

**Report of the
Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting
Sustainable Land Management Project (Phase I)**

An internal meeting of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) was held on 1 November 2007 in UNDP-Country Office to discuss the project titled “Sustainable Land Management to Combat Desertification in Pakistan—Phase-I”. Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Deputy Country Director (Programme), UNDP chaired the meeting, which was attended by the following:

1. Mr. Barnaby Jones, Deputy Country Director (Operations), UNDP
2. Mr. Amir Maqsood, Manager Finance, UNDP
3. Mr. Arif Alauddin, ARR/Chief Energy and Environment, UNDP
4. Ms. Rabia Khattak, Chief, Strategic Management Unit,
5. Mr. Saman Hamid Qureshi, Programme Officer, Governance Unit
6. Mr. Hidayatullah Khan, Programme Officer, Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit
7. Mr. Abdul Rafiq Qadir, Programme Officer, Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP
8. Dr. Amjad Tahir Virk, Project Manager, SLMP, Ministry of Environment, Government of Pakistan
9. Ms. Naveeda Nazir, Programme Assistant, Energy & Environment, Unit, UNDP
10. Mr. Mohammad Saleem, Programme Assistant, Energy & Environment Unit

2. The participants were informed that the PDF-B document and Project Brief was cleared from the LPAC meeting in 2004. Later the full-scale Project Document was prepared through a broad based national consultative process under the National Environmental Action Plan- Support Programme (NEAP-SP), which was cleared by the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) of NEAP-SP represented by key stakeholders, including UNDP and line ministries. This meeting of the PSC was also considered to be the external LPAC for the project. Subsequently, the document was cleared by the GEF Focal Point at the Ministry of Environment. The project was submitted to the GEF Council in Intersessional Work Programme in February 2006 and was approved by the Council in June 2006. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) GEF endorsed the full-scale Project Document in August 2007 and the Country Office received Delegation of Authority in September 2007.

3. Dr. Amjad Tahir Virk, Project Manager/Team Leader, SLMP gave detailed presentation on the project design, including its major objectives, key components, implementation arrangements and the financial layout for the Phase-I. A copy of the presentation is Annexed to this report. He highlighted that the project is designed to facilitate implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and National Action Programme (NAP) to combat desertification and mitigate impacts of drought in Pakistan. Other key points mentioned were:

- Project follows integrated, cross-sectoral, and participatory approach aimed to combat desertification and alleviate poverty among rural communities,
- Addressing main causes of land degradation and removing barriers to Sustainable Land Management (SLM),
- Creating enabling environment for mainstreaming SLM principles and strengthening institutional capacity,
- Mainstreaming SLM practices through local landuse planning based GIS and Remote Sensing,
- Conducting feasibility studies through implementation of 9 pilot projects in dryland regions,

- Documentation of lesson learnt and adaptive management,
- Involving local communities in decision making and giving lead role to provincial and district governments,
- Ministry of Environment and Provincial Planning & Development Developments will be the main implementing partners,
- Total layout for the Phase-I is US\$4.6 million (GEF 2.0, UNDP 1.35 and GoP 1.25 millions),
- Phase-I is for laying the ground work for major on the ground investment during Phase-II, so it is designed for 2 years.

4. The participants felt that at the overall the Project Document fulfils guidelines of quality programming and dimension of UNDAF, CCF and CCA. However, there are some observation/comments, which need to be addressed during the project inception phase. The participants made the following observation/comments on the project document/design:

- Two years period for the Phase-I needs to be reviewed during the inception phase of the project. The work plan and associated budget should be discussed in detail during inception workshop to ensure that timelines are realistic.
- The project duration has been mentioned as 2007-2008, which should be revised before submission of the Project Document to the Economic Affairs Division, as the year 2007 is coming to an end and pending changes in the government will delay the start of actual implementation towards 2008.
- There is need to ensure Results Management Guidelines Compliance, particularly Risk and Issues Logs,
- The Project Document doesn't talk much about gender mainstreaming, it needs special consideration during the inception planning and implementation of the Phase-I.
- Partnership with other UN agencies working on management of land resources needs to be explored and this will require a partnership strategy.
- UNDP and other UN Agencies are already on the ground implementing projects contributing to combating land degradation (e.g. Bio-saline Project). Pilot testing under SLMP could build on best practices and lesson learnt during the implementation of these projects. Collaboration with these projects/agencies will help in effective use of resource and saving time. SLM project should focus on the mainstreaming elements that can gain far greater mileage in terms of results if complementarities are fully materialised.
- At this stage it is not clear that how this project will be integrated with UN joint programming, as the Project Document was prepared before the UN Reforms/One UN Programme. However, during the inception phase the contribution of Sustainable Land Management Project towards joint programme should be assessed. This would also help in justifying the commitment of core resources towards the project, as well as, enhance the co-financing ratio in the project.
- There should be clear strategy for removing of policy barriers, particularly for the implementation of pilot projects.

- Designation of Provincial P&D Departments as Implementing Partner is a right step, but involvement of other line agencies/departments would be crucial for the successful implementation of the pilot initiatives.
- Involvement of community in policy reforms/higher level policy issues would be important.
- Recruitment of competent technical staff for the project would be crucial. Retention of team/staff involved in the preparatory phase would asset for the project and would help in early mobilization of project operations.
- Several UNDP/donor funded projects of the Ministry of Environment have components on GIS and Remote Sensing. In order to avoid duplication of efforts and resources, the possibility of bringing these components under one umbrella should be explored.

Recommendation/Follow-up Actions

- The project period for the Phase-I should be 2008-09 and the cover page of the Project Document and Total Project Budget and Workplan be revised according.
- The possibility of increasing duration of the Phase-I of the Project to 3-years (2008-10) be looked into during the Inception Workshop.
- The UNDP-Country Office and Implementing Partners should give due consideration to the above issues/observations during the inception planning and implementation of the Phase-I.
- The staff hired for the preparatory phase will continue during the full-scale project for smooth transition from preparatory to full-scale project.
- Since funds allocated for the PDF-B Phase have been completely utilized, UNDP may consider advancing funds from the committed core resources to cover the bridging period. These additional funds would be added to the PDF-B phase, as the Phase-I document is not yet signed.
- The Country Office will forward the Project Document endorsed by the CEO, GEF for clearance of the EAD and final signing of the Project Partners.