to forest degradation. It is very well possible that some form of *regulated* charcoal production could be an important and sustainable activity in the CFs, especially if the role of the middle men who currently take most of the profit on charcoal sales can be reduced.

Box 9 - Charcoal price differences

A quick analysis in Nakonde district showed that the charcoal producers in the area earn about ZMW30 to 35 per 50kg bag, while the price in nearby Nakonde town is around ZMW100 to 120 for the same bag.

Related to this is the fact that the tree nurseries supported by the project do not include any tree species that could be used for charcoal production, yet in areas like Brahim (near Nakonde town) , where a tree nursery has been supported, the few remaining forest resources are being depleted for charcoal production.

3.3.4 Overall effectiveness

To assess overall effectiveness of the project components, it is important to see how each of the components contributes to the overall project purpose. This purpose is formulated in the inception report as "To set up enabling framework, strengthen and operationalize devolved integrated sustainable forest and other NR management systems including improved livelihoods in project districts and communities".

It seems that there are still different interpretations of this project purpose in terms of where the main focus of the project lies in relation to components 2 and 3, and how these two components are interlinked (with component 1 addressing the first part of the purpose i.e. the enabling framework).

Feedback from several stakeholders indicate that they see the project primarily as one providing alternative livelihoods so as to reduce pressure on the forest resources, whereas other stakeholders (including the PMCU) see the CFM approach as the main focus, with CFM leading to community control over forest resources, which will be the incentive to sustainable management of forest resources in support of long term sustainable livelihoods benefits derived from those forest resources (as well as benefits from alternative livelihoods such as fish ponds, which are dependent on ecosystem services provided by the forest, such as protection of water sources and streams).

The consultants providing the CFM training also noted this difference in opinion, as well as a broader debate amongst stakeholders on whether the project is ultimately about decentralised

service delivery for poverty alleviation, or about piloting devolution of natural resources as a model for long term sustainable NRM and forest-derived benefits that can be scaled up nationwide.

One problem with “simply” providing alternative livelihoods is that they don’t necessarily lead to reduced pressure on forest resources, *unless* the link between the two is very clear. This is most clearly the case with enterprises based on forest products like honey and caterpillars and mushrooms. Even then, past experience has shown that such enterprises only really contribute to sustainable forest management if the community feels it has control over those resources. Hence the importance of a good enabling environment which now exists through the CFM approach included in the Forestry Act (and the additional work under component 1 on developing an S.I.). Some of the non-forest based livelihoods activities such as fish ponds, where these ponds depend on good water quality and quantity that originates in a CF, also have the potential to incentivise sustainable forest management, although the link is less clear; whereas support to some other alternative livelihoods activities like village chickens are very unlikely to contribute to sustainable FM.

So while forest-based livelihoods activities enterprises are likely to provide both direct livelihoods benefits and contribute to sustainable forest management, non-forest based alternative livelihoods activities and enterprises will provide livelihoods benefits but will not necessarily contribute to sustainable forest management. The latter is also clear from feedback received from communities, who did not see a clear link between activities like fish ponds and cassava and the work on CFM. Also, when given the (hypothetical) choice between support for CFM or support for alternative livelihoods the communities expressed a clear preference for CFM, since, as they said, “it is the forest that provides the basis for our lives”. In the same vein, several other stakeholders also indicated that the project should avoid too much focus on short term benefits through alternative livelihoods and focus more on long term sustainable benefits derived from the forests and forest-related natural resources.

3.4 Development impact

With the project only 1 year into its implementation phase, one cannot expect any real impact yet. In the logframe, the impact (development objective) is defined as: “To reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the environment through devolved integrated sustainable forest and other natural resource management”. As already indicated, the livelihoods and enterprise activities have not yet provided any substantial income, but there are strong indications that viable forest-based and non-forest based enterprises can be developed in the pilot areas (see the examples in section 3.3.3). Estimates of incomes to be generated cannot be given, but the M&E advisor in the PMCU did manage to provide data on the number of HHs involved in the project activities and the total forest area that is currently going through the process of becoming formally recognised community forests.

Box 10 - Potential impact of the project

- A total of around 25,000 hectares of forest resources are currently in the process of being brought under CFM, with the total number of HHs in the target communities around 5,700.
- 1,205 Beneficiaries (of which 535 are women) are so far directly involved in the enterprise and alternative livelihoods activities.

The MTE team took note of the fact that the impact statement indicates that reduction of poverty and inequality should be achieved through devolved integrated sustainable forest and *other* natural resources management. What the “other” natural resources are is not explained anywhere in the project document, but the indicators for the impact statement only make reference to forest products. The project document itself mentions other natural resources like water, wildlife, fish and soils, but its background and policy sections and description of the project areas very much focus on forest issues, so it seems that “other” natural resources should be read as “other forest-related” natural resources, although this has never been fully clarified.

3.5 Sustainability

Institutional aspects

By working with existing district staff, the project is building a strong sense of ownership at district level. This is further enhanced through the multi-sector integrated approach, which means all members of the DIPTT are aware of all project activities even if they are not directly involved in them. Importantly, members of the DIPTT indicate that they see the project activities as being part of their normal work responsibilities, with the project simply providing resources for the implementation of activities. They all indicate they are confident they can continue with the activities beyond the project, given time and resources. The role of the DPSU is more and more one of facilitation and of liaison with the PMCU in Lusaka, with the other DIPTT members increasingly responsible for developing project activities, e.g. through elaboration of concept notes and related budgets.

Through the alignment with the decentralisation process, the project works as much as possible in coordination with existing structures (DDCC, district departments of national ministries, Councils), which helps the sustainability prospects. A challenge however is the status of the DIPTTs. These multi-sector teams, although by some considered to be a sort of sub-committee of the DDCC, are in fact specific DFONRMP project delivery structures. If and how the multi-sector integrated approach as adopted by the DIPTTs will be continued beyond the project will very much depend on the progress with the devolution process, the way the councils will organise themselves and the way the project adapts itself to this continuously changing institutional environment at district level. Currently the link with the councils and with individual councillors is still weak and needs to be strengthened. The project support to WDCs will be a good vehicle to do this.

The limited capacity at district, and also provincial, level may be the one of the most important institutional factors hindering sustainability prospects, as also acknowledged by all stakeholders interviewed. The capacity is not only low in terms of financial resources, but also in terms of staffing levels, with many positions at district (and also province) level not filled.

Box 11 - Example of low staffing levels

Staffing levels for forestry staff in Muchinga province give a good indication of the capacity problems.

- At provincial level 2 out of 4 positions have not been filled
- Districts should have up to 11 forestry staff, but Nakonde has only 2 DFOs, Chinsali 1, and Shiwang'andu 1

With the ongoing devolution process, financial resources provided by the central government will likely not increase, with councils having to generate their own revenue streams through taxes and levies. This process will likely take very long and in the meantime the capacity to continue with project activities without external funding will be severely constrained.

At community level, the project is advancing well with CFM and enterprise activities and training, but it is still far from having completed the process of building sustainable and well-functioning community structures. The strong buy-in from communities, as witnessed during the visits to the pilot sites contributes to good sustainability prospects, as does the strong involvement and buy-in of traditional leaders. Several stakeholders did express worry that communities may be "left behind" if the project is trying to move too fast in e.g. implementing all steps of the CFM, or in promoting livelihoods activities that are not sufficiently demand-driven (such as the early maturing cassava in Chipupa).

At national level, the support and buy-in for the project is very strong, and there is high interest in upscaling CFM nation-wide, once the project is showing success and has documented best practices that can form the basis for wider upscaling. The commitment to the project is evidenced for

example by the field visit undertaken by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands, the active participation of the Director of the FD in provincial steering committee meetings and the support the same Director has provided to the project in terms of transport, drivers, etc.. Some direct financial support for the project was also included in the government's "yellow book", but with Zambia's current financial woes this support has not materialised and it would be unrealistic to expect substantial financial contributions from GRZ to the project in the years to come.

Technical / economic / environmental / socio-cultural aspects

Economic sustainability prospects relate in particular to the enterprise activities. With the introduction of the MA&D methodology and related capacity building efforts, the project will help ensure that any new enterprise development will be based on a thorough value chain analysis that shows good economic returns. It is clear that there are good markets for forest-based products like honey, mushrooms and caterpillars, and one of the main approaches to increase economic viability may be "taking out" the middle man from the value chain. This is already being pursued by some communities.

Remoteness from the markets may well be the main challenge for some areas like Chipupa in Chinsali district, although this pilot site would possibly be able to profit from the division of Chinsalie into two districts, with the proposed new district capital Mulilansolo (much closer to Chipupa than Chinsali town) forming a new market. These aspects need to be addressed comprehensively in the value chain analysis work.

A further challenge is the lack of access to credit facilities, in particular for the initial investments required for the enterprises. The project is currently analysing the village bank concept promoted through the Ministry of Community Development, which provides small credits to women, with the idea of potentially rolling this out in the project's district.

Technical sustainability aspects that need to be considered include, inter alia:

- 1) Water supply for the fish ponds, in terms of quality and year-round guaranteed supply. Where fish ponds receive water originating from a CF, this aspect relates directly to the success with achieving sustainable management of the CF. Apart from good forest management, the analysis should also consider the likely effects of climate change on the water source for the fish ponds.
- 2) The best type of beehives to be used for honey production. The project is currently testing some relatively expensive modern-type beehives. It might well be that simpler models may also be used.
- 3) So far, the tree nurseries consist almost entirely of pine seedlings. While these are good for timber, they cannot be used for charcoal. According to one of the DFOs, it is well possible to introduce other (fast growing) species that could be used for charcoal production.

More in general, the project should try to promote appropriate technologies that can be fabricated locally, such as beehives (which are currently bought by the project elsewhere), fish feed for the fish ponds, etc.

Charcoal production requires specific attention. Rural unregulated charcoal production is by now a socio-cultural ingrained livelihoods activity that is a main contributor to forest degradation (often in combination with expansion of agricultural land). As mentioned before, the issue of charcoal has so far not received much attention in the project, and this may undermine the long term environmental sustainability of the project results. The pressure to produce charcoal is high in areas such as Nakonde (with high demand from Tanzania) and is clearly increasing in areas like Kasempa, and it may be more appropriate to promote sustainable charcoal production in some of the CFs than to completely prohibit it.

Time and financial resources – the main challenge

DFONRMP was designed as a 12-year programme, with the current phase meant to set up systems and pilot them, and subsequent phases to support implementation of successful approaches at scale. 12 year is a relatively long period for a donor funded programme, but it makes sense in this case since the programme is piloting the application of new forestry legislation *and* using a novel integrated approach linked to the decentralisation process. Both these aspects require time in terms of developing approaches, building capacity and ultimately in changing attitudes and behaviour that lead to sustainable forest management in support of rural livelihoods.

With the new MFA development policy however, it seems highly unlikely that the programme will run for 12 year as originally foreseen. In fact, the current thinking is that there will be no second phase after this Introduction project. Yet, given the limited resources that districts receive from the central government (with no real increases expected in the coming years), the funding provided by MFA Finland is considered crucial for the implementation of the project activities for some time to come.

In the long term (i.e. ideally after 12 years), the need for additional support will gradually reduce, once all approaches for CFM and enterprise development have been piloted and best practices documented, and once strong community structures have been built that will only require limited further support from technical staff at district level. By that time, the decentralisation process will also expected to be at a much more advanced stage, with communities more directly linked to district development processes through the WDCs and their councillors. This will allow communities to hold service bearers more accountable, including those from the forestry sector.

However, it is highly unrealistic to expect that all this can be achieved within a 3-year period. It means that, if funding by MFA Finland is discontinued after the Introduction Project, and if no other external funding sources can be identified, the sustainability prospects of all aspects of the project are severely undermined.

Sustainability strategy

The project has produced a sustainability strategy, which is largely a summary of approaches used by the project and how these contribute to sustainability. It does include a “phase over” strategy, which is cognisant of the fact that MFA Finland funding may not continue beyond the Introduction project, but this strategy consists for now only of a few general ideas on how responsibilities for the project can be transferred to others.

3.6 HRBA and cross-cutting objectives

Human Rights Based Approach

A HRBA integrates the norms, principles, standards and goals of the international human rights system into development plans and processes. It is closely linked to national and international legal responsibilities, and identifies rights-holders and duty-bearers. A relevant right regarding forestry is in the Convention of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Article 1 ‘Everyone has the right to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources’.

It can be considered that DFONRMP is applying some elements of a rights-based approach by the fact that it is focused on community forest management, and is embedded in and supporting the decentralisation process. Supporting the legal right of communities to their forests is also an element of a HRBA. This governance work, getting the forest law into practice, could contribute to very positive outcomes in rights and livelihoods. Cross-cutting criteria within a HRBA include: non-discrimination, participation, accountability, transparency, impact and sustainability. These are all issues that are considered by DFONRMP. Planning is done at local level. Through Ward Development Committees the communities as rights holders have a voice vis-a-vis the duty bearers - their councillor, and the district level authorities.

The inception report stated that the team ran a series of district workshops in the two provinces. These included an investigation of how cross cutting issues of gender equality, reduction of inequality, HIV/AIDS and climate sustainability are addressed in existing district strategies and plans. Chinsali DIPPT mentioned they have a gender and vulnerable groups mainstreaming strategy and use that in the project (however, this was not sighted by the MTE). The Inception report includes the project's Human Rights Based Approach & Cross Cutting Strategy (February 2016). It outlines strategic approaches and training to deal with gender, vulnerable groups, HIV&AIDS, and climate sustainability, etc.

One of the challenges in using a HRBA in a natural resources management project is that the relatively better off households are likely to be over-represented in the (unsustainable) use of forest resources (such as charcoal production) and also have the highest potential for (sustainable) value chain development. The question then for a project like DFONRMP is how to balance the objectives for sustainable forest management (including through viable forest-based enterprises) with addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable groups. If sustainable forest management is considered the primary objective, then one could argue that the programme should not always go to great lengths to try to include the poorest and most vulnerable groups in their activities. However, this would go against the HRBA premise.

There is also a risk of communities focusing mostly on their rights (control over forest resources), while it is still to be seen whether they will also comply with responsibilities (sustainable forest resources management).

Gender

From the MTE visits it appears that there have been some successful elements of gender mainstreaming, with women strongly involved at community level, including in leadership positions in the groups for CFM and enterprise development. This is thanks in particular to involvement of staff from Min. of Community Development. Women were confident and spoke out freely in the meetings held with communities. But until now there has been only limited work on gender – mainly reporting the number of women and men trained. It is hoped that once the actual community work starts (rather than just planning) there will be more of a chance to work on livelihoods with women (though there will only be limited implementation time as the project will end).

Vulnerable groups

Vulnerable groups have been identified, but it is not clear how they are or will be involved in the project activities. These groups – for instance, landless households, are often highly dependent on forest resources (such as mushrooms, caterpillars or firewood). It was noted that the Community Forestry groups were not based on both informal and formal forest users, but instead tend to be the same persons who are participating in livelihood activities (and therefore are likely to be landowners). Consequently there is a danger that the vulnerable group members are excluded.

It can be a pragmatic decision to say that a project cannot necessarily serve all groups – especially a project of this kind. However, this may mean that the 'do no harm' minimum criteria is not being followed. If it is established that landless groups are disadvantaged by the project activities, it would be appropriate to ensure other supports are provided to those specific groups.

Environment

Clearly one anticipated outcome of the project is improved environmental management, however at this early stage the project is still to prove that CFM will lead to sustainable management. Traditionally some farmers (often the more vulnerable groups) have used slash and burn practices. Through the introduction of conservation farming practices and more productive crops, such as early maturing cassava, it is hoped that farmers will reduce the destructive slash and burn practice and reduce pressure on forest resources. Signs so far are mostly that the communities are taking

control of forest management, but there is no guarantee yet that it will indeed lead to sustainable management.

Climate change

Climate change hasn't received explicit attention in the project implementation, though it is included in the Cross-cutting issues strategy. In the use of the landscape approach it was clear that water is a key natural resource. It is clear that climate change may lead to drying up of streams and more soil degradation etc. and this may be mitigated somewhat through good forest management, use of conservation agriculture techniques, etc. Many stakeholders did mention climate change and the need to plant trees to help stop it – this can be used as argument for sustainable FM.

3.7 Component 4 - Project management, M&E, Action research and KM

The project is managed through management structures at two levels: the Project Management and Coordination Unit at the central (national) level, and District Project Support Units, which are based in the original 4 districts of the project intervention area, but two of which (Mwinilunga and Chinsali) also cover the 2 new districts that were formed after the formulation of the project. Oversight is provided by steering committees in each of the two provinces Muchinga and NW, while at national level there is a National Advisory Committee.

PMCU

The PMCU started working in the beginning of 2015 with the inception phase. Initially it faced a fair number of challenges (late recruitment of staff, delayed procurement of vehicles, problems opening bank account), leading to an approved request to extend the inception phase to November 2015. The inception report provides a good overview of the work done during that phase, and in particular how the project has re-aligned itself with the opportunities offered by the new forestry policy of 2014 and the new Forestry Act of 2015, which only came into effect after the finalisation of the original project document. The PMCU also critically reviewed and revised the original logical framework (more on this further down) and developed a concise Project Implementation Manual that guides all aspects of project management & governance.

The PMCU consists of a national Project Coordinator, an international Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), a national Financial Manager, a national M&E advisor and an administrative assistant. Feedback from a broad range of stakeholders on the performance of the PMCU has generally been very positive. The team is clearly good in relationship management at all levels, and is very actively involved in all project activities. It has also set up clear systems and mechanisms for efficient and effective project management (ranging from vehicle management, to financial systems, to participatory planning, budgeting, reporting and M&E systems). With support from the Indufor home office, the PMCU has recruited short term TA for support to all three components. In particular the two TA teams that support the capacity building efforts in component 2 and 3 have delivered high quality of work, evidenced both by the feedback received from the people that were trained, and from the reports produced by these teams.

DPSUs

At district level, the project has set up District Project Support Units in the 4 original target districts (Nakonde, Chinsali, Kasempa, Mwinilunga). The DPSUs in Chinsali and Mwinilunga are also responsible for the newly formed districts Ikelenge (originally part of Mwinilunga) and Shiwang'andu (originally part of Chinsali).

The DPSUs consist of a technical advisor (TA) and a finance/admin assistant. The technical advisors facilitate the multi-sector approach adopted for the project through the District Integrated Planning Task Teams. In most districts, the TA have been very successful in building a strong sense of real team work amongst the DIPTT members. Members interviewed feel they have a real say in the

project and highly appreciate the integrated approach that sees them work closely together with staff from other sectors. This success is all the more remarkable given that the normal tendency (as confirmed by the DIPTTs) is for each sector to work largely in isolation of the other sectors.

The main challenges are faced where the DPSUs are responsible for two districts. In Chinsali it appears that the TA was focusing mostly on Shiwang'andu district, leading to a situation whereby progress in Chinsali was clearly trailing compared to the other districts. The TA's contract was therefore cancelled and a new TA is being recruited. The TA in Mwinilunga also mentioned that working in two districts is challenging, but largely avoided the problems experienced with the TA in Chinsali.

The financial / admin assistants of the DPSUs are still struggling with effectively performing their duties. They were recruited partly on the basis of their financial / admin profile, but they also had to speak the local language of the area where they would be based. This significantly reduced the pool of candidates, and it is now becoming evident that they require more support from the central PMCU than initially envisaged.

Provincial Steering Committees

Oversight of the project is provided by Provincial Steering Committees (PSC) in each of the provinces. The PSC initially met quarterly, but this has now been changed to bi-annual, which seems appropriate for an oversight body.

Participation in the PSC has been good, and the long duration of the meetings indicate a high level of interest in the project. Apart from relevant provincial government staff, members also included representatives of the private sector and of NGOs, which helps ensure that project lessons learnt are shared, and promote collaboration. It is also very encouraging that the Director of the Forestry Department has been participating in some of the PSC meetings, a clear sign of the strong commitment for the project.

Reporting to the PSC by the district has initially been a relatively lengthy process, based as it was on providing details on all activities undertaken. This has now been improved by presenting through powerpoint presentations (with pictures) rather than paper reports.

One of the challenges with the PSC, as espoused by some members to the MTE team, is that it is not very clear to all how the PSC exactly functions, e.g. who is the secretary of the PSC, who should organise monitoring visits and prepare monitoring reports, etc.

A second challenge is the so far limited involvement of the PSC members in actual field level monitoring. Feedback from them indicates they also see this issue and most stakeholders have indicated they want to become more involved in field level monitoring in future.

National Advisory Committee

The NAC is responsible for providing general policy guidance to the project. Although called an advisory committee, the PIM indicates it can take strategic decisions. This is also clear from the minutes of the only NAC meeting held so far. Although it was difficult to get the meeting organised, the high level participation from GRZ and from MFA Finland is an indication of the interest and commitment for the project from all sides.

Planning and budgeting

The project has adopted a decentralised planning and budgeting system. It means that planning and budgeting is done at district level by the DIPTTs (facilitated by the DPSUs) and then consolidated at national level in overall work plans and budgets. Based on the approved annual work plan and budget, DIPTTs can then request for funds to implement the planned activities. To

strengthen the coherence of the project activities, all funding requests now need to be accompanied by a concept note, which is first reviewed with the DIPTT before it can go for approval to the PMCU. This is a good system both for quality control and for strengthening the integrated multi-sector approach at district level.

A major challenge so far has been the under expenditure compared to the approved budgets. Table 1 shows the budgets and expenditure figures to date. Although expenditure percentages have improved in 2016 compared to 2015, they are still very low for the 4 components. Given the overall positive findings with regard to the implementation of the components, this appears to be more indicative of too optimistic budgeting rather than of underperformance.

Table 1 - Overview of budgets and expenditures to date

		Finnish Contribution (Euro) Reporting period 2015			Finnish Contribution (Euro) Reporting period 2016			Finnish Contribution (Euro) Cumulative		
		Budget 2015	Actual expenditure Feb-Dec 15	%	Budget 2016	Actual expenditure Jan-Sep 2016	%	Budget total	Actual expenditure Feb 15 to Sep 16	%
TA Fees	Fees	444,075.00	462,902.39	104.2	550,000	465,745	84.7	1,557,225	928,647	59.6
TA Reimbursable costs	Items									
	TA Costs	186,582.00	130,294.08	69.8	160,000	124,998	78.1	489,370	255,292.25	52.2
	Vehicle purchase	150,000.00	159,641.35	106.4	-	-	0.0	160,000	159,641	99.8
	Vehicle fuel & maintenance	44,470.00	7,121.69	16.0	60,000	29,612	49.4	120,000	36,733	30.6
Operational costs	Items									
	Office equipment (computers, etc)	15,000.00	11,301.77	75.3	3,200	1,620	50.6	20,000	12,921	64.6
	Local staff costs	71,241.24	13,680.97	19.2	120,000	85,640	71.4	250,000	99,321	39.7
Component costs	Component 1	54,758.18	25,152.85	45.9	129,669	26,580	20.5	264,935	51,733	19.5
	Component 2	124,340.26	11,767.93	9.5	340,203	71,471	21.0	602,759	83,239	13.8
	Component 3	85,625.97	1,363.24	1.6	204,223	29,134	14.3	379,780	30,497	8.0
	Component 4	758,426.66	63,550.47	8.4	289,300	91,446	31.6	455,577	154,997	34.0
	Sub total	1,023,151.08	101,834.49	10.0	963,395	218,630	22.7	1,703,051	320,465	18.8
Contingency					48,005	-		85,086	-	
	Total budget (Euro)	1,934,519	886,777	45.8	1,904,600	926,245	48.6	4,384,732	1,813,022	41.3

M&E and Results-based management

The PMCU has developed a very comprehensive M&E framework, based on a highly participatory approach. It specifies data collection and reporting systems, quality control processes, knowledge management aspects (communication, learning, research) and specification of a project Management Information System.

While the project and the M&E systems are said to be based on results-based management principles, this is in fact not really the case. Activity-based plans and reports, and means-based budgets are still the standard in the project. In true RBM, the project, at least at PSC / PMCU / NAC level, would focus on monitoring the progress towards the results in the logframe and report on this in its technical reports. As it is, the project reports are in essence reporting on progress with the activities in the identified work plan. While reports are well written and informative, they are not results-based, and in fact do not include any analysis of progress towards the logframe results.

For effective results-based management it is important to have a logical framework with well formulated results (outputs, outcomes (=project purpose) and impact (=development objective)) and with SMART indicators (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound). An analysis of the DFONRMP logframe indicates that it is particularly weak on the second aspect, i.e. SMART indicators.

Box 12 - Examples of indicators that are not SMART

- Indicator P1.2 6 districts having functional integrated natural resources management system
 - Comment: There is no definition on what an "integrated NRM system" actually is, nor a definition on what "functional" means.

- Indicator O1.2.4 - 6 district councils facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM
 - Comment: The project reports that this is achieved, but the MTE team would not be able to confirm since it is not clear how this is measured.
- Indicator R 4.1 - The project is implemented according to the approved work plan and budget.
 - Comment: This is typically a result formulation, rather than an indicator. An indicator for this could be: Annually at least 80% of planned activities have been completed.

Furthermore, there are a number of indicators that would require not only a baseline amongst the project's target beneficiaries, but also amongst a control group.

Box 13 - Example of indicator requiring control group

- Indicator P1.3 - Increase in 5% of households assets in the project communities compared to baseline
 - Comment: without data of a control group it will be impossible to tell whether the increase in household assets can be (partly) attributed to the project.

Indicator methodology sheets that explain for each indicator how it is exactly defined and how it is measured and reported would have gone a long way in resolving some of these problems, but such sheets have not been developed.

Given these limitations of the logframe, there is a relatively weak basis for effective results-based monitoring and management. Given that both GRZ and MFA Finland are moving more and more towards RBM, this is a missed opportunity.

Action research and Knowledge Management

The project has identified 4 research areas / models for action research. These are:

1. Community Forestry+ model
2. Integrated land use management model
3. Forest restoration model
4. Smallholder plantation development model

A draft Call for Proposals to solicit research proposals in these 4 areas has also been elaborated, but so far no call has been issued. Real action research has so far not been undertaken, although the rapid assessment of the village banking scheme could be considered as a type of action research.

With regard to knowledge management, the project has a number of internal learning processes in place (through quarterly meetings with all DPSUs, complemented with regular email / phone / Skype contact). It has also developed a communication matrix that indicates the type of communication that is produced and what the target audience is. Apart from the regular project reports, a number of informative briefs on the project's approaches and activities have been produced for a wider audience. Where relevant, information is also being translated into the local languages. Reporting to the PSCs has been made more informative by using Powerpoint presentations with pictures rather than just written reports.

Sharing lessons learnt with a broader audience will become more important in the coming year(s) to promote scaling up of best practices at a national level. A clear strategy on how this will be achieved is so far still missing.

4 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Overall conclusion and priority recommendations

Based on the findings, the MTE team can confidently conclude that DFONMRP is a very relevant programme and that the DFONMRP-Introduction Project is implemented in an efficient and effective manner, with a high potential to deliver substantial impact in terms of improved livelihoods and improved forest management. The main issue that undermines the prospect for such impact is the fact that changes in the policies of MFA Finland imply that it will not continue to provide project funding for subsequent phases of the programme after this first Introduction Project. Given also the limited financial resources of GRZ, it means that the programme will come to an end in its current form after the Introduction Project if no alternative external funding can be secured.

With this in mind, the MTE team has identified the following recommendations (out of all the recommendations listed in the next sections) as the main priority recommendations:

Priority recommendations

- P1. GRZ and Embassy of Finland / MFA Finland should discuss how support can be continued in one form or another beyond the current Introduction phase, given that initial plan from both sides was for a 12-year programme.
- P2. Given that Finland's new focus in Zambia will be on PSD, *it is all the more important that the project continues with a main thrust on CFM* since it is difficult to see how this aspect of the project can be supported in future under the new MFA Finland policy. (although some form of support for the enterprise component could be envisaged given that the PSD support would focus on MSMEs, which are the sort of enterprises supported under the project.)
- P3. It is strongly recommended to approve an extension to the Introduction project, ideally with a period of 2 years to allow sufficient time to measure the impact of CFM and document lessons learnt.
- P4. MFA Finland should as soon as possible indicate whether an extension of the current phase is possible, for how long, and whether there are possibilities for a project budget increase (if only a no-cost extension is possible, it will likely mean that it can't be more than 6 months to 1 year, which will limit the project's ability to prove that CFM, combined with enterprise development, can lead to lasting positive impacts).
- P5. The project should propose a draft budget to the PSCs and NAC based on the agreed extension period. It should be given the mandate to move budgets from one line item to another, provided a clear justification is given for the proposed changes.
- P6. A sustainability strategy is required, addressing at least the following issues:
 - a) Assessment if and how some aspects of the project (such as those related to MSME development) can still be supported by MFA Finland under their new Country Strategy.
 - b) Assessment of the resources that GRZ can put towards continued support for CFM in the target districts / provinces
 - c) Liaising with other programmes / projects / Cooperating Partners to assess in how far they can continue (some of) the project's activities, as well as funding scaling up based on best practices.
 - d) Explore other funding opportunities e.g. GCF
 - e) Assess ways to gradually reduce TA inputs during the extension period and increasingly transfer full responsibility for the project's planning and implementation at province and district level to government staff, in particular from the 3 key ministries.
 - f) A detailed strategy to share lessons learnt broadly within the target districts / provinces and nation-wide:

- i) This should be the main focus of the last half year / year of the project
- ii) Can include exchange visits (between communities, between projects, between district staff, etc.), communication and training material, use of community radio / TV, national workshops, etc.
- iii) The budget for the last year needs to incorporate these.

4.2 Relevance

From the findings it is clear that the project is very well aligned with GRZ policies and strategies on Forestry and on Decentralisation.

The project has been somewhat lucky in the sense that new forestry legislation was approved in 2015 that provides legal backing for community forest management - i.e. for formally transferring control and user rights of forest resources to communities. Lack of such a legal framework was a major factor in the failure of earlier forestry programmes that attempted to promote sustainable forest management at the local level (including the earlier Finnish-funded project, PFAP). During the inception phase, the project has successfully re-oriented the project to take full advantage of the new legal enabling environment, and component 2 is now in essence piloting the provisions in the new Forestry Act for CFM.

The project has from inception also ensured that it embeds its structures and processes as much as possible within the ongoing decentralisation process. Its relevance for the decentralisation process is evidenced by the strong interest of the Decentralisation Secretariat in the project's experience with decentralisation at district level.

It is clear from feedback received, and from the active engagement of all stakeholders and beneficiaries with the project's activities, that the project is consistent with their needs and priorities. The timber and non-timber forest resources are crucial livelihoods assets for the communities leaving around them, and giving them control over these resources is very important, all the more so given the increasing pressure on those resources from agricultural expansion, commercial logging and charcoal production. Traditional leaders also confirmed this and are themselves strongly involved in the project.

At district level, the project not only provides crucial resources for implementation of development activities, but also supports a more integrated approach to development, which is not only highly appreciated but seen as a critical step towards improved service delivery under the decentralisation process.

However, while the project was a good fit for the earlier Finnish Development Policy (2012) the ground has now moved. The 2016 Policy and the cutbacks in Finnish bilateral development funding, have led to a reorientation of Finnish development cooperation in Zambia, and a decision to move away from natural resources management activities, to focus on private sector development.

Recommendations

- 1) GRZ and Embassy of Finland / MFA Finland should discuss how support can be continued in one form or another beyond the current Introduction phase, given that initial plan from both sides was for a 12-year programme. This issue is discussed further under Sustainability.
- 2) Given that Finland's new focus in Zambia will be on PSD, *it is all the more important that the project continues with a main thrust on CFM* since it is difficult to see how this aspect of the project can be supported in future under the new MFA Finland policy (although some form of support for the enterprise component could be envisaged given that the PSD support would focus on MSMEs, which are the sort of enterprises supported under the project.)

4.2.1 Efficiency

The findings show good overall efficiency, in spite of the relatively complex context in which the project is working (an ongoing decentralisation process, an integrated approach that is new to many, working with 3 key Ministries, working in two remote and very different provinces).

While some stakeholder feedback seemed to indicate that the project is moving fairly slow, the MTE team concludes that the project has found a good balance between moving fast and ensuring good quality of all processes. If anything, the project errs towards moving too fast: the whole concept of CFM is new and enough time needs to be given to all stakeholders to fully grasp the concept and to change perceptions, attitudes and (ultimately) behaviour with regard to the roles and responsibilities of forest management in the proposed CFs. The sense of moving slow may also be caused by the significant under-expenditure of the project compared to the annual budgets. This is however more a question of overly optimistic planning and budgeting that doesn't seem to sufficiently consider the complex working environment and the fact that new concepts are piloted. Ultimately, the priority should not be on spending fast, but on spending efficiently.

The project has also found a good balance between available resources and the geographical spread of activities. Focusing on a limited number of pilot sites has been a good approach in this respect, although the remoteness of some sites remains a challenge. Transport means as provided by the project are somewhat a limiting factor, but this promotes the need for good coordination between DIPTT members for field visits. There may also be options for use of other transport means available in the district such as motorbikes.

Recommendations

- 3) The project should for now continue to work in the pilot sites. Expanding to other sites / communities / districts should only be considered once the processes and structures have been consolidated in the pilot sites, signs of positive impact are consolidated, and lessons learnt have been documented.
- 4) The project should strengthen collaboration and coordination with other projects in the provinces, both with a view of future scaling up and with a view of complementing one another's expertise and resources.
- 5) Where transport is a limiting factor, DIPTTs should assess available other transport means within their departments and where possible use those for project activities (with fuel costs paid by the project). This not only increased efficiency, but also confirms strong commitment for the project from all involved sectors.

One of the main efficiency challenges has been the division of two of the original four districts into two x two new districts. It means two of the DPSUs have been covering two districts instead of one. While this is clearly more challenging than covering one district, the MTE team believes there is not enough ground to recommend setting up additional DPSUs in the two new districts. One important reason for this is the fact that the DIPTTs have by now gained considerable experience in working through the integrated approach, and are increasingly taking ownership of the identification and implementation of activities. While the DPSUs are still important, their role has moved more to one of facilitation and less to implementation.

The whole situation may change again if Chinsali district, as is the plan, will again be split into two districts. While already a challenge in itself, it is all the more an issue given that the current two pilot sites are apparently located in what would be the new district Mulilansolo.

Recommendations

- 6) It is recommended not to set up new DPSUs in the two new districts Ikelenge and Shiwang'andu. The PMCU should instead closely monitor DPSU performance and where needed

provide additional support. This could come from PMCU members, from other DPSUs, or through additional short term TA.

- 7) If Chinsali district is split up again into 2 districts within the project's lifetime, the project will have to find pragmatic ways of dealing with this situation. It should consider transferring the current DPSU from Chinsali to the new district capital since both pilot sites are likely to be in the new district. If possible, the current DIPTT members in Chinsali should continue to be involved in the work in the pilot sites.

4.3 Effectiveness

4.3.1 Component 1 – Institutional

Because a new Forestry Policy and new Forestry Act had been adopted just before the start of the project, the policy focus of this component has now rightfully been on providing rules and regulations that translate the clauses of the Forestry Act to the local level. The work on developing a Statutory Instrument and draft agreements for CFM are therefore effective ways to strengthen the policy environment for the CFM work.

The S.I. is not yet finalised, let alone approved, and any substantial delays in having an S.I. formally approved will have negative repercussions, in particular for the completion of the CFM processes in the pilot sites.

Recommendations

- 8) Finalisation and approval of the Statutory Instrument that regulates CFM is considered a high priority. The current draft S.I., as developed with support from the project, needs to be critically reviewed, possibly by external experts, and then be submitted for approval by Government as soon as possible.
 - a) Critical review of the S.I. should consider, inter alia, whether it sufficiently addresses issues of benefit sharing, mining concessions in CFs, and how possible commercial logging in CFs is to be regulated.
- 9) It is recommended that the Director of the Forestry Department, where needed with support from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands and NR, takes the lead in ensuring the S.I. is finalised and approved as soon as possible.
- 10) If the S.I. approval is delayed beyond the end of 2016, the Director of Forestry Department should consider giving provisional approval to CFM agreements, with final approval conditional on compliance with final S.I.

At the district level, it is foreseen that by-laws are developed and approved that support the CFM process. Getting formal by-laws approved may however take considerable time, which would also risk slowing down the momentum of the CFM process.

Recommendation

- 11) It is recommended that the CFM process is supported at district level by Council resolutions rather than by formal by-laws (this is in line with a recommendation emanating from discussions in the PSC).

The project has, through a pragmatic approach, been well embedded in, and supportive of the ongoing decentralisation processes. While progress on real devolution has been relatively slow, the election of new councillors and (for the first time) mayors has brought a new dynamic to the process, and the project is well placed to be directly involved in and provide active support to the

process of transferring responsibility for district development from the DC and sector departments to the Council and its directorates.

Recommendation

12) The project should continue to support the decentralisation process. Specifically, it is recommended to support:

- a) the establishment and functioning of Ward Development Committees in the project areas; these should be promoted as platforms for exchange between communities as well as linking communities to their ward councillor, with the project in particular supporting governance and development issues related to CFM and enterprise development.
 - i) The PLGOs should take a lead role in this process
- b) more active involvement of the Council and individual councillors in project activities e.g. by giving them a role in project monitoring and reporting at district level, having them participate in training workshops, etc.
- c) If possible, the DIPTT should transform into a (sub-) committee on NRM of the Council, both to strengthen the link with the Council and to promote sustainability.

The Decentralisation Secretariat has shown a keen interest in the project and its practical experience with decentralisation at the district level. The Director of the DS, seconded by the Director of the Forestry Department, would like the project to support the finalisation of the devolution plan for the forestry sector and provide further support to the decentralisation task force in charge of devolution for the sector. Given the project's alignment with the decentralisation process, this makes sense as long as it linked to, and not distracts from the ongoing integrated approach and CFM processes in the project's target districts.

Recommendation

13) It is recommended that, *if resources and time allow*, the project actively contributes to the forestry devolution plan based on lessons learnt from the project's experience in working at district level in the two provinces (which represent two extremes in terms of forest resources). *This should however not distract from the project's main focus on the CFM and enterprise development work in the pilot districts.*

4.3.2 Component 2 – Integrated Sustainable Forest and other NRM

The work under this component is currently undertaken in 16 pilot sites, and should ultimately lead to the establishment of Community Forests in each of those sites (with more sites to be added if time allows). The 7-step process for this CFM work is working well, seems well adapted to the local context, and makes optimal use of the provisions for CFM provided in the new Forestry Act.

Although a new concept, the project has managed to ensure that all key stakeholders are on-board and enthusiastic. Communities in particular have expressed a very strong interest in establishing CFs and have already started to shown signs of taking more control over the resources. *It is however still too early to conclude that CFM will lead to sustainable forest management.* More time is needed for this, and sufficient time is also needed to ensure that the quality of the process is of high standards, with some signs that this is not always the case (at least partly due to persistent different understandings on what this component and component 3 are exactly about and how they relate to one another. This is further discussed in section 4.3.4).

Recommendations

14) Rather than scaling up the process of CFM rapidly to other areas, the focus should first be on

completing the full process in current pilot sites and ensuring that high quality standards are maintained during all steps.

- 15) Scaling up of CFM during the latter stages of the project should increasingly be fully led by the DIPTT, with strong support from provincial staff, in particular the PFOs. The role of the PMCU and DPSU should be mostly one of quality control, and providing financial resources required for the scaling up.

While communities are showing a keen interest, this is for now in particular for the fact that the process will give them control over their forest resources. While it is clear that CFM also comes with responsibilities for sustainable forest management, the coming years will have to show whether the communities will fully take up this responsibility.

Recommendation

- 16) The project should carefully monitor whether communities are complying with their responsibilities as outlined in the (still to be developed) CF management plans. It should ultimately not shy away from suspending support to communities that do not show a clear commitment in this respect.

While the overall findings on this component are positive, a few issues were identified that merit more attention in the CFM development process and in the CFM training.

Recommendations

- 17) With the project bringing in fundamental changes in access to forest resources (from de facto open access to community-controlled access), conflicts may arise. It is therefore recommended to address conflict resolution mechanisms more explicitly in the CFM agreements and to train stakeholders in conflict management.
- 18) Where issues such as how CF rights relate to mining concessions and to licensing for commercial logging are not covered sufficiently in the Forestry Act or S.I., these should be addressed in the CFM agreements.
- 19) Charcoal production is an important rural income earner and options for sustainable charcoal production should be researched more in detail, and results should inform the CF management plans. See also under section 4.3.3.

4.3.3 Component 3 – Rural Entrepreneurship and Alternative Livelihoods

The project has supported a number of livelihoods activities. It is too early to be able to conclude whether these will be effective in terms of becoming viable activities. What is clear however is that most of these activities are unlikely to contribute much to sustainable forest management, although the idea behind them is that providing alternative livelihoods will reduce the pressure on forest resources. The link between the activities and the (community) forests is however weak, and not generally not recognised as such by communities.

With stakeholders now being trained in Market Analysis & Development, enterprises to be developed from here on will be based on a positive outcome of a value chain analysis and so are likely to be viable enterprises. The project approach of involving beneficiaries themselves in the MA&D training, and by organising the training as a trajectory with emphasis on practical work, the chances for success are considerably increased.

Although value chains still need to be developed based on the MA&D, the findings indicates that there are good opportunities for enterprise development of forest-based products like honey, mushrooms, caterpillars as well as for other products such as fish.

A product for which there is a known strong market is charcoal. It is currently produced in unsustainable ways, and, in combination with slash and burn practices, a major contributor to forest degradation. Yet the project has given little attention so far to explore options to promote sustainable forms of charcoal production.

Recommendations

- 20) Enterprise development options based on sustainable charcoal production should be researched by the project (see also recommendation 42 on action research). This should include, inter alia³:
- a) testing recently developed interventions for sustainable charcoal production at producer and community level;
 - b) Investigate, develop and test locally adapted incentives and localised permit systems for linking charcoal production to sustainable levels of forest production;
 - c) Train charcoal producers in technical and business skills and management, and sustainable resource use;
- 21) So far, the community nurseries are producing mostly pine seedlings. Good for timber but not for charcoal. The project should consider promoting tree species that are (also) suitable for charcoal production.

So far, the project has not facilitated access to financial services (credit) for enterprise development, although this is included in the logframe. It has proposed to support roll out of the Village Bank scheme which the Ministry of Community Development has been implementing in other areas in Zambia but not yet in the project districts, but MFA Finland has requested more information on this scheme before approving a budget change to support it.

Recommendation

- 22) The project should expedite the process of getting the Village Bank scheme approved and rolled out in the target district. MFA Finland should be given all relevant information as soon as possible⁴ and it should take a decision before the end of the year on whether a part of the project budget can be used for this purpose.
- 23) Given the tendency for community members to default on donor-funded loans it is important that if the MFA does provide funding to the village bank scheme, it should not be visible to the communities where the funding originates.

4.3.4 Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the project is mainly decided by how the 3 main components of the project complement one another, and in particular how components 2 (CFM) and 3 (Enterprise development) are mutually reinforcing one another.

The findings indicate that there are different opinions with regard to the latter, with some emphasising alternative livelihoods to reduce pressure on forest resources while others emphasise that the main thrust should be on CF, which will give community control over their forest resources, which can then through sustainable management provide a perpetual source of livelihoods support and income. Communities indicated that the latter is for them the most important.

While both "schools of thought" have their merit, one thing is clear, namely that the link between the two components is strongest where the enterprise development is based on forest products like

³ These recommendations were formulated by the MFA Finland forestry advisor after a visit to the project.

⁴ Information has in the meantime been submitted

honey, mushrooms and caterpillars that require sustainable forest management practices for them to thrive. This in turn requires that communities feel they have control over the forest resources i.e. through CFM. This leads to the conclusion that the CFM process needs to be prioritised, and followed up with enterprise development based on forest products in the demarcated CFs.

This does not mean alternative livelihoods based on non-forest products have no place in the project, but there should be a clear justification that explains how the alternative livelihoods activity contributes to reducing pressure on forest resources. Experience of many projects indicates that only an alternative income is not sufficient. Instead, lessons learnt from other projects have shown that, in addition to providing a decent income, alternative livelihoods based on non-forest products will have the best chance of reducing pressure on forest resources if:

- i) they highly depend on ecosystem services provided by the community forest, such as protecting water sources and streams on which e.g. fish ponds directly depend, *and/or*
- ii) the alternative livelihoods activity is very time-consuming (not allowing time for e.g. unsustainable and illegal charcoal production or timber extraction, or for the labour-intensive slash and burn) *and* provides a good income throughout the year; *and/or*.
- iii) the support for the alternative livelihoods activity is explicitly linked to an obligation for sustainable forest management, e.g. through a "contract" between the beneficiaries and the one providing the support for the alternative livelihoods.

Recommendations

- 24) The project should focus on completing the CFM process in the pilot sites, and this should be followed up with support for forest-based enterprises in the CFs.
- 25) Alternative livelihoods options should continue to be considered, but only if it is well justified that it contributes to reducing pressure on forest resources (as per the three criteria above).

4.4 Impact

If the recommendations under Effectiveness are adopted, it will improve prospects for real impact in the project's pilot sites in terms of sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihoods (for a large part derived from the sustainably managed forests). Furthermore, the project has in place a number of elements that are important for impact potential: enabling environment, real devolution, strong buy-in at all levels, good capacity development, a mix of short term and long term benefits.

It is however too early to conclude that the project's work on CFM and enterprise development will indeed deliver the expected impact. The main question mark is still whether communities will not only make full use of the rights that come with CF, but will also take full responsibility with regard to the obligations that come with CFM i.e. ensuring that the forest is sustainably managed.

It is important to realise that these impacts, if achieved, will mainly be limited to the project's intervention sites. Slash and burn practices, unsustainable charcoal production and illegal tree cutting will continue outside community forests as long as there are no real alternatives available for everyone, and as long as there is limited enforcement of regulations that stop such illegal practices. If CFM (ideally combined with enterprise development based on forest products) proves to deliver the expected impact, then rapid scaling up of the approach to other sites in the districts and ultimately broadly at national level will therefore be crucial.

Recommendation

- 26) Once clear positive impact is visible in the pilot sites, probably by second half of 2017, scaling up based on identified best practices should be given high priority:
 - a) Within the target districts, this can be mostly funded by the project, and may include engaging other stakeholders beyond the district authorities to accelerate the pace of

scaling up

- b) Within other areas in the countries this should be achieved by widely sharing lessons learnt, including organising exchange visits to the project's pilot sites.

4.5 Sustainability

Some of the project elements that strengthen the prospects for Impact also contribute to sustainability such as strong buy-in at all levels and a strong focus on capacity development of all key stakeholders. The strong buy-in is linked to the project's very inclusive approach, and to the fact that it has adopted an integrated approach to planning and implementation of activities, involving all key sectors at district and provincial level. It is very encouraging to see that district and province staff involved in the project see the activities as part of their normal work, and hence they feel confident that they can continue with the activities beyond the project's lifetime, provided sufficient resources are available.

Technical, socio-cultural and economic sustainability prospects are also generally good, although there are some areas where sustainability aspects can be improved.

Recommendation

27) The project should ensure good quality control of all technical, socio-cultural and economic aspects of in particular its livelihoods and enterprise activities

- a) For income generating activities, a value chain analysis with positive outcome should be a prerequisite
- b) Other alternative livelihoods activities should be based on a clear demand from the target beneficiaries
- c) The project should ensure appropriate technical choices are made e.g. use of beehives that can be locally produced, providing tree seedlings that can be used for charcoal production, improved technology for charcoal production. Where possible capacity should be built to produce required equipment locally.

The overriding main risk to the sustainability of the project is the changes in the development policies of MFA Finland introduced in 2016, which make it highly unlikely that the project will be continued beyond this Introduction phase, even though the original design was for a 12-year programme. Given that the Zambian government is currently facing a very difficult financial situation, one cannot expect any substantially increase in financial support from GRZ for the project's activities in the coming years, even though their commitment for the project is clearly strong.

If the Introduction project ends as now foreseen by December 2017, and if no further support is provided for the continuation of activities, the prospects for sustainable results are therefore dim. A project that is piloting new and innovative approaches for sustainable forest management requires more than 3 years to be able to conclude whether the new approaches deliver real sustainable impacts and to document best practices that allow scaling up.

As a Chief remarked:

"The fact that there is strong will from us as traditional leadership in this area, chances of success are very high and we shouldn't have difficulties in moving this work forward, however, there is need for the project to continue for a little bit longer than 3 years since the concept of CFM is critical and it requires that most grey areas are tested; it is like a breasting mother who abandons her child at 3 months; the child may not survive well"

To mitigate the consequences of the changes in the MFA Finland policies, a number of complementary measures are proposed.

A first and urgent recommendation relates to allowing the project more time than the current 3-years to be able to confirm whether CFM can deliver *sustainable* forest management and livelihoods benefits and document lessons learnt to promote broad scaling up of best practices.

Recommendations

- 28) It is strongly recommended to approve an extension to the Introduction project, ideally with a period of 2 years to allow sufficient time to measure the impact of CFM and document lessons learnt.
- 29) MFA Finland should as soon as possible indicate whether an extension of the current phase is possible, for how long, and whether there are possibilities for a project budget increase (if only a no-cost extension is possible, it will likely mean that it can't be more than 6 months to 1 year, which will limit the project's ability to prove that CFM, combined with enterprise development, can lead to lasting positive impacts).
- 30) The project should propose a draft budget to the PSCs and NAC based on the agreed extension period. It should be given the mandate to move budgets from one line item to another, provided a clear justification is given for the proposed changes.

Whether or not there is an agreed extension period, it will still be important to secure additional external funding to allow the district and provincial staff to continue to support the work in the pilot sites and expand the work to other sites in the districts. A detailed sustainability strategy will need to be developed, as soon as there is agreement on an extension period. While the PMCU should take the lead in developing it, it will require the involvement of all stakeholders, and in particular GRZ and MFA Finland.

Recommendation

- 31) A sustainability strategy is required, addressing at least the following issues:
 - a) Assessment if and how some aspects of the project (such as those related to MSME development) can still be supported by MFA Finland under their new Country Strategy.
 - b) Assessment of the resources that GRZ can put towards continued support for CFM in the target districts / provinces
 - c) Liaising with other programmes / projects / Cooperating Partners to assess in how far they can continue (some of) the project's activities, as well as funding scaling up based on best practices.
 - d) Explore other funding opportunities e.g. GCF
 - e) Assess ways to gradually reduce TA inputs during the extension period and increasingly transfer full responsibility for the project's planning and implementation at province and district level to government staff, in particular from the 3 key ministries.
 - f) A detailed strategy to share lessons learnt broadly within the target districts / provinces and nation-wide:
 - i) This should be the main focus of the last half year / year of the project
 - ii) Can include exchange visits (between communities, between projects, between district staff, etc.), communication and training material, use of community radio / TV, national workshops, etc.
 - iii) The budget for the last year needs to incorporate these.

4.6 HRBA and cross cutting objectives

As noted, the project is reflecting a HRBA, and a HRBA and Cross-cutting Objectives Strategy has been prepared in early 2016 as part of the Inception report. However, it is early to say whether the cross-cutting objectives are being mainstreamed in practice beyond the good intentions. A significant risk exists for vulnerable groups who are not necessarily active in the community forest groups, and could potentially be shut out and lose their right to forest benefits.

Recommendations

- 32) The PSCs should follow up that the HRBA & Cross-cutting Objectives Strategy is applied in practice, with allocations of funding, training and relevant activities.
- 33) The project should ensure (via emphasising this in awareness raising activities) that communities understand that DFONRMP can support them to exercise their rights (control over forest resources), but that they also have responsibilities (sustainable forest resources management).
- 34) The project should carefully map the likely impacts on vulnerable groups in the project areas. They should be encouraged to participate actively in project activities and to benefit from alternative livelihood supports if they are found to have been negatively impacted by the community forestry activities.

4.7 Component 4 - Project management, M&E, Action research and KM

Overall project management

The findings indicate that the project is managed well through the PMCU and DPSUs. Project management and quality control systems are in place, as are internal learning mechanisms. The importance of relationship management cannot be underestimated in a project with this many stakeholders who all have their interests and views, and the project staff has done an excellent job in ensuring good relations at all levels and with all types of stakeholders.

The project has overcome initial challenges with procurement of vehicles and recruitment of staff. The main project management challenges since then concerned the underperformance of one the DPSU TA (who had to cover 2 districts and did not manage a good balance between the two), and the difficulty in getting DIPTT members and DPSU to comply with the financial and technical reporting requirements. The former issue is being dealt with (replacement of the TA); the latter will require the PMCU, and in particular the Financial Manager, will need to provide more hands-on coaching and training to the DPSU admin staff to ensure compliance with the project's financial and reporting requirements.

While overall day-to-day management efficiency is satisfactory, the project staff has clearly had challenges in coming up with realistic work plans and budgets. The under-expenditure compared to budgets has been brought up as an issue of concern in PSC meetings, although in the view of the MTE team quality of the implemented activities is ultimately more important than the rate of implementation of activities. Nevertheless, the PMCU should ensure that more realistic work plans and budgets are presented for approval in the coming year(s), if needed with changes in budget allocations between main budget items.

Recommendations

- 35) Assuming an extension of the project is approved, the project management should ensure that the work plans and budgets for the coming years are more realistic, with budgets gradually shifting from CFM to Enterprise Development to scaling up and sharing lessons learnt.
- 36) Where under-expenditure still occur, clear explanations for the reasons behind these should be

provided in the financial reports to the PSCs

37) Given the importance of capacity building (not only for CFM and MA&D, but also within the context of the decentralisation process i.e. the functioning of WDCs), this issues merits specific attention in the budgeting. The PMCU should assess if the current TA budget is sufficient to cover the training needs, and if needed propose (well justified) adjustments.

Provincial Steering Committees

The oversight by the PSCs has so far been mostly been done through the regular meetings, which have been well attended. Having the main oversight structure at provincial level for a project that works primarily at district level is fully in line with the decentralisation process.

The decision to reduce the frequency of the PSC meetings from quarterly to bi-annual, when combined with more results-based reporting, will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these crucial oversight bodies. The main area that needs more attention is their active involvement in field level monitoring.

Recommendation

38) To promote active and efficient involvement of the PSCs in project monitoring, it is recommended that every half year a limited number of PSC members undertakes one field level monitoring visit and reports back on its findings to the full PSC. This should be a standard item on the PSC agenda. A budget to support this has already been set aside.

National Advisory Committee

It has proven to be difficult to organise meetings for the National Advisory Committee. While PSCs have so been providing sufficient oversight, the role of the NAC will become more important, as a platform to discuss ways forward for the project's activities beyond this Introduction phase, and for sharing lessons learnt and promoting replication of best practices nationwide.

Recommendation

39) NAC meetings need to be held at least annually. It should focus on strategic aspects such as:

- a) promoting the continued support for the project's activities through identifying ways that GRZ and others can provided resources after the end of this Introduction project.
- b) To broaden the discussions and increase the audience for lessons learnt, the NAC meetings could be transformed into national workshops on CFM, where not only DFONRMP but also projects share their experience.

M&E and Results Based Management (RBM)

Although the project is intended to be managed and monitored based on results rather than on activities, the findings show that this is not currently the case. Since both MFA Finland and GRZ are promoting results-based management, there are good opportunities to move the project more towards RBM (especially once implementation progresses further). This will however require a paradigm shift in the thinking at all levels in the project: from the DIPTTs to the PSC and NAC.

The best options to introduce more results-based management principles are at the level of the PSC (and NAC), since this is really the level where strategic discussions take place to help ensure that the project achieves its expected results. It would mean the reports to the PSC focus on progress towards the results in the logical framework rather than on progress with the implementation of

activities in the work plan. This in turn requires the indicators in the logical framework be better defined so they can be effective indicators against which to assess progress on results.

Recommendations

- 40) Report to the PSC (and NAC) should be increasingly based on RBM principles. The focus should shift from reporting on progress with activities to reporting on progress towards the results defined in the project logframe.
- a) With results-based reporting, the reporting frequency for technical reports can be reduced from quarterly to bi-annual, in line with the frequency of PSC meetings. This will also help reduce the amount of time the PMCU spends on reports.
 - b) The semi-annual report should focus on progress towards outputs, whereas the annual report should report progress on outputs, component objectives⁵ and project purpose. It should also include a section on risks (see below), on lessons learnt, and some detailed success stories that illustrate progress made over the year.
 - i) Activity progress can still be included on the principle of “reporting by exception” i.e. only report on activities where progress is significantly different from what was planned. In the semi-annual report this information will be required to justify any proposed changes in the budget for the second half of the year.
 - ii) Main risks and mitigating actions should be monitored and reported upon on an annual basis, in line with the new bilateral project manual procedures of MFA Finland.
 - c) Financial reports should continue to be produced quarterly, providing all details that the PSCs have requested.
- 41) Although ideally the indicators in the logframe would have to be reviewed to ensure they are all SMART, a more pragmatic way forward is for the M&E advisor of the PMCU to develop simple indicator sheets that explain for each indicator how it is exactly defined and how it is measured, calculated and reported.
- a) Any indicators that require baseline data that might be difficult to obtain should be reviewed to see if they can be formulated in a different way.
 - b) Indicator targets should be broken down per province where possible, so that each PSC can accurately monitor progress towards the expected results for that province.

Action research and Knowledge Management

The project has laid the foundation for action research by identifying 4 research areas / models, and developing a draft Call for Proposals. It is understandable that so far action research has been given less priority than the actual CF process and the identification and implementation of livelihoods activities. If there is no extension of the project, it will be very difficult to undertake comprehensive action research in all of the 4 identified areas. Prioritisation is therefore important.

Recommendation

- 42) The main topic to be researched as soon as possible should be the options to promote sustainable charcoal production in (and around) community forests.
- 43) The project will need to carefully consider whether more action research will be possible once the extension period is known. If time allows, an important second topic would be the effect of sustainable management of the forest resources in the CFs on water flows and water quality in streams originating in the CF (this would help make the link explicit between, for example, sustainable forest management and fish ponds that depend on a water sources originating in the CF).

⁵ These are somewhat confusingly called “results” in the logframe

With regard to knowledge management, it is clear that documenting lessons learnt and widely sharing these will become more important towards the end of the project to promote scaling up of best practices. As already mentioned, this requires a detailed strategy (and matching budget) that should be included in the proposed sustainability strategy (see recommendation 31).

Terms of Reference (Tor) and Instructions to Tender

for conducting mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the Decentralised Forest and other Natural Resources Management Programme – Introduction Project

1. Background to the mid-term evaluation

1.1 Project Context

Finland has long history of providing support to the Environment and Natural Resources sector of Zambia, especially to the forestry sub-sector. It is this history and Finland's on-going commitments to the sector that catalyzed stakeholders including traditional leaders, professional foresters in public and private sector and civil society to initiate discussions with the Embassy of Finland to consider a project that could support Zambia in view of the alarming deforestation rate of the country's forests. A strong interlinkage between environmental and natural resources degradation including deforestation and rural poverty is evident in Zambia. The loss of forests threatens the capacity of the natural forests: to retain carbon for climate change mitigation; provide wood fuel for energy and food security especially to rural populations; recharge water bodies; provide habitats for wildlife; for sustainable harvest of timber and non-wood forest products for enterprises etc.

The Decentralised Forest and other Natural Resources Management Programme (DFONRMP) – Introduction Project, was designed to pilot decentralization of natural resources taking an integrated approach and innovation in promoting local communities livelihoods through management of forests and other natural resources. The project's overall focus is to contribute to poverty reduction and approaches in implementation are based on the principles and cross-cutting objectives of Zambia's Sixth and revised Sixth National Development Plans and in Finland's Development Policy of 2012. The integrated nature of the DFONRMP – Introduction Project has made the project to have 3 key Ministries as partners and these are: The Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MLNREP); the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs (MoCTA) and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH). It is suffice to mention the Decentralisation Secretariat has since moved from MLGH to the Cabinet Office.

1.2 Description of the project to be evaluated

The DFONRMP – Introduction Project is a pilot phase for three years. The project commenced in January 2015 and is planned to end in December 2017. DFONRMP – Introduction Project has been designed to have a long term perspective as a programme with the introduction project phase expected to produce results on which the long term intervention on the overall aim could be built on. Therefore the objectives of the 3 years Introduction Project is the same as the long-term programme objective which is: *"To reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the environment through devolved integrated sustainable forests and other natural resources management"*. The purpose of the Introduction Project

is: *"To set up an enabling framework strengthen and operationalize devolved integrated sustainable forest and other natural resources management system including improved livelihood in the project districts and communities"*.

The project has four components which are interlinked and whose results can be summarised as: 1.) enabling legal, policy and institutional framework for sustainable forests and other natural resources management; 2.) sustainable forests and other natural resources management models and systems developed and implemented; 3.) improved livelihood and rural enterprises and effective and efficient project management and 4.) communication and results utilized in decision making in Government of Zambia's programmes.

The DFONRMP – Introduction Project is operating in six districts in two provinces: Kasempa, Mwinilung and Ikelengi districts in North-Western Province and Chinsali, Nakonde and Shimwang'andu districts in Muchinga Province. The initial design had four districts but the other two districts of Ikelengi and Shiwang'andu were split from Mwinilunga and Chinsali respectively and established as new districts after Finland had already committed funds and the project was in the Programme Document formulation stage. The key target beneficiaries to this project are the local communities in customary land under the traditional leadership of the Chiefs, the Local Government of the District and Provincial administrations and Partners from private sector and civil society organisations.

The inception phase of eight months was extended by 2 more months. This was mainly due to delayed implementation which was attributed to the transport challenges prior to the project procuring its own vehicles and its inability to open a local bank account for project fund management. The project is in its first year of implementation.

2. Objectives of the mid-term evaluation

Mid-term evaluation is envisaged to provide the following key elements:

1. Provide the competent authorities of the Governments of Finland and Zambia with qualified views on relevance and feasibility of the project design; implementation methods used to reach set objectives; evidence of project results including processes that are likely to lead to results and conclusions in light of the overall performance of the project.
2. Provide to the competent authorities' recommendations on how to ensure and improve performance, relevance, impact and sustainability including if necessary, adjustments in project management and implementation strategies. Recommendations should be prioritized in view of the period remaining for implementation.
3. Provide key lessons learnt and give guidance to the competent authorities giving analytical views on the usability of these lessons during current phase and give analytical views on cardinal issues for consideration in possible future programmes.

Specifically, the evaluation will:

- I. Provide evidence of project achievements to date in terms of outputs and any outcomes including of the cross cutting objectives.
- II. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation, including assessing the implementation strategies, institutional arrangements, management set up, risk management, RBME and funds flow arrangements.
- III. Assess the challenges affecting effective project implementation and delivery of project outcomes and how these can be overcome in the future.
- IV. Assess the extent to which the project is relevant to existing and likely future needs of stakeholders including local government and communities.
- V. Assess the long term sustainability of the project interventions including the approaches taken in its implementation.
- VI. Review to what extent the HRBA and cross cutting objectives of Finland's Development Policy Programme of 2012 and 2015, and Zambian Sixth and revised Sixth National Development Plan are incorporated in the project.
- VII. Assess the intervention strategy. Examine implemented actions and interventions in line with the revised logical framework, giving indications if the project is doing right things and if the interventions are leading to expected results, why they have or have not been successful and identify key lessons learnt to date, particularly in relation to strategic choices and approaches to implementation.
- VIII. Make clear, specific and implementable recommendations for improvements of the current phase and for future, give analysis of significance of continuing the project beyond introductory phase or not, taking into considerations the priorities of new Finland's Development Policy 2015 and Zambia's relevant policy developments and availability of resources.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will be to review project performance covering the inception phase and the implementation of the four project components so far. The components to be covered are namely: 1) institutional development for natural resources sector devolution; 2) sustainable forest and other natural resources management; 3) rural enterprises and alternative livelihoods and 4) project management, RBME, applied research and communication.

The evaluation should focus on the following criteria and questions; however, the evaluation team is encouraged to address all issues that are relevant for the success of the project:

a) Relevance

- Assess the set project objectives. Are the objectives and achievement of results for the project so far still consistent with the needs and priorities of the Stakeholders, mainly the beneficiary local communities and the pilot districts, the two provincial level stakeholders and MLNREP, MLGH and MCTA. Provide analysis on any variance to achievements of results
- Are the objectives and achievements of the project consistent with the policies of Zambia and Finland's Development policy?
- Are the chosen approaches and strategies of the project addressing the needs of beneficiaries increasing or leading to increase in household incomes?
- Has the policy environment of Finland and Zambia changed significantly since the approval of the project and what are the major implications of such changes to the project's current phase and future?

b) Efficiency

- How well have the activities transformed the available resources into intended outputs/results, in terms of quantity, quality and time?
- How have the project resources been allocated re-allocated and, used? What is the cost-effectiveness of the implemented activities? Can the costs of the project be justified by the results?
- Have the contributions by the partner country and the donor been provided as planned?
- What has been the quality of technical assistance in relation to TA team's terms of reference?
- How has the increased number of target districts affected to the program implementation and has the allocation of TA and other resources been relevant in changed situation?

c) Development Effectiveness

- Is the quality and quantity of the produced results and outputs in line with the plans, how are the results/outputs applied by the beneficiaries and other intended stakeholders at district and local community level?
- To what extent has the project achieved its purpose or will likely do so in the future? Have the planned changes in stakeholders' institutions or groups taken place accordingly or will be taking place?
- Have the planned benefits been or will likely to be delivered and received, as perceived by all key stakeholders?
- Are the results/outputs and the project purpose making a contribution towards reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development?

d) Development Impact

- What are the project achievements to date, in terms of project outcomes as outlined in the project document and the project baseline?

- How is the project intended to reduce poverty of the intended primary beneficiaries?
- Do the indicators of the overall objective show that the intended changes are starting to take place? In whose lives are the poverty impacts starting to make a difference?

e) Sustainability

- What are preliminary indications of the degree to which the project results are likely to be sustainable beyond the project's lifetime?
- What are the possible factors that enhance or inhibit sustainability, including ownership/commitment, economic/financial, institutional, technical, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability aspects?
- Will the benefits produced by the project be maintained after the termination of external support?
- Who will take over the responsibility of financing the activities or have they or will they become self-sustaining by the end of the introductory project?
- Is there an exit strategy/sustainability strategy, what is the relevancy and feasibility of the planned strategy? Will it ensure successful completion of remaining activities of introductory phase and will it ensure sustainability beyond the project?

f) Project management and administrative arrangement

- What is the quality of the day-to-day management, including the work planning and budgeting, monitoring and reporting and the use of indicators and baseline data?
- Have the project decision-making structures been adequate? Have the powers and responsibilities of these structures been effective and yielded the expected results
- Has the placement of TA teams in Councils and Forestry Department HQs been effective and supported the programme to achieve its results?

4. Methodology

The evaluation methodology will be used as one of the selection criteria in choosing the Consultant/Bidder. Therefore the Consultant/Bidder is asked to propose suitable methodology. The methodology will be discussed and agreed upon at the start of the assignment. It is envisaged that there will be desk review and field work. Based on the proposed methodology, the Consultant/Bidder shall propose a work plan and budget, which will also be used as one of the selection criteria.

5. The evaluation process

The evaluation team shall commence work in Lusaka and hold initial discussions with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and MLNREP as the lead government partner. The first draft of the MTE report shall be submitted for comments to the MFA and the key partners: MLNREP, MLGH and MCTA. The evaluation team shall present the final findings, recommendations and lessons learnt to the relevant stakeholders.

6. Timeline and reporting

The amount of required days for conducting the task will be proposed by consultant/bidder. The task shall consist of desk study, field work in Zambia, analysis and reporting.

The task in its full content shall be conducted by the end of November 2016.

The reporting language of the task is English. The evaluation team must submit at least the following deliverables:

- **Inception report**

The inception report should provide a concise analysis of the desk review of the forwarded information; interpretation of the ToR and understanding of the task at hand. Further the report should include a detailed work methodology; work plan and budget; an outline of roles of each member of the evaluation team and other relevant information that is needed at inception of the assignment.

The report needs to be submitted to the MFA two weeks before the field mission starts so that it can be commented and agreed on before commencing the evaluation activities.

- **Draft final report**

The draft final report will be a combination of desk and field study results. The report will clearly outline the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt and will integrate the evaluation results on cross-cutting objectives. The MFA and Zambia's key partners and relevant stakeholders will submit comments on the draft final report to the evaluation team.

- **Final report**

The final report will be submitted to MFA one week after receiving comments to the final draft. The report format will be agreed between MFA and the evaluation team during the inception of the assignment.

- **Presentation of the evaluation findings**

The evaluation team will be expected to make a presentation of the evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learnt to MFA and Zambia's relevant stakeholders.

7. Expertise required

The composition of the evaluation team is not predetermined but the Consultant/Bidder will propose suitable resources in terms of personnel. However, the team shall consist of at least one international and one national consultant. One person shall be nominated as the Team Leader. The combined evaluation team shall ensure solid experience and knowledge in the following fields which are in priority order:

- **Devolution/decentralization:** of natural resources and status of devolution process in Zambia.
- **Project design, monitoring and evaluation/institutional and capacity development in the rural development sector:** Project management cycle; Results based management; logical framework approach and their usage in design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation; Institutional and organisational development of forests/natural resources /and rural development programmes.
- **Natural resources management:** integrated approach in implementation of projects
- **Business development/rural enterprise development:** focusing on forests and other natural resources.

8. Budget

Resources to undertake this assignment is maximum budget EUR 29 000 (excluding VAT). This amount includes fees and reimbursable costs.

9. Tender

Written tenders including approach and scope to the task, budget and a reference list of the consultant/bidder (minimum five references) should be delivered to e-mail addresses harri.sallinen@formin.fi and matti.vaananen@formin.fi no later than 26th August 2016 at 12:00 hrs. The tender should be valid until 30th September 2016.

The criteria for the selection are: approach (40%), relevant experience (30%), relevance of references (10%) and price (20%).

Further questions about the tender can be addressed to above mentioned emails addresses from 15th to 17th August 2016.

ANNEX II

List of people met

Name	Position	Organization	Email	Contact No:	Location
Agness Namwanza	Fisheries Assistant	Fisheries Department	Namwanzaagness2000@gmail.com	0976369718	Chinsali
Beston Mboози	Provincial Chiefs & Traditional Affairs Officer	MOCTAO	bestonm@yahoo.com	0977410191	Chinsali
Dominic Mushashu	Environmental Planner	Municipal Council	Mushashu11@yahoo.com	0979616111	Chinsali
Dr. Yvonne Chikalema	District Vet. Officer	Livestock & Fisheries	drchikalema@gmail.com	0974539558	Chinsali
Everisto Nonde	Principal Forestry Officer	Forestry Department	everistomn13@gmail.com	0977845534	Chinsali
Gershom Simfukwe	Extension Methodologist	Agriculture	gershomsimfukwe@gmail.com	0978364627	Chinsali
Jere Adam	Provincial Local Govt. Officer	Min. of Local Government	jereadam@rocketmail.com	0979174638	Chinsali
Levis Mumba	Town Clerk	Municipal Council	mumbalevis@yahoo.com	0955515749	Chinsali
Martin Chongo	District Forestry Officer	Forestry Dept.	Martin.chongo@gmail.com	0977350853	Chinsali
Maximo Chitambi	District Commissioner	District Administration	Mchitambi6@gmail.com	0971064959	Chinsali
Maxwell Maluma	DCDO	MCTI	maxwelmaluma@yahoo.com	0978965268	Chinsali
Phiri Nelson	Technical Officer	Agriculture	shimadaliso@gmail.com	0976016433	Chinsali
Shimbetu Mweemba	Fisheries Officer	Fisheries	shimbetumweemba@gmail.com	0979459821	Chinsali
Stanley Mulenga	Assistant DMDO	Agriculture	Stanleymulenga75@gmail.com	0975677805	Chinsali

Name	Position	Organization	Email	Contact No:	Location
Thomas Mutale	Mayor	Municipal Council		0978346211	Chinsali
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ANNEX III

List of main documents consulted (not including internal project documents)

Nr	Author(s)	Year of publication	Title	Organisation	Any additional reference information
1	MFA Finland	2016	Finland's Development Policy, Government Report To Parliament,	MFA Finland	
2	Embassy of Finland in Zambia	2016	Country Strategy For Development Cooperation Zambia 2016 - 2019	MFA Finland	Confidential draft
3	Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	2014	National Forestry Policy	GRZ	
4	GRZ	2015	The Forests Act	GRZ	
5	Häggblom & partners	2016	Zambian Forest Sector Opportunities For Finnish Stakeholders	MFA Finland	Confidential draft
6	GRZ and MFA Finland	2014	Decentralised Forest And Other Natural Resources Management Programme – Introduction Project, Zambia Final Project Document	GRZ and MFA Finland	
7	Indufor & Orgut	2016	Decentralised Forest & Other Natural Resources Management Programme - Introduction Project- Project Inception Report	GRZ and MFA Finland	Revised version, February 2016

Nr	Author(s)	Year of publication	Title	Organisation	Any additional reference information
8	Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	2016	Draft Sector Devolution Plan	GRZ	
9	Office of the President	2002	The National Decentralisation Policy “Towards Empowering The People”	GRZ	

Annex 4 - Logical Framework - achievements and MTE comments

Results Area		Indicators	2015 targets	2016 targets	2017 targets	EOP Target	Information provided by PMCU M&E advisor		Comment MTE team
	Development Objective						Achievements as of September 2016	Reasons behind under/over achievements	Note: main underachievement in red. Main issues to be discussed / clarified in yellow.
Development Objective	To reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the environment through devolved integrated sustainable forest and other natural resource management	DO1.1 5% increase in income including all groups of the society, as compared to baseline data	0	0	0 %	5 %	To be asssed at EOP. Baseline underway to substantiate target.		Impact level indicator >> normally evaluated only at end evaluation or ex-post evaluation
		DO1.2 Improved access to basic needs including all groups of the society based on HDI at district level by 5% as compared to baseline data	0	0	0	5 %			As above. MTE team recommends in fact that this one is replaced with an impact indicator that measures impact of the CF management on the (improvement of) the forest resources
		DO 1.3 Increased compliance regarding number of forest product licences with 5% compared to baseline dataplans)	0	0	0	5 %	To be asssed at EOP. Baseline underway to substantiate target.		As per comment under DO1.1
		DO1.4 15 functioning governance structures at community level regarding forest and other natural resource management	0	0	15	15	100% Achievement (15 Community level FNRM Governance structures established,strengthened for FNRM & functional)		This is not really an impact indicator. The structures are in place, but their capacity is still being built. Not clear how "functioning" is defined. To be defined by M&E advisor
Project Purpose(3 year project outcome)									
Purpose	To set up enabling framework, strengthen and operationalize devolved integrated sustainable forest and other NR management systems including improved livelihoods in project districts and communities	P 1.1 6 operating multi-stakeholder platforms for integrated sustainable FNRM planning, coordination and implementation in each district, with participation from government agencies, traditional authorities, CSOs, and private sector representatives	0	0	6	6	100% Achievement (6 multi-stakeholder platforms for integrated sustainable FNRM planning, coordination and implementation in each district formed and operational)		Correct
		P1.2 6 districts having functional integrated natural resources management system	0	0	6	6		The development of functional integrated natural resources management system based on learning from the development & implementation of landscape. Detailed integrated landscape analysis & planning scheduled next year, 2017	Not clear what a "functional integrated NRM system" at district level entails. To be defined / explained by M&E advisor.
		P1.3 Increase in 5% of households assets in the project communities compared to baseline	0	0	0	5%	To be asssed at EOP. Baseline underway to substantiate target.		OK. Could also be considered an impact indicator. Requires a control group to be able to assess in how far increase in assets is attributable to the project
		P1.4 Increase in 50% of community based groups, organisations and small/scale enterprises involved in income generation	0	0	0	50%	To be asssed at EOP. Baseline underway to substantiate target.		Should only count groups where income generation is thanks to project support.
Component 1: Institutional Development for Natural Sector Devolution									
Result 1:	Enabling legal, policy and institutional framework for sustainable FNRM	R1.1 3 sustainable forest and other natural resources interventions implemented in each district based on Human Rights Based Approach and including cross-cutting objective	0	0	3 in each district(18)	3 in each district(18)	133% Achievement (Implementation of 24: 3 interventions(fish farming, CFM & bee-keeping) in Mwinilunga, 3(fish farming, CFM & bee-keeping) in Ikelenge, 4 (fish farming, CFM, Sustainable Agriculture & bee-keeping) in Kasempa, 4 (fish farming, CFM, Sustainable Agriculture & bee-keeping) in Shiwang'andu, 4 (fish farming, CFM, Sustainable Agriculture & bee-keeping) Chinsali and 6 (fish farming, Woodlots, CFM, Sustainable Agriculture, Gardening, & bee-keeping) in Nakonde underway	More interventions identified in Ikelenge, Kasempa, Shiwang'andu & Nakonde based on local level analysis	Achieved. Note that this indicator is more relevant for component 3 output rather than component 1 result. Not also that the word "result" normally covers all outputs and outcomes of a project. So it would have been better to call this "Outcome 1" rather than Result 1.
		R1.2 6 project districts having developed and implemented an integrated Local Development Plan (including FNR plan) based on updated information and data	0	0	6	6		Pending upadted information from baseline & landscape analysis. Development of integrated landscape plan scheduled for 2017	Normally you first make a plan, and then implement activities based on that plan. The project is doing it the other way around. Justifiable in a way because it is important to show results.These plans should NOT be considered a priority. More important to continue with actual activities

Results Area		Indicators	2015 targets	2016 targets	2017 targets	EOP Target	Achievements as of September 2016	Reasons behind under-/over achievements	Comment MTE team
Output 1.1:	Enabling policy and regulatory framework for sustainable FNRM strengthened	O1.1.1 6 districts having by-laws addressing sustainable FNRM	0	0	6	6	0	Councils dissolved in 2015; recommendations by PSC to propose council resolutions, Site specific FNR related bylaws and customary rules and practices collected in 6 districts through community engagement for the development of management plans. With PSC approval to commit project funds to the establishment of Ward Development Committees (WDC), the process of establishing WDCs through the Decentralisation and devolution mechanism to lay the platform for supporting ward level meetings for developing Council resolutions in support of sustainable FNRM initiated in all districts	Agree with recommendation to propose council resolutions rather than by-laws.
		O1.1.2 3 meetings and 4 documentations on lessons learnt in the project shared with the national-level policy makers	0	2/2	1/2	3/4	100 % Achievement (3 meetings & 1 documentation of the lessons learnt on devolving rights to the community as part of incentive for CFM and implication on project budget shared with NAC as part of inception report)		This should be broader than just NAC. But since the indicator has not been defined in detail, NAC meetings can count.
		O1.1.3 15 Legal Agreements signed	0	10	5	15		Preparations of 15 draft legal agreements for 15 CFS initiated	OK.
Output 1.2:	Capacity of key institutions strengthened for facilitating sustainable FNRM	O1.2.1 30 community action plans approved	0	0	15	15	0	Action planning for user groups underway; WDC not yet formed to approve community action plans	Very optimistic to get 30 community action plans. Community Forest management plans much more important.
		O1.2.2 72 monitoring reports submitted to DDCC by ENR sub-committee	24	24	24	72	27% (13 quarterly monitoring reports submitted to DDCC by ENR sub-committee)	DDCC not been meeting as planned. Project has deliberately provided resources to support special DDCC meeting	Should be either to DDCC or, asap, to Council
		O1.2.3 90 key district staff facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM	90		90	90	90 % Achievement (81 key district staff facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM as part of the district multistakeholder planning teams)	Variable participation due to other commitments	OK
		O1.2.4 6 district councils facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM	0	18 district staff trained in Financial Management & RBM	6 district councils facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM	6 district councils facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM	100 % Achievement (6 district councils facilitating implementation of sustainable integrated FNRM)		Not clear how this is measured. How is "facilitating" defined?
Output 1.3:	Improved information management systems established for integrated forest related natural resources management	O1.3.1 Information management system covering the needs of different stakeholders established		ToRs developed, consultant mobilized, MIS developed, tested & established	MIS operational	MIS operational	ToRs developed,	MIS development pending testing and refinement of data capturing forms, the basis of input tables of the MIS	This should not be a priority. By the time the MIS would be fully functioning, project would be close to completion.
		O1.3.3 Adapted ILUA II data and maps produced and biophysical and socio-economic data available for the target districts	Collaborative relationship with ILUA II two established, ILUA data adapted for the target districts			ILUA data adapted for the target districts	Collaborative relationship with ILUA II two established	Sampling intensity in ILUA II could not provide district level estimates to support for adaptation	
		O1.3.4 4 applied research technical notes and publications compared to the baseline		4 applied research areas identified, research implemented	4 research technical notes and publications	4 research technical notes and publications	5 Applied research identified, 4 of which will inform the development of the sustainable forest and other natural resources management models & 1 inform decision making on the micro credit model		So no applied research as yet implemented. Makes sense to focus on this in 2017.
		O1.3.5 3 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models improved and applied	3 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models identified	3 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models tested & refined	3 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models applied	3 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models improved & applied	4 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models identified for development	4 sustainable forest and other natural resources management models identified for development	Not clear what those 4 models are. There is one (very good) CFM model, and that should be sufficient. It can be adapted / reviewed based on the results from the pilot sites.

Results Area		Indicators	2015 targets	2016 targets	2017 targets	EOP Target	Achievements as of September 2016	Reasons behind under-/over achievements	Comment MTE team
Component 2: Sustainable FNRM									
Result 2	Sustainable FNRM models and systems developed and implemented in the project districts and selected communities aiming at equitable forest and other natural resources management	R 2.1 30 sites for sustainable and integrated FNRM adopted ensuring equitable participation	30	0	0	30	53 % Achievement (16 sites for sustainable and integrated FNRM adopted ensuring equitable participation)	Project adopted a phase approach, starting with fewer sites as a learning process & later scale up based on learning	Good justification for 16 sites only. EOP target of 30 ONLY if project gets at least 1 year extension.
Output 2.1:	Methodology strengthened for integrated, sustainable FNRM at district and community level	O2.1.1 3 methodologies and guidelines for sustainable integrated FNRM tested and documented	6	3 methodologies and guidelines for sustainable integrated FNRM tested	3 methodologies and guidelines for sustainable integrated FNRM documented		33 % Achievement (Methodology for implementing Community Forestry model documented & being tested as part of roll out)		See comment under O1.3.5
		O2.1.2 3 innovative sustainable integrated FNRM and livelihood/enterprise models tested and documented	0	1	2	3	0	The project is using a phased approach using CF as an entry point. livelihood & enterprise models to be tested after CF model	Seems to have overlap with previous one. For enterprise models, the adopted MA&D approach can be counted here.
Output 2.2:	Capacity of key institutions and local communities in integrated sustainable FNRM strengthened	O2.2.1 6 districts achieving set targets in the annual work plan regarding sustainable FNRM	6	6	6		0 districts achieving set targets in the annual work plan regarding sustainable FNRM	More time invested in local level planning, consensus gaining & learning than anticipated	See earlier comment: local level planning around CF much more important
Output 2.3:	Adopted integrated sustainable FNRM models implemented	O2.3.1 15 FNRM plans including adopted models and systems implemented	0	10	5	15	100 % Achievement (11 draft FNRM plans developed)		Incorrect: plans (assuming that CFM plans are meant) not yet implemented
Component 3: Rural enterprise and Alternative Livelihoods									
Result 3:	Improved livelihood and enterprising aimed aimed at equitable economic growth based on sustainable use and management of of FNRN	R 3.1 X% of the community members engaged in income generating activities compared to the baseline	TBA	TBA	TBA		Sustainable IGAs been promoted by ED consultants; baseline survey under way to inform target setting on indicator		
		R 3.2 X% of the enterprises engaged in diversified production compared to the baseline	TBA	TBA	TBA		Enterprises been developed, baseline survey under way to inform target setting on indicator		
Output 3.1:	Small scale forestry and other natural resource-based livelihoods and enterprises developed and supported	O3.1.1 250 entrepreneurs accessing financial services	TBA	TBA	250		Village banking being implemented by the Ministry of Community Development & Social Welfare identified & being assessed for viability as a micro-financing, credit & savings model to support enterprise development		
		O3.1.2 6 partnerships facilitating micro-credit, market linkages and value-chain established	Potential partnerships for micro-credit, market linkages and value-chain identified		6 Potential partnerships for micro-credit, market linkages and value-chain established		Community Development & Social Welfare identified as potential partner for facilitating micro-credit in 6 project districts; draft MOU developed & pending approval by PSC. COMACO(Chinsali & Shiwang'andu) & Forest Fruits(Mwinilunga & Ikkelenge) identified for supporting market linkages and value-chain		
		O3.1.3 350 vulnerable people receiving cash social transfers from Social Welfare	TBA	TBA	350		160 vulnerable households identified in Nakonde and Mwinilunga districts for project support & support plan being developed in these areas to support these people inclusive of linking them to cash social transfer from Social Welfare. Survey been conducted in Shiwang'andu, Chinsali, Kasempa & Ikkelenge by Ministry of Community Development & Social Welfare officials conducted with a view of identifying vulnerable households & develop a support plan as part of the project CCO.		Why is this a DFONRMP indicator??
Output 3.2:	Strengthen capacity for marketing, trade to local markets, national markets and export of selected products	O3.2.1 12 producer groups linked to the market	0	6	12	12		Producers groups to be mobilised in quarter four & linked to the market in 2017	Not achieved, but good progress being made

Results Area		Indicators	2015 targets	2016 targets	2017 targets	EOP Target	Achievements as of September 2016	Reasons behind under-/over achievements	Comment MTE team
Component 4: Project Management, Applied Research, Result based M&E and Communication									
Result 4: Effective and efficient project management and communication operational and results from applied research and results-based monitoring and evaluation systems utilised in policy decision-making and improving project implementation		R 4.1 The project is implemented according to the approved work plan and budget	6 Project team oriented in RBM	Project reports approved by PSC	Project reports approved by PSC	Project reports approved by PSC	Project reports approved by PSC		Clearly not achieved. But also not clear how this is defined. Suggest to rephrase into something like: Annually at least ...% of activities in annual work plan implemented, with less than 20% changes in budget for implemented activities
		R 4.2 Guidelines and procedures developed and used for project	Project implementation manual developed and approved by PSC, project team oriented			Guidelines and procedures developed and used for project	PIM, HRBA strategy & RBME framework developed & used	Enterprise development strategy yet to be finalized	OK
		R4.3 HRBA and cross-cutting objectives have been included in planning, implementation and monitoring in all project districts	Project team trained in HRBA & cross-cutting objectives, district strategy for HRBA & cross-cutting objectives developed	District strategy for HRBA & cross-cutting objectives operational	District strategy for HRBA & cross-cutting objectives operational	HRBA and cross-cutting objectives included in planning, implementation and monitoring in all project districts	HRBA strategy developed & Operational to guide operationalisation of HRBA & CCO; CCO included in the concept notes as part of integrated planning		OK
		R4.4 RBME systems and MIS are providing information for planning and management of sustainable forest and other natural resources at district and community level	RBME systems and MIS developed & tested	RBME systems and MIS operational	RBME systems and MIS operational	RBME systems and MIS operational	RBME systems providing information for planning and management of sustainable forest and other natural resources at district and community level	MIS yet to be developed; Peer community monitoring to be developed with input of user groups	Systems provide good info on activities undertaken, but not on results achieved. They are not results-based
		R4.5 The applied research results provided for policy decision-making and improvements of sustainable FNRM		Applied research area identified, research plan developed		Applied research results provided for policy decision making and improvements of sustainable FNRM	An applied research to assess the viability & sustainability of village banking as a micro-financing, credit & savings model to support enterprise development for the DFNRMP initiated. The findings to be provided to the PSC to support decision-making on the viability of the model for the project		Village bank research OK. MTE team has not seen any applied research plan though.
		R 4.6 80% of the selected communities implementing activities according to the Community Action Plan		60	80	80		More time invested in local level planning, consensus gaining & learning than anticipated, action planning under way	See earlier comment: local level planning around CF much more important
		R4.7 Information produced by the project reaches stakeholders at community, district, provincial and national level		RBME systems and MIS operational	RBME systems and MIS operational	Information produced by the project reaches stakeholders at community, district, provincial and national level	RBME systems and MIS operational Communication matrix developed to support dissemination of project information, random checks on to be conducted on stakeholders, based on communication matrix, to ensure that they are getting project information as planned		This indicator has the same targets as R4.2 ?! This is again not a very SMART indicator. But to improve, targets should related to e.g. no of national stakeholders reached, no. of translated products distributed to communities, etc.
Output 4.1: Project management, coordination and cooperation structures and arrangements identified and strengthened		O 4.1.1 Guidelines and procedures developed and used for project implementation	Guidelines and procedures developed and approved by PSC, project team oriented			Guidelines and procedures developed and used for project implementation	Project implementation manual, HRBA strategy & RBME framework developed and used in the project		Same indicator as R4.2 ?!
		Management, coordination and communication mechanisms established and linked to all key stakeholders. Project outputs and lessons learnt shared with others and fed into national good practices and standards and improving policy and legal frameworks	Management, coordination and communication mechanisms established	Project communication strategy & RBME systems operational	Project communication strategy & RBME systems operational	Management, coordination and communication mechanisms established as in PIM. Project outputs and lessons learnt shared with others through routine information dissemination			Is this meant to be indicator?? At best this could be considered a composite result, which would require several indicators for progress to be measured.
Output 4.2: Priority areas for the applied research identified and providing results		O 4.2.1.4 research results submitted for utilisation in implementation of the following phases of the project or in any other intervention	0	0	4 research results from operationalized research plan submitted for utilisation in implementation of the following phases of the project or in any other intervention	4 research results from operationalized research plan submitted for utilisation in implementation of the following phases of the project or in any other intervention	4 research topics identified to support the development of models		MTE team not aware of the identified research topics. They are also not mentioned in the last available progress report (2nd quarter 2016)

Results Area		Indicators	2015 targets	2016 targets	2017 targets	EOP Target	Achievements as of September 2016	Reasons behind under-/over achievements	Comment MTE team
Output 4.3:	Results-based M&E (RBME) system and MIS established	O 4.3.1 Forest and other natural resource inventory at district level and socio-economic baselines in the project communities undertaken	ILUA data reviewed to identify baseline data needs in relation to project logical framework, Preliminary Baseline data collected in target areas as part of participatory planning processes in each district	Forest and other natural resource inventory at district level and socio-economic baselines in the project communities undertaken, reports produced			Socio-economic baseline survey in the project communities underway.	Socio-economic baseline survey in the project communities underway. Forestry inventory sheduled after signing agreements	As above, MTE team not aware that the survey was already underway.
		O 4.3.2 RBME system integrating Human rights-based approach and cross-cutting objectives established	RBME framework integrating Human rights-based approach and cross-cutting objectives developed	Training needs assessment needs in RBME conducted, training conducted, supportive supervision in M&E provided	RBME system operational		RBME framework developed & approved by the PSC, RBME framework being operationalised.		See earlier comments. It is not a results-based system.
		O4.3.3 MIS established		ToRs developed, consultant mobilized, MIS developed, tested & established	MIS operational		Draft ToRs for MIS, developed.	MIS development pending testing and refinement of data capturing forms, the basis of input tables of the MIS	MTE team recommends to not pursue this given the limited duration of the project.
		O 4.3.4 96 relevant district and provincial staff trained in results-based work planning and monitoring and MIS use	0	0	96		81 district staff trained in RBME as part of the participatory process to support the operationalisation of the RBME framework	Training re-scheduled due to the evolving nature of the project & to allow sectors define activities as part of the integrated planning approach	Training will only be useful if the system itself is made into a truly results-based system.
		O 4.3.4 Identified other surveys, undertaken		Surveys identified during implementation, undertaken	Surveys identified during implementation, undertaken		An applied research to assess the viability & sustainability of village banking as a micro-financing, credit & savings model to support enterprise development for the DFNRMP initiated in Chongwe district		Not a priority, except possily impact surveys at the very end of the project that looks not only at livelihoods improvement but also forest resources impact.
Output 4.4:	Communication strategy developed and launched	O 4.4.1 Communication strategy for the project is launched	ToRs developed	ToRs developed, consultant mobilized, communication strategy developed	Communication strategy for the project is launched		Draft communication matrix developed as part of RBME framework, project social media developed & used; ToRs for the short term consultant to support development of the project website developed		A more thorough communication strategy is needed, in particular for effective sharing of lessons learnt during final stages of the project

Terms of Reference (Tor) and Instructions to Tender

for conducting mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the Decentralised Forest and other Natural Resources Management Programme – Introduction Project

1. Background to the mid-term evaluation

1.1 Project Context

Finland has long history of providing support to the Environment and Natural Resources sector of Zambia, especially to the forestry sub-sector. It is this history and Finland's on-going commitments to the sector that catalyzed stakeholders including traditional leaders, professional foresters in public and private sector and civil society to initiate discussions with the Embassy of Finland to consider a project that could support Zambia in view of the alarming deforestation rate of the country's forests. A strong interlinkage between environmental and natural resources degradation including deforestation and rural poverty is evident in Zambia. The loss of forests threatens the capacity of the natural forests: to retain carbon for climate change mitigation; provide wood fuel for energy and food security especially to rural populations; recharge water bodies; provide habitats for wildlife; for sustainable harvest of timber and non-wood forest products for enterprises etc.

The Decentralised Forest and other Natural Resources Management Programme (DFONRMP) – Introduction Project, was designed to pilot decentralization of natural resources taking an integrated approach and innovation in promoting local communities livelihoods through management of forests and other natural resources. The project's overall focus is to contribute to poverty reduction and approaches in implementation are based on the principles and cross-cutting objectives of Zambia's Sixth and revised Sixth National Development Plans and in Finland's Development Policy of 2012. The integrated nature of the DFONRMP – Introduction Project has made the project to have 3 key Ministries as partners and these are: The Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MLNREP); the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs (MoCTA) and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH). It is suffice to mention the Decentralisation Secretariat has since moved from MLGH to the Cabinet Office.

1.2 Description of the project to be evaluated

The DFONRMP – Introduction Project is a pilot phase for three years. The project commenced in January 2015 and is planned to end in December 2017. DFONRMP – Introduction Project has been designed to have a long term perspective as a programme with the introduction project phase expected to produce results on which the long term intervention on the overall aim could be built on. Therefore the objectives of the 3 years Introduction Project is the same as the long-term programme objective which is: *"To reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the environment through devolved integrated sustainable forests and other natural resources management"*. The purpose of the Introduction Project

is: *"To set up an enabling framework strengthen and operationalize devolved integrated sustainable forest and other natural resources management system including improved livelihood in the project districts and communities"*.

The project has four components which are interlinked and whose results can be summarised as: 1.) enabling legal, policy and institutional framework for sustainable forests and other natural resources management; 2.) sustainable forests and other natural resources management models and systems developed and implemented; 3.) improved livelihood and rural enterprises and effective and efficient project management and 4.) communication and results utilized in decision making in Government of Zambia's programmes.

The DFONRMP – Introduction Project is operating in six districts in two provinces: Kasempa, Mwinilung and Ikelengi districts in North-Western Province and Chinsali, Nakonde and Shimwang'andu districts in Muchinga Province. The initial design had four districts but the other two districts of Ikelengi and Shiwang'andu were split from Mwinilunga and Chinsali respectively and established as new districts after Finland had already committed funds and the project was in the Programme Document formulation stage. The key target beneficiaries to this project are the local communities in customary land under the traditional leadership of the Chiefs, the Local Government of the District and Provincial administrations and Partners from private sector and civil society organisations.

The inception phase of eight months was extended by 2 more months. This was mainly due to delayed implementation which was attributed to the transport challenges prior to the project procuring its own vehicles and its inability to open a local bank account for project fund management. The project is in its first year of implementation.

2. Objectives of the mid-term evaluation

Mid-term evaluation is envisaged to provide the following key elements:

1. Provide the competent authorities of the Governments of Finland and Zambia with qualified views on relevance and feasibility of the project design; implementation methods used to reach set objectives; evidence of project results including processes that are likely to lead to results and conclusions in light of the overall performance of the project.
2. Provide to the competent authorities' recommendations on how to ensure and improve performance, relevance, impact and sustainability including if necessary, adjustments in project management and implementation strategies. Recommendations should be prioritized in view of the period remaining for implementation.
3. Provide key lessons learnt and give guidance to the competent authorities giving analytical views on the usability of these lessons during current phase and give analytical views on cardinal issues for consideration in possible future programmes.

Specifically, the evaluation will:

- I. Provide evidence of project achievements to date in terms of outputs and any outcomes including of the cross cutting objectives.
- II. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation, including assessing the implementation strategies, institutional arrangements, management set up, risk management, RBME and funds flow arrangements.
- III. Assess the challenges affecting effective project implementation and delivery of project outcomes and how these can be overcome in the future.
- IV. Assess the extent to which the project is relevant to existing and likely future needs of stakeholders including local government and communities.
- V. Assess the long term sustainability of the project interventions including the approaches taken in its implementation.
- VI. Review to what extent the HRBA and cross cutting objectives of Finland's Development Policy Programme of 2012 and 2015, and Zambian Sixth and revised Sixth National Development Plan are incorporated in the project.
- VII. Assess the intervention strategy. Examine implemented actions and interventions in line with the revised logical framework, giving indications if the project is doing right things and if the interventions are leading to expected results, why they have or have not been successful and identify key lessons learnt to date, particularly in relation to strategic choices and approaches to implementation.
- VIII. Make clear, specific and implementable recommendations for improvements of the current phase and for future, give analysis of significance of continuing the project beyond introductory phase or not, taking into considerations the priorities of new Finland's Development Policy 2015 and Zambia's relevant policy developments and availability of resources.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will be to review project performance covering the inception phase and the implementation of the four project components so far. The components to be covered are namely: 1) institutional development for natural resources sector devolution; 2) sustainable forest and other natural resources management; 3) rural enterprises and alternative livelihoods and 4) project management, RBME, applied research and communication.

The evaluation should focus on the following criteria and questions; however, the evaluation team is encouraged to address all issues that are relevant for the success of the project:

a) Relevance

- Assess the set project objectives. Are the objectives and achievement of results for the project so far still consistent with the needs and priorities of the Stakeholders, mainly the beneficiary local communities and the pilot districts, the two provincial level stakeholders and MLNREP, MLGH and MCTA. Provide analysis on any variance to achievements of results
- Are the objectives and achievements of the project consistent with the policies of Zambia and Finland's Development policy?
- Are the chosen approaches and strategies of the project addressing the needs of beneficiaries increasing or leading to increase in household incomes?
- Has the policy environment of Finland and Zambia changed significantly since the approval of the project and what are the major implications of such changes to the project's current phase and future?

b) Efficiency

- How well have the activities transformed the available resources into intended outputs/results, in terms of quantity, quality and time?
- How have the project resources been allocated re-allocated and, used? What is the cost-effectiveness of the implemented activities? Can the costs of the project be justified by the results?
- Have the contributions by the partner country and the donor been provided as planned?
- What has been the quality of technical assistance in relation to TA team's terms of reference?
- How has the increased number of target districts affected to the program implementation and has the allocation of TA and other resources been relevant in changed situation?

c) Development Effectiveness

- Is the quality and quantity of the produced results and outputs in line with the plans, how are the results/outputs applied by the beneficiaries and other intended stakeholders at district and local community level?
- To what extent has the project achieved its purpose or will likely do so in the future? Have the planned changes in stakeholders' institutions or groups taken place accordingly or will be taking place?
- Have the planned benefits been or will likely to be delivered and received, as perceived by all key stakeholders?
- Are the results/outputs and the project purpose making a contribution towards reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development?

d) Development Impact

- What are the project achievements to date, in terms of project outcomes as outlined in the project document and the project baseline?

- How is the project intended to reduce poverty of the intended primary beneficiaries?
- Do the indicators of the overall objective show that the intended changes are starting to take place? In whose lives are the poverty impacts starting to make a difference?

e) Sustainability

- What are preliminary indications of the degree to which the project results are likely to be sustainable beyond the project's lifetime?
- What are the possible factors that enhance or inhibit sustainability, including ownership/commitment, economic/financial, institutional, technical, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability aspects?
- Will the benefits produced by the project be maintained after the termination of external support?
- Who will take over the responsibility of financing the activities or have they or will they become self-sustaining by the end of the introductory project?
- Is there an exit strategy/sustainability strategy, what is the relevancy and feasibility of the planned strategy? Will it ensure successful completion of remaining activities of introductory phase and will it ensure sustainability beyond the project?

f) Project management and administrative arrangement

- What is the quality of the day-to-day management, including the work planning and budgeting, monitoring and reporting and the use of indicators and baseline data?
- Have the project decision-making structures been adequate? Have the powers and responsibilities of these structures been effective and yielded the expected results
- Has the placement of TA teams in Councils and Forestry Department HQs been effective and supported the programme to achieve its results?

4. Methodology

The evaluation methodology will be used as one of the selection criteria in choosing the Consultant/Bidder. Therefore the Consultant/Bidder is asked to propose suitable methodology. The methodology will be discussed and agreed upon at the start of the assignment. It is envisaged that there will be desk review and field work. Based on the proposed methodology, the Consultant/Bidder shall propose a work plan and budget, which will also be used as one of the selection criteria.

5. The evaluation process

The evaluation team shall commence work in Lusaka and hold initial discussions with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and MLNREP as the lead government partner. The first draft of the MTE report shall be submitted for comments to the MFA and the key partners: MLNREP, MLGH and MCTA. The evaluation team shall present the final findings, recommendations and lessons learnt to the relevant stakeholders.

6. Timeline and reporting

The amount of required days for conducting the task will be proposed by consultant/bidder. The task shall consist of desk study, field work in Zambia, analysis and reporting.

The task in its full content shall be conducted by the end of November 2016.

The reporting language of the task is English. The evaluation team must submit at least the following deliverables:

- **Inception report**

The inception report should provide a concise analysis of the desk review of the forwarded information; interpretation of the ToR and understanding of the task at hand. Further the report should include a detailed work methodology; work plan and budget; an outline of roles of each member of the evaluation team and other relevant information that is needed at inception of the assignment.

The report needs to be submitted to the MFA two weeks before the field mission starts so that it can be commented and agreed on before commencing the evaluation activities.

- **Draft final report**

The draft final report will be a combination of desk and field study results. The report will clearly outline the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt and will integrate the evaluation results on cross-cutting objectives. The MFA and Zambia's key partners and relevant stakeholders will submit comments on the draft final report to the evaluation team.

- **Final report**

The final report will be submitted to MFA one week after receiving comments to the final draft. The report format will be agreed between MFA and the evaluation team during the inception of the assignment.

- **Presentation of the evaluation findings**

The evaluation team will be expected to make a presentation of the evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learnt to MFA and Zambia's relevant stakeholders.

7. Expertise required

The composition of the evaluation team is not predetermined but the Consultant/Bidder will propose suitable resources in terms of personnel. However, the team shall consist of at least one international and one national consultant. One person shall be nominated as the Team Leader. The combined evaluation team shall ensure solid experience and knowledge in the following fields which are in priority order:

- **Devolution/decentralization:** of natural resources and status of devolution process in Zambia.
- **Project design, monitoring and evaluation/institutional and capacity development in the rural development sector:** Project management cycle; Results based management; logical framework approach and their usage in design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation; Institutional and organisational development of forests/natural resources /and rural development programmes.
- **Natural resources management:** integrated approach in implementation of projects
- **Business development/rural enterprise development:** focusing on forests and other natural resources.

8. Budget

Resources to undertake this assignment is maximum budget EUR 29 000 (excluding VAT). This amount includes fees and reimbursable costs.

9. Tender

Written tenders including approach and scope to the task, budget and a reference list of the consultant/bidder (minimum five references) should be delivered to e-mail addresses harri.sallinen@formin.fi and matti.vaananen@formin.fi no later than 26th August 2016 at 12:00 hrs. The tender should be valid until 30th September 2016.

The criteria for the selection are: approach (40%), relevant experience (30%), relevance of references (10%) and price (20%).

Further questions about the tender can be addressed to above mentioned emails addresses from 15th to 17th August 2016.