

CPMT Meeting
17th January 2009

The CPMT meeting was held on the 17th January 2009 in Pune. The meeting was attended by the Country Programme Manager, Mr. Mattia Prayer Galletti, members of the India Country Office (ICO) and the Project Directors/ Representatives.

Mr. Mattia Prayer Galletti welcomed everyone to the CPMT. He laid out the agenda for the day. The topics to be discussed were as follows:

1. Assessment of Direct Supervision
2. Assessment and future plan for strengthening KM in the country portfolio
3. Country Programme Evaluation
4. Portfolio Review to be held in Orissa.

Thereafter, *Mr. Anirudh Tewari*, Coordinator, IFAD India Country Programme welcomed all Project Directors and project staff. He started by mentioning that the direct supervision was a watershed event this year. Earlier on, the engagement with projects was very limited as the supervision was done by UNOPS. Through this step of direct supervision, the role of IFAD and the Country Office has increased tremendously. The country office is now able to provide constant support to the projects and is able to meet each other on frequent basis. This has increased the horizontal collaboration across the board.

Dr. Shaheel Rafique, Implementation Support Specialist also gave his views on direct supervision. He mentioned that the response to direct supervision by the projects was very forthcoming. Direct supervision has led to improved targeting and M&E systems in the project. It has also impacted to over all project execution and the quality of project implementation.

The next point of discussion was the feedback from the Project Directors on Direct Supervision.

Dr. Swarna, Project Director- PTSLP said that she found the Joint Review Mission very useful. It led to the start up workshop of the project. She requested that projects should get some support before the start up workshop, which would include making reference letters, providing sequencing of events and proposal writing. These trainings should be given to the projects before they are expected to do a start up workshop.

The other point raised by her was that the consultants doing the baseline surveys and other surveys usually take secondary data that is already available with the project. It would be helpful if the consultants would base their analysis on some primary data.

Having said that, she opined that one point of contact at the ICO has been very helpful.

Mr. Mattia Prayer requested Ms. Swarna to give a feedback on the processes and the procedures that are confusing. This would also help to customize the start up process.

Ms. Jyotsna Sitling, Project Director- ULIPH said that the JRM and MTR were good learning experience. Some very innovative points came out of the MTR. However, she felt that the back-to-back mission was tiring for the consultants. This should be kept in mind while planning such missions in the future. She felt that there is a need to hire consultants to give more broad-based input on livelihood enhancement aspect of the project. Also, there is a need to look into livelihoods sustainability and the ways to move forward.

She requested that all PDs should get a presentation on procurement guidelines of IFAD. This will help them in the implementation of the project.

There was a discussion on the quality of documentation and the submission of the report. It was agreed that the main report of the JRM should be circulated within the second week.

The PDs were informed that the **JRM modalities would be changed from this year**. From now onwards, a JRM would be fielded for a period of 15 days. The break up would be as follows:

2 days as desk review and preparation for the field visit,
9 days in the field (2 villages per day) and
4 days for report writing.

There was also a discussion on the **extension of the projects**. In the past, loan cancellations have been considered towards the end of the project, where the projects requested for extensions. From now on, loan cancellation decisions would be taken as early as the MTR, so that it gives the project the needed support that is adequate to complete the project by the agreed project completion date as stipulated in the loan agreement and subsequent loan closure.

Mr. Kenneth Pala from MLIPH, also shared his experience of the MTR. He mentioned that we could have a one-week joint preparation (project and ICO) mission before the actual mission. This will help them to organize all the data, information and reports that are needed during the mission. Though a mission was fielded prior to the MTR, Kenneth emphasized the need for support from ICO on preparation for mission and inputs on themes such as food crisis and climate change.

Dr. Vincent Darlong, Implementation Support Specialist, said that the term JRM is a term that suggests joint participation and sharing of responsibility and accountability on part of the project and other stakeholders participating in the review. The JRM should focus on commitment than compliance.

He mentioned that the projects are technically sound but we have to bring new experiences. We need to bring keep in mind the demands and requirements of other partners and balance our work. We need to incorporate the term 'We' instead of 'I' in our communication to show team spirit. This year we have also worked with some **grant**

partners like ICRISAT and others more effectively. However, he contends that there are challenges that we have to meet this year, and the key challenge that we have learnt from the closure of one project and the learning from the two other projects is that are coming to an end is that we need to emphasis more on sustainability of outcomes. He said that he is still in the learning process with regards to facilitation and providing support to projects. Productive sanitation another programme that he is personally involved and he mentioned that if such convergence of programmes could be facilitated by the ICO then our relevance would be felt by the projects more.

Mr. Mattia Prayer Galletti mentioned at the very outset that the concept of **‘We’ versus ‘I’ is very important. The word ‘we’ brings more credibility and hence better results can be achieved.** He brought a comparison between ICO and UNOPS as institutions supporting operations. UNOPS was more detached from their office was in another country and the support they provided were only during supervision missions, usually one a year for almost all projects. On the other hand, the ICO is located within the country and the frequency of support and capacity building of projects was far more frequent due to proximity and familiarity. In addition to providing inputs through Joint Review Missions, the ICO also provides various types of implementation support.

Mr. Deepak Mohanty said that his project had two JRMs last year. He mentioned that Project Steering Committee was satisfied with the recommendations from both the mission. He mentioned as an example that in last JRM organized and coordinated by Vincent the recommendations were jointly agreed, and the government has taken a stand to commit and comply with the recommendations. He also mentioned that the Government is trying to fulfill the entire task and the Chief Secretary mentioned that the government would ensure convergence of schemes with the project. Regarding the log frame indicator, he mentioned that the adequacy of indicators to measure project outputs and outcomes were fine-tuned by earlier missions. He proposed that for the Mid-term Review for the next phase there should be pre-mid-term review preparation.

He also mentioned that the ICO has been very useful. Their contribution has been constructive and issues are addressed very systematically.

Mr. S.K. Singh, Project Director, CTDP said that CTDP has gained from Dr. Darlong’s experience. There is constant learning from one another. Most of our loose ends have been tightened. A lot of work is done through convergence.

He admitted that though the project has not been able to utilize its funds, they have the full capacity to do well now. Capacity Building trainings have helped the project staff to sharpen their skills and this has resulted in better project execution. Trainings on KM AWPB, RIMS have contributed immensely. **He thanked IFAD HQ and ICO for providing their support and technical assistance to steer the project work in the right direction.**

Mr. Manoj Sinha from JTDP reported that 50% of the funds have been utilized and we have planned for the next two years and how we will use the remaining funds and how to disburse. This matter has also been discussed with the state government.

The project has also been able to improve implementation. SHG formation has gone to 1000 from 700. WFP, our partner has extended their food grant till 2012. Mr. Manoj Sinha also appreciated the effort of the ICO in providing technical support for better project implementation. As the team has increased, we have got more support on any issue whether its NRM, Gender or KM.

He had requested to have training on procurement guidelines required and that the current procurement plan has been sent to ICP.

There was also a discussion regarding the extension. Mr. Manoj appealed that they should be informed about the extension soon as possible as there is a growing insecurity among the project stakeholders.

Ms. Judith D'Souza said that it was a new and a learning experience for her attending the training workshops and the CPMT. Both JRM conducted by her have helped her to build relation with the projects and have given a better understanding of IFAD's work on the ground. She suggested that there is a vast knowledge pool and this knowledge should be harnessed and utilized for knowledge sharing, experience sharing and learnings.

She mentioned that the **JRM as an opportunity** to find new solutions and work together for one common objective- working for the poor. The withdrawal strategy should be prepared from the beginning of the project cycle and fine-tuned at the MTR

She mentioned that one needs to develop a **realistic AWPB** and during the process of annual planning ensure shared vision at all levels. She appreciated MAVIM for their support in organizing this workshop

The next round of discussions focused on having quarterly analysis and review of the project. The PDs felt that **quarterly reporting** could also give a realistic picture to both at the project level and IFAD. The annual reporting and the JRMs can look after project components, quality of work on the ground. However, other issues like procurement and some technical assistance could be covered **six months**.

Mr. Mattia Prayer Galletti mentioned that there would be budget constraints this year and we have to be cost effective. The modality could be that the projects could visit Delhi office on a 6 monthly basis to discuss and review the concerning issues.

Other issues discussed:

- **AWPB-** being an excellent tool, to monitor financial progress in terms of budget vs expenditure.
- Accountability of Aajevika vis-à-vis the operational performance og UPASAAC

Mr. Kale, Project Director, MAVIM mentioned that they had some difficulties in preparing the AWPB, however, these trainings would help the project staff. He mentioned that there is some procurement related issue, which has to be sorted out. Grants were also discussed. Mr. Kale mentioned that grant is given by IFAD, but procedures not clear.

Mr. Gyanendra from Madhya Pradesh said that the JRM was useful and systematic. It helped in improving planning. In the last six months, they have achieved 75% of the target for 08. They plan to conduct orientation workshop for their staff. Next month district level staff would be trained by specialized agency like BASIXS. Many training materials have been prepared, which would be shared with other projects and ICO.

Mattia Prayer Galletti commented that the **project has the liberty to be flexible in changing activities wherever necessary as per their need** and context as they are implementing the project with a caveat that it will not distort the component of the project. Wherever necessary, the project staff will get back to the ICO to seek explanations and clarifications. He further affirmed that it is important to know the difference in views and any disagreements in course of any discussion more particularly relating to JRM must be recorded.

Mr. Anupam from CCL, made a presentation on the work done by the organization in the development of leadership. He specifically presented a study done in India to show case that the organization is committed to designing leadership programmes understanding the conditions and context in the country in which they are imparting such trainings.

Post lunch, Ms. Ankita Handoo, Knowledge Management Specialist, gave a presentation on the work done last year and also discussed future plans for 2009. In addition she also mentioned the support and cooperation that she would require from the projects in order to integrate KM in the project management.

All projects agreed that earlier, KM was a gray area for projects to internalize to be used in project management. However, consequent to the KM related activities and capacity build initiated by the ICO, the projects feel that they are now in a position to relate **KM to project management and see a link between KM and M&E systems.**

Earlier, the documentation produced by the projects had different quality standards, however, the projects acknowledge that the write shop organized by ICO in partnership with ENRAP have set the standards and de-mystified systematic documentation of lessons, success and experiences and the creation of knowledge products. The projects are now giving similar training to staff responsible for documentation in the projects,.

The project directors emphasized the fact that KM should be integrated from the beginning of project implementation, which went as a strong message to the new projects. They also pointed out that it should be part of a design process and documented in the appraisal as has been done for MPOWER.

There was a discussion about the need to prepare a **communication strategy** for the country programme. A KM Strategy has been prepared by the KM Specialist for the Country Programme; and it was emphasized that it was more specifically required for the projects to come up with their communication strategy with the assistance from the ICO. Considering this, the projects should be able to carve out a **budgetary allocation** for knowledge management activities, as there are no such provisions in the cost tables on the ongoing projects. Besides this, there is shortage of staff to be specially assigned for knowledge management and communication activities in the project districts as well.

The Country Programme Manager took note of this aspect and agreed that the projects should pro actively allocate funds and provide staff. He agreed that he would support this initiative once he receives official request from projects on this issue.

The future demands of the projects with respect to KM products are the following:

- Training on video documentation
- Writing skills
- Systematization of documentation
- Support in the PCR
- Cataloguing the best practices by the ICO.
- Converting website documents to print form and circulating to the projects for wider dissemination.
- Training on process documentation

Community resource persons should be trained to be able to identify, capture, collate and document the knowledge in participation with the community.

Shaheel Rafique said that since M&E is now systematized, it could be a source for generating information for knowledge management, which needs specific capacity building to produce products for websites, newsletters etc.

To add value to project management, the projects should develop communication strategy that will help in understanding community level information system related to various sub sectors which will be a support for KM at the community level.

It was also discussed that most often, the projects don't know what and when to communicate information. For this reason, there should be more knowledge sharing events and meetings, especially cluster wise. This will enhance knowledge sharing and experience and its utilization.

It was communicated and agreed that trainings should be organized during the lean period for more participation from the projects specifically the months of July-August.

In line with the training issues communicated, Mr. Sriram, Asstt. Program officer mentioned that **Loan Agreement Training, Procurement and Costab trainings would be organized in Feb 09** and it would be useful for the PDs could attend atleast the 1st day of the trainings.

During the CPMT meeting, Mr. Mattia expressed his views that he found it exceptional that the PDs were not in a position to attend the field visit and the trainings. **He felt that in future, as per the request of the PDs, the invitation letters should be specifically sent to the PDs so that they can use that as a document to process their permission from the govt. to attend such country programme events.**

The next topic of discussion was the **PRW** to be organized in the month of April 09

It was mutually decided that the PRW would be held from the 18th –22nd April 09 in Bhubeswar hosted by OTELP. The number of participants was also decided and this time there would be 2 members from the communities, 2 members from the NGOs, 4 members from the Projects.

The community members attending the PRW should be given an agenda for discussion and presentation of their views regarding the projects.

In the month of June, there would be a **conference on tribal development in India.**

A new initiative in IFAD has been undertaken, wherein **Transperancy International** will do a survey in India, the result of which, will be feed in the new project looking into how communities perceive about IFAD It will not be a public document, but will be used by management tool for designing future projects. CTDP volunteered for participation.

The participants were informed that **training on organic farming** would be held from 10th-14th Feb in Mysore, Karnataka. The PDs have agreed to send 4-5 people from their respective project. The focal point to coordinate this activity would be Mr. Vincent Darlong.

The projects were informed that there would be **Country Programme Evaluation** that will begin the month of February. The projects were informed that the CPE will visit their projects and for which they will be informed in advance. It is a golden opportunity to learn, as the core learnings will emanate from the discussions that will be held with people, academia and project staff. It will also involve a self-assessment of IFAD HQ and ICO.

This is an evaluation methodology, which is conducted independently by the IFAD's evaluation division. After fieldwork is completed, the CPE team will review 17 projects in the portfolio and at the end of the field visit, there would be **completion workshop**, where the evaluation findings would be shared.

The CPM was pleased to inform that **replenishment** for ifad funds have been increased tremendously. During the last internal review for reforms, many issues were addressed including KM. Now, as a result of this replenishment, IFAD would have the funds to address these issues.

Mr. Anirudh informed that CII is keen to develop **partnership** with IFAD projects to support forward linkage with industry. They would like to pilot initiatives in states like Uttrakhand. He also proposed that they could be called during the PRW. SRTT is also keen to have partnership with IFAD in N. East.

In the **closing remarks**, **Alamji** mentioned it was interesting and educative discussion. He found JRM to be a good concept and a good thought. He agreed that earlier, Supervision Missions came directly and conducted the mission on their own without the participation of all the stakeholders. Very few discussions were held and the focus was on brining out the report. However, with the new pattern of direct supervision, IFAD has been able to build a relationship with the projects and come to an agreement with the recommendations for better project execution. Hence, a level of commitment from the project has increased, and so has their ownership and accountability.

He mentioned about **project extension would be possible and should be allowed provided the project has a sound fund flow and fund management mechanism in place. As referred in the previous discussion, he mentioned that the KM activities are important and they should be explicitly mentioned in the annual work plan with corresponding budgetary allocation. Using finance software is a good concept and is worth spending money, as ULIPH has developed one. He proposed that AWPB reporting system could be converted into software.**

In his vote of thanks, The CPM mentioned that, it was a very productive day. He thanked everyone for their participation. He mentioned that 2008 was a year of growth, and we took the challenge of fielding the JRM and launching the KM initiative including other initiatives related to grants and partnerships. This year we would expanded our operations in India as well as consolidate our on going initiatives that we had begun in 2008.

There will be further opportunities ahead of us with the new country strategy that will be put in place by 2009. This will leave us packed with a lot of activities and challenges. The solution would be to work systematically and together to achieve the desired outputs and outcomes.

Logistic support by the ICO and MAVIM was also appreciated by the CPM and also the commitment from our partners and projects to work together to work together and work well was appreciated in the end.

=====