

MID-TERM EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

**Project Title: Fisher Community Resilience Enhancement Project
(FICREP)**

Project Symbol: OSRO/SSD/906/NET

Resource Partner: The Kingdom of Netherlands

Implementing Agency: FAO

Implementing country: South Sudan

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List of Acronyms

BSDO	Business Skills Development Officer
CMD	Christian Mission for Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EAF	Ecosystem Approach for Fisheries
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FICREP	Fisher Community Resilience Enhancement Project
FNS	Food, Nutrition Security
FPG	Fisher Producer Groups
FSL	Food Security and Livelihood
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approaches
KII	Key Informant Interview
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MACS	Multi Annual Country Strategy
MACSSS	Multi Annual Country Strategy South Sudan
MARF	Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MLF	Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAADO	Smile Africa Again Development Organization
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
VSLA	Village Saving and Lending Association

1.0 Executive summary

Introduction

The Fisher Community Resilience Enhancement Project (FICREP) is a project which was designed to address the challenges and increase the resilience of fisher folks in South Sudan. The project focuses on two major locations known for fish production, Terekeka, Central Equatoria State and Bor, Jonglei State. Funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, FICREP is implemented by FAO, in partnership with Christian Mission for Development (CMD) and Smile Africa Again Development Organization (SAADO), for a duration of five-years (2020-2024). Overall, the project contributes to food and nutrition security (FNS) through a coordinated, conflict sensitive and environmentally sustainable approach that enhances fishery resource management, optimizes value chains, and improves supply and access to quality fish products. The project specifically aims at delivering results through the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Improved fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security;

Outcome 2: Sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks; and

Outcome 3: Increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved post-harvest handling and management.

Following two years of implementation (2020-2022), an independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the project was carried out to assess the progress against outputs, management and coordination aspects, and recommended necessary adjustments for the second half of project implementation (2023-2024) and for strategically positioning the project beyond 2024.

Findings

Relevance – The rating was satisfactory

- The project is relevant to the country's developmental policies in view of the mandate of the national Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and the State Ministries of Animal Resources and Fisheries whose key objectives are to improve livestock and fish production in the country;
- The project is also relevant to the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (MARF) policy framework and strategic plans (2012-2016) and resonates with its Strategic Goal 5: 'Significant and documented improvements in consumer protections achieved through improvements in the quality of marketed livestock and fisheries products resulted from improved processing infrastructure, hygiene, handling, processing and inspection;
- The project outcome and activities are reflected in the national Fisheries Policy (2022-2027), which was revised by the fisheries stakeholders, with key policy areas in governance, institutional capacity and human resource development, research, development and resource monitoring, capture fisheries (wild fish utilization), aquaculture, post-harvest and value addition, fish marketing, and trade and

investment. The national policy goals includes a well-trained, dedicated and competent workforce and resource users with appropriate knowledge base and skills to enable better decision making regarding development and management of capture fishery resources and aquaculture;

- FICREP project addresses the needs of target beneficiaries at local levels, which were expressed through the members of the Fisher Producer Groups (FPGs) formed in Terekeka (10 groups) and in Bor (10 groups). This is being realized in the quantity and quality of fish in addition to reducing the post-harvest losses through the introduction and use of fish processing equipment provided by the project;
- The project is also directly linked to the Netherlands' Multi-Annual Country Strategy (MACS), which contributes to the achievement of its thematic objectives in general and through the development of business services in the fishery sector through agribusiness development, improving market linkages and promoting Village Saving and Lending Associations (VSLA); and
- The project outcomes fits within the FAO South Sudan Resilience Strategy, which was updated from 2019 to 2021 with an objective to: build the resilience of households and communities to shocks and stressors that impacts agriculture, food security and nutrition through protecting, restoring and improving livelihoods. It identified areas where FAO can make a difference and has comparative advantage.

Effectiveness – The rating was moderately satisfactory

- An enabling environment was created by the project which resulted in active interactions between the different actors and the beneficiaries in the implementation of the project activities;
- The selection of the project implementation areas in Terekeka and Bor, known as the fish production hubs in the country, was effective strategically as fish value chain and added value addition can be maximized;
- Linkages were established between the local fisheries county authorities, the implementing agencies (SAADO in Terekeka and CMD in Bor), which also included the fishers, processors, fish transporters and fish sellers;
- Some outputs were achieved and others yet to be achieved: from the beneficiaries' perspective, they are very happy and satisfied with two main activities, the ongoing trainings and the delivery of the fiberglass motor boats, among others;
- The main activities under Outcome 1 on improving fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security, were implemented, including the review of the fisheries policy and the trainings for students studying fisheries at both University of Juba and Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Sciences and Technology in Bor;
- Some activities under Outcome 2 on sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks, have started, however, most are yet to be implemented in the second phase; and

- Activities under Outcome 3 on increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved postharvest handling and management, which included the various trainings for the beneficiaries by the implementing partners and the renovations of the fisheries infrastructure have started, but yet to be completed.

Efficiency - The rating was moderately satisfactory

- The economic benefits that are accrued by selling the fish products from the processing equipment throughout the project period are far higher and will continue for a longer period of time in comparison to initial costs of the processing equipment;
- Some of the equipment required by the fishers e.g. boats were imported and not available in the local markets, therefore the procurement and operational procedures took longer and at a higher expense than if the goods were available in the local markets;
- The imported materials for construction of fibre glass canoes e.g. epoxy/resin are expensive;
- All fish value chain actors including fisher, processors, transporters, fish sellers, consumers, were targeted for efficiency as well as transporters from the private sector; and
- An inclusive approach that promotes strong linkages and effectiveness in the project whereby FAO, the stakeholders and implementing partners are actively involved in the implementation of the project activities need to be strengthened.

Sustainability- The rating was moderately unsatisfactory

- The project activities had built business relationships and linkages in addition to the fish value chain, which needs to be strengthened;
- The use of national NGOs for project implementation that understood the working environmental conditions ensures the achievement and sustainability of outcomes;
- Engaging the local national staff and local expertise in project implementation created trust for the project outcomes by the local communities;
- At present there is good coordination at the local level both in Terekeka and Bor with the fisheries departments. The FICREP project team needs also to strengthen the coordination of project activities, which is poor, with the national ministry at the Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture and at the Central Equatoria state level with the department of fisheries. The institutional capacity is not adequate both in Terekeka and Bor in order to support the sustainability of the project;
- Social benefits in the form of active participation in community issues, such as women empowerment etc., which were part of the project implementation strategies, contributed in enhancing communities' perception towards sustainability; and
- Improving engagement with local Institutions e.g. universities and the relevant ministries e.g. Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in project design and implementation will provide adequate support to the sustainability of the activities.

Cross –cutting issues – The rating was moderately satisfactory

- The gender aspect was considered in the design of the project by targeting and supporting women with the aim of empowering them and their families;
- In activities, particularly trainings conducted, there was adequate representation from both male and female;
- In Bor, women are allowed to be members of fisher groups but not allowed to participate in the boat management committee because the members believed that this is exclusively masculine, according to their culture and traditions;
- It was noted that in many of the project activities, youth were mostly involved in the fishing, cleaning fish and transportation to the urban fish markets;
- Floods affected the fishers in terms of accessibility to the fishing areas and also caused losses to fishing gears and crafts. This impact requires a national comprehensive approach and response from all the sectors of the community, the government and the development partners;
- The implementing partners, CMD and SAADO, have adopted a system whereby the group members and leaders/elders act as complaint-feedback channels for solving issues or problems between the members; and
- The non-beneficiaries found both in Terekeka and Bor were interested in the trainings which can build their capacities and the provision of equipment. As such they do recommend that such projects should be extended to other areas.

Recommendations

- The expedition of project activities is important due to the delays caused by COVID-19 as a result of the imposition of the precautionary measures as well as delays due to operational and procurement procedures for project inputs;
- Activate coordination mechanism and establish regular links and meetings with the fisheries departments of both the national and state actors.
- In consultation with the other stakeholders and local partners, FAO should prioritize to build capacities of government fisheries staff through training workshops in data collection, analysis and management;
- Gender issues need to be addressed through the recruitment of a national gender affairs expert for gender mainstreaming in the project site in Bor;
- Provide support to fish value chain development incorporating equipment and cost sharing agreements;
- FAO to engage the private sector through the State Chamber of Commerce and develop LoA for sustainability;
- Expand the localization approach through national universities;
- Construct a boat yard in both project sites for use and safety of the motor boats; and
- Re-visit voucher scheme which was suspended as a project activity to strengthen the fish value chain.

2.0 Background and context of the project

FICREP was designed with an aim of increasing the resilience of fisher folks by addressing the challenges faced in the fisheries sector. South Sudan attained its independence in July 2011 followed by a civil conflict which resulted in displacement, food insecurity and the disruption of livelihoods to the rural population. Apart from oil, its natural resources remained largely untapped including the fish. South Sudan produces approximately 140 000 tons/yr with an estimated 1.7 million people depending directly on fisheries for their livelihood and/or food security and nutrition (CAMP, 2013). As such the project was designed on the following rationale:

- Governance and enabling the legal environment of the fisheries governance system is weak and needs to be strengthened by having a strong national fisheries policy and bills. The national government has a supervisory and policy formulation role and the various states (Currently 10 states and 3 administrative areas) have the roles of implementation of the policy;
- Coordination in the fisheries sector involves the UN agencies, NGOs and the government agencies which work in the areas related to fisheries. It will address challenges that had resulted in resource wastage, effort repetition and failed interventions. There are enormous challenges in making sure that these different institutions and agencies are able to work together towards a common goal in terms of the development of the fisheries sector in the country. The main role of such a network would be to coordinate activities in the sector, ensuring efficient use of resources and exchange of information in the fisheries sector;
- There is lack of data and information on the status of the fishery stock in South Sudan which is necessary for ensuring the sustainable management of the resource. There is need to develop data collection schemes and tools, and build capacities at national and state levels to collect reliable data on fisheries and also socio-economic information;
- Production development needs to be prioritized. Despite the available rich aquatic resources in South Sudan, the sector has difficulties increasing production because of issues including poor infrastructure in the fisheries sector, low access to quality fishing equipment and gear, lack of appropriate fishing vessels, as well as weak organization of fisher communities in order to attract investment from the private sector;
- Fish post-harvest losses in South Sudan are generally estimated to be as high as 40% of the total landings. These losses are in quantity and quality, meaning losses in nutritional and market value. They are caused by poor handling, transportation challenges, and inappropriate storage and processing practices. Lack of ice and cold storage facilities along with inadequate means of transportation and infrastructure. Rudimentary post-harvest processing technologies have contributed to these high post-harvest losses; and
- Access to markets is a major constraint for many fishers. Fishing camps are scattered all along the rivers and water bodies. The only means of transportation available to fishers are their traditional canoes. Issues with the development of the fish value chain and market linkages are very important in growing the business environment.

FICREP is funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as the implementing agency and in partnership with Christian Mission for Development (CMD) and Smile Africa Again Development Organization (SAADO) for a duration of five years (2020-2024). The project aims to increase the resilience of fisher folk in South Sudan and the availability of fish to South Sudan's population, not only in volume, but also in quality. The project focuses on two major fish production hubs in South Sudan: Terekeka and Bor. Overall, the project contributes to food and nutrition security (FNS) through a coordinated, conflict sensitive and environmentally sustainable approach that enhances fishery resource management, optimizes value chains, and improves supply and access to quality fish products. The project strategies implemented by FAO for FICREP is based on multiple modalities and adaptive management aimed at achieving a better chance for success in a volatile environment. The specific outcomes of the project are:

- Outcome 1: Improved fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security;
- Outcome 2: Sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks; and
- Outcome 3: Increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved post-harvest handling and management.
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Following two years of implementation (2020-2022), an independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the project was carried out to assess progress against outputs, management and coordination aspects, and recommended necessary adjustments for the second half of project implementation (2023-2024) as well as recommendations for strategically positioning the project beyond 2024.

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Purpose and scope of the MTE

3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the MTE was to appraise the project's design, operations, administration, and outcomes in order to identify lessons and good practices that can improve project implementation. It assessed the intermediate results achieved, the way they were achieved, enhanced learning on what was working, what was not and why, and gave insights on necessary adjustments for the second half of project implementation. The specific objectives of the MTE were to:

- Assess project design, objectives, analysis of the context and environment for project implementation;
- Assess the implementation management and coordination modalities, including working arrangements and how the COVID-19 situation and other emergent challenges affected delivery of the project and how the project responded to the risks;
- Assess progress towards achievement of project results (outputs and outcomes);

- Assess how cross-cutting issues of gender, youth and human rights, conflict dynamics and climate change were integrated in the project; and
- Identify lessons and proposed recommendations to inform and enable necessary adjustments for the second half of project implementation.

3.1.2 Scope

The MTE covered the first half of the project from January 2020 – December 2022. The evaluation assessed the implementation strategies in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Gender mainstreaming, gender equality and cross cutting issues were considered during the process of the evaluation. It also identified and analyzed challenges, limitations and opportunities of the project. More specifically, the MTE also covered the level of achievements of the project objectives which were rated on a 5-scale as shown below:

- Highly satisfactory (HS): Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings;
- Satisfactory (S): Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings;
- Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings;
- Unsatisfactory (U): Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings; and
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU): Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings.

3.2 Evaluation design

The MTE was conducted as per ToR and informed by the global standard evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/ DAC0: Strategic Relevance & Added Value, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability). Evaluation questions were guided on the basis of these criteria. Partnership and strategic learning lessons were also evaluated with FAO as implementing partner, in partnership with national organizations which are SAADO in Terekeka and CMD in Bor.

3.3 Methodology and Data collection

The MTE was conducted according to the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations System. The objectives were provided in the ToR and evaluation questions were formulated which formed the analytical framework for the MTE. Taking into consideration the COVID-19 situation, information was collected by adopting social distancing especially during meetings. The methodology used includes:

- i) A desk review of relevant documents, including project documents, work plans, progress and monitoring reports, LoAs and activity reports;
- ii) Key informant interviews (KIIs) are methods of qualitative in-depth interviews with individuals informed on the topic to find out their opinions. It was conducted together

with the project manager, implementing partners, local and state authorities, those involved in project delivery, and beneficiaries. A total of 60 respondents were interviewed (36 males and 24 females) in Juba, Terekeka and Bor;

- iii) Focus group discussions (FGD) with the beneficiaries were conducted in both Terekeka and Bor. This method was used for collecting qualitative information using an in-depth discussion with a selected group of members who are knowledgeable about the topic in order to find out their general opinion as a group. Such shared knowledge and experience may be difficult to obtain from individual interviews. In Terekeka, three FGDs for the fisher groups were conducted comprising of 10 females, 10 males as well as 4 members (2 males and 2 females) of the boat management committee totalling 24 members. In Bor, two FGDs were conducted comprising of 10 females, 10 males totalling 20 members. As such 5 FGDs were conducted with the total number of 44 respondents disaggregated into 22 males and 22 females; and
- iv) Field visits to project sites to meet beneficiaries (9 sites) were conducted as an observational methodology for examining the activities that are taking place in the field. The areas visited included the fish market, landing site, bus shop, ice plant, canoe building site, Department of Fisheries, and Women's center which are all located in Terekeka. In Bor the places visited included the fish market, Department of Fisheries, fishing camp in Malual Chat, the ice plant, and Loudiet and Fish Wholesale market in Loudiet.

A joint consultative and participatory evaluation approach with a gender responsive approach was adopted through inclusive and consultative meetings, discussions and engagements. Meetings for the KIIs in Juba were conducted by the consultant. The mobilization and meetings with the stakeholders and beneficiaries were conducted by the consultant and assisted by two enumerators in each of the project sites in Terekeka and Bor.

3.4 Data analysis

The qualitative information gathered was categorized from the interview guides and analysed using content analysis to understand the concept and ideas being communicated. The text was broken down/coded into manageable categories on different levels in terms of word, sentence or theme. The similarity of the various responses were arranged together under specific themes, so that the ideas communicated were then clearly expressed as the findings.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The MTE was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) "Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations". The process was independent and impartial whereby the consultant maintained personal and professional integrity without any influence whatsoever from any of the actors.

3.6 Limitations

- Some of the key stakeholders were not knowledgeable with the project document in terms of the project outcome, outputs and activities, therefore were not able to contribute effectively to the evaluation process; and

- In Terekeka, the recent flooding caused destruction to some of the fishing camps on the nearby islands resulting in displacements to the fisher folks. As a result, the consultant was unable to visit the fishing camps.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Relevance

Relevance rating: Satisfactory

Evaluation Questions:

4.1.1 To what extent are the objectives, outputs and planned activities of FICREP consistent and relevant to the government fisheries programs?

- The project is consistent and relevant to the country's developmental policies in view of the mandate of the National Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and the State Ministries of Animal Resources and Fisheries whose key objectives are to improve livestock and fish production in the country;
- The project is also relevant to the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (MARF) policy framework and strategic plans (2012-2016) which resonates with its 5th Strategic Goal: significant and documented improvements in consumer protections achieved through improvements in the quality of marketed livestock and fisheries products resulted from improved processing infrastructure, hygiene, handling, processing and inspection;
- The project also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2 (zero hunger), SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth);
- The fisheries sector had lagged behind in comparison to the other agricultural sectors in the country, thus this project addresses the prevailing challenges;
- The project design in terms of its outputs and activities identified the potential for increasing incomes by developing a sustainable fisheries value chain which will have a ripple effect towards a broader economic development in the area.
- Terekeka and Bor as project locations, known for their potential for high fish production, also relates to the government's policy of developing the fisheries sector in terms of productivity in states or the production areas.
- The project outcome and activities are reflected in the National Fisheries Policy (2022-2027) which was revised by relevant stakeholders with key policy areas in governance, institutional capacity and human resource development, research, development and resource monitoring, capture fisheries (wild fish utilization), aquaculture, post-harvest and value addition, fish marketing, trade and investment. The national policy goals include a well-trained, dedicated and competent workforce and resource users with appropriate knowledge base and skills to enable better decision making regarding development and management of capture fishery resources and aquaculture;
- The Comprehensive Agricultural Master Plan (CAMP) formulated in 2013 recognized the huge potential of the fish resources and recommended for its sustainable exploitation through fisheries projects, private sector and government intervention

which will enhance the amount of fish catch and improve fish quality in the markets to benefit the population. As such the activities of this project are relevant to the recommendations provided by CAMP for agricultural transformation towards 2040;

- The project Outcome 1, which relates to improved fisheries sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security, is ambitious to be completely achieved but relevant to be implemented. This is because it demands for a holistic approach to fisheries development in the country which comprises of infrastructure provision, technical capacity and skills development to be implemented for a longer period of time which may not be possible for this project;
- Activities under Outcome 2 and 3 are relevant as they provide opportunities for income generation to the fisher folks by strengthening the fish value chain through a sustainable fisheries resource management approach.

4.1.2 Are the on-going activities addressing the specific needs of target beneficiaries at the local and national levels?

- FICREP is addressing needs of target beneficiaries at the local levels as expressed through the members of the Fisher Producer Groups (FPGs) represented by 10 groups in Bor and 10 groups in Terekeka, (with 30 members in each group), which include increases in the quantity and quality of fish in addition to reducing the post-harvest losses;
- The introduction and use of fish processing equipment provided by the project addressed the lack of appropriate technology for fish processing such as the FTT oven and fish drying racks. This led to an improved quality of the processed fish which was easily sold in the markets;
- The fish value chain was strengthened whereby all the actors were actively participating resulting in vibrant market activities;
- Market linkage was geared to enhance sales of the produce among the targeted beneficiaries, be it the FPGs or other value chain actors, which increased their income and improved their livelihoods;
- The resultant multiplier effect was seen in the community since quality fish product was sold and consumed, increases in number of families benefiting from various stages of fish value chain and attracted more people to buy fish, therefore improving the economic status of the community as a whole;
- The ongoing trainings increased the beneficiaries' knowledge and skills on fish handling, fish processing, business, entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy;
- The coaching on VSLAs built the resilience of the target beneficiaries, in cases when members of the FPGs needed money for their businesses. The purpose of VSLA is to build social capital of the beneficiaries while having informal financial settings amongst them;

- The distributed fibre-glass canoes allowed for better efficiency of fishing activities. Motor boats provided better access to further rich fishing areas resulting in increased fish catch and therefore increased income to the beneficiaries and their families;
- The canoe building training by the use epoxy/resin coatings started in Terekeka and was highly appreciated but yet to be finalized in both Terekeka and Bor;
- Post-harvest fish losses is generally recognized as a major concern to the fisher folks all over South Sudan, especially in Terekeka and Bor, as such the beneficiaries preferred to have a fish storage facility for the processed fish and functioning ice manufacturing plants for fresh fish which could contribute immensely towards the reduction of post-harvest fish losses; and
- Though the local needs of the beneficiaries are being met, still a lot of effort in terms of inputs and investments are still required to meet needs at the national level.

4.1.3 How is the project fitting with the other FAO supported activities?

- The project is in line and contributing to the Strategic Objectives of 1 – help eliminating hunger, food insecurity and Malnutrition, Strategic Objective 2 - to make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable, Strategic Objective 4 - to enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems, and Strategic Objective 5- To increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises;
- The project aligned with FAO’s Country Programming Framework (CPF 2018-21) which included improved practices and technologies for sustainable production and productivity of crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry adopted. Also actors in agriculturally based value chains being better organized and more productive. In addition to the risks and vulnerability reduced at households and community levels;
- The activities of the project was also reflected in FAO’s global fishery sector guidelines including, The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), The Ecosystem Approach for Fisheries (EAF) and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Small Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication; and
- The project outcome also echoed the FAO South Sudan’s Resilience Strategy which was updated from 2019 to 2021 with an objective to build the resilience of households and communities to shocks and stressors that impacts agriculture, food security and nutrition through protecting, restoring and improving livelihoods. It identified areas where FAO can make a difference and had comparative advantage.

4.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness rating: **Moderately satisfactory**

Evaluation Questions:

Sub-questions:

4.2.1 To what extent did FICREP achieve its planned outcomes at this half- life implementation period?

- An enabling environment was created by the project which resulted in active interactions between the different actors and the beneficiaries in the implementation of the project activities;
- Linkages were established between the local fisheries, county authorities, and the implementing agencies which also included the fishers, processors, fish transporters and fish sellers;
- The project attained a level in which some of the outputs were achieved and others yet to be achieved. From the beneficiaries' perspectives, they are quite happy and satisfied with two main things in addition to other activities, which are the on-going trainings and the delivery of the fiberglass motor boats;
- Outcome 1 on improving fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security is composed of 3 outputs and 5 activities. The important activities implemented amongst the others included the review of the fisheries policy and trainings conducted for university fisheries students of both University of Juba and Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Sciences and Technology in Bor;
- Outcome 2 on sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks is composed of 4 outputs and 17 activities. The development of the fish species guide is progressing but not yet completed. The development of methods for data collection and conducting of a frame survey is still pending. Training on fiberglass canoe building skills was started but to be completed in both Terekeka and Bor. The training of stakeholders on ecosystem approach to fisheries have not yet started which is intended to lead to the formulation of a Fisheries Management Plan in the specific project areas;
- The FPGs) were formed, made up of 10 groups in Bor and 10 groups in Terekeka with 30 members each. FTT ovens and fish drying racks were distributed to the women groups. 5 motor boats were transported to the project sites to be distributed to the groups;
- Outcome 3 on increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved post-harvest handling and management which included the various trainings for the beneficiaries by the implementing partners. The renovation of the bush shop and market in Terekeka was completed however the fisheries buildings and the ice manufacturing plants both in Terekeka and Bor are yet to start;
- The activities conducted by SAADO for the 10 groups in Terekeka in 2022 included producing an assessment report for for the ice machine and fiber glass canoes and developing a training manual on fisheries business skills and management. Trainings were conducted for the beneficiaries fisher folks, fish processors and value chain

actors in 7 locations, developing tools on fisheries business skills and management, training of beneficiaries from 10 selected locations on business and financial management totaling to 155 (120 male, 35 female) in addition to another 200 (150 male, 50 female);

- FPGs general assembly elected on 20 September 2022 and interim executive body composed of 5 members (1 Female as treasurer) and 8 supervisory committee members (4 male, 4 female) with a term of office for a period of 2 years. The bush shop feasibility study was conducted and the report produced. The bus shop was officially inaugurated by FAO, donors, National Government and county authorities on 5 October 2022 in Terekeka;
- The activities conducted by CMD for the 10 groups in Bor in 2022 included entrepreneurial skills assessment as well as carrying out a training needs assessment (TNA) on entrepreneurial skills of traditional canoe builders. A baseline assessment for fishers and mapping of value chain actors along the fishing value chain and the existing linkage between them was conducted.
- FPGs general assembly endorsed preliminary draft by-laws and formed the Motor Boat Management Committee made up of five executives and five members (all male members) from all the ten groups in Bor South; and
- Trainings of beneficiaries composed of 70 people (58 male, 12 female) were conducted for the Pariak Group on the adoption and uses of improved dry fish technology. Groups from Jarweng, Leudiet, Adel, Malualchat and Arek were also trained on integrate saving and internal lending practices in their fishing business. A total of 120 beneficiaries (72 male, 48 female) and 60 (42 male, 18 female) were trained, respectively.

4.2.2 What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

The activities that are being implemented in the project sites in Juba, Bor and Terekeka are progressing well. Outline below are factors contributing to the achievement or underachievement of the activities:

- The selection of the project implementation areas in Terekeka and Bor, where there is high fish production was strategic in terms of achievement of project outputs since the target communities are traditionally fisher folks and livestock keepers;
- Funding from the donors was available and not an issue, which facilitated the implementation of the project activities;
- The project was able to support the local fish processing equipment manufacturers e.g. FTT ovens, which allowed the processors to access appropriate technology and to create work opportunities since the ovens are locally made;
- With the formation of the fisher producer groups, the beneficiaries were able to actively participate and contribute to the meetings and also were involved in the trainings for capacity building and the enhancements of their skills;

- Market linkages with the fish traders were established whereby the fishers and processors were linked to the traders, which ensured that their fish products had customers resulting in profitability and improvement of their livelihoods;
- The FAO –FICREP focal person in Terekeka has no office, as a base for monitoring and coordinating the project activities, the staff in Bor sits in the field office;
- A concern was raised by CMD in regard to report clearance by FAO, which at times is delayed. Delays affect the progress of the implementation;
- The project delayed some of the activities which were supposed to have begun, for example activities related to the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries;
- The prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic generally affected the implementation of the project activities which started in late 2022 instead of 2021; and
- The flooding which occurred in both Terekeka and Bor displaced the beneficiaries and affected their activities and livelihoods.

4.2.3 How effectively funds from the project have been transferred to the community, local partners and / or government?

- According to the agreement, the total amount of \$192,927.00 (One hundred ninety two thousand nine hundred twenty seven US dollars) was earmarked for SAADO and \$189,598 (One hundred eighty nine thousand five hundred ninety eight US dollars) for CMD;
- The period for the project execution for the implementing partners is 18 months, which started from February 2022;
- Project funds are transferred from the donor to FAO, then to the implementing partners. A concern was raised by CMD that there was a delay for two months regarding the second disbursement for the project activities, which slowed implementation. This may be due to a late request, in view of the processing procedures for funds to reach on time;and
- Generally the funds have been effectively transferred to the implementing partners for the project activities.

4.3 Efficiency

Efficiency rating: Moderately satisfactory

Evaluation Questions

Sub-questions

4.3.1 Were activities of FICREP cost-efficient?

- Most of the project activities are implemented in the project sites by locally based project staff, with visits from staff at the headquarters who mostly travel for monitoring purposes, reducing mobility and other related costs;
- Materials used for making FTT ovens and fish drying racks are locally purchased. The design is acceptable and easy to use by the beneficiaries, which is more cost-effective than importing ready-made equipment for the beneficiaries;
- The economic benefits that are accrued by selling the fish products from the processing equipment throughout the project period are far higher and will continue for a longer period of time in comparison to initial costs of the processing equipment;

- The processed fish, smoked or sun-dried, have been prepared in a cost-efficient, improved social and business environment;
- Beneficiaries noted increased incomes due to the project activities through fishing and processing, which have the potential to generate an ongoing economic gain for their families and the wider community for the betterment of their livelihoods;
- Some of the equipment required by the fishers e.g. boats are imported and not available in the local markets, as such the procurement and operational procedures took and costs higher than if the goods were available in the local markets;
- The use of the imported materials for canoe building trainings e.g. epoxy/resin are expensive to supply for constructing the fibre -glass canoes;
- All the actors in the fish value chain were targeted for efficiency, moreover the transporter needs to be strengthened through private sector intervention; and
- An inclusive approach that promotes strong linkages and effectiveness in the project whereby FAO, all stakeholders, and implementing partners are actively involved in the implementation of the project activities needs to be strengthened.

4.3.2 Has the project efficiently utilized local capacity and partnerships in implementation?

- The project has been efficiently utilizing local capacity for project implementation, including national staff that are familiar with the context, language and systems in the country, allowing for accurate approach and response to the implementation strategies;
- The use of a national consultant to conduct the MTE was cost efficient, and was supported by local enumerators who were experienced in data and information collection as well as knowledgeable about the language and culture;
- The active involvement of the members of the local communities in the trainings provided is a positive indication of their interest and enthusiasm in improvement to their livelihoods; and
- The partnerships established between the donor, FAO and the implementing partners is effective because each of the actors understood and executed their roles and responsibilities in delivering the project outcomes.

4.3.3 Are there any unintended results to date?

- Due to the delays of the project activities because of the interruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, outcomes were not achieved in the intended project planning period.
- The project has created a conducive environment for the fishing activities to flourish coupled with the trainings provided to fisher folks. This has also led to the high demand of fish in the markets in Terekeka to transport to Juba. Therefore, as a response to increasing catch, some of the fishers are using monofilament nets which is prohibited by the department of fisheries in the state and county because it also captures smaller sized fishes;

- With the training in business and market linkages, the beneficiaries are requesting for start –up capital from the project so that they can easily progress in their fish business which was not earlier planned; and
- The beneficiaries have concerns that the distributed fiberglass canoes which were imported are not safe due to its low sides for fishing activities, meaning they may not use them for fishing, instead for short distance movements.

4.4 Sustainability

Sustainability rating: Moderately unsatisfactory

Evaluation sub-questions:

4.4.1 Which measures are implemented in order to support sustainability after donor funding cease?

- The project activities had built business relationships and linkages in addition to the fish value chain which needs to be strengthened;
- Engaging the local national staff and local expertise in project implementation created trust by the local communities for ensuring sustainability;
- Social benefits in the form of active participation in community issues, women empowerment etc. which were part of the project implementation strategies contributed to enhancing communities' perception towards sustainability;
- Knowledge retention through trainings brought in new ideas and options for the improvements of the beneficiaries livelihoods.
- The bush shop was renovated and operational in Terekeka but requires a business management plan, to be supervised by FAO, with the support of the Department of Fisheries;
- The fish market is functioning but needs to be supported by strengthening the fish value chain and market linkages so that fish sales are guaranteed;
- Fish value addition in terms of processing and the distribution of local processing equipment created jobs and other options in the markets;
- Renovation/establishment of an ice plant in both project sites will be regarded as one of the most important achievements of the project; and
- Provision of the motorboats to the fisher groups will increase fish catch in both project sites, thereby increasing income for the beneficiaries for a longer period.

4.4.2 Are there key issues, challenges and risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and benefits?

- Financial – the funding for the project implementation of the various activities is on track however the long term financial sustainability of the project result after the funding ceases is quite uncertain. This requires for some of the activities e.g. the motor boats operations to be able to generate enough funds for the running costs of these activities;
- Institutional – this is in reference to the government support both at the national and state. Currently, there is good coordination at the local level both in Terekeka and Bor with the departments of fisheries. The FICREP team needs also to strengthen the coordination of project activities, which presently is poor, with the national Ministry

at the Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture and in Central Equatoria State with the Department of Fisheries. The institutional capacity is not adequate from the government sector found both in Terekeka and Bor to support the sustainability of the project. The staff of the department need some training and support in terms of facilitation so that they can also develop through this project. This institutional support is very important for the sustainability of the project after the funding is exhausted

- Socioeconomic – there is lack of awareness in regard to the project activities and outcomes to the local communities at large, specifically on the socioeconomic aspect which advocates for an overall positive outlook and betterment of their livelihoods. The fish business is an income generating activity which has a positive effect both at a household and community level. The trainings also empower the beneficiaries to be able to make decisions to improve their lives;
- Environmental – there are some environmental risks which can affect the sustainability of the project e.g. natural disasters such as flooding. Flooding earlier displaced the fisher producing groups from their areas into the towns in Terekeka and Bor. When flooding occurs it negatively affects the fishing activities;
- Operational aspects – this is related to the operational and procurement procedures which also in some cases can affect the project. FAO uses its policies of operation and procurements for fishing inputs, boats and many other items which are required for the smooth running of the project activities. Fishing activities is mostly seasonal where there are high and low seasons for fishing and contingency plans must be in place in order to leverage this natural phenomenon. This means FAO procedures should be initiated and approved much earlier for better contingency; and
- Project coordination and management – this aspect need to be strengthened for the smooth running of the project activities. There were complaints about delayed payments, delayed requests of items, which as a result, do not reach the project sites within the planning period.

4.4.3 Is the institutional framework capacity adequate to support sustainability of the activities?

- FAO, as the recipient of the donor funds, is capable and adequate with its well established system to manage the funds for the project implementation and the implementing partners to implement activities and deliver project results which will support sustainability;
- Engaging the local institutions e.g. universities and the relevant ministries including the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, in project design and implementation will provide adequate support to the sustainability of the activities.
- The sustainability of project outcomes are achievable thanks to developed partnerships and support to the fish value chains mainly during project implementation period;
- The government and other stakeholders may not be able to support sustainability of project activities after the end of the project due to the current national economic situation;and

- Encouraging the local institutions e.g. universities to deliver capacity building supports the sustainability of the project activities.

Box 1: Positive approach towards sustainability

Mr. Chol, who is the leader of the fisher producer group in Malual chaat, Bor narrated his experience. FICREP has indeed opened their eyes and minds so that they are able to do things properly because they used to fish regularly every year but without any progress in their lives. They formed groups where the members are able to help each other discuss and solve problems as a group. They received trainings in fish handling, preservation and business skills and market linkages. When they catch a lot of fish, some are consumed and others sold either fresh or preserved. They can preserve fish properly using equipment provided so that the fish is not spoilt. His life and his family's livelihood have changed for the better because he can now send his children to school and is also able to buy himself a canoe from his savings to help with fishing activities. The savings also help in times of emergencies. As such he is very happy for the project and wants it to continue so that it can help many people and lift most of the fishers from poverty by improving their livelihood.

Box 2: Negative approach towards sustainability

Most of the beneficiaries found in Terekeka and Bor, believed that a project has to provide all things freely for them. If this is not happening then they may start to question the honesty of the project staff or maybe reduce their participation in project activities. After providing the beneficiaries with fishing inputs/equipment, they will also demand for shelters to be built for them or provide them with wheelbarrows for carrying their fish from place to place etc. Therefore the idea that there is nothing for free and beneficiaries must be able to work hard to improve their family's livelihood should be well explained by the project officers and understood by the beneficiaries and members of the community. This may be one of the reasons why many projects' achievements are not sustained after the project ends. When the funding stops, all the activities cease to operate in the area because the beneficiaries fail to understand that it was their own project.

4.5 Cross cutting issues:

Cross cutting issues ratings: Moderately satisfactory

Sub questions:

4.5.1 To what extent were gender and youth considerations taken into account in designing and implementing FICREP?

- The gender aspect was considered in the design of the project by targeting and supporting women with the aim of empowering them and their families;
- Trainings were conducted where both the males and females were well represented and able to take part in other project activities.;
- FTT ovens and fish drying racks were distributed to the women groups, involving them in the fish preservation and marketing activities;
- The gender aspect was considered in Terekeka where in the fisher groups and even in the boat management committee, the females have been represented and given positions e.g. the treasurer is a female.
- In Bor, the female are members in the fisher groups but were not allowed to participate in the boat management committee because the members believed that the boat issue is exclusively a masculine according to their culture and traditions;
- It was noted that in many of the project activities, mostly the youth were involved in the fishing, cleaning fish and transportation to the urban fish markets; and
- In most of the communities where many are cattle keepers, fishing has long been regarded as a low status profession in comparison to livestock keeping. In the last few years, when the youth realized that there is money in fish business, they changed their perception and showed interest in working in the fish value chain.

4.5.2 Are there measures considered regarding climate change issues eg. Flooding, drought?

- An important aspect of the project is the inclusion of Ecosystem Approach to fisheries management which will lead to the formulation of a fisheries management plan that can be used to manage the fishers, the fish as well as the aquatic ecosystem. This approach, when implemented will go a long way in the mitigation of some of the threats caused by climate change and promote sustainable fish resource utilization;
- Flood related issues affected the fishers in terms of accessibility to the fishing areas and also caused losses to fishing gear and crafts. As it affected all the communities including the fisher folks, it requires a national comprehensive approach and response from all the sectors of the community, government and the development partners; and
- Drought is a phenomenon where the natural green vegetation is depleted mainly by human activities e.g. deforestation. The introduction and use of the fiberglass canoes and improved fish processing stoves will help reduce the number of trees cut down for making the traditional canoes.

4.5.3 Are there measures put in place for conflict mitigation in the community?

- South Sudan has been impacted by many conflicts for so many years, which affected all the various communities throughout the country. These conflicts include community conflicts over resources, cattle raiding, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, in addition to the armed conflict between opposing forces;
- In the communities there are chiefs and elders who represent the people in community and national issues. These are respected individuals who discuss issues and solve problems amongst the members of the community and their decisions are usually respected and implemented;
- Serious injuries or deaths are usually handled by the judiciary system which is capable of executing its decisions;
- The inclusion of a diverse community representations in the project activities leads to the promotion of positive interaction amongst the community, mitigation of conflict, which leads to peaceful coexistence.

4.5.4 Has issues about human rights been raised during project implementation?

- The human rights-based approach (HRBA) seeks to “ensure the participation of small-scale fishing communities in non-discriminatory, transparent and accountable decision-making processes by putting particular emphasis on the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups and developing countries”. It has been included in the project design and has not been raised nor noted during implementation. The implementing partners are ensuring that issues that include gender, youth and providing opportunities for the improvement of livelihoods and food security is paramount for the peaceful coexistence amongst the communities.

4.5.5 Is there a grievance and feedback mechanism

- The implementing partners (CMD and SAADO) have adopted a system whereby the group executive members and leaders act as complaint-feedback channels for solving issues or problems between the members in case it occurs. During meetings with county fishery department, the meetings serve as platforms to discuss grievances and get feedback during monthly coordination meetings, where individual groups reach out. There are separate sessions for male and female group members; and
- There is also a grievance mechanism which is available through elders and chiefs in the communities who usually are able to settle some of the disputes and misunderstandings that may occur amongst the fisher folks especially in regards to fishing grounds.

4.5.6 What are the opinions of the non- beneficiaries of the project

- The non-beneficiaries found both in Terekeka and Bor who have not heard about FICREP also need to be supported by the project so that their livelihoods can improve. They are especially interested in the trainings that can build their capacities and the provision of fishing inputs/equipment. The recommendation is that such projects should be extended to other areas so that the number of the beneficiaries can be increased.

5.0 Project Implementation strategies

5.1 Project assumptions

Outcome 1: Improved fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security. The project assumption for the implementation of this outcome included:

- Government, UN agencies, NGOs, private sector institutions, and fishery stakeholders willing and committed to coordinate fishery support;
- FSL cluster members willingness and commitment to support fisheries coordination; and
- Beneficiaries' willingness and commitment to learn and adopt new technologies.

These assumptions are in place since the Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the National Government and the Department of Fisheries at the Central Equatoria State are willing to cooperate and coordinate for the implementation of project activities. The beneficiaries have also shown willingness and commitment in both project sites in Terekeka and Bor.

Outcome 2: Sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks. The project assumption for the implementation of this outcome are:

- Consistent commitment and participation in Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) approach by stakeholders;
- Government, UN agencies, NGOs, private sector institutions and communities willing and committed; and
- Willingness and regular participation of resource users, stakeholders, community members and community leaders in adopting and applying EAF.

Most of the activities of this outcome had not yet started and will possibly start in the second phase of the project implementation. The assumptions are accurately in place in terms of commitment and willingness for cooperation.

Outcome 3: Increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved post-harvest handling and management. The project assumptions for the implementation of this outcome are:

- Consistent participation in initiatives by stakeholders;
- Community participation and commitment to protect and manage community assets is strong;
- Willingness and regular participation of community members and community leaders in protecting and supporting the functioning of infrastructures is strong;
- Training provided is effective; and
- Government, UN agencies, NGOs, private sector institutions and communities willing and committed.

Partners and Beneficiaries have shown their willingness to participate in meetings and other project related activities. Some of the activities of this outcome were conducted and the beneficiaries had noted an improvement to the quality of fish through the improved post handling and processing methodologies.

5.2 Achievements to date

FICREP had planned for 3 outcomes, 12 outputs and 35 activities in exclusion of the M&E and coordination for project implementation. As such the following were noted:

Outcome 1 Improved fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security

The first outcome is composed of 3 outputs and 5 activities which represented 14% of the total activities (35) to be conducted during the period of the project implementation. The status of these activities are that 4 are in progress and 1 has all the arrangements completed but delayed in terms of implementation. Therefore the performance rate for this first outcome is 80%.

Outcome 2 Sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks.

The second outcome is composed of 4 outputs and 17 activities which represented 49% of the total activities (35) to be conducted during the period of the project implementation. The status of these activities are that 4 are in progress, 1 was completed and 10 are pending in terms of implementation. Therefore the performance rate for this second outcome is 41%. This low performance may be attributed to the fact that some of the activities found in this outcome are heavily dependent on external connections e.g. the development of fish guide and purchases and trainings related to the motorboats. The activities which are related to the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) generally takes a long period for execution which currently have not yet started.

Outcome 3 Increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved post-harvest handling and management

The third outcome is composed of 5 outputs and 13 activities which represented 37% of the total activities (35) to be conducted during the period of the project implementation. The status of these activities are that 6 are in progress, 2 have been completed and 4 are pending and 1 was suspended in terms of implementation. Therefore the performance rate for this second outcome is 61%. The performance of this outcome is average and can be increased especially when all the motorboats are fully functional in the project sites.

In the project M&E and coordination, which is separate from the other regular project activities, whereby 3 activities which involve the baseline survey and trainings at the project inceptions, were completed, 1 activity, which is the current MTE, is in progress and 1 activity which is about a documentary evidence of the project is pending.

Therefore, the total achievement to date for the project implementation is 65% which is above average.

5.3 Likelihood of meeting the objectives

Outcome 1: Improved fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security

The first outcome which is composed of 3 outputs and 5 activities represented 14% of the total activities (35) to be conducted during the period of the project implementation. The performance rate for this first outcome was noted to be 80%. Therefore there is a high likelihood of the project to achieve this outcome.

Outcome 2 Sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks.

The second outcome is composed of 4 outputs and 17 activities which represented 49% of the total activities (35) to be conducted during the period of the project implementation. The performance rate for this second outcome was 41%. There is a high likelihood that this objective may not be fully achieved, this requires that the activities related to this objective should be started and its implementation accelerated in the second phase.

Outcome 3 Increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved post-harvest handling and management

The third outcome is composed of 5 outputs and 13 activities which represented 37% of the total activities (35) to be conducted during the period of the project implementation. The performance rate for this second outcome is 61%, which means there is a high likelihood for the achievement of this outcome in the second phase of the project implementation.

5.4 Timeliness and use of resources

- i. Insecurity was not a major concern in the project implementation areas and many of the fishing areas were largely accessible for project implementation within the specified period;
- ii. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the start of project activities;
- iii. Flooding became a serious concern where most of the rich fishing islands were inaccessible and the fishers were displaced and were not able to do their work properly in both project sites;
- iv. There were issues with late delivery of equipment by FAO which may be related to procurement, operational procedures and logistical challenges; and
- v. There were no reports of misuse of resources in the project sites.

In terms of the project outcomes, outputs and activities can be summarized into the following:

- i. Outcome 1: Improved fishery sector enabling conditions for food and nutrition security.
 - Output 1.1: 2 activities which were set to start from Feb 2020 – Nov 2024;activities have started;

- Output 1.2: 1 activity which were set to start from Jan 2023 – Jan 2024 and has started; and
 - Output 1.3: 2 activities which were set to start in July – Sep 2024 and have started.
- ii. Outcome 2: Sustainable fishery resource use and management promoted for peace building and livelihood security of fisher folks.
- Output 2.1: 3 activities which were set to start from Jan 2023 – Sep 2024; activities have started;
 - Output 2.2: 3 activities which was to start from May 2021 – Nov 2021; activities have started but are already late.
 - Output 2.3: 7 activities which were set to start in Apr 2020 – Jul 2024 and have started, some of the activities are already late;
 - Output 2.4: 4 activities which was to start in Feb 2020 – Mar 2022 and have started, but already late.
- iii. Outcome 3: Increased volume of quality fish traded and increased income of fishers through value chain optimization, improved postharvest handling and management
- Output 3.1: 3 activities which were set to start from Mar 2020 – May 2021 and the activities have started but late.
 - Output 3.2: 6 activities which were set to start from Apr 2020 – Jul 2024 and have started;
 - Output 3.3: 1 activity which were set to start in May 2020 – Apr 2022 and have started but are already late.
 - Output 3.4: 2 activities which were set to start in Jun 2020 – May 2024 and have started.
 - Output 3.5: 1 activity, but had to be cancelled.

5.5 Partnership

- The partnership and collaboration between FAO and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was realized in terms of FICREP which falls within the donors' strategy of being committed to work with FAO and other UN agencies to address the need for more focus and synergy in humanitarian and development programming to achieve resilience against food insecurity in the country. The project specifically contributes to the MACS thematic objective of economic development and sustainable development. It also contributes to alleviating humanitarian needs, ensuring synergy and complementarity between humanitarian assistance and development interventions.
- According to the donors, the project activities should be developmental oriented instead of humanitarian aimed at strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries (South Sudan and Kingdom of the Netherlands). The donors have a supervisory role with regular meetings and field visits at the project sites so as to ensure that the activities being implemented and complying with the criteria which are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

- The donors expects that the assistance provided is for the long term development for South Sudan within the context of the rule of law and aimed at developing skills but not aid or humanitarian in nature. This will develop the private sector by creating small and medium enterprises which in the long run minimizes handouts and lead to resilience, women empowerment, improvement of livelihoods and finally development.
- Another important partnership which should be established and strengthened for project implementation is with public institutions like the relevant line ministries and universities which are basically stakeholders. LoAs can be formulated with these institutions streamlining the activities and deliverables which may be helpful especially in the technical areas of the fisheries sector.

5.6 Strategic learning lessons

The strategic lessons from the performance of this project up to this stage include:

- The project should carefully take decisions by engaging the community and identifying entry points for implementing activities that are acceptable in order to avoid potential negative results.
- Due to the interruptions of COVID-19 which resulted to the delay of the start of project activities, it is important that when planning for upcoming or future activities, a generous amount of time period should be allocated to cater for any unforeseen interruptions.
- The project should establish a robust coordination mechanism which involves regular monthly meetings and sharing progress reports of the on –going activities in the project sites which involves the fisheries government authorities at the national and state levels.
- The project should pursue a comprehensive fish value chain approach with a strong attachment to the private sector so that project outcome do not only benefit the target beneficiaries but to the much wider community.
- Adequate mobilization, sensitization and visibility regarding the on-going project activities and outcome at the county level and state level. This will educate the community so that they are aware and knowledgeable of the developmental activities happening in their county in terms of food security.
- There is need to have more tangible project output which is clearly visible from the community’s perspective which will outlast the project and remain as a legacy when the project finally phases out because it will be what the community will refer to, in the future about the project e.g. infrastructure.

The adjustments that may be needed should include:

- Many of the stakeholders are not knowledgeable about the project outcomes, outputs and activities, this requires continuous sensitization by FAO to all concerned.
- The expedition and prioritizing of project activities with the aim of completing the remaining activities within the remaining time period.

- The source of supply for the inputs for the canoe manufacturing like resins/epoxy should be well established and easily accessed so that the local fiberglass canoe makers will continue with their work.
- The issue of the operationalization of the ice plant in both project sites should be a priority during the second phase of the project implementation. This will go a long way in countering the fish postharvest losses and any other issue that may arise will be addressed earlier enough before the project phases out.
- To engage more with the private sector.
- To expand the localization approach by engaging the local Universities in the various project activities.
- At the river bank, a boat yard needs to be constructed at both project sites in Terekeka and Bor, this will help to protect the boats from damages and ensure a longer lifespan.
- In terms of fish catch, it is difficult to estimate the quantity of fish that passes through a particular point or arrives at a particular landing, as such it is important to plan and purchase weighing scales of different capacities to be used by the fish producer groups for reporting and monitoring purposes.

6.0 Conclusion

- In terms of relevance, the project was well designed taking into consideration the Country's National policies, FAO's strategic framework and Netherlands' MACS thematic objectives.
- The project activities started late because of movement restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- In terms of effectiveness, the project was able to create an enabling environment for active interactions between the fishers, processors, transporters, fish sellers and the local government authorities.
- The formation of the fish producer groups contributed to a better way of conducting the trainings to the beneficiaries. FAO provided FTT ovens and fish drying racks to the women groups which formed an important link between the fish producers and the consumers through the markets. This resulted into increased outputs for the project beneficiaries.
- Partnering with the national NGOs for the implementation of the project activities in the local areas was effective since they understood the local situation in terms of the social and environmental context.
- In terms of efficiency, the project supported the introduction and utilization of appropriate technologies in the form of FTT ovens, fish drying racks, and the making of fiberglass canoes which were constructed locally and being used efficiently in comparison to the imported equipment.
- Providing support to the local manufacturers encouraged the fish processors to increase their output and provide for the markets and the value chain.
- In terms of sustainability, the project result is related to the strong partnership established with the implementing partners for project implementation in the local areas. This made the community to appreciate the project activities and to participate

effectively. This also involved the coordination and linkages with the relevant stakeholders especially the local and national government authorities for meetings and progress reports so that there is holistic approach and support for the project.

7.0 Recommendations

Rec. No.	MTE-Recommendation	Entity responsible	Time frame
1.	The expedition of project activities is necessary due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 as a result of the imposition of the precautionary measures and also delays due to operational and procurement procedures.	DONOR, FAO – FICREP, SAADO, CMD	Immediately within the first quarter of the second phase
2.	Activate coordination mechanism and establish regular links and meetings with the fisheries departments of both the national and expanded to state actors (Set a meeting every two months for sharing of information and progress reports).	FAO – FICREP, SAADO, CMD, Universities, National and State government	Immediately within the first month of the second phase
3.	In consultation with the other stakeholders and local partners, FAO should prioritize to build capacities of government fisheries staff through training workshops in terms of data collection, analysis and management	DONOR, FAO-FICREP	In the first half of second phase
4.	Gender issue needs to be addressed by the recruitment of a national gender affairs expert to work for gender mainstreaming in project activities in Bor.	FAO – FICREP, CMD,	Immediately within the first quarter of the second phase
5.	Support to Fish value chain development incorporating equipment and cost sharing agreements.	DONOR, FAO-FICREP	The first half of the second phase
6.	Construction of a boat yard in both project sites for the safety and use of the motor boats	DONOR, FAO-FICREP	The first quarter of the second phase.
7.	FAO should engage the private sector through the State Chamber of Commerce and develop LOA for sustaining the engagement for supporting the fisheries sector.	FAO- FICREP	The first quarter of the second phase.

8.	The voucher scheme which was suspended as a project activity should be revisited for strengthening the fish value chain.	FAO-FICREP, SAADO, CMD	Immediately within the first quarter of the second phase
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