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ANALYSIS  
CONSULTING  
EVALUATION

in collaboration with

**ECOPLAN** Economic Research  
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# External Project Evaluation of “Water efficiency and food production in Rice & Cotton” (WAPRO) project

## Final Report

12 October 2022

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Mandated by:

**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**

**Section Food Systems**

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# List of Abbreviations

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AAER	Adopt-adapt-expand-respond
AWS	Alliance for Water Stewardship
BCI	Better Cotton Initiative
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CHF	Swiss Francs
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
EQ	Evaluation question
FDFA	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GPFS	Global Program Food Security of SDC
HQ	Headquarters
LNOB	Leave no one behind
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee
OH	Outcome Harvesting
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
RRVCP	Regional Rice Value Chain Program (Islamic Development Bank)
SC	Steering Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SRP	Sustainable Rice Platform
TISS	Transparency and Innovation of Sustainability Standards
ToR	Terms of Reference
WAPRO	Short form of the project title “Water efficiency and food production in Rice & Cotton” and commonly used project name
WUA	Water Users Association

# Executive Summary

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*“How can a **donor together with NGOs join forces with the private sector** to promote water efficiency in the production of water-intensive crops in such a way, that improving agricultural and water efficiency measures applied by **smallholder farmers is rewarded with improved incomes and food security?**”*

The “Water efficiency and food production in Rice & Cotton” (WAPRO) project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) addressed this issue in its first (2014 – 2018) and second phases (2018 – 2022). WAPRO as an innovative multi-stakeholder project with a large number of private and civil society partners was implemented in six countries using the Push-Pull-Policy approach addressing water efficiency for smallholder farmers in cotton and rice production. Its overall goal is to enhance food security, farmers’ income and water productivity for 65’000 farmer families in Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Madagascar.

After eight years of implementation, an external evaluation commissioned by SDC assessed the results achievements of the second phase in particular and the overall impact of the project. The external evaluation is based on case studies conducted in two out of the six countries, an outcome harvesting inspired online survey with implementers and partners on self-assessing intended and unintended results, several expert interviews held online and offline and a Cost Benefit Analysis, which helps to discuss the efficiency and effectiveness of WAPRO’s implementation.

The evaluation clearly shows that WAPRO is on a promising path towards achieving the target set, i.e. 65’000 farmer families increasing their incomes. Sustainable outcomes are visible thanks to innovative agricultural and water efficiency techniques applied in the 10 sub-projects. In addition, WAPRO successfully lobbied in standard organisations with large outreach such as the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) and the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) so that water efficiency issues are better addressed in their standards. Impact has thus been rated as satisfactory by the evaluation team.

The WAPRO project and its interventions on all levels are seen as highly relevant. Especially the way the project addresses the issue of cotton and rice as water-intensive key commodities through the application of the Push-Pull-Policy approach on micro, meso and macro level and the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the respective value chains.

As Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and the implementing partners in all countries are well connected to relevant players as well as to Swiss Cooperation Offices in the countries where present, the internal and external coherence is satisfactory.

Confirmed by all parties involved, WAPRO is achieving good results at the level of farmers. Family incomes have increased, and water efficiency measures are successfully implemented. The farmers’ food security is only addressed indirectly and unfortunately not systematically measured in the M&E system. Effectiveness has therefore been rated as satisfactory.

The chosen project set-up with a small management team and its secretariate function ensuring overall coordination, M&E and knowledge management is seen as a very lean

and efficient project approach. However, sometimes more steering and better quality of reporting would have been desirable, which led to an unsatisfactory score for this sub-criterion. The Cost Benefit Analysis showed that the overall WAPRO budget of around CHF 27 million, which includes SDC contributions as well as contributions made by the private sector, was internalized well within the project timeframe. Having reached around 40'000 confirmed farmer families by 2021 with a relatively low budget by SDC, the interventions can therefore be ranked as overall cost-efficient. Private sector contributions having come from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) rather than accepting to pay higher prices for the commodities is highly criticisable.

Regarding sustainability of project interventions, the highest probability for continuation is with activities implemented by local stakeholders relating to the Push Factor. Regarding the Pull Factor, at the interface between farmers and the private sector, the potential for sustainable continuation of approaches introduced in course of WAPRO is mixed. The sustainability in the Policy area and issues related to water stewardship measures are the most questionable regarding its continuation. The different teams by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, as well as companies and partner organisations in the sub-projects in the WAPRO countries will without a doubt continue selected activities based on own interests and resources. Sustainability is therefore rated as satisfactory.

Because WAPRO showed the advantages of involving private sector already at design stage, the evaluation team recommends to SDC that planning further projects of this kind should be undertaken collaboratively with potential project implementers and partners (intermediaries such as NGOs and the private sector). This recommendation also includes that SDC should orientate its implementation modalities to lean, time flexible project arrangements and agile project set-ups.

# 1 Introduction

WAPRO (“Water efficiency and food production in Rice & Cotton”) is a multi-stakeholder initiative to address water efficiency issues in agriculture. It was first implemented between 2015 and 2018 in four countries in Asia by a consortium of nine partners with a budget of about CHF 6.76 million and involving 23,600 farmers. By 2019, the project had grown to 5 countries in South and Central Asia and one country in Africa, aspiring to improve the lives of more than 60’000 farmers.

After 2 phases and a 1-year extension due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project is coming to an end by the end of 2022 and an external evaluation was foreseen for the project. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)’s Global Program Food Security (GPFS) declares the purpose of this evaluation as an “external and objective assessment regarding the achieved results of the second phase in particular, and of the overall impact of the entire project in general”. In addition, as mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR), “the evaluation will have to contribute to the Learning-Accountability-Steering “triangle” as specified in the SDC Evaluation Policy”.

The evaluation should “provide an overall and comprehensive picture on the project results on the short and medium term as well as provide information on possible effects at the long-term including elements of impacts and sustainability.”

## 2 Evaluation objective

The evaluation object is the WAPRO project implemented by Helvetas and related consortium partners in 6 countries (India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Myanmar, Madagascar), the overall project management unit with their knowledge management and steering function based in Switzerland, and the respective 10 sub-projects, as shown in the Table 1 and Figure 1 below:

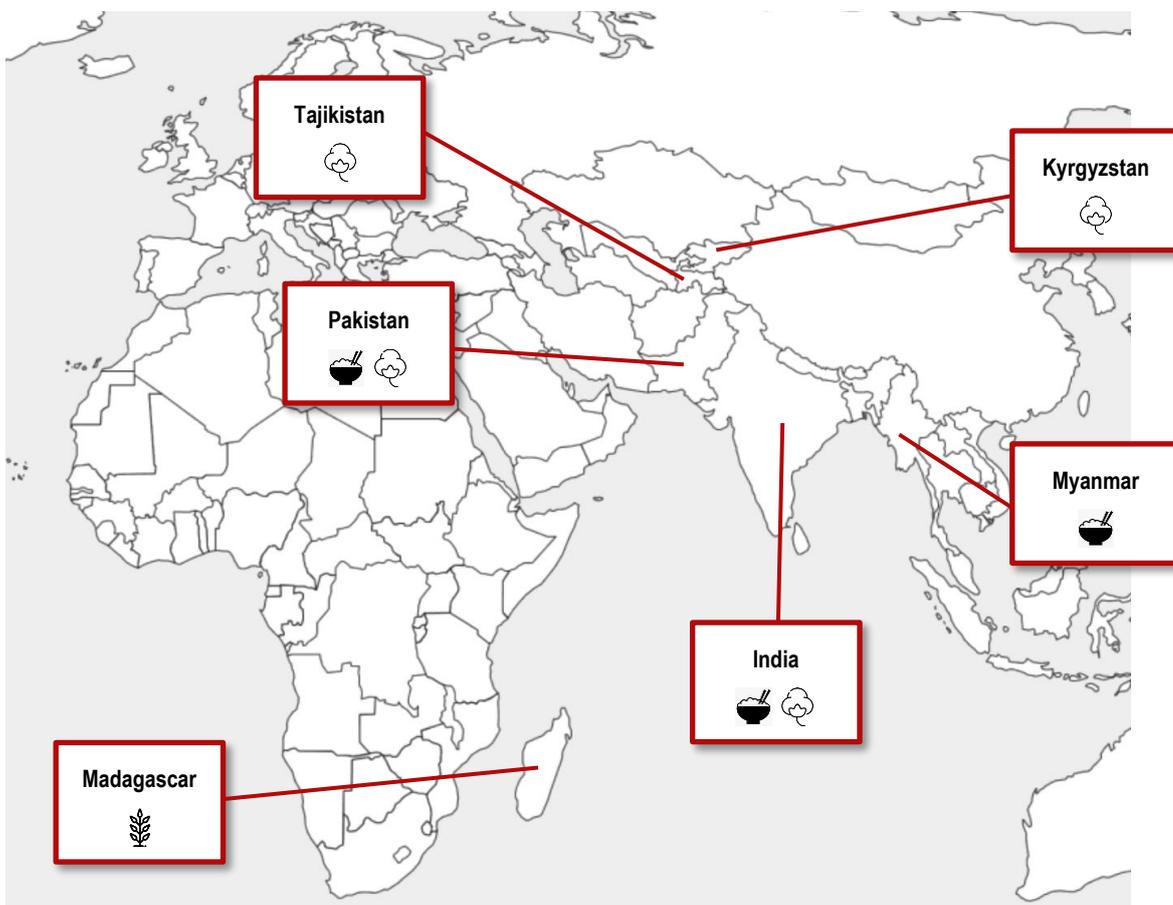
**Table 1 Overview of the 10 sub-projects working in the 6 countries**

Country	No	Name of Sub-project	Geographic area	Local implementing partner	Financial contributors/sponsors beside SDC	
India	1	SRP Rice India	Haryana	LT Food, PnP	Mars	
	2	Organic Rice India	Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh	PNP	Reismühle NUTREX, Coop Sustainability fund	
	3	BCI Cotton India	Gujarat (coastal districts)	CSPC	Tata Trust	
	4	Organic Cotton India	Madhya Pradesh	Remei India	bioRe Foundation	
Pakistan	5	BCI Cotton Pakistan	Selected districts in Punjab and Sindh	REEDs	BCI innovation fund	
	6	SRP Rice Pakistan	Selected districts in Punjab and Sindh	Galaxy, RPL	Mars, Westmill	

Kyrgyzstan	7	Organic Cotton Kyrgyzstan	Jalalabad	IWIP	Helvetas own funds	
Tajikistan	8	BCI Cotton Tajikistan	Sughd region	Helvetas and Sarob	Helvetas own funds	
Myanmar	9	SRP Rice Myanmar	Shan, Mandalay, Mon	CESVI	Norad	
Madagascar	10	Diversified Crop Rotations Madagascar	Atsimo Andrefana	Helvetas	Scrimad, Bionnex, BCI	

Legend:  Cotton  Rice  Other crops

Figure 1 Map<sup>1</sup> of countries in which WAPRO is active and the crops grown



The “Regional Rice Value Chain Program (RRVCP)” project mainly financed by the Islamic Development Bank and implemented in ten sub-Saharan countries (The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, and Ivory Coast), is sometimes referred to as 11<sup>th</sup> sub-project. As the role of WAPRO (i.e., Helvetas and its partner Rikolto) in RRVCP is mainly related to technical assistance regarding building a solid monitoring, evaluation and learning framework based on the WAPRO lessons learned, the RRVCP program is not part of this evaluation exercise.

<sup>1</sup> Map retrieved from <https://www.nationsonline.org/>

### 3 Evaluation purpose and questions

#### 3.1 Purpose of the evaluation

SDC in its ToR for this evaluation mandate defines the purpose of the external evaluation as following three overall objectives, which are:

1. To evaluate the WAPRO phase 2 according to the OECD/DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee) criteria (coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact) against the planned and agreed objectives and outputs.
2. To assess how far systemic changes were triggered by the project and if impact results, susceptible to be sustainable as well as well as replicable, can be identified.
3. To recommend SDC on the basis of the results of this evaluation, on how to further engage with the private sector along a logic of food systems approach and supply chains.

#### 3.2 Evaluation questions

The evaluation team developed an extensive evaluation matrix (see annex 6) during the inception phase of this evaluation with a set of 37 evaluation questions, based on the original evaluation questions from the ToR written by SDC.

In order to cluster and summarize the essence of this long list of evaluation questions, we formulated 2 core results (or contribution) hypotheses to be validated at the end of the evaluation exercise:

<b>Results Hypotheses = core of the evaluation</b>	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
A) The improvement of food security, farmers income and water productivity for 65'000 farmer families in the 6 countries is a result of the interdependency of the different elements of the Push-Pull-Policy approach applied by the WAPRO project. → targets mainly on micro and meso level						
B) The Private Sector Engagement (PSE) modality including external facilitation enabled the stakeholders in the 6 countries to better cooperate towards sustainable (water efficiency, food security and farmers income) solutions in the key commodity value chains, also after the SDC funding comes to an end. → targets mainly on meso and macro level						

These will be discussed in the chapter 6 (the conclusion part of the report) as well in the chapter 7 (Lessons learned and recommendations) on how to deal with private sector engagement in supporting initiatives in sustainable agricultural practices and resources management activities in the future.

### 3.3 Evaluation team

SDC announced the evaluation mandate in March 2022, and a team by KEK - CDC evaluators in partnership with specialists from mesopartner and Ecoplan AG have been awarded this assignment by handing in an offer document. KEK - CDC have been contracted by SDC in May 2022. The evaluation team started their work immediately in May led by **Carsten Schulz**, who has overseen the whole evaluation process, coordinated the case studies and acted as a single point of contact to SDC. **Roman Troxler** conducted interviews, contributed to the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) discussion, and participated in the analysis and interpretation of the evaluation results. **Sophie Staheyeff** led the online survey and supported the facilitation of the online validation workshop with the implementing partners. As specialist in systemic approaches, **Marcus Jenal** (from mesopartner) advised the evaluation team on using elements of Outcome Harvesting and participated in the analysis and interpretation of the evaluation results. With his vast experiences in Economic Financial Analysis, **Felix Walter** (from Ecoplan AG) advised the evaluation team in the CBA, and contributed to the analysis of the evaluation results.

### 3.4 Limitations of the evaluation

WAPRO project is working with 10 sub-projects in 6 countries. Due to the **tight schedule in evaluating this project**, the team leader visited 3 sub-projects for a short time in 2 countries (in Tajikistan for 5 days and in Pakistan for 3 days excluding travel). He had the opportunity to meet and interview most of the important stakeholders, thanks to the close collaboration with 2 national experts. They have been conducting case studies, which are elementary for the assessment process of the evaluation team.

Although a specific online survey was conducted, and interviews and a validation workshop were done with representatives of all 6 countries, there might be a **certain risk that the evaluation team assessed the implementation of WAPRO with a slight bias towards the subprojects in Tajikistan and Pakistan**, while the results of the other 7 sub-projects and findings from India, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Madagascar were given less attention.

The evaluation team may **lack understanding of the Pull component**, as we only talked to farmers and ginners/rice mills (and on micro and meso level even to a very limited extent); but the evaluators were not in the position to discuss with ginners/rice mills and the large buyers (or related CSR bodies or foundations) on the meso or even macro level about their relationships.

The evaluation team had to find out by revising the provided documentation that some of the **key documents prepared by WAPRO are lacking consistency and accuracy of terminology used, (budget) figures and monitoring data**. The evaluation team used as main reference documents for monitoring and budgetary data the project document (of September 2018) and the annual report 2021 (March 2022). An updated list

of partner contributions up to August 2022 has been provided by Helvetas upon request. As this evaluation report has been prepared in September 2022, additional partner contributions due to the rice and cotton harvest 2022 in process, are still possible to be effectuated until the end of the year.

## 4 Evaluation methodology and process

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### 4.1 Inspiration of Outcome Harvesting in the evaluation process

In addition to discussing the two results hypotheses as mentioned under 3.2, exploring the contributing factors was an integral part of the evaluation. To that effect, the following question was developed:

***What are the most important achievements of the WAPRO project on the level of behaviour changes in project partners and how has the WAPRO project contributed to these achievements?***

The data collection process was inspired by Outcome Harvesting (OH) and allowed the evaluation team to complement missing answers to several evaluation questions. OH is a method that enables evaluators or projects to identify, formulate, verify and make sense of qualitative outcomes of their initiatives. In OH, outcomes are defined as ***changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, actions, or capacities of people, groups, and organizations (partners or other societal actors)***. The method thereby does not measure progress towards predetermined targets or objectives, but collects evidence of what changes have actually happened and can be observed. It then works backwards to determine whether and how the project contributed to the change. In this way, using essences of OH allowed the evaluation team to find both intended outcomes and unintended outcomes and to determine how the project contributed to them.

This evaluation did not use the full OH process, but rather oriented itself on the principles of OH, particularly the collection of outcomes and contribution statements. These statements aim to document **who** changed **what**, **when** and **where** it was changed, and **how** the project contributed to the outcome. After the collection of said statements, the significance of the changes regarding the overall WAPRO objectives was also assessed.

#### **Main application on meso and macro level**

Data collected for OH focused mainly on **the meso and macro (policy) level** of the WAPRO project. The partners who participated in this process were the WAPRO consortium and implementation partners in the countries. A list of contacted stakeholders and partners can be found in Annex 2:. Figure 2 illustrates the process and timeline.

**Figure 2 Online Outcome Harvesting process and timeline**



1. A 45-minutes online Kick-Off workshop on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 introduced the process, the OH approach and the online survey to be filled out by the participants.
2. The online survey was open to participants from the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 to the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2022. In addition to collecting the outcomes and the contributions of the project to these outcomes, the survey inquired about WAPRO interventions – whether participants would have implemented them without the project, whether they will continue to implement them after the end of the phase and how they would rate their overall importance – and the collaboration with the WAPRO team at Helvetas Headquarters (HQ). A total of 48 people were invited to respond, 22 filled out the whole survey and an additional 4 responded to part of it.
3. The evaluators analysed the collected data and created aggregated outcome statements representing the major patterns in the responses received.
4. The evaluators presented the aggregated outcomes at an online 2-hour validation workshop on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2022. The participants had the opportunity to verify the findings and indicate which patterns they also observe in their country or countries. Working in geographical groups, the participants then selected and ranked the three most significant outcomes for their country and what WAPRO interventions contributed to said outcomes.

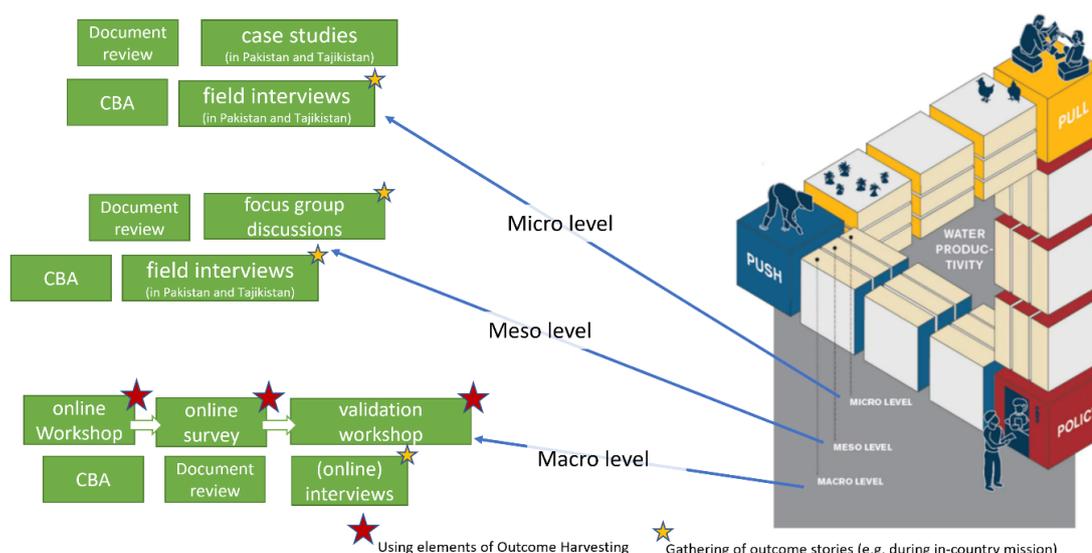
### **Gathering outcome stories on micro and meso level**

In Tajikistan and Pakistan in July and August 2022, the 2 national consultants as well as the team leader gathered outcome stories through in-person interviews and focus group discussions to better understand the **what, when, where** and **how** especially on beneficiary and field implementation (micro and meso) levels in those two countries. This data collection served as a complement to the results from the macro level outcomes. It also allowed the comparison of the different meso level outcomes between the countries and the discussions among the participants with regards to the significance of the changes generated additional insights for the evaluation.

## **4.2 Methods**

For the evaluation process of the WAPRO project on the different levels of engagement (micro, meso and macro level), the evaluation team has foreseen the application of the following evaluation methods as illustrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3 Evaluation methods on various levels**



### Document analysis and review

An analysis of the essential documents provided by SDC, Helvetas and other stakeholders (strategic documents, project documents, specific studies and reports by consortium partners within the sub-projects, minutes of workshops and meetings, etc.) was carried out. In addition, the evaluation team consulted and analysed additional documents they identified as relevant for the evaluation. The analysis of documents allowed the evaluation team to discuss the hypotheses and orient the evaluation process adequately.

### Field interviews during case studies

Led by two national consultants in Tajikistan and Pakistan, interviews with all relevant stakeholders in 3 sub-projects were undertaken. During the visit by the team leader to Tajikistan and Pakistan, he interviewed selected implementing organizations on micro and meso level, relevant stakeholders including water stewardship initiatives, representatives of the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Business Development Services, etc. These field interviews gave the team a better understanding of the relations and processes.

### Focus group discussion

One focus group discussion per subproject with different stakeholders active in the value chain was conducted for the 3 sub-projects in Tajikistan and Pakistan during the field visits, amounting to a total of around 5 to 6 focus group discussions. These discussions were conducted in the local language and facilitated by the national consultants. The main questions revolved around the usefulness of the Push-Pull-Policy approach on micro level, the contribution by the different players to the approach, and the positive (and negative) results of its application, as well as the future perspective of working together in these commodity value chains after the financing by SDC has been ceased.

## **Online Outcome Harvesting Process**

The Online Outcome Harvesting Process, including the Online (Kick-Off) Workshop, the Online Survey, and the Online Validation Workshop, is explained in 4.1.

## **Semi-structured interviews**

Through more than 25 interviews conducted mostly online, the evaluation team gathered feedback on main aspects related to the efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence of the WAPRO project from key staff at Helvetas, the consortium partners, SDC and other stakeholders such as local and national authorities. In addition, some interviews with external experts from textile industry or certification organizations have been undertaken to get a second opinion.

## **CBA discussion focusing on break-even points**

While the above-mentioned methods mainly focused on generating qualitative findings on how the project contributed to certain intended and non-intended outcomes, the evaluation also aimed to provide evidence regarding the achievement of quantitative targets and the cost-effectiveness of the WAPRO project.

At the end of its first phase the project already developed a rather simple yet straightforward CBA, contrasting SDC's project cost and the income effects of the final beneficiaries (farmers and their families). Using these calculations as a starting point, the evaluators developed a simplified CBA, based on reported costs and benefits per cut-of date 2021 (see Annex 3: for more details) identifying break-even points with respect to the different sources of funding.

## **Presentation of preliminary findings**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2022, at the end of the evaluation process, a meeting with the WAPRO team and members of GPFS, was organized. The consultants presented their findings, learnings and recommendations. The participants also had the chance to comment on these findings and to validate the conclusions and recommendations presented.

# **5 Evaluation findings per DAC criterium**

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## **5.1 Relevance**

**The WAPRO overall project and its interventions are highly relevant**, as they address the issue of water efficiency in key commodities, an issue of highest interest and very forward thinking when the project objective and approach were conceptualized eight years ago. The degree of WAPRO's alignment with government priorities in all 6 countries is given, as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24 and the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy of most of private sector partners involved.

WAPRO's ability to work with stakeholders at different levels together with government authorities and the private sector (including their readiness to contribute financially), its

Push-Pull-Policy approach at the micro, meso and macro levels has provided a good opportunity to both initiate or implement targeted measures and, in addition, to use advocacy to systematically address water productivity in the value chain. The private sector appears to have great interest in WAPRO interventions at the farmer or initial value chain level, and is ready to support meaningful initiatives with the payment of organic and FairTrade premiums (mainly from CSR budgets), but has little interest in the long run of paying a higher price for the commodity.

What the evaluation team learned by visiting farmer groups and having a look at the sales statistics: WAPRO is not a project focusing necessarily on smallholder or disadvantaged farmers per se, as it was not meant to particularly address specific target groups (e.g. women farmers, youth, LNOB = leave no one behind). This could be seen as a mistake in design, or rather as a viable approach to have a fast adoption of water efficiency measures to all farmers working in these key commodity value chains. While we state this so clearly, it should not be disregarded that the majority of WAPRO beneficiaries are smallholder farmers (with more than 15 % of female farmers) who benefit substantially from increased incomes and improved water efficiency because of WAPRO interventions.

### **Mixed results on gender sensitivity in rice and cotton value chains<sup>2</sup>**

Although no specific mainstreaming issues have been mentioned in the ProDoc, WAPRO addressed gender sensitivity during implementation in some of the sub-projects based on the important need given that commodity value chains in selected countries are predominantly ruled by men. Based on the reflection of phase 1 that gender sensitivity was not addressed sufficiently (and mentioned as “cornerstone 6” of what should be done differently in phase 2, as presented in the ProDoc of phase 2), the application of gender approaches in phase 2 didn’t show much success, with positive exceptions, e.g. in Tajikistan the percentage of female farmers (and female trainers) could be raised to ca. 40% percent of all reported farmers; this effect is due to labour migration of male farmers to Russia, and WAPRO’s ability to address this issue during implementation. While the organic cotton sub-project in India exclusively targeted women farmers, in other sub-projects (e.g. in SRP rice in Pakistan) gender specific activities mainly addressed social welfare of female workers (and paid by Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives from the private sector), as male are owners and decision makers in agriculture. In general terms the evaluation team is of the opinion that the target of 15 % of participating women was not an ambitious goal, but with 27 % of female farmers reached (as mentioned in the annual report 2021) the project reached an overall satisfactory result.

### **Critical observation: Organic cotton versus BCI cotton**

Helvetas has worked several years in the promotion of Organic cotton with projects in Central Asia and West Africa<sup>3</sup>. However, WAPRO has taken up water productivity as a core issue and has therefore prominently promoted the application of the BCI standard based on private sector demand, but continues to support Organic cotton in other re-

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<sup>2</sup> The evaluation describes the issue of gender sensitivity in the chapter of relevance, while you find the scoring in correspondence with SDC’s evaluation grid in chapter 5.3 effectiveness.

<sup>3</sup> The projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [“Trade with Organic and Fair Trade Cotton”](#) implemented by Helvetas have been financed by SECO until 2016.

gions. Farmers in Tajikistan, who have benefitted from the previous Switzerland financed and Helvetas implemented Organic cotton project with trainings and other measures, are now trained on water productivity issues (together with conventional agroecological knowledge) and have increased their yields remarkably.

The evaluation team does not want to make a judgment as the market rules the sourcing and production of cotton. On the one hand there is a risk of cannibalism or a power game between organic and “sustainable” production in a specific geographic region (as the example shows in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), and the farmers will make their choice based on higher yields and selling opportunities. On the other hand, BCI cotton with their in certain aspects less rigorous standards<sup>4</sup> but a much bigger outreach (to millions of hectares of cotton fields) and recognition will have much more leverage than the niche product organic cotton.

It is quite interesting to observe that WAPRO’s interventions (including the advocacy work done by AWS) successfully contributed to improving and amending the standards of BCI or SRP with water efficiency measures.

**Overall, the relevance of the project is rated as highly satisfactory with an average score of 1.3** (1 for target group needs, 1 for indirectly affected stakeholders, 2 for design elements of the intervention<sup>5</sup>).

## 5.2 Coherence

### Good internal and external coherence

The evaluation team assess internal coherence to be good as WAPRO being steered by a global division at SDC is coherent with global and country strategies by Switzerland; thanks to WAPRO management it maintained close synergies with other (SDC) interventions on countries level e.g. India, Tajikistan, where the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) runs a Swiss Cooperation Office.

There is also a good alignment (and external coherence) on country level, as WAPRO worked based on opportunities and had – by project design – an open and transparent communication with relevant stakeholders from government, development partners, the private sector and civil society in the countries assessed.

Noteworthy is the ability of WAPRO management to gather implementers and relevant stakeholders across all WAPRO countries in relevant training and coordination meetings, which contributed enormously to knowledge and information sharing and mutual support. This led to the quite unique effect of competitors (sourcing of cotton as well as on rice) on national as well as international level sharing ideas and working together.

The same applies with the coherence from a food systems perspective: WAPRO is coherent as water efficiency measures and improvement in the agricultural manage-

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<sup>4</sup> The consultants learned by talking to different specialists, that standards applied at BCI are less rigorous, when it comes to e.g. GMO-seeds (GMO=genetically modified organism) and the application of pesticides; and BCI standards are sometimes more rigorous, e.g. when it comes to the use of irrigation water – compared to organic standards.

<sup>5</sup> On a scale from 1 (highly satisfactory) to 4 (highly unsatisfactory). For more details see Assessment Grid in Annex 7:.

ment of smallholder farms are the backbone of (food) production in the selected countries. The Push-Pull-Policy approach offers a comprehensive way to involving relevant stakeholders in complex (market) systems.

### **Satisfactory coherence with other Switzerland-financed projects**

WAPRO's coherence on steering level with other global programs of SDC but as well with those from State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), such as "Transparency and Innovation of Sustainability Standards (TISS)"<sup>6</sup> is not clearly visible. However, at field level, especially in countries with SCOs, there is a good coherence and exchange with other Switzerland financed projects, both by SECO and SDC.

**Overall, the coherence of the project is rated as highly satisfactory with an average score of 1.5** (1 for internal coherence, 2 for external coherence).

## **5.3 Effectiveness**

### **WAPRO achieving good results at the level of farmers**

WAPRO is likely to achieve the set objectives regarding the adoption of water efficiency measures and increase of income by farmers (as mentioned in the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system) until the end of 2022. A large number of farmer families have indeed improved their water efficiency, their productivity and their incomes.

The overall number of beneficiaries of 65'000 farmers was defined at the beginning of the second phase in 2019, and according to the annual report 2021 the number has already been exceeded in that year by more than 15'000 to 81'550 farmers. With regard to this figure, the evaluators would like to note that M&E reporting from different sub-projects and countries seems to differ in terms of a clear definition of criteria and harmonization on what can be considered a beneficiary of the WAPRO project. In addition, there are differences in the quality and length of training cycles provided by WAPRO partners, and huge differences in the integration or contracting of farmers in improved value chains (e.g. SRP Pakistan<sup>7</sup>). There is also the legitimate question of why the number of beneficiaries was not adjusted when discussing the extension of the phase by one year (due to Covid-19), taking into account the systemic nature of the project.

Nevertheless, even with the number of 40'000 confirmed beneficiaries by end of 2021 after 8 out of 9 years (as included for the CBA presented in Annex 3:), WAPRO achieved satisfactory results, with its 10 subprojects working in different political contexts and with the involvement of various private sector entities and government institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> More information in the project database by FDFA on the [TISS project](#) financed by SECO.

<sup>7</sup> Due to COVID-19, there have been different approaches to train farmers on water efficiency measures: the group of 2'050 contracted farmers around the participating rice mills have been trained by remote and onsite courses, followed by visits of extension workers for in-person advice and monitoring. Around 52'000 non-contract farmers had access to the remote training material (e.g. Robo calls, WhatsApp groups) without any tracing of results or any in-person training and follow-up by extension workers.

## **WAPRO indirectly addresses food security – but not measured in the M&E system**

WAPRO is (co-)financed by the Global Program Food Security (GPFS) of SDC's Global Cooperation Domain<sup>8</sup>, but the topic of food security is not in the focus of the implementation of the project. Dealing with water productivity of 2 key commodities produced as cash crops by farmer families, food security was never actively addressed by WAPRO or even measured by a specific indicator in the M&E system<sup>9</sup>. However, it can be assumed that water efficiency measures combined with agro-technical and agro-ecological improvements have direct and positive implications on food security of farmer families. Another explanation is the high probability that due to the increased yield and higher productivity (thanks to the measures introduced), farmer will have increased their income which contributes as well to enhancing food security. This was confirmed by an external study conducted in India by a private sector partner<sup>10</sup>, and as well through the OH process as can be seen in outcome statement number 11 (cf. Annex 4:).

## **WAPRO aimed to reduce water consumption, which positively affected the efficiency of using other agricultural inputs**

The activities in the Push component enhanced the knowledge of farmers in water productivity measures with the aim to reduce water in production of rice and cotton. Alongside these activities, farmers greatly benefited from higher production efficiency due to sharing improved agricultural techniques to improve the quality of the produce, by using high quality seeds, by reducing the use of (mineral) fertilizer or finding alternatives (e.g. manure). The commodity prices by participating companies buying the produce remain by and large unchanged and rely on international market prices.

## **WAPRO countries in Asia well chosen – added value of Madagascar questionable**

The selection of WAPRO countries in Central and South Asia has proven successful, as the exchange of experience and knowledge has led to synergies and innovations. At the beginning of the second phase, 2 new countries were added to WAPRO. While the inclusion of Myanmar made sense, the inclusion of Madagascar is considered somewhat artificial due to language barriers, lack of regional linkages, and the fact that value chains other than cotton and rice were targeted.

## **WAPRO's Push-Pull-Policy approach is effective**

In most of the sub-projects, the interaction of the three components of Push-Pull-Policy contributed to reach the objectives. In almost all sub-projects, the discussion between farmers and the private sector led to a raise in awareness and to the incentivization of water productivity measures. In some particular sub-projects, the discussion with government authorities contributed to improving the water stewardship by smallholder farmers, e.g. in Tajikistan where SDC is supporting the government in water resources

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<sup>8</sup> In course of the reorganisation process at SDC and the new structure (by September 2022), GPFS has been transformed to the Food Systems Section and is based in the Thematic Cooperation Division.

<sup>9</sup> According to the information received, the baseline study conducted at the begin of phase 1 was not recommending to include a specific food security indicator in the M&E system.

<sup>10</sup> The positive effect on food security was confirmed by the external evaluation of the Coop Organic Rice Project in India conducted by KPMG in 2021.

management issues<sup>11</sup>, and WAPRO is contributing with practical examples of water productivity in smallholder agriculture, and very well testing the cooperation of state structures and water user associations. However, in countries with several sub-projects and implemented by various stakeholders, the interaction with government authorities on state-level would have needed more systematization from WAPRO stakeholders. The function of the policy coordinator (India, Pakistan) was seen by some stakeholders as not effective and not always successful.

As it was assessed during the visits to Pakistan and Tajikistan and confirmed by all participants in the validation workshop, the Push component contributed more to the success of WAPRO compared to the Pull and Policy component.

**Overall, the effectiveness of the project is rated as satisfactory with an average score of 2** (2 for adequacy of approaches, 2 for achievement of objectives, 2 for transversal themes)<sup>12</sup>.

## 5.4 Efficiency

### Highly efficient project approach

In order to assess WAPRO's efficiency, the evaluators developed a simplified CBA, based on reported cost and benefits per cut-of date 2021 (see Annex 3: for more details). The analysis shows that considering benefits for the around 40'000 confirmed beneficiaries (as discussed above in 5.3), the project's break-even point (i.e. the point where aggregate benefits exceed aggregate costs) is reached after just one year, if solely the SDC contribution for the current second phase is used as a reference. After less than two years, the SDC costs for both phases are internalized.

WAPRO was highly successful in attracting co-financing from third parties. The SDC contribution of just under CHF 5 million was quadrupled to a total project budget of over CHF 20 million for the second phase. A more detailed breakdown of the contributions to WAPRO shows the following picture:

- 36 % of the budget comes from official development assistance (ODA) SDC and Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation)
- 5% of the budget is from NGOs (BioRe, REEDs, Helvetas own funds)
- 8% are contributions from companies' CSR budgets or their foundations (Tata Trust, Coop Sustainability Fund, LT Foods, etc.)
- 50% are Fairtrade / SRP premiums (paid by Mars, Coop and Remei).

Taking these contributions also into account and replicating the above-mentioned calculations with regard to the total project costs, the project breaks even after about 4 to 5 years (for the second phase) or 6 to 8 years (for the two project phases together). Summarizing, we can thus state that the WAPRO project has a quite good cost-benefit

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<sup>11</sup> In Tajikistan, SDC is financing the [National Water Resources Management Project](#) (implemented by Helvetas) and working in the same region as WAPRO.

<sup>12</sup> See the comments on gender sensitivity under chapter 5.1 relevance and the respective footnote there.

ratio, assuming that most of the initiated changes at the level of the benefitting farmers will last.

Assuming that by the end of 2022 considerably more than the 40'000 farmers documented so far will have adopted the improved techniques and thus achieve higher incomes, the effective cost-benefit ratio is likely to be even higher. In addition, it can also be stated that the project was implemented within the planned timeframe (which was then extended by one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic). There are considerable differences between the ten sub-projects; anecdotal evidence suggests that the sub-projects managed by Helvetas itself on average achieve better results than those managed by external third parties.

### **Lean project management – however, sometimes more steering and better reporting would have been needed**

The project management of WAPRO is considered very lean and efficient – which most partners highly appreciated. However, the evaluators have learned of / found several aspects where more effort and accuracy would have been desirable:

- Inaccuracies and conflicting information within the ProDoc, partly imprecise definitions, logframe that does not comply with international standards. (e.g., “Number of male/female farmers involved in capacity building and value chains” cannot be considered an impact indicator).
- Yearly reports are insufficiently structured and to some extent incomplete. In particular, the reports of the sub-projects differ massively in terms of level of detail and reader-friendliness.
- Lack of transparency towards SDC and the other consortium partners regarding financial contributions of partners, also communications about failures (withdrawal of key partners like IKEA and PIC) could have been more transparent and pro-active.
- Announcements of meetings were sometimes made on very short notice, meetings were not always sufficiently well prepared and equally relevant to all participants, as some interviewees from consortium partners mentioned to the evaluation team.

The (learning) exchange between the WAPRO countries was considered very fruitful by all stakeholders interviewed, while exchange and collaboration between the different actors / sub-projects *within* one country (for example between the sub-projects in India) could have been fostered further.

### **Also SDC could have steered more**

Several stakeholders confirmed that the SDC's contribution was decisive in leveraging other contributions for this specific project. In particular for the central project management services such as the inter-country exchange formats and knowledge management, SDC funding was crucial. The other donors directly co-financed selected sub-projects, but not the steering unit's work.

In addition, SDC's role in WAPRO was seen primarily as a silent and likeminded donor, strong in conceptualizing but not interfering in project implementation on operational level, which was appreciated by all partners interviewed. Some partners also mentioned the advantage of having a public donor involved (which might give better access to decision makers).

Even though the SDC was praised by many stakeholders for its low-profile role, one may also note that the SDC was not always able to do justice to its steering role. For example, the project document for the second phase has been accepted despite the above-mentioned severe shortcomings. The evaluators are aware that the SDC repeatedly voiced concerns about the quality of the reporting, which has evidently not led to any improvements. The very limited time resources of the desk officer responsible for the project at the GPFS undoubtedly had a significant influence on the fact that the SDC was not able to play a more decisive role in the steering of the project.

**Overall, the efficiency of the project is rated as satisfactory with an average score of 2.3** (2 for cost-effectiveness, 2 for timeliness, 3 for management / monitoring / steering).

## 5.5 Impact

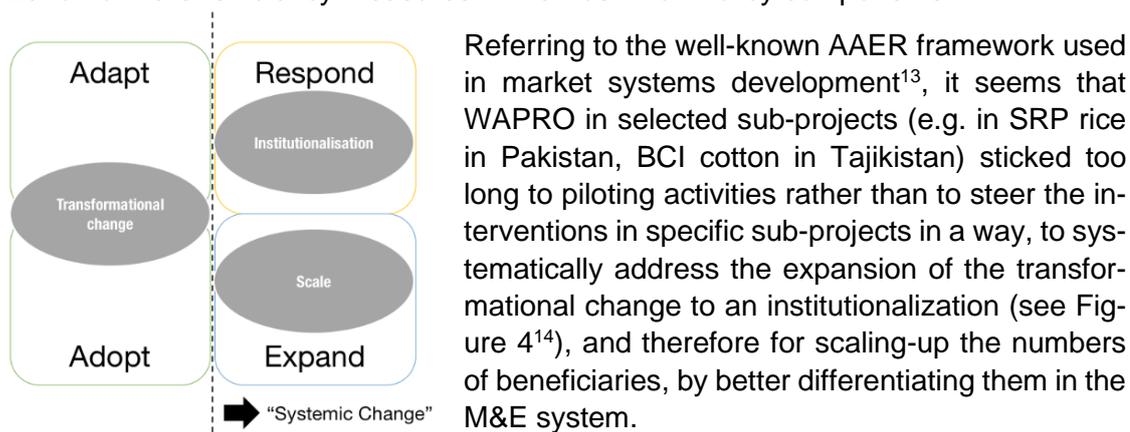
### WAPRO contributed to impact on farmers' level...

With high probability the interventions initiated by WAPRO led to enhanced water productivity and increase of family income on the level of the (currently) at least 40'000 farmers and their families.

As already mentioned, the monitoring data of the several sub-projects lack harmonized criteria to distinguish different levels of adopting water efficiency techniques, which is unfortunate, as the quantification of the impact by this missing information is extremely complex to trace back on the level of the 10 sub projects.

### ...but could have reached more scale (and been measured better) at the level of sub-projects

From the monitoring data obtained, the evaluators are of the opinion that WAPRO project missed the momentum to strategically think about scaling-up within its sub-projects, measure farmers crowding-in and reaching scale, and contributing to the institutionalization of water efficiency measures in the Push-Pull-Policy components.



**Figure 4 The AAER framework super-positioned with the phases of systemic change**

<sup>13</sup> Adopt-adapt-expand-respond - A framework for managing and measuring systemic change processes 2014, Beam Exchange, by Daniel Nippard, David Elliott, Rob Hitchens <https://beamexchange.org/resources/130/>

<sup>14</sup> Graph retrieved from Marcus Jenal, 2018 <https://www.jenal.org/attempt-at-a-typology-of-systemic-change/>

### **Impact on national policies**

In some countries (e.g., Tajikistan), WAPRO was able to contribute to policy/mainstreaming of water efficiency issues at the national level, while in others policy dialogue processes could only be initiated. Due to the size of the countries as well as the population (e.g. India, Pakistan), policy influencing on water management issues have only been undertaken at the state or provincial level, and had the desired impact on local level only. Influencing policy at a higher political level seems to be a very difficult field of action that requires the right partners (e.g. a platform) and more time.

### **Impact on partners (including standard organizations)**

WAPRO approaches will be sustained in ongoing activities by partner organizations and/or replicated in several new projects co-financed by the private sector and/or with other donors. One example is the intention of SRP in partnership with Helvetas to set-up an SRP platform in Pakistan, and to channel advocacy issues of sustainable rice production issues (combined with water stewardship) to private sector partners and government authorities.

An important success to which WAPRO contributed already during phase 1 was the adaptation of standards: through the successful implementation of water stewardship approaches in course of WAPRO thanks to the Push-Pull-Policy approach in the countries, the standards by BCI and as well by SRP have been better formulated, which was achieved also through the exchange and collaboration between AWS, BCI and SRP and with Helvetas being member of the Technical Committee of AWS, the board of SRP and asked to join the board of BCI.

However, there is no evidence for WAPRO's direct impact on ESG strategies of private sector partners. Most of them cooperate with quite a number of different donors, or they have their own CSR foundation at hand which jointly implements charitable activities.

**Overall, the impact of the project is rated as satisfactory with a score of 2** (no sub-criteria defined in the assessment grid).

## **5.6 Sustainability**

In some aspects of the interventions initiated by WAPRO there is the probability that activities will continue beyond the lifetime of the project.

**Highest probability for continuation is with activities by local stakeholders in the Push Factor.** The adoption of water saving technologies by individual farmers will continue, as its application contributes to the reduction of the overall costs in crop production. This applies to all geographic areas where irrigation water from irrigation canals costs individual farmers money in the form of water fees, or costs for electricity or diesel where water needs to be pumped. Combined with a higher awareness on agroecological factors and applied agricultural techniques<sup>15</sup>, the costs of production will decrease, and therefore the income of farmer families will increase. WAPRO well understood to initiate training to farmers in form of demo plots and by farmers trainers/extensionists, as this is required by the standards or certification schemes. These farmer groups were

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<sup>15</sup> Examples are: the reduction of the use of pesticides, the use of organic fertilizers with irrigation (fertigation), etc.

established with a close relationship to a Water Users Association (WUA) or to a company that buys the harvested crop. The continued existence of these groups is therefore highly dependent on the relationship with the company under the current market situation.

**Regarding the Pull Factor, at the interface between farmers and the private sector, the sustainability of approaches introduced in course of WAPRO is questionable.** The usage of incentives by the private sector for farmers to produce high quality crops or to adopt water efficiency techniques (e.g. in form of subsidies for agricultural input, or through providing or paying for training and advice, etc.) very much depends on their readiness and awareness.

Although it has been successfully implemented in most WAPRO subprojects, its continuation is not necessarily guaranteed. In some sub-projects you see the private sector very much engaged and incentivizing good practices by farmers based on quality and performance criteria, which create a win-win situation. Unlike organic certification schemes, where binding and long-term contracts are essential, voluntary standards (SRP and BCI) and the financial incentives paid by the private sector depend on the interest in long-term relationships and the ability of the private sector to contribute to these

costs. What appears to be an impediment is that sourcing companies do not include these incentives as cost components in the overall cost of goods calculation. According to the information received, some companies pay these incentives or premium from the CSR budget or acquire a co-financing through public funds by NGOs or donors.

The evaluators believe that the internalization of these incentives in the price of the sourced commodity is an important factor of sustaining the forthcoming activities in the Pull factor. The uncertain acquisition of external funding from private and even public sources is an impediment to these incentives, and thus to a long-term relationship with producers, as well as to sustained improvements in water efficiency.

**The sustainability in the Policy factor or all issues related to water stewardship measures is the most questionable regarding its continuation.** Although water efficiency issues have been discussed at almost all levels in all subprojects, continuation after WAPRO ends depends on the willingness of farmers, the private sector, and the government to engage. There have been some cases reported (e.g. Pakistan SRP rice), where private sector was involved in water stewardship issues, discussing the situation with related authorities, and supporting and backing farmers in the overall discussions. There is a high probability that in those countries/regions with payment schemes for publicly available water resources (e.g. irrigation schemes), water stewardship approaches will continue to work very well in the future, as it is a common property and WUA approaches might continue to work well. In cases where water is based on individual access e.g. by using a pump (e.g. channel water but even more

**Voluntary standards SRP / BCI and how they grant incentives to farmers is different:**

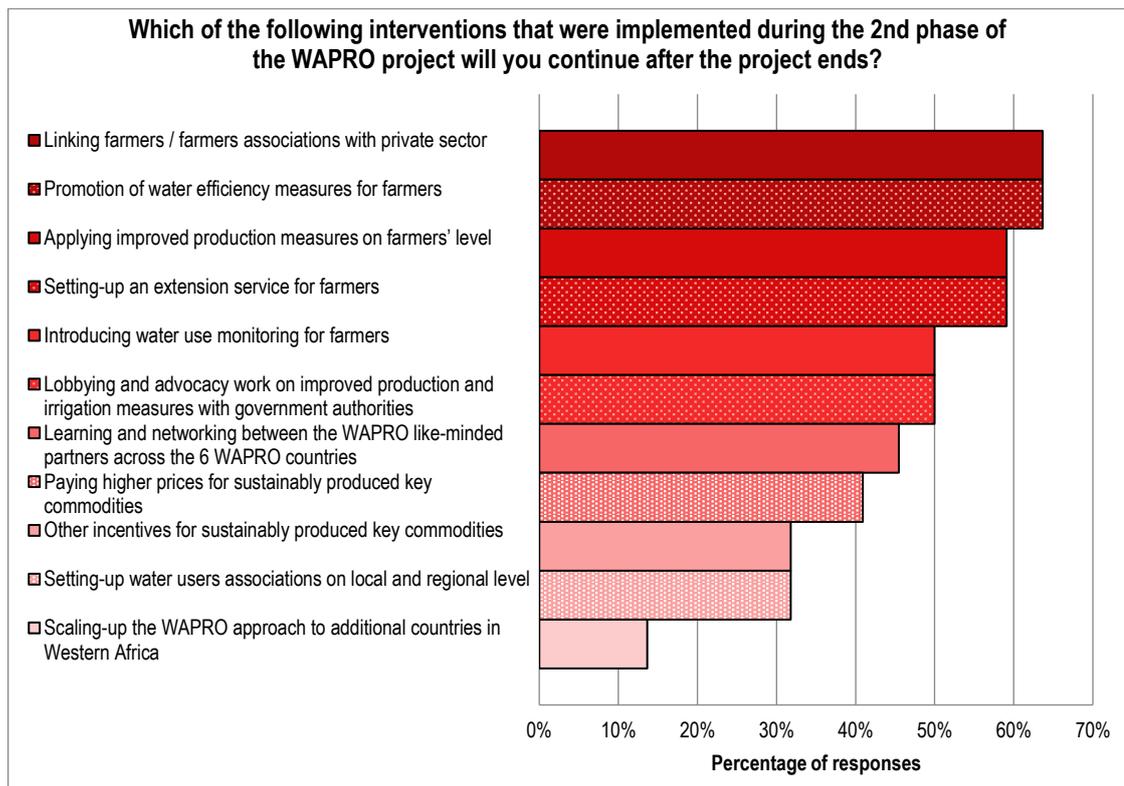
**SRP:** Besides the provision of advisory services by the rice mill and other direct benefits to the farmer (e.g. harvest being collected at the field etc.), SRP foresees the possibility for the private sector to pay a premium for high quality rice directly to the farmer. The provision of benefits or payment of premiums varies from company to company, as well as from country to country, and seems not to be very systematic in SRP.

**BCI:** It is important to mention that in the case of BCI there are no premiums directly paid by private sector to farmers. Payment by the private sector is done to BCI or the BCI representative in the respective country in form of a yearly membership fee, a sort of license fee per ton of harvested cotton coming from a BCI certification system. In return, BCI sets up the certification system and organises trainings or advisory support to participating farmers.

important: ground water to be pumped) water scarcity will dictate whether water stewardship approaches will function as well in the future.

**WAPRO did a good job in knowledge sharing and spreading lessons learned to interested partners and other projects.** The list of publications in form of short video films, articles in journals, or contributions and posters presented in conferences on national, regional and international level is seen as a good step to share the knowledge with other interested entities outside the WAPRO community. There was a missing tool by WAPRO in the form of a platform with a blog-function to exchange on the good practices applied by WAPRO with others. The objective of this platform would be to share the experiences by other stakeholders in other countries on water efficiency measures in agricultural crops. Beside the technical dimension of water efficiency measures, learnings regarding the application of Push-Pull-Policy in their geographic context should be exchanged<sup>16</sup>. Thanks to mentioned publications in different forums there is a good chance that the conceptual ideas and proven results might be read by interested people.

There have been articulated interventions by the implementing partners of WAPRO, which will be continued after the end of WAPRO in late 2022, as it is illustrated in the Figure 5 below. Activities in the Push and the Pull components include those in the promotion of water efficiency and income generation by scaling-up the overall number of farmers.



**Figure 5 Interventions to be continued by Helvetas and/or partner organizations after the end of WAPRO's second phase (beyond January 2023) – source: WAPRO online survey**

<sup>16</sup> The evaluation team learned thanks to GPFS of the [CROPS4HD](#) Project financed by SDC and implemented by SWISSAID, FIBL and AFSA in 3 African countries and India applying a quite similar approach as the Push-Pull-Policy approach. CROPS4HD call it Demand – Supply – Policy, aiming to increase food security and nutrition by smallholder farmers through agro-ecological approaches.

Based on the interest in WAPRO and the demand by external stakeholders and sponsors, there is a **high probability of follow-up projects and activities to be started soon**. The evaluation team learned about the continuation of several initiatives and projects by the stakeholders working in the framework of WAPRO, including the following:

- SDC Tajikistan will use the WAPRO learnings and include them in the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the National Water Resources Management Project, to be scaled up in other regions (and other agricultural crops) in the country.
- There is a desire from WAPRO stakeholders with several initiatives and donors (e.g. in Pakistan and India) to widen the Push-Pull-Policy approach in commodity growing to a more holistic Landscape Approach, considering human and ecological wellbeing.
- There are concrete plans to consolidate the set-up of the SRP platform in Pakistan by Helvetas, and to continue working on BCI cotton in Tajikistan.

**Overall, the sustainability of the project is rated as satisfactory with an average score of 1.7** (1 for capacity of partners, 2 for resources of partners, 2 for contextual factors).

## 6 Conclusions

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Responding to the overall results and contribution hypotheses presented in 3.2, the evaluators have come to the following conclusions:

**Hypothesis A: The improvement of food security, farmers income and water productivity for 65'000 farmer families is a result of the interdependency of the different elements of the Push-Pull-Policy approach applied by the project.**

The **targets regarding enhancing water productivity and improving farmers' incomes will be most probably reached**, although reliable monitoring data is only available for around 40'000 farmer families at the moment<sup>17</sup>. We can assume that many more farmers have been copying what their neighbours did and have thus also adopted some of the promoted technical measures towards water efficiency. Others may have profited from the changes in frameworks conditions (crowding-in) thanks to all interventions with the Push-Pull-Policy logic on micro, meso and macro level. Unfortunately, WAPRO project management hasn't defined clear criteria and ways to measure and aggregate these kinds of copying or crowding-in effects on various levels in order to use them in advocacy work and in dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

The essence of the **Push-Pull-Policy approach seems to be very useful** having been applied in various settings and contexts and allows to include a range of different stakeholders. Its beauty is that it has the potential to simplify some issues in complex environments, by a long lasting and viable approach aiming for continuity and further outreach. It includes different levels of engagement with micro, meso and macro, without

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<sup>17</sup> WAPRO management is currently conducting an adoption rate survey in selected countries to obtain the latest data on how many beneficiaries have adopted water efficiency measures, to be published in November 2022.

predetermining what needs to be done on which levels, thus allowing the sub-projects to be opportunity-driven. These different levels of engagement and the triangle relationship offers entities and stakeholders to be included in a meaningful way.

Especially for (also future) **projects in the context of food systems**, the Push-Pull-Policy approach can be a very useful model to plan systematic and interlinked interventions targeting different stakeholder groups. As the AAER example (see 5.5) very clearly shows, systems approaches should be well embedded.

**Hypotheses B: The Private Sector Engagement (PSE) modality including external facilitation enabled the stakeholders in the 6 countries to better cooperate towards sustainable solutions in the key commodity value chains, also after the SDC funding comes to an end.**

We can conclude that the external facilitation (by Helvetas) indeed allowed private sector partners to better collaborate in the respective sub-projects, particularly when it comes to the advocacy and policy component – and that some of these activities might continue also after the SDC funding comes to an end.

The key question here however relates to the additionality of SDC funding to WAPRO, i.e., was SDC able to trigger engagements or investments that the private sector would not otherwise make? Most private sector partners acknowledged, that they would (also without SDC) support with their own money the implementation of sub-projects with local partner organization (under the supervision of Helvetas). However, as explained in 5.4, the evaluators assume that the overarching project services (innovating, piloting and sharing knowledge) could only be realized thanks to SDC funds.

For future PSE projects a straightforward working modality could thus be that SDC finances a facilitator (such as Helvetas) in form of a hub or a secretariate for innovation, idea creation, knowledge management and overall coordination, while the private sector partners (or other donors) should pay for the direct implementation of activities in the countries – maybe with some seed funding at the beginning by SDC. Such an approach would allow for a more flexible (opportunity-driven) start of sub-projects in a country.

However, the evaluators were concerned to see that although SDC has managed to leverage substantial third-party funds (SDC pays only about a quarter of the total budget of the current phase), most of the leveraged funds were already earmarked for improving the living conditions of farmers. This applies on the one hand to the leveraged funds from Norad (ODA funds) and NGOs, but on the other hand also to the premiums mobilized by the private sector, which by definition have to be paid in order to comply with the corresponding labels, e.g. Fairtrade premium. We note that the private sector investments beyond the abovementioned premiums are primarily made from corresponding CSR budgets (e.g. Coop Sustainability Fund) and are not internalized in the production process. It can therefore be assumed that the private sector investments would also have been invested in a charitable sense without WAPRO (simply as a co-financing with another donor).

## 7 Lessons learned and recommendations

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As lessons learned from the WAPRO evaluation, **the following success factors** can be identified:

- Unlike other projects in SDC's global programs, WAPRO's focus is very much on implementing activities at country level, thus creating tangible results at the level of smallholder farmers and does not have too much bureaucracy on top management level.
- WAPRO's successfully reduced the complexity of working in 6 different countries with an integrative and comprehensive approach (Push-Pull-Policy). With necessary adaptation and contextualization, the main features of the Push-Pull-Policy approach could be used for future projects within a food systems logic.
- The ability of speaking the same language, having a similar mind-set and addressing emerging topics (e.g. sustainable sourcing; water productivity) have facilitated private companies joining WAPRO.
- A good knowledge sharing component on project coordination level is essential, so that exchange on good practices, mutual learning and knowledge sharing among participating stakeholders' functions well.

Potential for improvement was particularly evident in the areas of steering, monitoring and reporting: While lean project management with not too complex reporting requirements is crucial in order to effectively collaborate with the private sector, Helvetas' project management in WAPRO could have been better structured in order to standardize and harmonize monitoring and reporting of the sub-projects and the overall project.

Based on the conclusions and lessons learned presented above, the evaluation team formulated some key recommendations, addressing either Helvetas or the SDC:

1. To Helvetas: It is recommended that in future projects with a similar approach more emphasis and human resources shall be allocated to project management issues, particularly for standardization and harmonization of documents used for accountability management and reporting (e.g. definition of terminology used project-wide, collection of data and assessment of costs and benefits (see annex 3), harmonization of M&E criteria).
2. To Helvetas: WAPRO's experiences and results in form of knowledge products should be captured better and presented on a meaningful online platform, apart from the WAPRO page on the Helvetas website. This platform can be used during the out phasing for external knowledge sharing and dissemination of good practices with other interested stakeholders.
3. To SDC: As the Push-Pull-Policy approach makes sense, it could be
  - a) used and included as a lean component to other Water Resources Management Projects, especially for the improved link between the private sector and water stewardship issues

- b) used for new (global) projects in the area of food systems, to connect different stakeholders on different levels (micro, meso and macro) and to reduce complexity and focus on main objectives.
4. To SDC: In order to attract the engagement of the private sector, find ways and plan projects together from the eyes of the future project partner:
    - a. Allow for planning process with more “out of the box” ideas / co-creation processes to conceptualize innovative and foresighted projects.
    - b. There is an urgent need for more flexible tender mechanisms (such as the open call used for WAPRO in 2013) to effectively partner with new partners, particularly from the private sector.
    - c. There is a need for lean, time flexible project arrangements and agile project set-ups that are opportunity driven to attract investments / co-financing by private sector partners.
  5. To SDC: We recommend to seek more synergies with the SECO portfolio (standard organizations / engagement with the private sector) and to have a more intensive exchange on success factors.
  6. To SDC: We highly recommend conducting an ex-post impact evaluation in 2027, to see after 5 years what WAPRO project contributed to change on income increase and water productivity on the level of farmer families.

## Annex 1: References

Find here a list of the main documents, publications and online tools reviewed by the evaluation team:

- End of Phase Report WAPRO I (2018)
- ProDoc by Helvetas WAPRO II (2018) and the annex of the sub-projects (2018)
- Annual reports by Helvetas 2019, 2020, 2021 and the respective annexes of the sub-projects
- Cost Benefit Analysis conducted by Helvetas (2018)
- A set of financial reports of WAPRO as provided by SDC (2019 – 2021)
- A set of minutes of steering meetings (2019 – 2021)
- Kobo Toolbox: cloud-based M&E system used by all sub-projects and supervised by WAPRO management
  
- Selected reports by Helvetas or main stakeholders
  - o Organic Rice India 2018 - 2021 Phase End Evaluation Study (KPMG) on behalf of COOP
  - o Back to office report – visit COOP organic rice and WAPRO projects in India, Peter Schmidt 2022
  - o Impact Study on Rice in India 2021 – by Mars
  - o Diversification strategy to improve the water productivity in state of Haryana, PNP India Dr. Samraj Sahay 2022
  - o Landscape Approach in the COOP rice project 22 – 25 – by Helvetas
  - o WAPRO Policy Paper in India: Policy Paper on groundwater resource of Haryana 2020
  
- Publications by standard organizations
  - o AWS Standard 2.0
  - o Better Cotton Principles Criteria V2.1
  - o SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, Version 2.1
  - o SRP Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, Version 2.1
  - o Better Cotton Conference 2022: Enablers of Landscape Approaches
  
- Articles and factsheets by WAPRO
  - o Articles in Rural 21
  - o Factsheets produced in course of the project
  
- Other documents
  - o Textile Exchange - Organic Cotton Market Report 2021
  - o Textile Exchange – Preferred Fiber and Materials Market Report 2021
  - o Cotton: A case study in Misinformation – a report on building critical data consumption in fashion – Transformers Foundation 2021

The respective documents used by the national experts in Pakistan and Tajikistan are mentioned in each of the case study reports, as you can find in annex 7 and annex 8.

## Annex 2: List of stakeholders and partners

Find here the list of stakeholders and partners of WAPRO contacted during the evaluation process by the evaluation team, by sending out the link to the online survey – or by having a personal interview or focus group discussion online.

Name	Email	Organisation name	Country(ies)	survey	interview
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Kyrgyzstan		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	All, supporting M&E as well as knowledge management		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Tajikistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	PIC Poéles Intégrée des Croissance	Madagascar		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SDC			X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)	All	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)	All	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Coopérative KMR / Miharo Raiky	Madagascar		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Better Cotton Initiative BCI	India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Madagascar	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Better Cotton Initiative BCI Pakistan	Pakistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Better Cotton Initiative BCI Pakistan	Pakistan	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	BioRe India	India	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	BioRe Foundation	India	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	LT Foods	India	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Coop	Switzerland	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Myanmar, India	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Pakistan, Madagascar		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Pakistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Pakistan	X	X

Name	Email	Organisation name	Country(ies)	survey	interview
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Pakistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Galaxy Rice Mill	Pakistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Reismühle Nutrex	India	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Reismühle Nutrex	India		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	BioneXX	Madagascar	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Myanmar	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Kyrgyzstan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Tajikistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Madagascar	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Mars	Pakistan, India	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Mars	Pakistan, India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Madagascar	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	BioneXX	Madagascar		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	REEDS	Pakistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Nature Biofoods	India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	PnP (Partners in Prosperity) India	India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	PnP (Partners in Prosperity) India	India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	PnP (Partners in Prosperity) India	India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	PnP (Partners in Prosperity) India	India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Rice Partners Limited	Pakistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Sarob	Tajikistan	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SCRIMAD	Madagascar	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SDC	GPFS		X

Name	Email	Organisation name	Country(ies)	survey	interview
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Sustainable Rice Platform SRP	India, Pakistan, Thailand	X	X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Tata Trusts	India	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Westmill	Pakistan	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SDC Tajikistan	Tajikistan		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Helvetas	Madagascar	X	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Gherzi Textile Organisation	Switzerland, external expert		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	ECOS Basel, Swiss Fair Trade	Switzerland, external expert		X
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Former SDC	Panama, resource person		X

In the 2 case study reports, find the list of people visited and interviewed during the field mission by the two national consultants in Tajikistan and Pakistan.

## Annex 3: CBA Discussion

At the end of its first phase the project already developed a rather simple yet straight-forward Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), contrasting SDC's project cost and the income effects of the final beneficiaries (farmers and their families). Based on monitoring data provided by the WAPRO management, the evaluators tried to update this analysis, reflecting costs and benefits per cut-off date end 2021.

### Limitations:

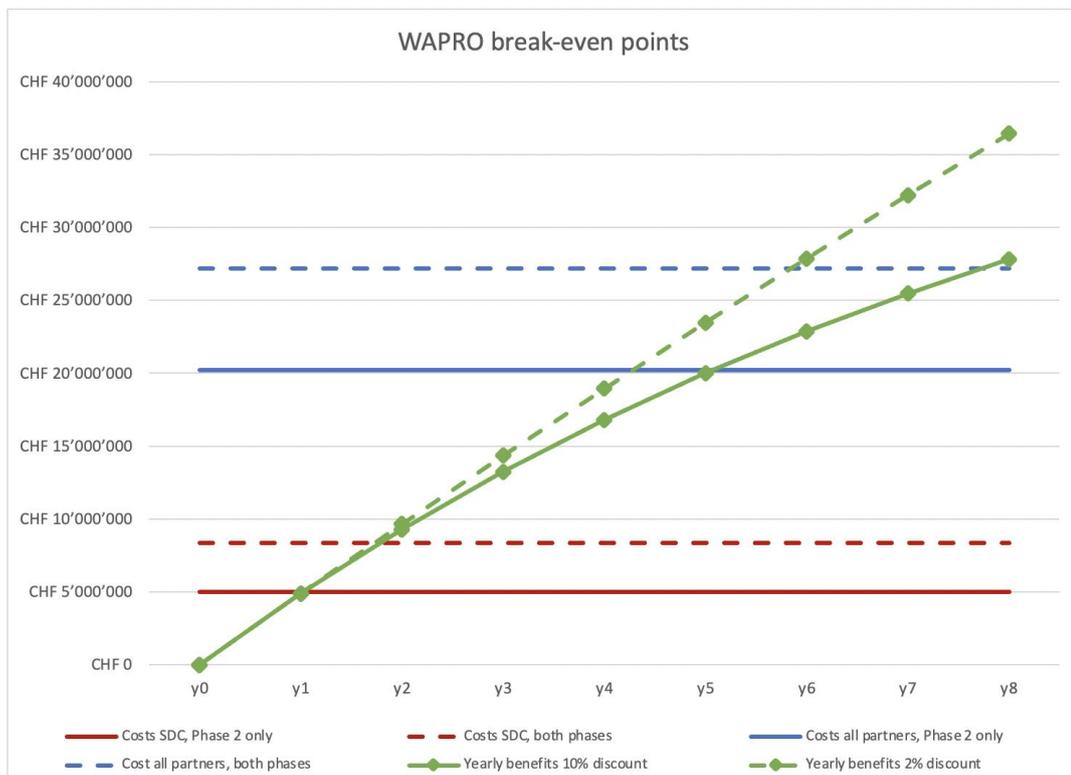
- The analysis is based on WAPRO's own monitoring data (see table below), which varies in detail and reliability depending on country and sub-project (some with control group, some without, adoption rates estimated, benefits not exhaustively documented). A comparison with productivity and income effects (data collected as part of the two country case studies) shows that the overall magnitude of the data can be considered reliable. It emerges that most WAPRO farmers cannot sell their products at higher prices, but that they significantly increase the volume produced per hectare compared to control groups, without significantly higher costs (for agricultural inputs, labour, etc.).
- The calculation of cost-benefit ratios per sub-project as such is possible and shows substantial differences in the profitability of the various sub-projects. However, since on the one hand not all sub-projects were launched at the same time, and on the other hand due to the high proportion of coordination costs of the WAPRO project that cannot be attributed to the individual sub-projects (around 1/3 of the SDC contribution), the corresponding figures are not very meaningful. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the cost-benefit ratios of the various sub-projects vary considerably.
- On the cost side, the SDC contribution (CHF 5.0 million for phase 2, after budget top-up) is known as well as the partner contributions received by August 2022. (CHF 15.1 million for phase 2, including 10.1 million in premiums). Investment and additional costs of farmers, including opportunity costs, are not explicitly reported but should be included in the "net income increases". For simplicity, it is also assumed that all costs for SDC and the partners are incurred in a theoretical year 0, and that these are 100% one-off costs (no annually recurring costs).
- On the benefits side, only monetary benefits ("net income increases") for farmer families are taken into account. Possible benefits for intermediaries and purchasers (be they companies from the WAPRO consortium or beyond) are not included, nor are benefits for other, indirectly reached (crowding-in) farming families or non-monetary benefits such as improved access to education or health. Only numbers for 2021 are available; it can be expected that the data for 2022 will be somewhat higher.

### Analysis:

Assuming that the net additional income benefits measured for the target group in 2021 (around 40'000 farmer families reached by then - excluding the BCI Pakistan sub-project) are the result of improved production processes, which will similarly materialize in the subsequent years, the question arises as to how many years it will take for the

project investment to "pay off" (break-even). For this purpose, future benefits are discounted at a rate of 10% - and 2% for comparison.

- As can be seen in the chart below, the break-even point is reached after just one year, if only the SDC contribution for the current second phase of WAPRO is used as a reference. After less than two years, the costs for the first project phase are also internalized.
- Since the WAPRO partner contributions besides quality premiums largely originate from public funds (ODA) or charity (NGOs and foundations), the evaluators consider it to be more appropriate to calculate the break-even point with regard to the total project costs, and not only taking into account the SDC contribution. This point is reached after about 5 years (for the second phase) or 8 years (for the two project phases together). Applying a lower discount rate (dashed green line) shortens the payback to slightly more than 4 years (for the total costs of the second phase) or just under 6 years (for the two project phases together).



### Conclusion:

Based on the data available we can attest the WAPRO project a favourable cost-benefit ratio - also when the total project costs and not only the SDC contribution are taken into account in the assessment.

This is particularly the case since, in addition to the financial benefits calculated here for around 40'000 WAPRO farmer families reached by the end of 2021, many other actors (e.g. neighbouring farmers, distant family members or other population groups, particularly through the Policy component) could or can benefit directly or indirectly from

the learning experiences of the project. The actual benefits are therefore likely to be significantly higher than the calculated CHF 5 million per year.

A detailed investigation of the extent to which the WAPRO model is also worthwhile for companies such as Mars or Coop (through direct benefits in the respective supply chains - or indirectly through a more social/ecological brand image among consumers) would certainly be of interest. However, this would require comprehensive access to key corporate performance indicators, which the evaluators did not have - and would also have gone beyond the scope of this evaluation mandate.

### Recommendations:

For future, similar projects, a more detailed assessment (separating one-off and recurring costs and benefits) and a differentiation for the various stakeholders is highly recommended. This would allow project management to gain a deeper insight into the profitability of the various sub-projects and to scale the most effective approaches accordingly. This would, e.g., allow to see under what conditions the projects can, after an initial impulse, generate revenues or other benefits exceeding recurring costs and can therefore be financially sustainable. Such an analysis could make the projects more attractive for actors from the private and also public sector.

The elaboration of an in-depth ex-post CBA (even for selected sub-projects only) might generate further interesting findings and could also be used as a set of arguments vis-à-vis potential partners for future, similar projects (provided that a differentiation is made between financial and economic analysis perspectives).

Underlying data and assumptions for the cost-benefit calculation (provided by Helvetas)

Sub-project	Unit	Tajikistan Cotton	Kyrgyzstan Cotton	India BCI Cotton	India Organic Rice	India SRP Rice	India organic cotton	Myanmar SRP Rice	Madagascar	Pakistan SRP Rice	Pakistan BCI Cotton
Parameter		Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison	Income Increase over comparison
WAPRO technology		short furrow	short	BCI package	AWD, organic	AWD	arboresum variety, organic	Direct sowing, AWD	AWD	Levelled & AWD	BCI practices
Conventional technology		long furrow	long furrow	conventional methods	cont flood, conventional	continuous flooding	conventional production	Transplanting, flooded	continuous flooding	non-levelled, cont. flood	conventional
Project farmers in season 2020/2021	No	9'200	900	12'927	8'685	2'701	851	4'155	4'700	2'250	100'201
Surface		7'303		11'512	3'500	6'260	2'000	4'543	1'504	42'052	239'114
Productivity WAPRO	t/ha			2.56		4.31		4.15	3.47	3.55	
Productivity comparison group	t/ha			2.35		3.95		2.41	2.81	3.22	
Increase of productivity	t/ha			0.21		0.36		1.74	0.66	0.33	
calculated price	\$/t							189	150	170	
Adoption rate	%	100		100	100	60	100	30	30	34	
Comment adoption rate		Monitored were all farmers using the technology		Monitored were all BCI farmers	Monitored were all farmers in organic programme		Monitored were all farmers in organic programme	Estimation of adoption rate with sub-project team			
Income increase	\$/ha	114.04		40.00	569.25	56.32	45.75				
Benefit	\$/ha * average * adoption rate	832'834		460'480	1'992'375	211'538	91'500	448'203	44'969	802'100	n.n.
Comment		Productivity increase not even included	Due to focus on POLICY component, not monitored		Driver for high figure is the high premium	Productivity increase not even included		Adoption rate is only estimated for all farmers in programme	This is only the rice; the Artemisia and Cap-beans need to be added to the calculation		As the programme was going on before, the benefits should not be calculated to WAPRO
<b>TOTAL of all benefits 2021</b>	<b>\$/ha</b>	<b>4'883'699</b>									

## **Annex 4: Aggregated Outcomes – results from online survey and validation workshop**

### **Analysis**

The following points are the evaluation team's main observations from the analysis of the aggregated outcomes:

- The vast majority of the outcomes have been observed in at least three countries or more (31 outcomes out of 33 = 94%), with the two other outcomes being very regionally specific (outcome n° 2 and n° 8).
- A total of five outcomes have been observed in all six countries. These outcomes saw a better dialogue between the farmers and the authorities/government, the increased knowledge about water issues in crop farming among farmers, a stronger learning community both among farmers and among WAPRO implementing partners and overall fairer access to water for farmers (outcomes n° 6, 12, 14, 15, 31).
- More than half of the outcomes (18 outcomes out of 33 – 55%) were submitted through the survey separately by two countries or more, meaning these outcomes were initially observed in several countries and submitted independently from each other to the evaluation team before the validation workshop. During the validation workshop, 14 of the outcomes submitted by only one country were validated in at least one other country too.
- There were five instances where an outcome story was submitted but then not validated at the workshop (outcomes n° 2, 6, 14, 25, 29). In all these instances, the outcome was validated in at least one other country. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that not every person having submitted an outcome through the survey was present at the validation workshop.

## Overview

Outcomes		 India	 Pakistan	 Madagascar	 Tajikistan	 Myanmar	 Kyrgyzstan	
 outcome written in survey and validated at workshop  outcome written in survey but not validated at workshop  outcome only validated at workshop								
Collaboration between actors								
1	Stakeholders (local farmers, municipal representatives, etc.) have become aware of their own political agency.							
2	While male farmers have advanced their knowledge and household income, women haven't had the same access so the gap between men and women may have increased even more.							
3	Better and more close collaboration between private sector and non-profit organizations in questions of sustainability and water efficiency was achieved							
4	Better and more close collaboration between private sector and the farmers was achieved (e.g. dialogues between farmers and private enterprises to discuss fair water allocation)							
5	Better collaboration between the private sector companies in the rice sector, even when they are competitors (e.g. rice mills and food companies)							
6	Better dialogue was fostered between the farmers and the authorities/government on water saving technologies and water stewardship issues.							
7	The project has gained recognition among water sector stakeholders and is being invited to share experiences by state agencies and development partners.							
8	Producers who committed offences were sanctioned more systematically by the authorities and thus fewer offences are being committed.							
9	The behaviour of farmers towards farm labour has improved thanks to better working conditions demanded by standards.							
10	Female farmers have been empowered to lead and supervise other producers							

<b>Outcomes</b>		 India	 Pakistan	 Madagascar	 Tajikistan	 Myanmar	 Kyrgyzstan	
 outcome written in survey and validated at workshop  outcome written in survey but not validated at workshop  outcome only validated at workshop								
<b>Farmers' income</b>								
11	There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers							
<b>Water efficiency and management (producer)</b>								
12	Knowledge about water issues in crop farming among the farmers has increased							
13	There is a more sustainable management of water, particularly groundwater resources							
14	A strong learning community of farmers in the WAPRO regions was created or expanded							
15	Farmers have fairer access to water							
16	Awareness of water management issues was raised, and therefore farmers' family have also started using water responsibly (irrigation and drinking water)							
17	Farmers are applying water saving techniques with other crops (such as cassava and cowpea)							
<b>Production efficiency through fewer inputs</b>								
18	The farmers consume less irrigation water as they need to irrigate fewer times during a cycle							
19	The farmers use fewer fertilizers when growing their crop							
20	The farmers use fewer Highly Hazardous Pesticides when growing their crop and use environment-friendly pesticides and other biopesticides							
21	There was a reduction of pressure on water, fuel and electricity resources							

<b>Outcomes</b>		 India	 Pakistan	 Madagascar	 Tajikistan	 Myanmar	 Kyrgyzstan	
	outcome written in survey and validated at workshop		outcome written in survey but not validated at workshop		outcome only validated at workshop			
<b>Quality of harvested products</b>								
22	The quality of the rice yielded has significantly improved							
23	The security of the supply of rice has increased							
<b>Sustaining water stewardship and efficiency approaches (community)</b>								
24	The local implementing partner has begun to replicate the project's development in other regions of the country							
25	Water productivity and sustainability have become important issues in private sector companies (ginneries)							
26	Private sector companies (ginneries) have a more active role in spreading awareness about water efficiency and integrate it more into their activities							
27	Farmers joined associations that ensure laws and rules linked to water usage are followed							
28	Water users associations (WUAs) are better managed, leading to fewer conflicts between members							
29	Legislation concerning water efficiency were put in place or reviewed in the country on regional and/or national level							
30	Government took ownership of WAPRO approaches (e.g. water saving technologies) and want to continue them after the end of the phase							
31	A strong Community of Practice was established within the WAPRO implementing actors							
32	An educational program for young students has been put in place to improve their irrigation skills and become professionally involved in the water and agricultural sectors, addressing one of the biggest bottlenecks in the sector: lack of qualified staff.							
33	The local government has appointed a person in charge of post-WAPRO monitoring and supervision of activities in anticipation of the end of the phase							

## Significance of the outcomes and what activities contributed to them

The following results were gathered from the online validation workshop hosted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 with the WAPRO partners.

### Overview of significance

Outcome (ranked on their significance throughout the WAPRO countries)	Number of countries	Ranks (per number of countries)
There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers	5/6	1 <sup>st</sup> : 3; 2 <sup>nd</sup> : 1; 3 <sup>rd</sup> : 1
Better and more close collaboration between private sector and the farmers was achieved (e.g. dialogues between farmers and private enterprises to discuss fair water allocation)	3/6	1 <sup>st</sup> : 2; 2 <sup>nd</sup> : 1
There was a reduction of pressure on water, fuel and electricity resources	2/6	2 <sup>nd</sup> : 2
Government took ownership of WAPRO approaches (e.g. water saving technologies) and want to continue them after the end of the phase	2/6	3 <sup>rd</sup> : 2
Water users associations (WUAs) are better managed, leading to fewer conflicts between members	2/6	3 <sup>rd</sup> : 2
Knowledge about water issues in crop farming among the farmers has increased	1/6	2 <sup>nd</sup> : 1
Legislation concerning water efficiency were put in place or reviewed in the country on regional and/or national level	1/6	1 <sup>st</sup> : 1
A strong Community of Practice was established within the WAPRO implementing actors	1/6	2 <sup>nd</sup> : 1
The project has gained recognition among water sector stakeholders and is being invited to share experiences by state agencies and development partners.	1/6	3 <sup>rd</sup> : 1

### India

Most significant outcomes	Why is this outcome significant?	Which WAPRO activities contributed to this outcome?*
Better and more close collaboration between private sector and the farmers was achieved (e.g. dialogues between farmers and private enterprises to discuss fair water allocation)	Farmers and private sector are biggest water users (directly and through virtual water trade), better technology.	[not filled out for India as a whole] * due to the diversity of sub-projects, no consensus was found for all sub-projects involved
Knowledge about water issues in crop farming among the farmers has increased	Rising water scarcity is catching farmers' attention lately and they are ready to switch to water saving technology.	
There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers	Through reduction in cost of cultivation and can fetch better prices especially for organic produce.	

## Pakistan

Most significant outcomes	Why is this outcome significant?	Which WAPRO activities contributed to this outcome?
There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers	Improved incomes and yields are the most significant factor in bringing about a behavioural shift among farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building trainings on agronomic practices</li> <li>• Access to technology (Laser levelling, AWD, MRT)</li> <li>• Awareness sessions</li> <li>• Access to quality inputs</li> <li>• Advisory services</li> <li>• Contract farming under SRP/BCI program</li> </ul>
There was a reduction of pressure on water, fuel and electricity resources	Water efficiency is one of the most important objectives of the project. It is not only important from the point of view of the project but also a national priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising</li> <li>• Access to technology</li> <li>• Advisory services</li> </ul>
Government took ownership of WAPRO approaches (e.g. water saving technologies) and want to continue them after the end of the phase	This is significant from the point of view of sustainability of the project in the long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy sessions</li> <li>• Joint workshops/seminars</li> <li>• Evidence sharing</li> <li>• Policy dialogues</li> </ul>

## Madagascar

Most significant outcomes	Why is this outcome significant?	Which WAPRO activities contributed to this outcome?
Better and more close collaboration between private sector and the farmers was achieved (e.g. dialogues between farmers and private enterprises to discuss fair water allocation)	[not filled out]	Strengthening of capacities of local stakeholders, adoption of new techniques (proximité dans l'accompagnement)
There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers	[not filled out]	Strengthening of capacities of local stakeholders, adoption of new techniques (proximité dans l'accompagnement)
Water users associations (WUAs) are better managed, leading to fewer conflicts between members	[not filled out]	Strengthening of capacities of local stakeholders, adoption of new techniques (proximité dans l'accompagnement)

## Tajikistan

Most significant outcomes	Why is this outcome significant?	Which WAPRO activities contributed to this outcome?
There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers	The project's mission was to increase farmers' income and food security. Financial well-being serves for the sustainability of the project approach, as well as allows the project beneficiaries to improve their livelihood.	Transfer of knowledge, trainings, promotion of agro-ecological principles, consultations and organizing demonstration plots
There was a reduction of pressure on water, fuel and electricity resources	The project farmers save up 30% of water compared to the traditional farmers, which results in a reduction in electricity demand, as 85% of pump irrigation is used. This has an impact on the overall better management of natural resources and is a climate change mitigation measure.	Implementation of simple, affordable and easy applicable water-saving technologies at farm level, development of water-use plans at WUAs level including mapping, strengthening capacity of WUAs
Government took ownership of WAPRO approaches (e.g. water saving technologies) and want to continue them after the end of the phase	WAPRO's existing approach has proven successful and extending the knowledge transfer to other areas ensures the sustainability of the project.	Advocacy conducted by the project, development of training modules, development of materials, brochures, educational videos, posters and by working at irrigation system level, participation in RTs, organization of multi-stakeholders workshops with government and private sector representatives, development of recommendations for Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation and creation of Syrdarya River Basin Council Working Group on Water Use Efficiency and Productivity led by WAPRO.

## Myanmar

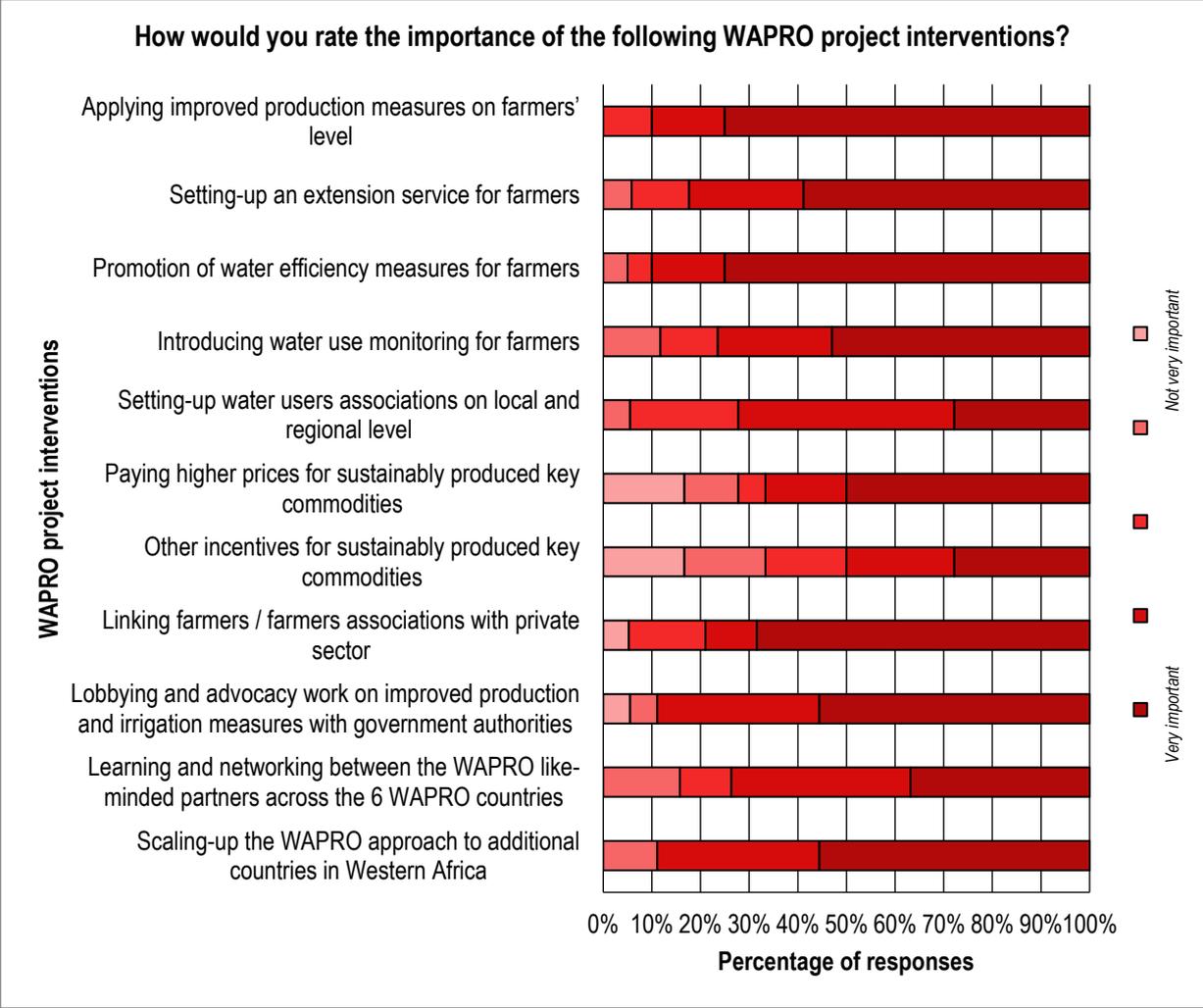
Most significant outcomes	Why is this outcome significant?	Which WAPRO activities contributed to this outcome?
There is a visible increase in rice and cotton farmers' yield, which ultimately contributed to additional income for said farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It directly contributed to higher income by farmer, better food nutrition leading to food security.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair water access</li> <li>Adoption of resource efficient technologies (SRP, SRI, AWD)</li> <li>Rice miller extension model (training and coaching to farmers)</li> </ul>
Better and more close collaboration between private sector and the farmers was achieved (e.g. dialogues between farmers and private enterprises to discuss fair water allocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovative approach (pull factor) relevant to Myanmar</li> <li>One of the best approaches for sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building trust</li> <li>encouragement/ facilitation for contract farming (formal and informal)</li> <li>investment/ co-financing based on rice miller assessment</li> </ul>
Water users associations (WUAs) are better managed, leading to fewer conflicts between members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It guarantees sustainability for fair water allocation and usage in the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restructuring the organization structure for WUAs</li> <li>SOP include water risk management plan, incident response plan,</li> <li>Facilitation for MoU between private sector partners and WUAs (WS plan updating and equal sharing of water)</li> <li>Capacity development program WUAs (leadership skill, accountant skill and management skill)</li> <li>Support / contribution for rehabilitations which is lead by WUAs</li> <li>Support WUAs to manage collective action (financial and HR, etc.)</li> </ul>

## Kyrgyzstan

Most significant outcomes	Why is this outcome significant?	Which WAPRO activities contributed to this outcome?
<p>Legislation concerning water efficiency were put in place or reviewed in the country on regional and/or national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National law that was put in place and successfully approved on national level</li> <li>• It opens up legislative opportunities for water security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-stakeholder discussion platforms</li> <li>• Expert support from Helvetas</li> <li>• Media coverage</li> <li>• Collaboration with state stakeholders (bilateral meetings, round tables)</li> </ul>
<p>A strong Community of Practice was established within the WAPRO implementing actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong local group of interested stakeholders</li> <li>• Through capacity building, they were able to talk as equals with the authorities and change the laws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building capacity of the actors</li> <li>• Building/strengthening ownership of actors through strategy development; the actors were involved in developing the strategy and the project, they built it together</li> <li>• Mobilizing the involved and interested stakeholders</li> <li>• Establishment of local initiative group</li> <li>• Keeping up regular communication and meetings with the local initiative group (1 meeting every 2 months)</li> <li>• Broadening of the base of supporters (it started in a specific region, then more provinces were involved)</li> </ul>
<p>The project has gained recognition among water sector stakeholders and is being invited to share experiences by state agencies and development partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helvetas give support to the local actors in their water-related activities, especially policy related activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise provided (legal, technical and practical expertise); it was based on local knowledge, not only on INGO knowledge</li> <li>• Persistent advocacy and long-term thinking, not stopping after the first set back</li> </ul>

# Annex 5: Selected survey result graphs

How would you rate the importance of the following WAPRO project interventions?



## Annex 6: Evaluation matrix

No	Criteria	Code	Question improved / questions proposed
1	Relevance	R1	How far were project design (notably through the 4 components), scope, implementation modalities and budget adequate to reach the planned objectives and outputs? What about unplanned objectives and outputs?
2	Relevance	R2	Which of the different pillars and activities of the project were more relevant to tackle the different objectives of the phase?
3	Relevance	R3	To what extent has the intervention responded to changes in the environment over time (risks and potentials)?
4	Relevance	R4	How pertinent has the public-private partnership modality been to reach the overall goal of improved water resources management for increased farmers' income and water productivity? What was their main motivation / incentive to get involved?
5	Relevance	R5	How far has gender mainstreaming been considered in the overall design and implementation of this phase, and how could it be improved in the future?
6	Relevance	R6	How far were challenges and opportunities of the youth taken into account in the overall project design and implementation, and how could it be improved in the future?
7a	Relevance	R7a	Was the intervention aligned with the goals and policies of Swiss development cooperation (incl. GPFS cooperation strategy 2017-2020 and 2021-2024)
7b	Relevance	R7b	Was the intervention aligned with the needs and priorities of partner countries?
7c	Relevance	R7c	Was the intervention aligned to the needs and priorities of target groups (farmers)?
7d	Relevance	R7d	Was the intervention aligned to the needs and priorities of the target groups (international private sector)?
8	Coherence	C1	In view of the recent developments under the momentum of the UN Food Systems Summit, how coherent is the project approach and partnership through a food systems lens?
9	Coherence	C2 new	How do you assess the coherence / synergies / subsidiarity with other SDC/SECO interventions in the countries (internal coherence)?
10	Coherence	C3 new	To what extent is the intervention compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic field regarding complementarity and synergies? (external coherence)
11	Coherence	C4	How far did the WAPRO phase 2 coordinate / cooperate with other interventions by other donors / projects in the similar regions or countries?
12	Effectiveness	EFFECT1	To what extent were the project results attained, in terms of smallholders reached, policies adapted, private sector engaged, etc.?
13	Effectiveness	EFFECT2	What evidence exists regarding results of the project on people's livelihoods in terms of social or economic improvements (e.g. food security)?
14	Effectiveness	EFFECT3	At national and sub-project level, was the steering and implementation setup adequate enough to: (1) ensure effective project implementation, (2) guarantee a proper monitoring of the project results, (3) ensure transparency and accountability, (4) consolidate the results and advances for policy dialogue and general communication (notably through the national coordinators)?
15	Effectiveness	EFFECT4	Was the selection of the 4+2 countries effective to promote the WAPRO Initiative? Were the countries selected coherent in terms of partner engagement, results attainment, and to gain leverage for replication potential?
16	Effectiveness	EFFECT5	To what extent have the three components (push / pull / policy) interacted between one another to reach greater effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions? (e.g. the push developments brought into policy frameworks, the pull incentives brought into adapted ESG guidance, etc.)
17	Effectiveness	EFFECT6	What was the value of SDC engagement for the overall partnership, objectives attainment and engagement of the stakeholders (AWS / BCI / SRP & co, Mars / Coop / Westmill, etc.?)
18	Effectiveness	EFFECT7	Which have been the most important incentives for the Private Sector to become engaged in the project ("Pull" factor)?
19	Effectiveness	EFFECT8	How far was the private sector involved during this phase, and how could their involvement be positioned for greater engagement and impact in the future?
20	Effectiveness	EFFECT9	Which interventions have proven the least effective?
21	Efficiency	EFF1	Were the coordination mechanisms and leadership in project implementation fit for purpose to achieve the project results?
22	Efficiency	EFF2	How efficient was the partnership between the different project actors?
23	Efficiency	EFF3	How far did the various sub-projects communicate between each other, in terms of sharing of experience, lesson learning, or building on each other (notably for the policy dialogue at national level and globally)?
24	Efficiency	EFF4	Are the results (outputs, outcomes) delivered in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe)?
25	Efficiency	EFF5	Were project resources efficiently utilized to achieve the project results, especially considering the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic?
26	Efficiency	EFF6	A first cost-benefit analysis was done at the end of the first phase, with a ratio of approximately 1:1 with regards to the CH funds. Based on the available information, what would be the cost-benefit assessment of the overall project?
27	Impact	I1	How far were WAPRO approaches and methods mainstreamed, nationally and globally?
28	Impact	I2	What has been the impact of the WAPRO initiative on the CSR / ESG strategies of the private sector partners, but also within the global discourse?
29a	Impact	I3a	How far did the WAPRO overall project influence policies, in the countries of direct intervention? Are there any documented examples of such policy uptakes?
29b	Impact	I3b	How far did the WAPRO overall project influence policies globally? Are there any documented examples of such policy uptakes?
30a	Impact	I4a	Have there been any unintended effects, such as: (1) relative to the uptake by non-stakeholders of elements promoted by the project, be it from neighbouring farmers, other governments or private sector companies? (2) relative to the re-orientation of markets (such as increased focus on export vs. local food supply), or new supply chain contracting?
30b	Impact	I4b	Have there been any unintended effects on a more global level?
31	Sustainability	SUS1	To what extent will the effects, impacts & partnerships be maintained once SDC's support comes to an end?
32	Sustainability	SUS2	To what extent are knowledge, information and experiences documented and shared during the project implementation at the national, regional and global level?
33	Sustainability	SUS3	How far have the implementation strategies been oriented keeping in mind a logic of sustainability? (e.g. in terms of anchoring the "push" practices into local institutions or entities, or in terms of increasing the "pull" effect adoption through the development of new supply chain contracting, or through concrete new governmental frameworks)
34	Sustainability	SUS 4	How far have the results and lessons learnt produced under the programs been fed into the Swiss country offices and interventions in the countries of intervention (for those countries where an SCO is / was present)?
35	Lessons Learned and Recommendations	LL&R1	What lessons can be learned from the phase 2 in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and what recommendations could be drawn for the GPFS for any new support targeting private sector engagement along a supply chain?
36	Lessons Learned and Recommendations	LL&R2	Which are the good practices from this phase, which should be further promoted for replication and up-scaling, and which activities or approaches should be avoided in the future?
37	Lessons Learned and Recommendations	LL&R3	Make any other recommendation towards SDC/GPFS, which could be useful for the promotion of private sector engagement, of sustainable agricultural practices and resources management, etc. – along the priorities of the GPFS cooperation framework 2021-2024.

## Annex 7: Assessment Grid

### Assessment Grid for project/program evaluations of SDC / SECO interventions

Version: 11.06.2020

**Note:** this assessment grid is used for evaluations of SDC / SECO financed projects and programs (hereinafter jointly referred to as an 'intervention'). It is based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria.<sup>18</sup> In mid-term evaluations, the assessment requires analyzing the likelihood of achieving sustainability and, to a lesser degree, the likelihood of effectiveness and efficiency. All applicable sub-criteria should be scored and a short explanation should be provided.

Please add the corresponding number (0-4) representing your rating of the sub-criteria in the column “score”:

0 = not assessed

1 = highly satisfactory

2 = satisfactory

3 = unsatisfactory

4 = highly unsatisfactory

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<sup>18</sup> For information on the 2019 revisions of the evaluation framework see: Better Criteria for Better Evaluations. Revised Evaluation Criteria. Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2019.

Key aspects based on DAC criteria	Score (put only integers: 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4)	Justification (please provide a short explanation for your score or why a criterion was not assessed)
<b>Relevance</b> <b>Note:</b> the assessment here captures the relevance of objectives and design <i>at the time of evaluation</i> . In the evaluation report, both relevance at the design stage as well as relevance at the time of evaluation should be discussed.		
1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group.	1	Working with a Push-Pull-Policy approach on micro, meso and macro levels, WAPRO addresses the needs and priorities of the various stakeholders directly involved in the project.
2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not included in target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention.	1	WAPRO aligns with government priorities in all 6 countries, the SDGs, Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24 and the ESG strategy of most private sector partners involved.
3. The extent to which core design elements of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group.	2	Though the majority of WAPRO beneficiaries are small-holder farmers, the design of the project does not specifically target them or any other specific disadvantaged target groups (e.g. women farmers, youth, LNOB), however, the chosen target group "farmer families" and the project interventions are seen to be very relevant.
<b>Coherence</b>		
4. Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies).	1	WAPRO being steered by a global division at SDC is coherent with global and country strategies by Switzerland, and WAPRO management maintained close synergies with other SDC and SECO interventions in countries where the FDFA runs a SCO.
5. External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic field (complementarity and synergies).	2	WAPRO worked based on opportunities and had by project design an open and transparent communication with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the Push-Pull-Policy approach offers a comprehensive way to involve relevant stakeholders in complex (market) systems.

<b>Effectiveness</b>		
6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.	2	In most of the sub-projects, the interaction of the three components of Push-Pull-Policy contributed to reaching the objectives. By addressing water efficiency, WAPRO also indirectly addressed food security, and water efficiency knowledge was also applied to other crops.
7. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes).	2	A large number of farmer families have improved their water efficiency, their productivity and their incomes. The initial goal of 65'000 farmers was exceeded – around 81'550 farmers were reached based on the 2021 annual report. However, differences between the countries regarding M&E reporting bring a certain limitation to the true meaningfulness of this number. The confirmed number is 40'000 by 2021.
8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.	2	Though the target of 15 % of participating women was not a particularly ambitious goal, given that the agronomy sector is highly male-dominated, the 27 % of female farmers WAPRO ended up reaching (as mentioned in the annual report 2021) is an overall satisfactory result.
<b>Efficiency</b>		
9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.	2	The overall budget of around CHF 27 million for both phases allowed the project to reach around 40'000 confirmed farmer families by 2021. The CBA showed that the overall WAPRO budget (SDC contributions and third-party contributions) was internalized well within the project timeframe.
10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).	2	WAPRO was implemented within the planned timeframe, which was extended by one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.	3	The project management style was lean, which was praised by many partners, however the lack of clear steering from SDC was seen by the evaluators as a missed opportunity. The project management lacked systematic and organized coordination and reporting and led to inaccuracy and opacity. Furthermore, though the inter-

		country exchanges were considered fruitful, intra-country exchanges – between the sub-projects and actors – could have been fostered more.
<b>Impact</b>		
<p>12. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> when assessing this criterion, the primary focus is the intended 'higher-level effects'. In the event that <i>significant</i> unintended negative or positive effects can be discerned, they must be specified in the justification column, especially if they influence the score.</p>	2	WAPRO led to enhanced water productivity and increase of family income of at least 40'000 farmers and their families. However, the project could have reached more scale on the sub-project level. Furthermore, mainstreaming of water efficiency in policy was achieved on local, regional and even national level depending on the country.
<b>Sustainability</b>		
13. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	1	Activities in the Push category are the most likely to be continued (e.g. adoption of water saving technologies by individual farmers), in the Pull category it is questionable (it highly depends on the private sector's readiness and awareness) and in the Policy category it is the most questionable (it depends on the willingness of farmers, the private sector, and the government to engage).
14. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	2	Several examples showed that WAPRO approaches will be sustained by partner organizations and/or replicated in several new projects co-financed by the private sector and/or with other donors.
15. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.	2	Though there is a will from farmers, the private sector and to an extent the governments to work on water efficiency, not many policies or mandatory incentives for private sector actors were put in place, meaning in most countries there is still a lack of a clear framework with enforceable measures to push water efficiency measures long term.

Additional information (if needed): no

Title of the intervention: WAPRO Phase 2

Assessor(s): Carsten Schulz, Roman Troxler

Date: 12.10.22

## **Annex 8: Case study Pakistan**

**Annex 9: Case study Tajikistan**