

**Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project  
“Desert Margins Program – Phase II”  
GF/1030-02-04**

**FINAL REPORT**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Summary</b>  | <b>03</b>  |
| <b>Acronyms and Abbreviations</b>                             | <b>06</b>  |
| <b>(A) Introduction</b>                                       | <b>07</b>  |
| <b>(B) Performance and Impact: Findings</b>                   |  |
| <b>(1) Attainment of objectives and planned results</b>       | <b>09</b>  |
| <b>(2) Achievement of outputs (components) and activities</b> | <b>14</b>  |
| <b>(3) Cost-effectiveness</b>                                 | <b>22</b>  |
| <b>(4) Financial Planning</b>                                 | <b>22</b>  |
| <b>(5) Impact</b>   | <b>23</b>  |
| <b>(6) Sustainability</b>                                     | <b>24</b>  |
| <b>(7) Stakeholder participation / public awareness</b>       | <b>25</b>  |
| <b>(8) Country ownership / driveness</b>                      | <b>25</b>  |
| <b>(9) Implementation approach</b>                            | <b>25</b>  |
| <b>(10) Replicability</b>                                     | <b>27</b>  |
| <b>(11) Monitoring and Evaluation</b>                         | <b>27</b>  |
| <b>(C) Conclusions</b>  | <b>28</b>  |
| <b>Ratings and Justification</b>                              | <b>29</b>  |
| <b>(D) Lessons</b>  | <b>31</b>  |
| <b>(E) Recommendations</b>                                    | <b>32</b>  |
| <br>  |  |
| <b>Annex I</b>  | <b>Terms of Reference</b>                            |
| <b>Annex II</b>   | <b>Breakdown of Costs and Co-Financing</b>           |
| <b>Annex III</b>  | <b>Documents Consulted</b>                           |
| <b>Annex IV</b>   | <b>Analysis of Networking/ Exchange Visits</b>       |
| <b>Annex V</b>  | <b>Analysis of Country Coverage by ARIs/ IARCs</b>   |
| <b>Annex VI</b>   | <b>Example of Case Study Presentation from WOCAT</b> |
| <b>Annex VII</b>  | <b>Photographs</b>                                   |

## SUMMARY

### MAIN CONCLUSIONS

#### Strengths:

- i. The DMP has undertaken an important and inherently difficult and ambitious challenge. There are many positive points. Chief amongst these are the strength (and strengthening) of a coalition of partners, a portfolio of creative technologies and approaches to tackle the problems of the desert margins, and an identity, while not fully exploited, that cannot be currently matched in Africa.
- ii. Several initiatives are novel and imaginative – making active use of the comparative advantage of the resources in the desert margins. These include organic *Rooibos* tea production in South Africa; the *Pomme du Sahel* (grafted *Ziziphus* sp.) in West Africa; micro-dosing in Niger; and the evolving participatory range management strategies in Namibia. The development and promotion of these represents a core strength of DMP.
- iii. With few exceptions, DMP is a participatory program that involves target populations in decision making. The Forum for Integrated Resource Management (FIRM) and Local Level Planning (LLP) approaches are particular examples. This is as was intended, and as it should be. One consequence of such an approach, however, is that it inevitably slows down rates of implementation.
- iv. There is an evident pool of talent, dedication and enthusiasm within the DMP. Of the entire project's resources this human capacity is the most important, and provides a firm foundation for a further phase.
- v. DMP has a strong name, a versatile acronym (used both in Anglophone and Francophone areas), and an imaginative logo. However the program's public and international profile does not yet adequately match these symbols and DMP undersells itself. There is evidence (particularly in the array of strong local initiatives and activities) that the "whole" appears to be *less* than the "sum of its parts".

#### Limitations:

- vi. Outstanding amongst the limitations is the confusion and contradictions within the various guiding documents (the Project Document; the Logical Framework; the Phase II Program of Work and Budget; the Technical and Financial Project Reports and the Project Implementation Reviews) regarding *Objectives, Outputs, Outcomes, Milestones, Targets* and *Indicators*. This is compounded by the contradictions in the various documents regarding targets – and where these targets belong.
- vii. If there is one document that epitomises these confusions it is the Phase II Program of Work and Budget (PWB). It is surprising, to say the least, that this document can have been drafted and endorsed as it stood.
- viii. DMP's very diverse portfolio – though in itself can be seen as strength – is inadequately connected. The result is a program that appears somewhat random, and misses potential synergies. Without integration of efforts between countries and regions, and between the various IARCs and ARIs, there is a danger of presenting an apparently opportunistic and scattered approach organized under a very loose coalition without a clear theme. This belies the notion of a 'program'. An effective campaign depends on a cohesive program and integration of efforts. These aspects are not yet sufficiently developed.

ix. There is a strong feeling throughout that DMP is failing to make adequate progress towards its targets. Even though the PIR ratings for Phase II are generally satisfactory, it is of concern that there has been very little progress in area coverage or families with increased incomes between mid 2005 and mid 2006 (see respective TFPRs). And this is the period when DMP would have been expected to be progressing by leaps and bounds.

#### **MAIN LESSONS *for future programs of a similar nature***

x. Inevitably targets cited in programs of this nature are ambitious: non-achievement should not always therefore be attributed to poor performance, but (often) to over-optimism at the project formulation stage. Realistic targets should be a feature of future project design.

xi. A regional program needs to focus on capacity building, partnership and policy. In future programs of a similar nature a greater proportion of resources need to be dedicated to capacity building in its broadest sense. “Vertical” achievements (institutionalization etc) should be given more prominence than “horizontal” achievements (area and human targets etc).

xii. Monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment depend on good data and/ or reliable estimates. These are often difficult and time consuming exercises, but should be given more strategic priority. The difficulty of providing accurate data should not detract from the imperative for high standards of estimation/ best judgment; and of consistency.

xiii. Conservation and sustainable use are functions of value attachment to the land, and to its biodiversity. If value can be established – in terms of sales of produce or other goods and services – then the incentive to protect and produce is established. This demonstrates the need to concentrate on output-led conservation wherever possible.

xiv. It is difficult to separate out the GEF-incremental impact from the on-going baseline initiatives in such programs. Monitoring and evaluation should take better account of the distinction between baseline and incremental inputs and outputs.

xv. Programs under GEF that seek to improve land management should not try to artificially differentiate between “land rehabilitation”, “land under improved management”, “land under improved management of biodiversity”, “plantations with carbon sequestration benefits” as this is counter to the whole concept of improving ecosystems.

#### **MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

xvi. DMP must strive for better coherency overall, integrating its various components, through:

(a) developing the West/ Central Africa – Southern/ Eastern African linkages and interchanges; and

(b) combining the efforts of the IARCs and ARIs into a cohesive scientific program which is distributed better over the whole region with a clearer thematic focus on the link between land management and livelihoods.

Specific ways and means need to be negotiated at the forthcoming steering committee meetings, and this requires the Global Coordinator taking a more proactive role in these two aspects, or clear delegation to the sub-Regional coordinators.

xvii. Profile-raising should be achieved at various levels and by various means. Articulation and dissemination of achievements can be addressed by:

- (1) a professional video featuring up to two DMP initiatives each from four countries, with cross-cutting themes of biodiversity; land conservation; poverty alleviation etc
- (2) attractive and informative brochures and briefing notes developed
- (3) at least a list, but better an annotated bibliography, of DMP's publications

xviii. It is recommended that the capacity of the Global Coordination Unit be strengthened by employing (or delegating) an assistant who is able to relieve the Global Coordinator of some of his regular reporting duties, allowing him – while maintaining accountability for reporting - to spend more time on travel-based hands-on coordination.

xix. The forthcoming book (as yet untitled) must be completed and published as a matter of urgency – and the time and effort it takes to produce such a book must not be underestimated, thus a careful schedule and division of responsibilities should be drawn up.

xx. Specific best-bet technologies should be presented in a much more attractive, standardized way: including diagrams/ photographs, cost-benefit indications etc.

xxi. Thought should be given to investigating further possibilities for labeling of products under an “origin-based product” scheme to exploit a market niche and to cash-in on comparative advantage – as is has been done for organic *Rooibos* tea in South Africa. The *Pomme du Sahel* is a case in point.

xxii. There is an urgent need for DMP to come up with “policy option papers” supported by (standard format) “policy briefs” – on a country basis, but also DMP-overall policy briefs.

xxiii. Strategic exchange/ cross-visits between countries – of personnel at all levels – though costly, should be a hallmark of any further phase. Exchange visits between scientists, community leaders and students will improve the integrated nature of the DMP.

xxiv. To speed up the exchange of information and upscaling of best-bet practices more attention should be given to farmer exchange visits and the use of farmer field-schools.

xxv. DMP must make the link with climate change more evident, and work towards practical policy pointers.

xxvi. Further surveys need to be put in place to determine the impact on poverty of (at least specific) DMP interventions in each country. This should have a particular focus on women and youth.

xxvii. The imperative for a program of the DMP nature is clear and the GEF-related rationale is justified: the performance under Phase II is adequate, and is promising enough to warrant a recommendation that this program is carried forward into a Phase III.

xxviii. Before embarking on a Phase III it is essential that the logframe is adjusted to take into account the new outcomes, targets (etc) that have been developed during the course of the project, and all monitoring and reporting be realigned to conform to this. Learning from the limitations of, and confusions in, the Phase II PWB, a clear and agreed Program of Work and Budget for Phase III should be drawn up and used to guide the process.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBEVIATIONS

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| AMG      | African Market Garden   |
| ARI      | Advanced Research Institute   |
| ASARECA  | Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa   |
| CBD      | Convention on Biological Diversity  |
| CEH      | Centre for Ecology and Hydrology  |
| CIRAD    | Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement |
| CORAF    | Conseil Ouest et centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricole     |
| DMP      | Desert Margins Program  |
| FIRM     | Forum for Integrated Resource Management  |
| FMO      | Financial Management Officer  |
| GCU      | Global Coordination Unit  |
| GEF      | Global Environmental Facility   |
| GIS      | Global Information System   |
| IARC     | International Agricultural Research Centre  |
| ICRAF    | World Agroforestry Centre   |
| ICRISAT  | International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics                    |
| IFDC     | International Fertilizer Development Centre   |
| ILRI     | International Livestock Research Institute  |
| IRD      | Institut de Recherche pour le Développement   |
| LLM      | Local Level Monitoring  |
| Logframe | Logical framework (of the DMP Project Document)                                     |
| NARS     | National Agricultural Research Stations   |
| NGOs     | Non-Governmental Organisations  |
| PIR      | Project Implementation Review   |
| Prodoc   | (DMP) Project Document (officially: “Project Brief”)                                |
| PWB      | DMP Program of Work and Budget, Phase II  |
| SADC     | Southern Africa Development Community   |
| TFPR     | Technical and Financial Progress Report   |
| TOR      | Terms of Reference  |
| TSBF     | Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility   |
| UNCCD    | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification                                 |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Program  |
| UNEP     | United Nations Environment Program  |
| UNFCCC   | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change                               |
| WOCAT    | World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies                          |

## (A) INTRODUCTION

### **Desert Margins Program**

The overall objective of the DMP is to arrest land degradation in Africa's desert margins through demonstration and capacity building activities. The GEF increment to this project will enable the programme to address issues of global environmental importance, in addition to the issues of national economic and environmental importance, and in particular the loss of biological diversity, reduced sequestration of carbon, and increased soil erosion and sedimentation. Key sites harbouring globally significant ecosystems and threatened biodiversity have been selected in each of the nine countries to serve as field laboratories for demonstrations activities related to monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity status, testing of most promising natural resources options, developing sustainable alternative livelihoods and policy guidelines and replicating successful models. The project will make a significant contribution in reducing land degradation in the marginal areas and help conserve biodiversity. Guidelines, recommendations, appropriate technologies and supportive national policies that address biodiversity concerns are envisaged to be in place in implementing countries.

The project's logical framework states

(a) the overall goal of the project to be:

*Conservation and restoration of biodiversity in the Desert Margins through sustainable utilization;*

(b) the purpose as:

*Strategies for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of dryland biodiversity (to enhance ecosystem function and resilience)*

The project is eligible for GEF funding through the Operational Programme 1 on Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems because it addresses biodiversity issues of global significance. The DMP is consistent with Strategic Priority BD-2: Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes and Sectors and Strategic Priority BD-4: Generation and Dissemination of Best Practices for Addressing Current and Emerging Biodiversity Issues. DMP is expected to provide benefits to two focal areas (biodiversity and climate change through carbon sequestration) and is therefore also of relevance to the GEF Operational Programme 12 on Integrated Ecosystem Management as well as 13 on Conservation of Biodiversity important to Agriculture, through its focus on carbon sequestration and conservation of biodiversity within the managed/productive landscape.

The project is executed by ICRISAT in collaboration with UNEP and the National and International Partners. DMP governance is organised according to three levels: national level, sub-regional level (West, and Southern / East Africa), regional level (Africa) including at the GEF level. The governing body for the DMP is a Steering Committee that provides policy guidance and direction. NARS and NGOs are at the centre of the organizational structure. The consortium of partners pools resources and expertise of nine NARS and NGOs, four sub-regional organizations (CORAF for western Africa, SADC/FNAR for southern Africa, and ASARECA for eastern Africa), five IARCs (ICRAF, ICRISAT, IFDC, ILRI, and CIAT-TSBF), and three ARIs (CEH, CIRAD and IRD, with the experience of UNEP and UNDP in the implementation of the CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD).

Phase I of DMP (2003, 2004) was evaluated during the period June-August 2004, and Phase II, the subject of this evaluation began in 2005 and runs until the end of 2006. The overall DMP envisaged a three phase program, continuing until the end of 2008.

## **Evaluation of Phase II of the Desert Margins Program**

An independent evaluation of the second phase of the Desert Margins Program was commissioned by UNEP's Evaluation and Oversight Unit, and carried out by William Critchley between 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007. This period included a visit to four of DMP's member countries, namely South Africa, Namibia, Mali and Niger, between 22<sup>nd</sup> October and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Prior to the field trip, and afterwards, telephone discussions were held with Mohamed Sessay, DMP's UNEP/GEF project officer. After the field trip, the national coordinators from Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe were contacted by e-mail with a questionnaire, as were the various ARIs and IARCs. Several sent informative and useful replies. The underlying approach of the evaluation was to give credit where credit was due, and constructive criticism where deficiencies were found. The field trip in itself was mutually beneficial, and there was genuine appreciation expressed when constructive points were made. It is important to realise that an evaluation is a *process*: it is not simply a report.

In each of the countries visited, the evaluator was briefed by the National Coordinator – Klaus Kellner (South Africa), Bertus Kruger (Namibia), Aly Soumaré (Mali) and Mohamadou Gandah (Niger) respectively - introduced to DMP teams and partner implementing agencies, and was taken on field tours to view various activities. This included benchmark monitoring sites in South Africa and a community meeting in Namibia. In South Africa there was a presentation by all members of the DMP consortium. Throughout, in Southern Africa, the evaluator was accompanied by the sub-Regional Coordinator of DMP, André van Rooyen, and by Ganesh Rauniyar of UNEP EOU who, though officially merely an observer, added valuable and appreciated insights. In West Africa the evaluator was joined by DMP's Global coordinator, Saïdou Koala and the sub-Regional Coordinator, Ramadjita Tabo; for much of the West African trip the coordinators from Burkina Faso (Souleymane Ouedraogo) and Senegal (Tamba Abdourahmane) were also with the group. There was a presentation by the West African country coordinators and the ICRISAT/DMP financial officer, Moussa Diolombi at Sadore. The field trip in Mali took in various sites around Gao to see afforestation, a biodiversity plot and an African Market Garden. In Niger we visited a rehabilitation site, farmers engaged in *zai* pitting and micro-dosing, and the Giraffe reserve.

Terms of Reference (TOR) were developed for the evaluation, and these define the framework for this report (see Annex I). An initial, skeleton draft was produced to meet the deadline of the end of November: this was extensively commented upon by UNEP EOU, and was then revised and extended considerably to form the current document. As will be noted in this report, there was some minor confusion in the TOR regarding “outcomes” and “outputs” of the program. Looking at the various DMP project papers in more detail to get to the bottom of this question, the evaluator found himself getting deeper and deeper into conflicting and confusing documentation regarding outputs, outcomes, objectives, targets and so on. This was a necessary process, but has made the evaluation report a complex “read” in itself – at least in the first section. It should not take away, though, from the broader and more important issues: the findings, the conclusions and recommendations.

It has to be said that the evaluation was greatly facilitated – and made a truly pleasurable experience – due to the openness, courteousness and sense of humour of all those the evaluator came in contact with. Whatever DMP may lack, it has certainly has a pool of wholehearted, dedicated and talented personnel whose efforts are not sufficiently recognised. Very many thanks to all for a stimulating and very worthwhile assignment. I hope this report is taken in a constructive spirit and proves of value.



## (B) PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT: FINDINGS

### (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results:

#### *Introduction*

1. In addressing this section it should be noted that the eight objectives listed in the terms of reference (TOR: Annex I) under 2.1.(i), which are drawn from the project document (prodoc) where they are termed “broader objectives” (see p 13), are *not* listed in the program logframe, where only a generic wider objective (goal) is cited, supported in the logframe by a specific objective (purpose). These - goal and purpose - were allocated quantitative targets during Phase II of the project and these are reflected in the Project Implementation Review (PIR) of June 2006 (see Table One).

2. In view of the limited time and resources available for the evaluation, coupled with the fact that there were no established baselines with respect to the intended outcomes and objectives of the program, the following simplifying assumptions were made in evaluating outcomes:

- a. That the awareness of improved and integrated soil, water, nutrient, vegetation and livestock management technologies was at a low level before the program activities began;
- b. That progress in promoting such DMP technologies in key national policies, and among practitioners more generally, would have been minimal in the absence of the program.

Therefore the outcomes recorded were attributed to the actions under the program

3. There are no outcomes listed in either the project document or the logframe. However these were also later developed by the project, and allocated targets. These three outcomes are briefly addressed in this evaluation report.

4. This section thus begins with the wider and specific objectives, continues with the outcomes – and then moves on to the eight “broader objectives” as listed in the TOR under 2.1.(i).

5. It is immediately apparent that there are a whole series of confusions, contradictions and complications within DMP regarding objectives, outcomes, outputs, targets and results<sup>1</sup>. While Tables One and Two attempt to simplify and clarify, the maze of footnotes required illustrates this complexity. This has also served to make the evaluation considerably more difficult, and inevitably leads to some overlap and repetition in this report (where this occurs it should be taken as confirmation of points/ triangulation rather than redundancy). It also serves to disrupt the flow, but this is inevitable. Striving for clarity, the evaluator has tried to rationalise, simplify and explain as far as is possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Even the TOR of this evaluation were – not surprisingly - confused with respect to the difference between DMP’s outcomes, outputs (e.g. see TOR footnote 2: Annex I), and results (see comment under 1.(i) which states that the “anticipated results” are listed in the logframe: they are not!). This anomaly was pointed out by the evaluator at the outline draft stage and discussed with UNEP EOU.

**Table One: Objectives and Outcomes: targets and PIR rating of Phase II achievements**

| Project Objectives <sup>2</sup>  | End of project target <sup>3</sup>                         | Targets Phase II (“mid-term”)   | PIR progress rating <sup>4</sup> June ‘06  |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1. Wider Objective (Goal)  | 100,000 ha under improved biodiversity mmnt <sup>5</sup> . | 50,000 ha   | 50% = Satisf. (‘S’) <sup>6</sup>   |
| 2. Specific Objective (Purpose)  | 200, 000 ha degraded land rehabilitated                    | 60,000 ha   | 30% = ‘S’  |
|  | 300,000 ha with increased carbon sequestration             | 100,000 ha  | 33% = ‘S’  |
|  | 200,000 farm families with increased income                | 75,000 families   | 37% = ‘S’  |
|  | Policy guidelines supporting these strategies...in place   | Nine benchmark sites characterised and synthesis book prepared/ published   | Some countries modelling CC and studying impact of land use etc = ‘S’  |
| <b>Outcomes<sup>7</sup></b>  |  |   |  |
| 1. Status of biodiversity, causes, dynamics and indicators of land degradation established and used in R&D.  | Policy guidelines for their sustainable use are in place   | List of economically and ecologically important species and list of known endangered species are available to policy makers and end users | Some countries such as Kenya, Namibia and Botswana are already introducing some legislation for their sustainable use ( <i>no rating given</i> ) |
| 2. Crop, tree and livestock system integration promoted. Water and nutrient enhancing techniques developed and integrated.                               | Policy guidelines and legislative measures are in place    | Technical information on best practices, livelihood options and holistic management are in place  | A document summarizing DMP best-bet technologies is now available and is being published ( <i>no rating given</i> )                              |
| 3. Pro-agricultural policies promulgated. Diversification mitigation & biodiversity conservation strategies promoted and adopted. Disaster preparedness. | Relevant policies promulgated regionally and in use        | Relevant information on pro-agricultural development policies are made available to policy makers   | Some DMP partners in Burkina Faso, Senegal, South Africa and Namibia are currently drafting policy options ( <i>no rating given</i> )            |

<sup>2</sup> For clarity: these (“wider” and “specific”) are the only two levels of objectives cited in the logframe. The eight “broader objectives” described in the prodoc (p 13) which are mentioned in the TOR (where they are listed as “anticipated results”) are absent from the logframe, and have no targets attached to them. Neither are they addressed by the PIR. They are therefore not included in this table.

<sup>3</sup> These targets were developed later – after the commencement of Phase II of the project – and are presented in the PIR, as are the mid-term (end of Phase II) targets

<sup>4</sup> Based on data reported by DMP from the field, which is impossible to verify independently, but is plausible, and there is no reason to doubt that these figures are (at least) broadly accurate estimates

<sup>5</sup> These quantified targets have been allocated in the Program of Work and Budget Phase II (PWB) to project outputs number (4) and (6) – see page 2; but the number of farm families to benefit is given in the PWB as 100,000 [ actually “100,00”] rather than the 200,000 in the PIR

<sup>6</sup> Note: assumption in the PIR of June 2006 is that the Phase II targets (the targets as defined in the PIR) have been met in full as the percentage rating refers to the proportion of the end-of-project target

<sup>7</sup> There are no “outcomes” in the prodoc or logframe: these are taken from the PIR of June 2006 where it is noted “the initial logical framework did not identify project outcomes, these were later on identified as a way to help the DMP focus on its initial impacts”: note – these are slightly abridged in Table One.

### *Wider and specific objectives and quantitative targets*

6. The text of these has been reproduced above (see 1), and the quantitative targets<sup>8</sup> allocated to them are given in Table One. It should also be noted that there are indicators – at a higher level than these quantitative targets – elaborated in the logframe. Those indicators are not treated systematically here as they pertain to the overall full-term project, cannot simply be disaggregated into phases, and would be repetitive with the other units of analysis (the eight “broader objectives” of the project document [prodoc] and the three outcomes).

7. Referring to Table One it will be seen that the tangible targets for Phase II refer to area coverage and numbers of families benefiting. These are as cited (and assessed) in the Project Implementation Review (PIR) under “wider and specific objectives”. Similar – though not quite the same – targets are provided by the Program of Work and Budget (PWB) for Phase II under “Milestones”, and these are allocated to Outputs #04 and #06 in the PWB page 2 (see Table Two – where the achievements according to the project’s Technical and Financial Progress Report are recorded under those outputs).

8. There is also apparently some discrepancy between the apparent achievements, comparing the Technical and Financial Progress Report (TFPR) for August 2006 – which gives cumulative achievements to that date under the rubric “conclusion” - with the percentage achievement rating in the PIR<sup>9</sup>. For example the 30% rating for degraded land rehabilitated in the PIR implies 60,000 ha (of the total project target of 200,000 ha), whereas the TFPR cites a total of only 3,000 ha “restored”. Yet the 50% rating for land under improved management in the PIR implies 50,000 ha, while the TFPR gives a total of 150,000 ha under “improved (rangeland) management”. Obviously there has been some internal readjustment/reallocation, which may well be justified, but nevertheless the two documents must agree.

9. In the case of farm families with increased income, the assumption of the PIR (with its rating of 37% of a project total target of 200,000) is that 75,000 families have benefited, whereas the TFPR estimates merely 20,000 families. This latter is the only serious anomaly, and the only indication of significant underachievement compared with targets - if the TFPR is taken as presenting the correct figure. The lack of evidence to support claims of families benefiting from increased incomes is highlighted by these discrepancies, and furthermore represents a clear – and self-admitted - weakness in the program.

10. What is of concern – and this point is picked up again under (2) Achievement of outputs – is that there is little significant difference between the achievements listed in the TFPR of mid-2005 and that of mid-2006, implying stagnation rather than the scaling-up and expansion foreseen (see also paragraph 51).

11. The logframe gives both indicators and means of verification for the wider (goal) and specific (purpose) objectives. It should be noted that these indicators are so general and at such a high (almost abstract) level that they will be practically impossible to assess (e.g. “Improved ecosystem stability”) and the means of verification (e.g. “Survey, monitoring and

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<sup>8</sup> The fact that quantitative targets appear under these higher level objectives (in the PIR, June 2006) means that this section of the evaluation report (1) inevitably overlaps with section (2).

<sup>9</sup> Note: the date of the PIR (June 2006) precedes that of the associated TFPR (August 2006), but it is assumed that they are linked.

site reports”) are vague and imprecise. The TOR of this Phase II evaluation do not require that these be assessed.

### ***Outcomes and results***

12. As pointed out already, the outcomes of DMP were constructed after the project began, and are not to be found in the logframe. They are, in fact, only to be found in the PIR of June 2006 – discounting the completely different “outcomes” given in the table of “Performance Indicators” (p7) in the PWB. The “outcomes” in the PWB, confusingly, are four and comprise quantitative measures of land area treated and numbers of communities with nurseries.

13. The outcomes within the PIR, and assessment of results are as follows:

14. Outcome 1: *Status of biodiversity, causes, dynamics and indicators of land degradation established and used in R&D*: this has been accomplished for each country according to the various reports, but there is no reference to specific documents, and no indication of whether these are being used now in research and development. It is noted that the methodology used was not always consistent.

15. Outcome 2: *Crop, tree and livestock system integration promoted. Water and nutrient enhancing techniques developed and integrated*: There are two documents relevant to this objective – the “Best-Bet” technologies handbook and a booklet entitled “*Alternative Livelihoods: Technologies in selected countries in Africa*”. It is not yet evident what the impact and eventual results will emanate from these, but they constitute a firm foundation.

16. Outcome 3: *Pro-agricultural policies promulgated. Diversification mitigation & biodiversity conservation strategies promoted and adopted. Disaster preparedness*. No specific evidence was found to indicate that this has been achieved, though there is no doubt that DMP’s whole thrust lends weight to these outcomes.

### ***“Broader Objectives”<sup>10</sup>***

17. These eight broader objectives, listed in the project document (p.13) are not found in the logframe and have *no indicators attached to them* against which to assess performance. Neither are they addressed in the PIR. Because, furthermore, they overlap considerably with the seven outputs/ components (which are treated in more detail in this report), they are only briefly assessed here in terms of project performance<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Understanding of Land Degradation***

18. During the evaluation field trip it became evident to the evaluator that the DMP has helped open up important and cutting-edge insights into the causes and impacts of land and biodiversity degradation. Two examples, which were expressed verbally, help illustrate this. In South Africa it was explained that degraded rangeland (under high grazing pressure in “communal areas”) tended to be, ironically, more biodiverse in above ground vegetation than the less degraded rangeland (under lighter grazing pressure in “commercial areas”). In Niger

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<sup>10</sup> Again, for clarity, these are listed in the TOR under “objectives and planned results” as “anticipated results”

<sup>11</sup> As agreed in correspondence with UNEP EOU regarding the TOR

the reasons for patchiness – alternating denuded areas and expanses of “tiger bush” and the complex impact of mechanical rehabilitation on both units was explained. See further comment in paragraph 28.

#### *Documentation of Current Practices*

19. See paragraphs 31, 32 and 36 where policy outputs are discussed.

#### *Development and Extension of Good Practice*

20. With respect to extension of these practices, then the achievements are rather limited and rather localised with respect to most. This localisation is partially because many techniques and vegetation are site specific: the specificity being defined by soils, climate, socio-economic factors etc. The implication is that replicability of many techniques in the drylands is limited, rather than being an indictment of the project itself. This furthermore adds weight to the argument that the drylands cannot be “cured” by a silver bullet approach.

21. Two outputs<sup>12</sup>, videos, have been produced by/ through DMP, and these are a further means of creating impact in terms of extending good practice. The first, namely “*Voices of the Drylands*” which was premiered during the evaluation mission, has been accepted for a film festival in Europe and is of high professional quality; however in parts it must be said that “art triumphs over science” and the DMP-related message consequently becomes blurred. Nevertheless it will have an important awareness-raising function, at least in Southern Africa. The second, focussing on activities in Niger, is strictly a low-budget, amateur production, useful solely as a local training tool.

#### *Evaluation of Policies and Development of Policies:*

22. See paragraphs 43-47 inclusive.

#### *Increase in Research and Extension Capacities*

23. Undoubtedly there are examples of increased capacity at local level in each country: much has been achieved through various training workshops, but there is also a small cadre of DMP-associated personnel in each country visited who have been strongly influenced, encouraged and enlightened by working with the program. While not a specifically-defined target group under DMP, the establishment of a small group of committed and enlightened individuals will be crucial in the long-term sustainability of action. See paragraphs 37, 38 and 39.

#### *Exchange of Information and Technologies*

24. While exchange and spread has happened within the West and Central African sub-Region, this is much less true between countries in Southern and East Africa; even less has spread between the two sub-Regions. Annex IV, compiled on the basis of information on interaction supplied by the two sub-Regional coordinators, while only a crude proxy for exchange and spread, demonstrates this graphically.

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<sup>12</sup> While these videos, strictly speaking, are “outputs”, their function and impact is more relevant to this heading than to any of those under any of the outputs/ components.

25. The website set-up recently under DMP is a welcomed addition. It is quite simple, relatively informative and a good start. This evaluator agrees that not too much time or money should be invested in developing a highly sophisticated website. What exists at the moment can be built up progressively. The newsletter though has barely got off the ground, and while it is available on the website, the current e-mail circulation is very limited.

### *Use of climate change scenarios*

26. There is no evidence to show that climate change scenarios have been developed: climate change is mentioned in the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) report, but it does not (as far as this evaluator has seen) appear conspicuously elsewhere. There is also mention that experimentation has been carried out by the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD).

## **(2) Achievement of outputs (components) and activities:**

27. There are seven outputs/components in the logframe of the prodoc; they are also subject to indicators and means of verification. These are treated in turn below. In Table Two, these outputs/components are analyzed by targets and achievements both at overall and Phase II levels.

**Table Two: Components/ Outputs compared with targets and achievements; overall and Phase II**

| <b>Components/ Outputs</b>  | <b>Main target indicator in Logframe</b>  | <b>Achievements Phase I<sup>13</sup></b>  | <b>Targets Phase II<sup>14</sup></b>   | <b>Achievements at August 2006<sup>15</sup></b>  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1. Improved understanding of ecosystem and dynamics with regard to loss of biodiversity | At least 10% communities promoting sustainable ecosystem management technologies in 3 years<br><br>(+ 13 specific indicators) | <i>No data on main indicator</i><br><br><u>W/C Africa</u><br>Detailed lists endemic & endangered spp. all countries (but “understanding not clear in some”) <sup>16</sup><br><br>Niger characterised water ponds and Giraffe reserve<br><br><u>E/S Africa</u><br><br>Greater understanding of desertification...being developed<br><br>All countries developed well-planned site characterisation reports: standardisation of | <u>Milestones (2005)</u><br><br>Benchmark sites characterised<br><br>Endemic and endangered spp. and major causes of land deg. published<br><br>Indicators developed to monitor trends<br><br>Interactive database updated and maintained<br><br>Reports on status of biodiversity, land degradation and livelihoods | <i>A large number of individual activities/impacts reported but not systematically related to the specific indicators in the main logframe or the milestones of the PWB phase II..These include:</i> |

<sup>13</sup> Source: Phase I Synthesis reports from West/Central and East/Southern Africa respectively

<sup>14</sup> Source: Program of Work and Budget (PWB) Phase II: Table entitled “Milestones”. There is no categorisation under Milestones by the seven output/ component categories of the logframe. The evaluator has attempted to categorise in the table above (using as a basis the “Expected Outputs” in the same document (PWB, page 2) – which appears to refer to the overall project and which *do* allocate area-based targets to outputs/ components). There is another table in the PWB entitled “Performance Indicators” which *also* has defined quantitative targets for 2005 and 2006 - but these are *not* consistent with those used under Milestones, or with the targets in the PIR of June 2006 (see Table One). They have not been reproduced in this table to avoid adding to the confusion.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Technical and Financial Progress Report, August 2006 (note: the summary data under “conclusions” are almost exactly the same as those quoted in the parallel report 12 months previously indicating little progress in that period: these data are assumed to be cumulative)

<sup>16</sup> Note: evaluator’s use of inverted commas to draw attention to portions of text (though all text is taken from reports, apart from that in *italics* which is comment by the evaluator)

|   |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
|   |   | methodologies required.  | Standardised data collection methodologies<br><br><u>Milestones (2006)</u><br><br>Conservation and restoration strategies evaluated and disseminated<br><br>Book on soil fertility research in W/C Africa published<br><br>Report on major biochemical processes | [PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “HS” overall]   |
| 2. Strategies for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of degraded agro-ecosystems developed and implemented | At least 3 technologies developed by year 3<br><br>At least 1 technology implemented at each site by year 5<br><br>(+ 6 specific indicators)  | <i>No data on main indicator</i><br><br><u>W/C Africa</u><br>Info on best-bet NRM options compiled<br><br>Various options tested in B-F, Mali and Niger<br><br><u>E/S Africa</u><br><br>Collaboration between South Africa and Namibia in further developing <i>Eco-restore</i><br><br>Kenya engaged with several technologies | <u>Milestones (2005)</u><br><br>Reports on best-bet practices available<br><br><u>Milestones (2006)</u><br><br>Three best bet technologies for up/ outscaling identified   | African Market Gardens; Sahelian Ecofarm; Fertilizer micro-dosing; Eco-restore; <i>mise en defens</i> identified<br><br>[PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “HS” overall] |
| 3. Capacity of stakeholders and target populations enhanced   | At least 10% target population able to apply sustainable NRM principles by end project<br><br>90% partners have intervention capacity strengthened<br><br>All communities are set up and operational<br><br>(+ 7 specific indicators) | <i>No data on main indicator</i><br><br><u>W/C Africa</u><br>Nutrient monitoring training w/shop<br><br>Methodology w/shop<br><br>Modeling w/shop<br><br>Agroforestry w/shop<br><br>Field courses (various)<br><br><u>E/S Africa</u><br><br>“Huge” amount of work done. Numerous activities                                    | <u>Milestones 2005</u><br><br>Training needs assessed and published in 2005<br><br>Training on biodiversity strategies and assessment, monitoring and prevention of land degradation<br><br><u>Milestones (2006)</u><br><br>Training packages published          | 2 communities with more than 100 farmers linked to international markets in southern and east Africa<br><br>[PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “S” overall]              |
| 4. Alternative livelihood systems tested and promoted   | At least one alternative livelihood activity being practised in target areas by end of project<br><br>(+ 3 specific indicators)   | <i>No data on main indicator</i><br><br><u>W/C Africa</u><br><br>African Market Garden (AMG): “a number” of farmers selected for pilot plots<br><br>Various experiments<br><br>Fruit tree propagation: mother tree plantation established  | <u>Milestones 2005</u><br>(none specified)<br><br><u>Milestones (2006)</u><br><br>Sustainable alternative livelihoods options tested<br><br>50, 000 farm families with increased income<br><br>300,000 “Pomme du   | 3 promising alternative and improved livelihood strategies being implemented<br><br>More than 150,000 tree seedlings produced<br><br>Estimated 20,000 farm families benefiting<br><br>More than 350,000      |

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
|  |  | <p>AMG training/ demo plot: 1,200 farmers visited from Niger</p> <p>Date palm nursery established</p> <p>Sahelian Eco-farm: trial/ demo plot established</p> <p><u>E/S Africa</u></p> <p>Surveys carried out</p> <p>Sustainable <i>Rooibos</i> tea production in South Africa being supported through DMP</p> | <p>Sahel” grafted</p> <p>1,500 African Market Gardens established</p> <p>200 nursery men trained</p>   | <p>grafted and planted</p> <p>340 installed and being expanded</p> <p>20 tree nurseries put in place and being established</p> <p>[PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “S” overall]</p>  |
| 5. Sound policy interventions/ guidelines for sustainable resource use formulated, adopted and implemented | <p>At least one policy guideline formulated in participatory manner at local community level by year 2</p> <p>Formulated guidelines are tested at least one per country site by project end</p> <p>(+ 3 specific indicators)</p> | <p><i>No data on main indicator</i></p> <p><u>W/C Africa</u></p> <p>“Efforts made” in all 4 countries to document existing policies</p> <p><u>E/S Africa</u></p> <p>Mention of collaborative work on national policy in Namibia, Kenya and an analysis in South Africa</p>                                    | <p><u>Milestones (2005)</u></p> <p>Sound policies for conservation of biodiversity and land degradation documented</p> <p><u>Milestones (2006)</u><br/>(none specified)</p>  | <p>[PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “S” overall]</p>   |
| 6. Participatory NRM methods are implemented   | <p>Participatory NRM methods published, known and used by local communities in at least 50% project sites</p> <p>(+ 5 specific indicators)</p>   | <p><i>No data on main indicator</i></p> <p><u>W/C Africa</u></p> <p>“Various [...] strategies and alternative livelihood options tested: good results”</p> <p><u>E/S Africa</u></p> <p>“Much work done”, but it is “essentially the focus of the second phase”</p>  | <p><u>Milestones (2005)</u><br/>(none specified)</p> <p><u>Milestones (2006)</u></p> <p>10,000 ha under improved management for biodiversity done and documented (then: “20,000 ha more”)<sup>17</sup></p> <p>20,000 ha degraded land rehabilitated (then: “50,000 ha degraded land rehabilitated”)<sup>18</sup></p> | <p>50,000 ha land in South Africa under improved management of biodiversity</p> <p>1,500 ha biodiversity gardens, “mise en defens” and rangelands under improved management</p> <p>Approx. 5,000 ha rehabilitated with PduS and A. Senegal</p> <p>3,000 ha land restored in southern and east Africa</p> <p>150,000 ha land under improved rangeland management in southern and east Africa</p> <p>[PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “S” overall]</p> |

<sup>17</sup> In the Milestones for 2006, there are two separate entries for biodiversity management (points 5 and 7): it is assumed these relate to the two sub-Regions.

<sup>18</sup> In the Milestones for 2006, there are two separate entries for degraded lands rehabilitated (points 6 and 8): once again, it is assumed these relate to the two sub-Regions.



|  |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| 7 Target populations involved at each stage of project cycle | All components are involved in the design, implementation and follow-up/ evaluation of the project<br><br>(+ 3 specific indicators) | <i>No data on main indicator</i><br><br><u>W/C Africa</u><br><br>“Carried out” in all the 4 countries. Various group discussions....<br><br><u>E/S Africa</u><br><br>Most DMP partners made efforts to include vulnerable groups<br><br>Exchange visits between communities taken place in South Africa | <u>Milestones (2005)</u><br><br>Participation of vulnerable groups enhanced<br><br><u>Milestones (2006)</u><br>(none specified) | “FIRM” approach being successfully disseminated to South Africa and Botswana [PIR report of June 2006 grading = “S” for each specific indicator and “S” overall] |
|--|---|---|---|--|

*Improved understanding of ecosystem and dynamics with regard to loss of biodiversity*

28. The evidence for the “understanding of land degradation” will be clarified in a forthcoming book<sup>19</sup>, where the various studies will be interpreted and presented. It is not yet clear when this publication will be forthcoming, and as no draft was shown to the evaluator there must be some serious doubt about whether this will be published until late 2007. It is not referred to specifically in the logframe, though it effectively comprises the consolidated reports and publications foreseen under output one. The timeline for these is vague in the prodoc, and the PWB is silent regarding the book.

29. The series of rangeland benchmark plots in South Africa is an example of an academic study –forming the basis of one DMP researcher’s PhD - that is in urgent need of distillation into practical implications for range management (see Photo Annex VII). These plots – fenced off and isolated - have little evident practical value in terms of developing range management strategies, yet there has been a wealth of information collected and analysed. It is critical that this be “interpreted” or its value towards DMP goals will be greatly diminished.

30. Interpretation and presentation goes equally for the socio-economic and biophysical parameters. This “understanding” needs to be documented and shared with decision makers and practitioners. As noted already, it is not just the climate and soils that differentiate countries, zones and locations in the drylands – it is the people as well. While superficially the Sahel may resemble the Kalahari, there are very important differences (not least in terms of the political legacy) that simply have to be comprehended. It is understood that this will comprise part of the book mentioned above in paragraph 28.

*Strategies for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of degraded agro-ecosystems developed and implemented*

31. It is noted, and commended, that one member of the South African team has visited the other member countries of the DMP to help establish this database of good practice. This is agreed by all to have been a very useful and cost-effective exercise – and the evaluator concurs with this opinion. Many of these are the basis for the best-bets described in the

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<sup>19</sup> As yet untitled: one proposal is “Status of biodiversity and land degradation in dryland sub-Saharan Africa”

following section, and are recorded in the Best-Bets handbook and the colourful and attractive booklet produced under the South African country program entitled “*Alternative Livelihoods: Technologies in selected countries in Africa*”

32. There are a number of examples of good practice that have been developed (or more often “further developed” after being initiated by previous programs - and this should not be viewed negatively: DMP ought to build on what has gone before). In the evaluator’s judgement these developments have added value to several techniques/ systems by refining them – and the marginal returns outweigh the marginal costs. In many ways this is a strategy that characterises many of the success of DMP: not so much inventing the wheel as oiling the axle.

33. These examples do not need to be listed exhaustively in this report as they are the subject of the Best-Bets handbook<sup>20</sup>. Many are relatively well known (for example *demi-lunes* and *zai* pits in West Africa). These two, combined with micro-dosing of fertilizer and the “warrantage system” (basically an input-credit and storage system) have very wide potential in the West African Sahel, and there is strong demand from the local people for a kick-start. Furthermore these techniques thrive on previously degraded land, which is brought back into production. This is a clear example of a win-win/ conservation-production combination.

34. Several other technologies are novel and imaginative – making active use of the comparative advantage of the resources in the desert margins. Notable in this respect are organic *Rooibos* tea production (see Photo Annex VII), and the use of bird inventories as indicators of range condition in South Africa; the *Pomme du Sahel* (“Apple of the Sahel”: grafted *Ziziphus* sp. see Photo Annex VII) in West Africa; micro-dosing in Niger; and the evolving participatory range management strategies in Namibia. The development and promotion of these represents a core strength of DMP. Not all have broad applicability and thus the potential for spread (*Rooibos* will always be relatively limited due to biophysical and climatic requirements) but others certainly do. In this respect the use of micro-dosing and participatory range management are, respectively, a technology and an approach that have a passport to travel the continent: more prosaically, they have very wide applicability domains.

35. The potential to capitalise on medicinal plants – such as “devils claw” (in Namibia) is particularly promising (see Photo Annex VII). However the potential of devil’s claw has not yet been adequately followed up by the Namibian component: it was explained that this was something planned for the near future. It should be given priority. It is noted by the evaluator that the most recent TFPR (August 2006) talks of value-addition to traditional medicine and conservation of medicinal plants in Burkina Faso, though there is no specific information given.

36. The Best-Bets handbook is strong in parts (it has a useful summary) but missing, or not documented, is the crucial aspect of costs and benefits. Neither are there detailed descriptions, photographs or diagrams. It serves mainly as an inventory and a check list of how these best-bets contribute to DMP’s objective. The “*Alternative Livelihoods: Technologies in selected countries in Africa*” booklet is attractive and well presented in terms of a mixture of basic notes, photographs and diagrams. The latter has more value in spreading messages. Both could be improved by basing themselves on the format developed by the WOCAT program: an example of a technology and an approach (from the West African Sahel) is attached at Annex VI.

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<sup>20</sup> ICRISAT, 2006: “Best-bet technologies adopted in DMP Member Countries”

### *Capacity of stakeholders and target populations enhanced*

37. The areas in which capacity has been built include both technical knowledge regarding biodiversity and processes of land degradation/ rehabilitation and production. But it is also evident that participatory approaches (demand-led and participatory research in particular) are being strongly and successfully encouraged through DMP, especially in Southern Africa where these are relatively new concepts.

38. In some cases capacity building has been within the academic community: the best example comprises several students active as researchers within the South African program. In a single case a student (from Niger) has followed his PhD in a DMP-partner country (South Africa) on a DMP-related topic (land degradation). This evidently has been a good arrangement, with a suitable topic, able student and useful outputs. It is surprising that this has been limited to just one case, under an *ad hoc* arrangement, rather than being part of a defined strategic approach to capacity building (with in-built elements of sustainability and regional exchange).

39. The role of the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs) and the Advanced Research Institutes (ARIs) in capacity building and research has been sporadic, and limited largely to West and Central Africa. Annex V presents an overview of the countries in which the IARCs and ARIs have principally been active: the pronounced clustering within West and Central Africa is striking. A specific example of where the spread could be wider is the case of ILRI which surely (as the evaluator was told more than once) should be involved in Southern Africa.

### *Alternative livelihood systems tested and promoted*

40. Alternative livelihoods formed a cornerstone of the DMP in its design: the reason was to offer people other ways of making a living than simply depending on basic primary production in the drylands. The logframe is, however, unclear as to what would be expected, and the overall indicator “*at least one alternative livelihood activity being practised in target areas by end of project*” is as feeble as it is vague. The prodoc gives a little more information on what is foreseen (improved production; better marketing of products; micro-enterprises), but nowhere is it made clear where the line is drawn between the development of technologies that assist in rehabilitation/ better management of rangeland resources (see paragraph 31 and onwards) and “alternative livelihoods”.

41. The TFPR reports under components/ outputs, and here we can see what DMP considers to be “alternative livelihoods”. The “African Market Garden” in West Africa, featuring low pressure drip irrigation (see Photo Annex VII), is one, organic *Rooibos* tea production another, vegetable gardening (“food gardens”) in South Africa another, and bee keeping and production of organic honey in Kenya one more. In relation to targets developed under the PWB (taking the “Performance Indicators” table) DMP has underachieved in terms of African Market Gardens (340 compared with 800)<sup>21</sup> and in terms of tree seedlings produced (200,000

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<sup>21</sup> There is some question about how many of these African Market Gardens can be “claimed” by DMP; and this raises the vexed question of where to draw the line with respect to outputs emanating from broad partnerships. There is no doubt however that the DMP has given

compared with 300,000) as well as with *Pomme du Sahel* graftlings (550,000 compared with 700,000). Nevertheless these figures can be considered creditable in absolute terms, as well as credible based on observations during the field visit, and the figure of blame pointed at over-ambitious internal targets. But the caveat regarding the slow rate of upscaling and impact in paragraph 51 is applicable here also.

42. There is some evidence of localised exchange and transfer of information and technologies. Extension campaigns that are working include those around the *Pomme du Sahel* and African Market Garden within the Sahel; the evidence of the spread is to be seen in the numbers quoted above – and from visual observation during the evaluation mission.

*Sound policy interventions/ guidelines for sustainable resource use formulated, adopted and implemented*

43. In most countries there has been a thorough examination of policies relating to the environment. For example a recent workshop in Dakar organised by ICRAF investigated policies regarding natural resources, and specifically those covering forestry/ agroforestry. Botswana has finalised a report; in South Africa the process is on-going and in Kenya, Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal, DMP is involved in national reviews of policy for dryland areas. These serve as reference points for development of new policy - and strengthening the implementation of existing policies.

44. At national level there has been little impact on policy change (either policy development or the implementation of existing policies). Nevertheless there are examples of DMP personnel contributing to policy discussion/ policy development alongside their roles in DMP. An example is the involvement (of the National Coordinator and others within the DMP core team) in the formulation development of *LandCare* policy in South Africa. This is helped by the fact that the DMP serves as a channel (or is the main channel) for implementation of action plans under the CBD and CCD in several of the countries, as the evaluator was told: it should be recollected that the main DMP actors in most countries are and have been, anyway, closely involved in these conventions and action plans.

45. The TFPR reports that policy briefs have been prepared and published in six of the nine countries (these have not been seen by the evaluator).

46. There is evidence that policy has been addressed at the local-level; and this is largely under-recognised and under-reported by DMP. Examples of this are the influence on and the association with, mayors in Mali (see Photo Annex VII), and Chiefs and Councillors in Southern Africa. In the example from Mali, DMP has supported the development and implementation of local level protocols for protection of natural resources by communities.

47. South Africa is a special case where “alternative” views on rangeland and its management are accommodated under the national program: this is a direct result of the heterogenic composition of the South African national DMP consortium. The diversity of opinion makes a single policy position difficult in a number of areas – particularly those concerning land reform and range management policies. On the other hand it could be argued that is an opportunity to develop different “policy options”.

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significant stimulus to the uptake of these gardens in the judgement of the evaluator.

### *Participatory NRM methods are implemented*

48. What comes across strongly – from the documentation, through discussions and indeed was very evident during the field trip – is that DMP is action-oriented. There are multiple and varied activities underway, and the fact that they are scattered and relatively localised does not make them less valuable. This is the reality of low population-density semi-arid areas, where “bush-fire” spread of technologies cannot be expected. Indeed, in keeping with the observation made in paragraph 20, answers in the drylands comprise a mixed bag, and within that “bag” different situations will chose different options. Some activities (we have already noted the *zai* and micro-dosing for example in the Sahel) will spread widely; others (such as the *Rooibos* tea initiative) will be necessarily limited in scope.

49. The guiding documents on the scale of achievements are national reports, centrally compiled half-yearly Technical and Financial Progress Reports (TFPR) and the Project Implementation Reviews (PIR). It is noted that the last two PIR reports (June 2005/ June 2006) have recorded progress as “Satisfactory” or “Highly Satisfactory” under each section graded (see Table 2). While it is very difficult to substantiate objectively the data supporting those ratings, the first (June 2005) is fair in the opinion of this evaluator, while the second (June 2006) must be considered somewhat generous on account of the slow rate of progress.

50. This report has already discussed achievement of target coverage of land management under paragraphs 7,8,9,10 and achievement of alternative livelihood targets under paragraph 41.

51. The PIRs are assembled on the basis of the TFPRs: but it is a worry that in the “conclusions” section of the June 2005 and August 2006 TFPRs (these conclusion sections basically summarise achievements to-date: though there ought to be a clear separation between “cumulative to-date” and “achieved during the reporting period”) quote *almost identical* cumulative achievements (e.g. “3,000 ha of land restored in southern and eastern Africa”). Of the 16 items quantified, only 3 show any increase (of which only one - the doubling in farm-families benefiting, from 10,000 to 20,000 - is really significant). This is apparently *not* an error – but indicates the fact that there has been negligible up and out-scaling during the main part of Phase II.

52. As discussed already, the latest PIR does list achievements/ implementation status – at 30 June 2006 – as a percentage of end-of-project targets. These are based on estimated data reported from the field. In all cases these are more or less acceptable, though the three categories covering (a) rehabilitation of degraded land, (b) area with increased carbon sequestered and (c) number of farm families with increased income<sup>22</sup>, all fall around one-third of end-of-project target. This is a reason for speeding up activities in the field as well as some cause for some concern.

### *Target populations involved at each stage of project cycle*

53. The last component/ output of the DMP is more of a cross-cutting theme than an output itself: the very phrasing of the “output” lends weight to this argument. But it is an area where

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<sup>22</sup> Note concern about this figure expressed in paragraph 9

DMP generally excels. With the exception of the rangeland monitoring benchmark plots in South Africa, which were basically non-participatory (and should have at least involved some participatory monitoring), almost all other activities reviewed involved the target populations to a high degree.

54. The Local Level Monitoring (LLM) and The Forum for Integrated Resource management (FIRM) approaches which originated in Namibia are excellent examples of this. LLM upgrades the ability of land user to monitoring the condition of their rangeland and livestock and then enlightens them on how to make informed decision *themselves* about stocking rates and management of their herds. FIRM basically comprises a structured methods of participatory ranking/ prioritising development needs at local level. Both are now finding popular demand in neighbouring South Africa and Botswana.

55. In South Africa, the *Rooibos* tea project and the vegetable gardens in the Cape are fully participatory – and implemented by DMP associates with venerable records of involvement in such approaches. (see also paragraph 37 for a comment on how relatively new these participatory concepts are in South Africa and Namibia).

56. In West Africa there is a longer tradition of participatory approaches/ involvement of the local population in development projects, and this was evident in all of the activities seen. For example in Mali, a tree planting project visited was introduced by the local chief in the presence of villagers – both men and women, and the evaluator invited to question them. In Niger, whichever project was visited (African Market Gardens; land rehabilitation schemes; *zai* and micro-dosing; Giraffe sanctuary) there was always evidence of participation and villages available to be questioned.

### **(3) Cost-effectiveness:**

57. DMP should not be viewed as an expensive program to the GEF. There is a large fount of co-funding; both in terms of cash and kind (see Annex II). The more important question is whether the money is being spent effectively.

58. There were two specific concerns raised during discussions. The first was the impact/ cost-effectiveness of the collaboration with the IARCs and the ARIs (the international organisations' costs are especially high), and particularly because there appears to be a lack of a coordinated research program connecting these organizations. That indeed is a concern.

59. The second was the relatively large amount of money directed towards the Global Coordination Unit (GCU) – or as it was occasionally put to the evaluator, West Africa receiving a greater “slice of the cake” than East and Southern Africa. The amount allocated from the GEF to the GCU was (approx) US\$ 1.0 million out of a total budget of US\$ 5.6 million for Phase II. An 18% coordination allocation is high, and needs to be justified by a strong performance.

60. This criticism could be dispelled by two arguments. The first is readily done: the Global Coordination Unit has to be placed in one or the other region and its base within ICRISAT in Niamey is logical (though it could be argued that Kenya would have been a more “neutral” home). The second is not so easily defended: the GCU should represent value for money and this evaluation finds that this is indeed an area for improvement. Several of the recommendations address ways in which this can be better achieved.

#### **(4) Financial Planning:**

61. Data and information from the FMO in Nairobi demonstrate that:

- (a) Financial reporting has been regular and of a high standard;
- (b) Around 90% of the planned expenditure will have been spent by the end of Phase II, which is commendable in terms of timely disbursement; and with respect to the reported achievements of DMP it is reasonable;
- (c) The unspent balance would provide for 3 months more of spending;
- (d) The Executing Agency is proposing a budget-neutral extension into 2007: this is a reasonable and sensible request to allow important activities to continue and to avoid a hiatus between Phase II and III.

62. Nationally speaking, while financial reporting procedures are clear, it is apparent that not all of the country programs understand the phasing of the program (when Phase II officially began or will end). Confusion also exists with regard to how co-funding is calculated, and the accounting for co-funding: this has been (apparently) consistently under-reported<sup>23</sup>. There is evidently need for more guidance on these issues, to the national coordinators, from the GCU.

63. There is one explicit and reported mention of a financial misunderstanding with one of the ARIs (the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology). According to the CEH Report dated October 2006, as a result of the CEH budget for Phase I being unilaterally cut by DMP: *“It took several months before agreement could be reached over the Phase II contract and work plan”*.

64. In one case, South Africa, there was an observation by the national management that since the beginning of DMP, the Rand has appreciated in value considerably in relation to the US dollar, thereby constraining activities<sup>24</sup>. This was not seen as a problem though in Namibia, despite the fact that the Namibian dollar is pegged one to one with the SA Rand.

65. The mechanisms for financial monitoring are in place and function effectively, though it is noted that countries are slow in reporting. Some concerns were raised that the requirements for auditing of accounts differed from country to country.

66. Within ICRISAT – the Executing Agency – financial controls are tight, with an internal control approximately each year (February 2006; November 2006) and an external audit again once a year (January 2006; January 2007).

67. Zimbabwe is a special case, with multiple problems and constraints in fund flows and lack of accounting for funds. The situation is too complex to present here in detail, but in summary financial reports were not submitted on time (though apparently they have been now), and the situation has led to various complications, and is not yet fully resolved. However the sub-Regional coordinator (who is based in Zimbabwe) appears to have the situation under control (though creativity and dedicated application), and is in contact with DMP financial management with respect to this. A temporary solution has been direct funding through the

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<sup>23</sup> See Annex IIIb for a schedule of co-funding

<sup>24</sup> Exchange rates (SA Rand: US \$) 8.6:1.0 in January 2003; 6.6:1.0 in January 2004; 5.7:1.0 in January 2005 and 6.3:1.0 in January 2006

sub-Regional coordinator. As an endnote here, despite these problems the Zimbabwe program has apparently made good implementation progress.

### **(5) Impact:**

68. The overall impact of the program on poverty is not yet proven: it is “assumed and believed” – according to the CGU - that DMP has generally helped impact positively on families in the desert margins. While there is no hard evidence to back this up, there is no reason either to dispute it.

69. The evaluator notes that there are several specific assessments of impact on livelihoods underway: for example in Senegal on the *mise en defens* system and on cows/ milk/ household nutrition/ livelihoods (country not specified: see August 2006 TFPR).

70. Once again, although it is evident that women (for example within the community visited in Namibia) and youth (for example an African Market Garden seen in Mali) are involved in the program, there is no means currently in place of assessing this impact.

71. By exploiting comparative advantage niches, and specialised products in particular, DMP has begun to pursuing an avenue rich in promise for future impact.

72. DMP admits that there is a problem of scaling-up and scaling-out on a tangible hectares covered/ families affected (see paragraph 10) but impact should not simply be judged on primary factors. Secondary impact comprising awareness raised, capacity built, partners supported, advocacy, is as important, and DMP has almost certainly had more impact at this level – though this is understandably hard to measure.

### **(6) Sustainability:**

73. There is little doubt that much of what is being put in place under DMP will have a very good chance of continuation – either under DMP in the short/ medium term, or under follow-on projects and programs. TerrAfrica<sup>25</sup> should and will surely learn from DMP and take forward the positives. This is major opportunity to consolidate and expand DMP’s better initiatives.

74. In many ways (and this is reflected in other sections here) one of DMP’s main strengths, which is not recognized enough, is its partnership building. Its name should perhaps have been the “Desert Margins *Partnership*”. The main partners in question are the implementing agencies in each country with their own contact partners. During the field visit this was seen most clearly in South Africa, whose program is run through a consortium of partners, and in Niger where various NGOs and Government Agencies are associated/ affiliated to the program.

75. Most of the technical and socio-technical interventions will persist, and many will evolve. One considers here the constantly evolving technologies associated with *Ziziphus* sp. and *Acacia senegal* grafting and land rehabilitation in West Africa – both mechanized and

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<sup>25</sup> A major new initiative to be coordinated by the World Bank



implemented by hand, and the Local Level Monitoring in Southern Africa. These have picked up momentum that will not be easily lost.

76. DMP has not constructed elaborate buildings, bought a fleet of vehicles centralized within a project enclave, or employed a cadre of personnel. It is characterized rather by working through, and capacity building of, existing personnel and channeling efforts through current institutional structures. In this respect when DMP as a discretely funded program eventually comes to a close, there should be less of a problem to sustain what has been put in place.

77. There are some dangers of non-sustainability, particularly if DMP is terminated before reaching its third phase. These are those most closely associated with the ICRISAT centre itself in Niger. “African Market Gardens”, the Sahelian Eco-farm and the vigorous program of fruit tree grafting/ upgrading, it is not yet evident that these would be able to take off if support for them was dropped at this stage.

#### **(7) Stakeholder participation / public awareness:**

78. Several allusions to “participation” are made in these findings. It was been mentioned in respect to activities in each of the countries visited. It was evident at first hand during the field trip that the programs in Namibia (a community rangeland management meeting was attended: see Photo Annex VII) and throughout the trip in West Africa, that land users are deeply involved. The ‘FIRM’ project in Namibia, for example, is a participatory planning tool. There is abundant demand for expansion of the *zai*/ micro-dosing/ warrantage system in Niger: DMP is responding to these.

79. But this is not to say that DMP is a program that is through-and-through participatory. Some parts remain relatively traditional and research-driven: the rangeland monitoring process in South Africa is a case in point. (See discussion under related heading in paragraphs 53-56).

80. Public awareness is hard to judge. While DMP is quite widely understood for what it is, at least locally, there remains a sensation that its overall “identity” could be improved considerably through awareness creation campaigns<sup>26</sup>. The general importance of establishing widespread credibility, and specifically demonstrating comparative advantage in semi-arid area research and development cannot be underestimated. The DMP is ideally positioned to capitalise on this “development market niche”, but has not yet seized the opportunity adequately. This is key in its efforts to scale-up and out.

#### **(8) Country ownership / drivenness:**

81. There is a strong sense of country ownership under DMP. Countries indeed rely on DMP (or DMP personnel “wearing another hat”) to represent them at international meetings on desertification, biodiversity etc. Ironically the degree of country ownership is strengthened by

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<sup>26</sup> This evaluator happened – by chance - to be present at the DMP presentation at the UNCCD-COP in Nairobi during October 2005: his notes on that presentation indicate that the DMP came across (to him) as a conventional programme, emphasising well-known technologies such as *zai* pits and *demi-lunes*.

a relative *lack* of regional or pan-Africa identity. Several interviewees failed to appreciate the DMP as a truly regional, multi-country interactive program.

82. The only minor qualification to sense of national identity appears to be South Africa, where there is apparently some resistance by Government to fully embracing DMP because of its being relatively isolated within an academic institution (a university). Nonetheless, as noted in the previous paragraph, South Africa too relies on DMP to represent it at relevant fora, nationally and internationally.

### **(9) Implementation approach:**

83. The overall DMP Steering Committee has apparently functioned effectively, though some concern was expressed to the evaluator that the support research agencies (IARCs and ARIs) are not “fully represented”. It is difficult however to envisage the justification for a larger committee than the current one, in practical or financial terms. Quite why the sub-Regional Coordinators are officially “observers” (yet they *de facto* participate) is a mystery. But this has little practical implication.

84. The Steering Committee reports indicate a lively exchange of views and information, and this constitutes the main mechanism for interaction between the various national entities within DMP. It is the only regular forum for face-to-face interaction. This is the forum where, for example, the Phase II PWB was finalised and approved (despite this evaluator’s misgivings about that document). The steering committee is a key component of DMP.

85. At national level, the Steering Committees are just as diverse in structure as the country programs themselves are different. But once again these are understood to function effectively, and are used primarily to oversee work plans/ logframes and budgets. They check and guide national coordination.

86. Documentation in general – at all levels - is not commensurate with the status of the DMP. Neither is there a ready list of publications. It might be expected that a general “briefing note” or a series of these would be available in both languages to inform a newcomer. One exception is under the national South African program where these do exist – and provide an attractive and informative example that might be followed. There are also some other good publications from South Africa (on alternative livelihoods) and Namibia (on LLM and FIRM). But these are the exception rather than the rule, and some of these are not directly attributable to DMP support.

87. The STAT (Scientific and Technical Advisory Taskforce) - a proposed, *ad hoc* advisory body, apparently hasn’t yet functioned. This is apparently due to lack of demand from the country programs, but concern was raised (and shared by the evaluator) that certain specific advice (on policy; on some technical aspects of the program; on public relations) would be welcomed.

88. UNDP (replying to an e-mail questionnaire) feels that it has not been adequately involved as a partner under DMP. No specific details were given.

89. Some of the recommendations of the Phase 1 evaluation have been partially addressed but several have not.

- Those adequately addressed include:
  - (a) extending Phase I to the end of 2004;
  - (b) increasing attention to dryland silviculture (though with a sensible focus on directly productive species: the recommendation was far too sweeping in this evaluator's judgement);
  - (c) website and newsletter have been introduced.
  
- Those inadequately addressed and still require attention are:
  - (a) the need for more up-scaling;
  - (b) strengthened program management and coordination;
  - (c) publicity and outreach;
  - (d) increasing cross-border visits by farmers; and
  - (e) improved data collection.

90. One of the major problems with DMP is the lack of strong connection between the two sub-Regions. This was expressed by several of those spoken to, and is demonstrated graphically in Annex IV which is the result of the two sub-Regional Coordinators being asked to note down instances of exchange (principally of personnel) between countries. There is clearly a West/ Central African cluster and an East/ Southern Africa cluster also. Naturally there are significant costs involved in moving people across the regions, but DMP tends to be too isolated within countries and within regions.

91. The role of the global coordination unit is clear, though there some dissatisfaction with the level of performance of this unit, and two criticisms within the DMP are to be heard. The first is the poor (and slow) standard of reporting by the unit and the second is the relative isolation of the Global Coordinator.

92. It is evident from all those spoken to that the relationship between the DMP project staff and UNEP-GEF in Nairobi is excellent, and the oversight function is carried out diligently and creatively.

#### **(10) Replicability:**

93. The project document tends to simplify the problems and the potential solutions by highlighting the similarities within Africa's desert margins. These are in fact quite diverse, for biophysical, demographical and political reasons. The considerable challenge facing DMP is made all the more difficult for these reasons. Nevertheless the approaches to the problems require a common touch: this implies involvement of the target group, building on local comparative advantage in producing goods and services etc.

94. The replicability of DMP (to other countries in Africa: for example Mauritania; Chad; Ethiopia) can be viewed from different angles. Technologies and approaches to implementation will cross some boundaries. There is certainly potential for this, and but much will hinge on attractive technology descriptions and the implementation of exchange visits.

95. Expansion of DMP into other countries is also a real possibility (and the need for/ desirability of this was expressed several times during the field visit). Indeed DMP's

exclusivity (to the current group of 9 countries) may be counter-productive. Increasing the number of countries involved in DMP offers potential economies of scale. DMP effectively fills in two parts of a continental jigsaw: it would not be difficult to complete this jigsaw with four or five other countries with significant expanses of drylands. This would be logical also.

96. Whether the model could be replicated to other areas with desert regions is an important question. The strong impression from DMP is that it would be easiest (initially at least) to connect a cluster of countries (such as those in one of the DMP sub-Regions) than to set up a broader continent wide program.

97. Another perspective is to look at the way DMP is structured within each country (here, there are several very different models to choose from – a subject worthy of analysis in its own right) and suggest that other countries could structure the implementation of their biodiversity/ CCD action plans in such a manner.

### **(11) Monitoring and Evaluation:**

98. A number of observations have already been made about the relationship between the TFPRs and the PIRs (see for example paragraphs 51 and 52). In general, while the PIR are timely and useful checklists of progress, the basis for the ratings is not very obvious. The TFPRs simply do not give clear enough evidence for the PIRs to be constructed with confidence.

99. It is notable within the PIRs that there are no ratings given for the *overall* achievement of particular outputs (nor is there specific mention in the TFPRs). For example under Output 6 the main/ overall indicator is “Participatory NRM methods are published, known and used by local communities in at least 50% of the sites”. This is not addressed by the PIR.

100. Poor reporting standards, in terms of timeliness and quality – especially from the Global Coordination Unit – are a source of concern to many of those consulted. This concern is shared by the evaluator. The country reports are assimilated in Niamey, but the composite report (the TFPR) does not always do justice to the country submissions and is often delayed: this causes understandable frustration. Reporting under each of the seven components is helpful and correct, but no attempt is made to link items report to the *sub*-components. And there are surprising gaps: there is silence on various major outputs, including the website, the forthcoming book and the recently completed South African video.

101. Apart from the financial monitoring, there seems to be a general weakness in monitoring activities and achievements. This has been stressed elsewhere – with respect to data collection and quantification of achievements in reports.

102. In some reports (the TFPRs) large and very “rounded” figures are presented, in others (the Report of the Steering Committees for example) data are presented to an unnecessary and unwarranted level of precision. The basis for these calculations/ estimates is often missing.

103. There is also a lack of consistency in reporting: taking for example the compiled reports of the IARCs and ARIs their dissimilarity is striking (not simply in presentation, but in content and lack of cross-reference) – and it is tempting to view this as an indication of an uncoordinated approach to their input.

104. One specific case from Namibia can be mentioned here. There is an important and dynamic discussion underway regarding participatory community range management. This is an extremely valuable exercise, involving, intriguingly “participatory GIS”: the whole process is worthy of more detailed process monitoring than it is receiving currently.

## (C) CONCLUSIONS

### STRENGTHS

105. DMP has undertaken an important and inherently difficult and ambitious challenge. There are many positive points. Chief amongst these are the strength (and strengthening) of a coalition of partners, a portfolio of creative technologies and approaches to tackle the problems of the desert margins, and an identity, while not fully exploited, that cannot be currently matched in Africa.

106. Several initiatives are novel and imaginative – making active use of the comparative advantage of the resources in the desert margins. These include organic *Rooibos* tea production in South Africa; the *Pomme du Sahel* (grafted *Ziziphus* sp.) in West Africa; micro-dosing in Niger; and the evolving participatory range management strategies in Namibia. The development and promotion of these represents a core strength of DMP. While upscaling of several initiatives may be spatially limited, the approaches underpinning them are very widely relevant.

107. With few exceptions, DMP is a participatory program that involves target populations in decision making. The Forum for Integrated Resource Management (FIRM) and Local Level Planning (LLP) approaches are particular examples. This is as was intended, and as it should be. One consequence of such an approach, however, is that it inevitably slows down rates of implementation.

108. There is an evident pool of talent, dedication and enthusiasm within the DMP. Of the entire project’s resources this human capacity is the most important, and provides a firm foundation for a further phase.

109. DMP has a ‘strong’ name, a versatile acronym (used both in Anglophone and Francophone areas), and an imaginative logo. However the program’s public and international profile does not yet adequately match these symbols and DMP undersells itself. There is evidence (particularly in the array of strong local initiatives and activities) that the “whole” appears to be *less* than the “sum of its parts”.

### LIMITATIONS

110. Outstanding amongst the limitations is the confusion and contradictions within the various guiding documents (the Project Document; the Logical Framework; the Phase II Program of Work and Budget; the Technical and Financial Project Reports and the Project Implementation Reviews) regarding *Objectives, Outputs, Outcomes, Milestones, Targets* and *Indicators*. This is compounded by the contradictions in the various documents regarding targets – and where these targets belong.

111. If there is one document that epitomises these confusions it is the Phase II Program of Work and Budget (PWB). It is surprising, to say the least, that this document can have been drafted and endorsed as it stood.

112. DMP's very diverse portfolio – though in itself can be seen as strength – is inadequately connected. The result is a program that appears somewhat random, and misses potential synergies. Without integration of efforts between countries and regions, and between the various IARCs and ARIs, there is a danger of presenting an apparently opportunistic and scattered approach organized under a very loose coalition without a clear theme. This belies the notion of a 'program'. An effective campaign depends on a cohesive program and integration of efforts. These aspects are not yet sufficiently developed.

113. There is a strong feeling throughout that DMP is failing to make adequate progress towards its targets. Even though the PIR ratings for Phase II are generally satisfactory, it is of concern that there has been very little progress in area coverage or families with increased incomes between mid 2005 and mid 2006 (see respective TFPRs). And this is the period when DMP would have been expected to be progressing by leaps and bounds.

## RATINGS AND JUSTIFICATION

*A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory (HS) = 6, Satisfactory(S) = 5, Moderately Satisfactory (MS) = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) = 3, Unsatisfactory(U) = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) = 1, and unable to assess = 0.*

| Aspect   | Rating    |
|--|-----------|
| <p><b>1. Attainment of objectives and planned results:</b></p> <p><i>Still a long way to go: part of the problem is a very ambitious set of objectives. The new insights into degradation and biodiversity are not clear yet.</i></p>        | <b>MU</b> |
| <p><b>2. Achievement of outputs and activities:</b></p> <p><i>While upscaling remains a priority, the PIR reflects a fairly reasonable level of achievement, and defined steps towards the foreseen outcomes.</i></p>                        | <b>MS</b> |
| <p><b>3. Cost-effectiveness:</b></p> <p><i>Coordination costs are high, and there is room for improvement, but a regional program needs strong coordination. Overall costs are not excessive.</i></p>  | <b>MS</b> |
| <p><b>4. Financial Planning:</b></p> <p><i>From almost all aspects, financial planning and reporting is satisfactory –control and level of disbursement also.</i></p>  | <b>S</b>  |
| <p><b>5. Impact:</b></p> <p><i>The low score reflects the fact that impact is so far limited – and inadequately assessed.</i></p>  | <b>MU</b> |
| <p><b>6. Sustainability:</b></p> <p><i>Because of its institutional imbedding/ strong partners/ capacity built and important technical interventions, DMP’s work is unlikely to fade away.</i></p>   | <b>MS</b> |
| <p><b>7. Stakeholder participation / public awareness:</b></p> <p><i>There is evidence throughout that DMP has had a participatory element in most of its Phase II activities. Public awareness could certainly be improved however.</i></p> | <b>MS</b> |
| <p><b>8. Country ownership / driveness:</b></p> <p><i>There are well-defined country-programs, and these are used by the countries to strengthen their UNCCD and CBD implementation plans.</i></p>   | <b>S</b>  |
| <p><b>9. Implementation approach:</b></p> <p><i>The general structure and the steering committees (at regional and national levels) have worked effectively, though the GCU needs to be strengthened.</i></p>                                | <b>MS</b> |
| <p><b>10. Replicability:</b></p> <p><i>The DMP could and should be “replicable” in other countries: there are various organisational models to work, and many technologies and approaches to spread.</i></p>                                 | <b>MS</b> |
| <p><b>11. Monitoring and Evaluation:</b></p> <p><i>Deficiencies in data collection and impact assessment – as well as the weak reporting thereof (especially under the TFPRs) – are the reasons for a low rating.</i></p>                    | <b>U</b>  |

**Overall Project Rating = 3.8 = Moderately Satisfactory**

#### **(D) LESSONS *for future programs of a similar nature***

114. Inevitably targets cited in programs of this nature are ambitious: non-achievement should not always therefore be attributed to poor performance, but (often) to over-optimism at the project formulation stage. In this evaluator's view, that may well turn out to be the case under DMP. A program such as the DMP can easily be overloaded with unrealistic expectations and targets: the marginal drylands are notoriously problematic for a variety of reasons and there simply are unlikely to be widespread, simple solutions. Realistic targets in formulation should be a feature of future project design - and the temptation to equate potential progress in marginal areas with high potential zones avoided.

115. A regional program needs to focus on capacity building, partnership and policy. Despite the requirement for local-level action to support these, emphasis should not be unduly on implementation. In future programs of a similar nature a greater proportion of resources need to be dedicated to capacity building in its broadest sense. "Vertical" achievements (institutionalization etc) should be given more prominence than "horizontal" achievements (area-based and human targets etc).

116. Monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment depend on good data and/ or reliable estimates. These are often difficult and time consuming exercises, but without these it is impossible to make statements about effectiveness, or build a case for investment. Reporting and documentation may also be considered thankless tasks – but they are vital, and need to be done well. There is always a danger in development work of "institutional amnesia", implying a loss of knowledge to an organization simply because work has not been adequately recorded and presented. Monitoring and evaluation plans should be given more strategic priority. While the difficulty of providing accurate data needs to be acknowledged this should not detract from the imperative for high standards of estimation/ best judgment, and of consistency.

117. Conservation and sustainable use are functions of value attachment to the land, and to its biodiversity. If value can be established – in terms of sales of produce or other goods and services – then the incentive to protect and produce is established. This demonstrates the need to concentrate on output-led conservation wherever possible.

118. It is difficult to separate out the GEF-incremental impact from the on-going baseline initiatives in such programs. Nevertheless it is evident that – in the case of DMP - a spur has been given to efforts that focus on sustainable use of biodiversity in important areas, and simultaneously help to conserve land. Monitoring and evaluation should take better account of the distinction between baseline and incremental inputs and outputs.

119. A program such as DMP cannot achieve optimal impact without developing its particular "brand" through building up a clear profile. "Marketing" is as important in development work as in the private sector. A proportion of the resources available for M&E/ documentation in such projects should – unashamedly - be allocated towards creating a profile and the development of public confidence in its potential to "make a difference".

120. Programs under GEF that seek to improve land management should not try to artificially differentiate between "land rehabilitation", "land under improved management", "land under improved management of biodiversity", "plantations with carbon sequestration benefits" as this is counter to the whole concept of improving ecosystems to provide multiple and simultaneous benefits.



## (E) RECOMMENDATIONS

121. DMP must strive for better coherency overall, integrating its various components, through:

(a) developing the West/ Central Africa – Southern/ Eastern African linkages and interchanges; and

(b) combining the efforts of the IARCs and ARIs into a cohesive scientific program which is distributed better over the whole region with a clearer thematic focus on the link between land management and livelihoods.

Specific ways and means need to be negotiated at the forthcoming steering committee meetings, and this requires the Global Coordinator taking a more proactive role in these two aspects, or clear delegation to the sub-Regional coordinators.

122. Profile-raising should be achieved at various levels and by various means. Articulation and dissemination of achievements can be addressed by:

(1) a professional video featuring up to two DMP initiatives each from four countries<sup>27</sup>, with cross-cutting themes of biodiversity; land conservation; poverty alleviation etc

(2) attractive and informative brochures and briefing notes developed – along the lines of those seen in South Africa - covering the seven thematic areas and the country initiatives, associated perhaps by slogans (“you protect only what you value” etc)

(3) at least a list, but better an annotated bibliography, of DMP’s publications

123. It is recommended that the capacity of the Global Coordination Unit be strengthened by employing (or delegating) an assistant who is able to relieve the Global Coordinator of some of his regular reporting duties, allowing him – while maintaining accountability for reporting - to spend more time on travel-based hands-on coordination.

124. The forthcoming book (as yet untitled) must be completed and published as a matter of urgency – and the time and effort it takes to produce such a book must not be underestimated, thus a careful schedule and division of responsibilities should be drawn up. This is important not just for dissemination of results, but also necessary to clarify and summarize the findings of the studies on land degradation and socio-economic aspects.

125. To complement the benchmark study sites on land degradation/ biodiversity a time-series of photographic records should be established as soon as possible. This will be of value now, and as an on-going legacy of DMP.

126. Specific best-bet technologies should be presented in a much more attractive, standardized way: including diagrams/ photographs, cost-benefit indications etc. WOCAT <sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Suggested: Niger – *Pomme du Sahel/ Acacia senegal* grafting, and giraffes (see Photo Annex); South Africa – *Rooibos tea*, and ways and means of rangeland monitoring; Mali – work based on decentralised NRM management, and African Market Gardens; Namibia – participatory rangeland planning, and policy advocacy work

<sup>28</sup> WOCAT (2007). *Where the land is greener: case studies of soil and water conservation worldwide*. CTA, FAO, UNEP and CDE [see Annex VII for an example]

has developed four-page case study layouts that could be used as a model. Differentiation should be made between technologies (hardware) and approaches (software).

127. Thought should be given to investigating further possibilities for labeling of products under an “origin-based product” scheme to exploit a market niche and to cash-in on comparative advantage – as is has been done for organic *Rooibos* tea in South Africa. The *Pomme du Sahel* is a case in point.

128. The potential for sustainable exploitation of medicinal plants should receive increased focus for multiple reasons, including income generation and preservation of bio-diverse habitats.

129. There is an urgent need for DMP to come up with “policy option papers” supported by (standard format) “policy briefs” – on a country basis, but also DMP-overall policy briefs relating to conservation of biodiversity and land. These should be used for advocacy and most useful in face-to-face engagement.

130. Thought should be give to the possibility of either replacing the newsletter by/ supplementing it with the type of e-mail single-story/ one screenful only alert used so effectively by CIFOR under their “POLEX- Forest Policy Expert Listserver”. It may be that single “stories”, intermittently, have greater impact than a series of articles in a regular newsletter.

131. Strategic exchange/ cross-visits between countries – of personnel at all levels – though costly, should be a hallmark of any further phase. Exchange visits between scientists, community leaders and students will improve the integrated nature of the DMP. It is recommended that, as a planning tool, all substantive exchange visits between countries be recorded and reviewed at steering committee meetings. It is suggested that each country should endeavour to plan both (a) a senior technician/ planner cross-visit and (b) a farmer exchange to a neighbouring country on an annual basis.

132. To speed up the exchange of information and upscaling of best-bet practices more attention should be given to internal farmer exchange visits and the use of farmer field-schools. Performance targets need to be determined on a country to country basis.

133. Better process monitoring of *specific* research-development activities - tracing their progress - is recommended. The example of community range management in Namibia is a particular case in point (see paragraph 104).

134. It is important to give attention to the *overall* achievement indicators of each output as cited in the logical framework. An early assessment of how closely on track these are is essential. Key milestone for outcomes need to be developed by the Steering Committee.

135. DMP must make the link with climate change more evident, and work towards practical policy pointers. This is an area where the key input should be provided by a structured, and better coordinated, sub-program of the IACs/ IARCs.

136. Further surveys need to be put in place to determine the impact on poverty of (at least specific) DMP interventions. This should have a particular focus on women and youth. Each country should design and implement its own plan for this.

137. The imperative for a program of the DMP nature is clear and the GEF-related rationale is justified: the performance under Phase II is adequate, and is promising enough to warrant a recommendation that this program is carried forward into a Phase III.

138. Before embarking on a Phase III it is essential that the logframe is adjusted to take into account the new outcomes, targets (etc) that have been developed during the course of the project, and all monitoring and reporting be realigned to conform to this. Learning from the limitations of, and confusions in, the Phase II PWB, a clear and agreed Program of Work and Budget for Phase III should be drawn up and used to guide the process.