

October 19, 2012

Comments from Germany on the Approval by Mail: Revised Project Concept under the Strategic Program for Climate Resilience for Yemen

Dear colleagues,
thank you very much for the well drafted and comprehensive project proposal. We have no objections to the approval of the project but a number of recommendations that we think could be taken into consideration for project design and implementation.

Thank you very much,
kind regards

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German Comments on proposed project: Yemen - Pilot Scheme to Improve the Resilience of Rural Communities to Climate Change in Yemen (IRRCCC)

Summary

We would like to commend all involved parties for submitting a well prepared proposal, which is written in a very comprehensive way with clear goals and indicators. Soil and water conservation as well as agricultural diversification as main intervention areas, combined with risk and knowledge management, constitute a well-defined approach for Yemen, where water resources are in extremely short supply and a rapidly growing population is heavily depending on agriculture in order to ensure food security.

We have no major objections to the implementation of the project. We have some recommendations (see bold highlights below) that we propose to be taken into account in the further project design.

Individual Comments on the Proposed Project

Based on former impact assessments (resp. WB, 2010) and Yemeni strategy papers (National Agriculture Sector Strategy, National Food Security Strategy and National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Program), the project design addresses the combined main vulnerabilities and challenges posed by climate change: agriculture, food security and lack of water resources. Different institutional entities are in charge and one of the key risks is (see section F iii) the poor coordination and collaboration between them, both horizontally and vertically. Therefore we highly recommend fostering cooperation, knowledge sharing and networking through the establishment of respective platforms and intersectoral and intergovernmental committees in order to ensure transparency and to optimise needed collaboration and coordination.

Besides the already mentioned ministries and agencies, the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) as well as the National Water Resources Authority (NWRA) should also be involved in the project planning and implementation since they are crucial

stakeholders and are already active in many fields of intervention targeted in the proposal (see National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Program NWSSIP).

We also recommend **analysing and using already existing structures at the regional and local levels** (water user associations and water basin committees) to avoid overlapping and the creation of double structures. We encourage an active cooperation with other donors and international institutions besides the ones already mentioned and recommend taking into consideration their lessons learned and creating synergies and making use of contacts and capacities (see below).

Another central issues is to strengthen the understanding of the linkages between climate resilience and disaster risk management. We therefore recommend focusing **on training events in Component 1** to create the necessary preconditions for achieving the expected output and outcome. The training and awareness raising efforts should build on and make use of already existing structures (e.g. local institutions like the water user associations and/or water basin committees) to make sure that the right people are targeted and involved, and to ensure the understanding and the acceptance of the importance of the issue.

Taking into consideration limited capacities and extreme poverty especially in rural areas, the **training should raise a general understanding first before introducing payment for environmental services** or similar schemes since this might overburden local capacities.

Another important issue is the consideration of Yemeni traditional knowledge. The people of Yemen have, especially in the rural areas, rich and broad traditional knowledge in how to deal with crisis and hazard situations. This profound know-how should be considered during project implementation. Supplementing the project activities, it probably would decrease the risk to inaction (see section F iv) and increase an active participation of communities (see comments on participation below).

Comments on Cross-Cutting Issues

The previously mentioned cross-cutting elements of the project design (awareness, gender, private sector involvement, education and research) provide a comprehensive approach. However, we would suggest considering the following recommendations:

Participation

Enabling meaningful participation of broad sectors of society is crucial in Yemen. Especially after the political uprising due to the Arab Spring, with focus on youth, women and general civil society movements, strong involvement and active participation in development planning and implementation is needed more than ever. In addition to that, the participation of local communities is marked as being at risk (see section F iv). Therefore we recommend to consider explicitly and more precisely the **participation of a wide range of society stakeholder as well as the involvement of local communities in the project planning** and to involve both in the implementation. Besides crucial decision-makers on regional and local level should be involved in the project since they often proved to be a major asset or constraint in the implementation of planned activities.

Gender

Gender issues in adaptation are well defined and considered. Especially the focus on both, gender mainstreaming and specific gender initiatives such as income generation activities and mobilization of women farmers are highly appreciated. We would still recommend to ensure the **involvement and participation of women, especially regarding the social protection measures within the integrated community risk management (Component 2), during project implementation.** We suggest to not only measure women's participation quota in meetings, trainings etc. but to make sure that the right socio-cultural setting is created where women have the chance to actively participate and bring in their opinions and needs.

Learning

Enabling learning-by-doing and sharing of lessons at different levels is emphasised clearly in the strategic knowledge management approach of Component 3. Similarly, scaling up processes are being discussed in detail in the project document. Still, two risks for effective learning, the institutional risk and the lack of coordination and collaboration between agencies (see sections F ii and iii) are being identified at the same time. Due to these persistent concerns we recommend including network building activities and setting up intersectoral platforms as part of the knowledge management mechanisms in order to ensure transparency, efficient information sharing and multiplier effects of the project. We also highly recommend using and building on already existing local structures in order to enhance information sharing, learning, and ultimately local empowerment and ownership. Local institutions such as the water user associations could be replicated in other areas, and locals already acting as facilitators or trainers could assist building capacity for new associations.

Synergies with other donors Climate Change Related Engagement in the Country / Region

The project document foresees to ensure coordination of efforts among various actors (see section E). Germany has a long standing and profound experience in Yemen in key sectors mainly affected by climate change, such as integrated water resources management and food security.

We would encourage an involvement of or close links to the German-supported water sector program, which has been operating already since 2006 and is active in many fields of intervention that the proposal also targets. Among others, the program has supported the establishment of structures and institutions that enhance water resources management at the local and regional levels, such as the above mentioned water user associations and water basin committees.

For instance, the water sector program has long standing experience in the governorate of Amran in strengthening local communities and actors regarding water resources management and participatory decision making processes, with a special focus on women.