



NDA

National
Development
Agency



AVULWAMASANGO FARMING COOPERATIVE

CLOSE – OUT EVALUATION REPORT

MAY 2014



CONTENTS

Glossary

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Structure of the Report	7
3. Background to the Project	8
4. Avulwamasango Primary Co-operative: Project Implementation Period 2012-2014 Funding Period	10
5. Relevance of Support and Project	10
5.1 South Africa Context	
5.2 Government Response	
5.3 Role of the National Development Agency	
6. Project Methodology	12
6.1 Unit of Analysis	
6.2 Evaluation Criteria	
7. Results as Stated in the Funding Proposal	13
8. Effectiveness of the Project	16
9. Capacity of the Organisation	16
10. Centre Development	17
11. Impact of the Project	17
12. Sustainability	18
13. Financial Analysis	18
14. Recommendations and Conclusions	19

REFERENCES

SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

ABBREVIATIONS

CDD	Community Driven Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
DAEA	Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DRDLA	Department of Rural Development and Land affairs
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
GAS	Grant Administration System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
ISRDP	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LED	Local Economic Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDA	National Development Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
PC	Project Consolidate
SIS	Small Holder Irrigation Scheme
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP SHD	United Nations Sustainable Human Development

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Development Agency Act No 108 of 1998 states that the National Development Agency's (NDA) mandate is to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil society organisations for the implementation of integrated and sustainable community driven programmes and contribute towards the eradication of poverty in areas that income generation.

Importantly, the NDA identifies income generation as an important area for intervention and sets out to support the creation of opportunities for communities to productively use locally available resources to develop less state and aid dependent, more self-reliant households and communities able to care for themselves. Avulwamasango Co-operative (herein referred to as Avulwamasango) fits neatly within the NDA's focus areas of intervention through grant funding. The current close out evaluation is therefore a part of the elements of the NDA's funding cycle (Project Proposal- Prioritisation- Assessment- Approval-Grant Disbursement- Monitoring- Evaluation).¹

Using participatory research methods, a qualitative approach to information gathering was utilised where a focus group, meeting, face to face interviews were held with management and members of Avulwamasango including the Co-ordinator (Mr Mntuwabantu Njobe), Treasurer (Mrs Nokwanda Mlando), Co-operative Members (Mrs Nothusile Zayedwa and Mrs Mbuzo Ntlonze) and a subsequent telephonic interview with the co-operative's Chairman (Mr Fanele Tomsana) on 06.06.2014.

In addition to the above- mentioned interactions, the following documents were reviewed for the evaluation process:

- Avulwamasango constitution/ founding documents
- Avulwamasango interim reports 2012- 2014
- Avulwamasango grant application form
- Grant Agreement between Avulwamasango and the NDA
- Narrative and financial report of project progress for the first and second reporting phase
- Avulwamasango project progress reports
- Avulwamasango project files (including activity reports etc.) and;
- Avulwamasango project implementation reports.

Further a site inspection of the co-operative's 15 hectares of land and the irrigation system was undertaken.

¹ Monitoring and evaluation is also a requirements stipulated in a Grant Agreement of a project funded.

In terms of the Grant Agreement entered into between the NDA and Avulwamasango for the rolling out of the Vegetable and Crop Farming Project, the project is 18 month long² and commenced after the signing of the Grant Agreement on 02 August 2013. The Grant Agreement provides that project implementation shall commence on 01 August 2012 and terminate on 31 July 2014. Further, the Grant Agreement spreads out 3 reporting phases of activity periods, namely: 1st reporting period (30 April 2013), 2nd reporting period (31 December 2013) and the final reporting period (31 August 2014).³

The total amount approved is R1 029 650 and the amount transferred to Avulwamasango for project implementation is R929 650.00.

The Grant Agreement sets out 4 activities to be implemented, namely:

- a) To upscale crop production by installing an irrigation system in 5 hectares of land
- b) To improve household food security
- c) To capacitate co-operative members on crop production, project management and marketing and;
- d) To develop a business plan for the project.

At the time of the current evaluation (21.05.2014) Avulwamasango had implemented activities (a)- (c) and was in the process of finalising (d).

1.1 Evaluation Findings

The current evaluation- consistent with the NDA's Strategic Document evaluates the impact of the Crop Farming and Production Project pursuant to funding support granted for the 2012- 2014 period:

- The project failed to meet a key deliverable under the Grant Agreement which is to upscale vegetable production by repairing the irrigation system in 30 hectares of land. The irrigation system was delivered by an East London based irrigation and installation company *Preventix CC* without lateral pipes/ tubes and sprinklers. Further the irrigation system- since its installation has been dogged by mechanical faults ranging from excessive use of diesel and gallons of oil to intermittent service repairs.
- The evaluation also finds that the delivery of an inappropriate irrigation system has had a corrosive effect on maize and vegetable production. The evaluation finds that the irrigation system is ill suited for Emazizini's farming requirements spanning 30 hectares of land. The irrigation system only covers 5 hectares of land. Only 5000kg of maize was produced during harvest for 1 hectare of land farmed. Cabbage yielded 7000 heads (weighing 0.5 to 2 kilograms). Potatoes yielded 120 bags instead of 250 that the co-operative

² See section 3 of the Grant Agreement (Annexure A: Funding Provisions) under the heading: Duration of the Project.

³See section 2 (2.1-2.4) of the Grant Agreement (Annexure A: Funding Provisions).

expected. Spinach yielded 1700 of spinach leaves (weighing 250-400 grams each).

- Purchase of tractor and implements: The evaluation finds that this deliverable was successfully met. A Massey Ferguson tractor model 168, 2008 make valued at R249 000 was purchased from Agriport Port Shepstone in Kwa Zulu Natal. The budget was not sufficient to cover the purchase of implements.
- The evaluation finds that the co-operative succeeded in securing long term markets for its produce. The co-operative during project implementation secured the following markets: 3 school feeding schemes in the Lusikisiki area, namely: Xura View JS, Lingelethu JSS and Lusikisiki Village JSS. In addition to school feeding schemes, the co-operative secured month to month vegetable supplier agreements with Spar and Boxer Supermarket in Lusikisiki. Maize is supplied to Vendors and local traders.
- Owing to hostile labour relations during project implementation between the co-operative's management and the general labourers- the co-operative failed to create decent jobs over the 12 month duration of the project and beyond.
- Finally the evaluation finds that the co-operative has failed to make an impact on its beneficiaries, its members and the broader community if one considers that currently: farming of vegetable and maize is taking place on an adhoc basis; the irrigation system is not working properly; the tractor is mechanically broken- down; the Co-ordinator is not full time on the project; co-operative members are not involved on a full time basis in the running of the project and; labour relations have been tumultuous and hostile for the entire duration of project implementation.

1.2 Challenges and Lessons Learnt

- The evaluation finds that the NDA Eastern Cape provincial office must provide an explanation for its referral of an irrigation and installation company that installed a faulty and incomplete irrigation system. Even more- in the aftermath of problems with the irrigation system, when pursued by the co-operative the company could not be reached/ located.
- The glaring challenges experienced by the project during commencement up to conclusion phase beg the question about the need for heightened levels of monitoring by the NDA Eastern Cape office. It would seem that the challenges gleaned from this evaluation persisted for the entire duration of the project without any intervention.
- Lastly the heavy reliance of the co-operative on the founder in its day to day running and supervision means that when the founder decides to pursue

other opportunities outside of farming- the life and continued sustenance of the co-operative is heavily compromised.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into three main parts:

- Part I entails a disposition of the Background to the Project followed by the Relevance of Support and the Project; and the Project Methodology.
- Part II consists of seven sections dealing with the main aspects of the evaluation exercise, namely: Results as stated in the Funding Proposal; Challenges Facing the Project; Effectiveness of the Project; Capacity of the Organisation; Centre Development and the Impact of the Project and Sustainability.
- Part III includes a Financial Analysis followed by concluding sections dealing Lessons Learnt and Recommendations.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

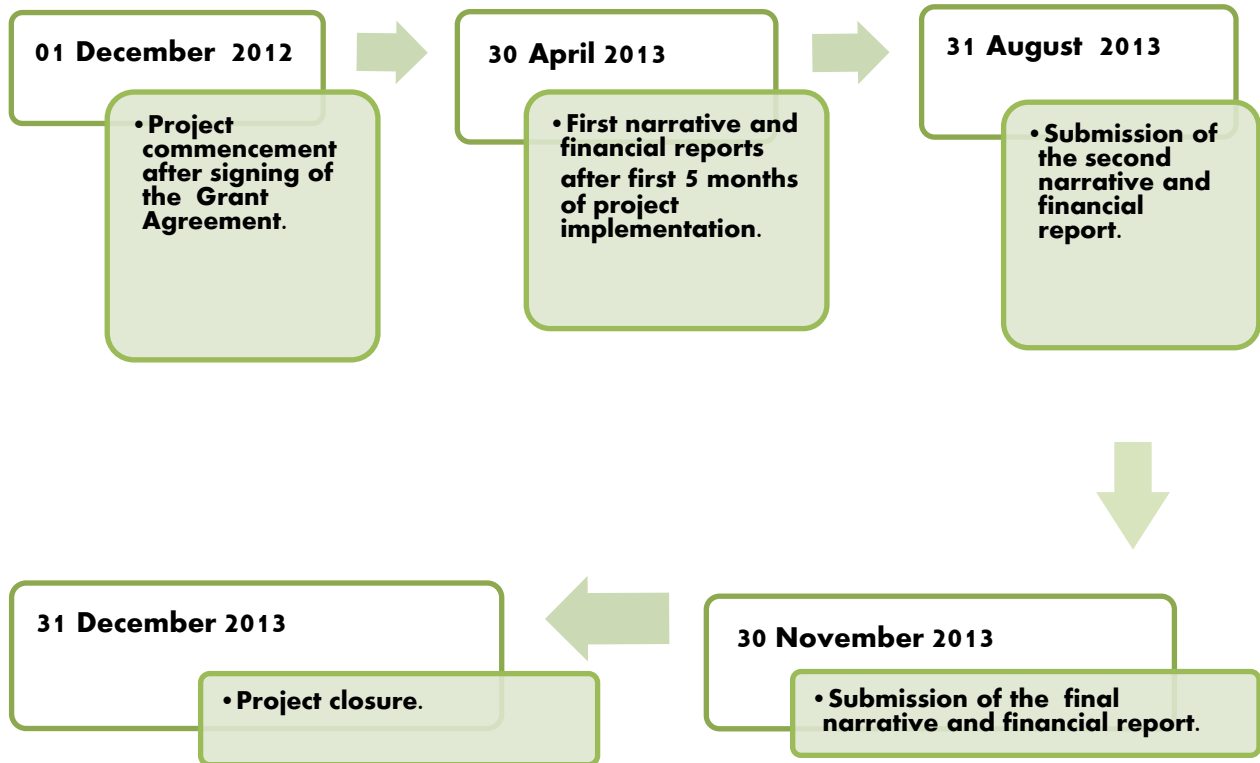
Avulwamasango was formed in 2009 after consultation with the local Tembu Chief Msengana and the Tsengiwe community 18 community members voluntarily joined. The joining fee was R1500.00 per member. The co-operative according to Mrs Nokwanda Mlando struggled during its formative years owing to unfavourable weather conditions and the high costs of procuring fertilisers and farming implements.⁴ In 2011 the co-operative delegated Mr Mntuwabantu Njobe to approach the NDA in East London for funding support. Njobe had a meeting with Ms Nokulunga Skeyi NDA's Provincial Manager who advised him to submit a proposal for consideration. The co-operative submitted a proposal and it was approved in 2012. On 02 August 2012 the Grant Agreement was signed between the NDA and Avulwamasango providing for the implementation of the following activities:⁵

- To upscale crop production by installing an irrigation system in 5 hectares of land
- To improve household food security
- To capacitate co-operative members on crop production, project management and marketing and;
- To develop a business plan for the project.

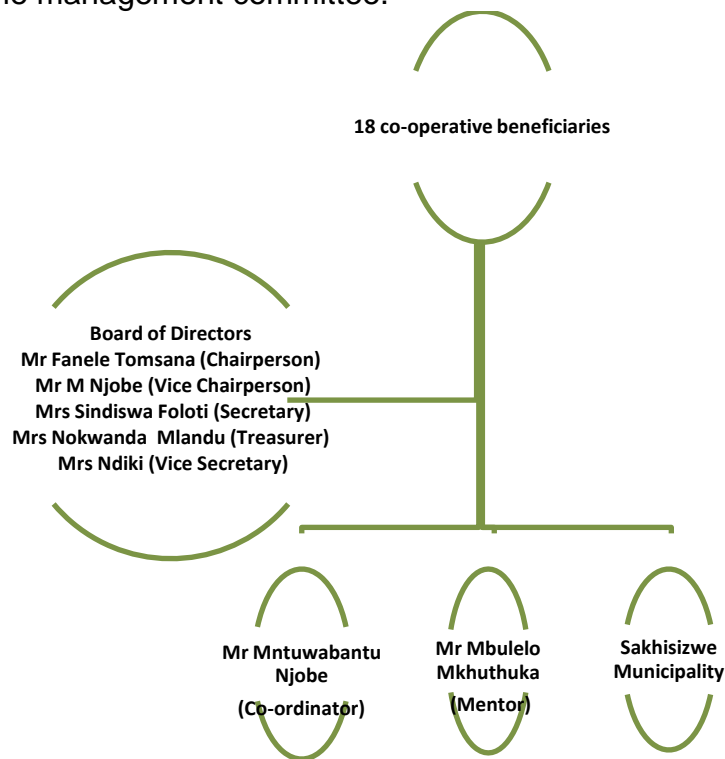
Project reporting in terms of the Grant Agreement is distributed into phases as shown below:

⁴ Interview with Mrs Nokwanda Mlando, Treasurer of Avulwamasango on 21.05.2014.

⁵ See: Grant Agreement Section 1.

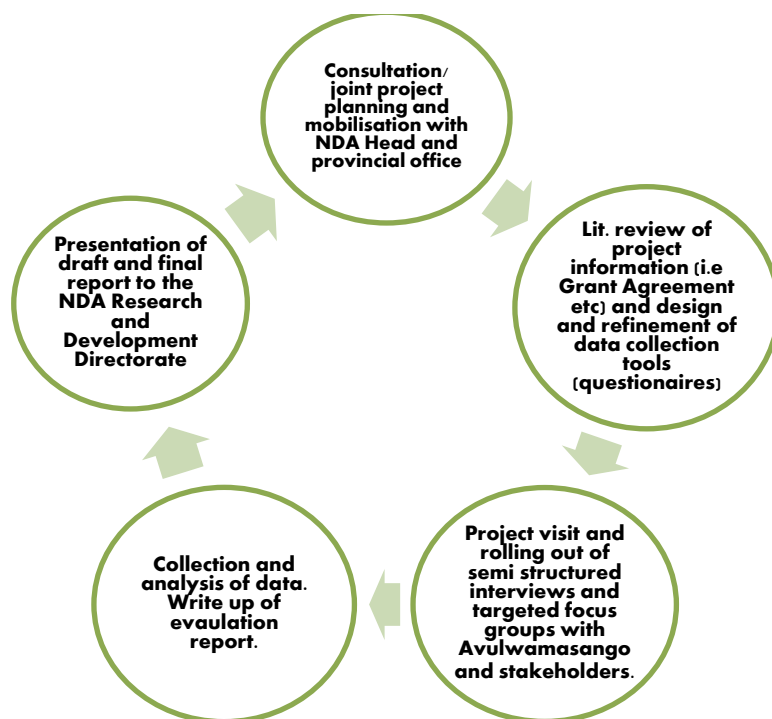


The supervision and the delivery of the current project is undertaken by the co-operative membership and the management committee.



The current Close- Out Evaluation of Avulwamasango sought to ascertain how well the above- mentioned project deliverables have been met or not met and the constraints to that effect. The diagram below depicts the conceptual methodological approach underpinning this evaluation.

Accordingly the triangulation of the feedback received from Avulwamasango using qualitative research tools- a detailed picture of responses and a body of facts emerges on project performance: the generation of income through rearing and selling of pigs and the creation of job opportunities for co-operative members.



4. AVULWAMASANGO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION 2012/14 FUNDING PERIOD

The above- mentioned project deliverables as set out in the Grant Agreement between Avulwamasango and the NDA are quantifiable, measurable and most importantly capable of impact assessment. The Grant Agreement⁶ sets out key activity areas for a 12 month period and a form/ template⁷ is provided for: end of project impact and activity assessment by the organisation itself. Accordingly this evaluation is informed by the activity areas, deliverables and the level of impact spelt out in the Grant Agreement.

⁶ Section 3 of the Grant Agreement.

⁷ See annexure to the Grant Agreement.

5. RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT AND THE PROJECT

5.1 Provincial Context

The Crop Farming Project is implemented in Tsengiwe Village in Cala situated in the Sakhisizwe Local Municipality which is part of the Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape province. According to the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2014-2015 – Sakhisizwe Municipality's Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.41 which is lower than that of the region and the country.⁸ Consistent with this HDI, poverty is endemic in the Sakhisizwe Municipality with a dependency ratio on government grants standing at 65% coupled with endemic poverty in which an estimated 1872 people are said to be living below a R7. On the back of these huge socio- economic challenges the Municipality's Local Economic Development Plan (LED) acknowledges the municipality's potential in the agricultural sector particularly the high fertility lands for crop growing that remain unutilised in most parts of the municipality. Importantly and for current purposes the LED estimates that if the agricultural sector can be fully supported and capacitated, it can easily contribute over 30% of jobs in the local economy and would significantly improve its contribution to the GDP.⁹

5.2 Government Response

The legacy of apartheid and its present day manifestations has pushed the government to craft a rural development strategy to address special challenges found in the farming and former homeland regions. According to Gwanya (2010:5), the depressing rural conditions of the majority of South Africans require a strategy that will explore and build on the knowledge and strengths of the rural communities and improve on what worked in the past while introducing new approaches to rural development.¹⁰ Since 1994 the government has introduced various policy and institutional measures to improve the lives of the rural population and regenerate rural economies. These have had limited successes. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) 1994-1996, the Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity of 1995, The Rural Development Framework of 1997, The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) of 2001, Project Consolidate and the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) are cases point. South Africa is also a signatory to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to halve poverty and unemployment by 2015. South Africa committed to reaching these goals by 2014. It is worth pointing out that these interventions were not department specific but the implementation was across government departments. Thus the focus was broadly on the rural question in the implementation of rural sanitation, rural transport; rural housing strategy the comprehensive social security programme and social wage, free basic education services; no fee paying schools, subsidised housing etc. have made an impact in rural areas. However the limited successes of previous rural development strategies has lead

⁸ Sakhisizwe Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2014- 2015. See: <http://www.sakhisizwe.gov.za/uploads/documents/2014/Sakhisizwe%20IDP%20Review%202014%20-%202015v1%20for%20adoption%20Mar2014c.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See: http://www.rimisp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Paper_T.T_Gwanya.pdf.

government to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy of rural development that is aimed at improving the quality of life of rural households, enhance food security through a broader base of agricultural production, and exploit the economic potential that each region enjoys. To this end the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) was conceived as a strategic priority within the government's current Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). The vision of the CRDP is to create vibrant equitable and sustainable rural communities. It seeks to address poverty and food insecurity through maximizing the use and management of natural resources. It also seeks to rectify past injustices and improve the standard of living and welfare through rights based interventions that address skewed patterns of distribution and ownership of wealth and assets. The primary objective is to facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches in partnership with all sectors of society.¹¹ Notably within the broad contours of the objective thrust of the CRDP also lies the NDA' strategic mandate of supporting and strengthening civil society (CSO's) in pursuit of programmes that meet the development needs of the most vulnerable of our society- the rural poor , women, youth and the disabled. According to the CRDP, the ultimate vision of creating vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities will be achieved through a three- pronged strategy based on:

- a co-ordinated and integrated broad based agrarian transformation;
- rural development infrastructure and;
- an improved land reform programme.

The intergovernmental and agency based nature of the CRDP also means that government agencies such as the NDA have a role to play in for instance mobilizing resources to support small scale agricultural projects while at the same time assisting civil society organisations and community based organisations to build capacity necessary to roll out poverty alleviation interventions.

5.3 Role of the NDA

The NDA's Strategic Document 2010-2013 sets out in detail exactly how the NDA will fulfil its mandate over a three year period (2009-2012). Consistent with the CRDP's intentions, NDA's Strategic Document 2009-2012 envisages a fit and a role in the agrarian, rural and local economic development (LED) areas identified by the CRDP and other government initiatives aimed at fighting poverty and levels of inequality in South African society. Avulwamasango Co-operative's resolve of generating income through vegetable and maize farming whilst creating jobs for co-operative members has resonance with the NDA's Strategic Document, namely: the granting of funds and mobilisation of resources to support rural development, food security, poverty alleviation and income generation projects. Additionally this evaluation is informed by the KPI's set out in the Strategic Document (p.18), namely: assessing the impact of funding support on beneficiaries.

¹¹ Ibid.

The NDA Act envisages the granting of funding to civil society organisations to implement integrated and sustainable community driven programmes and contribute towards the eradication of poverty by supporting the creation of opportunities for communities to productively use locally available resources through income generation initiatives.

Emazizini fits neatly within the first area identified by the NDA Act, namely: the granting of funds for income generation projects. Additionally this evaluation is informed by the KPI's set out in the Strategic Document (p.18), namely: assessing the impact of funding support on beneficiaries.

6. METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation utilised five main avenues:

- Document Analysis- Documents reviewed include Avulwamasango project proposal, the Grant Agreement between the NDA and Avulwamasango, monthly activity reports, project files (including activity, progress reports etc.), project implementation reports and financial statements.
- Key informant interviews- The management, board and operational staff was interviewed. This proved crucial for a complete understanding of the history of the organisation and current operational involvement and management of the day to day running of the organisation. To this end targeted interviews and focus group discussions were held with Avulwamasango's management and co-operative membership: Using participatory research methods, a qualitative approach to information gathering was utilised where a focus group, meeting, face to face interviews were held with management and members of Avulwamasango including the Co-ordinator (Mr Mntwabantu Njobe), Treasurer (Mrs Nokwanda Mlando), Co-operative Members (Mrs Nothusile Zayedwa and Mrs Mbuzo Ntlonze) and a subsequent telephonic interview with the co-operative's Chairman (Mr Fanele Tomsana) on 06.05.2014.
- A project site inspection of the crop farming project was undertaken.

6.1 Unit of Analysis

The current evaluation is based on two main units of analysis. The first of these is the project itself (piggery farm) which is the intervention through which the co-operative is meant to benefit. To some extent there is also some attention to stakeholders (i.e. the district municipality and the broader community) but mainly for the purpose of establishing the efficacy and impact of the project. The second unit of analysis is the financial analysis- that is an analysis of financial disbursements, protocol and reporting between the NDA and Avulwamasango.

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

The key evaluation criteria employed in the present analysis are as follows:

- Relevance of objectives- the extent to which the goals and objectives of the project remain valid and relevant
- Impact- the extent to which the project achieves the deliverables enunciated in the grant agreement
- Sustainability- the durability of the project or project results in the absence of further support by the NDA, although it must be underlined that the exact meaning of sustainability in the current evaluation is adapted to the present project type.
- Institutional capacity and development impact- the extent to which institutional systems are successfully adapted to ensure that activities and deliverables are rolled out.
- Scale of engagement- the magnitude of the project relative to the size of the target group or problem that government is attempting to address.
- Targeting- the success with which the intervention is directed at those who most need it or for whom it is meant
- Partnerships- the extent to which project interventions interact positively or negatively with other projects or with other developmental goals/ problems and including considerations of spatial coherence.
- Monitoring and evaluation- whether or not an internal effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism is in place to ensure that the progress of the project is monitored and its effects and impact evaluated.

7. RESULTS AS STATED IN THE FUNDING PROPOSAL

The project outcomes as set out in the Grant Agreement for the first and second reporting phase are:

- To upscale crop production by installing an irrigation system in 5 hectares of land
- To improve household food security
- To capacitate co-operative members on crop production, project management and marketing and;
- To develop a business plan for the project.

Below is an evaluation of project deliverables as set out in the Grant Agreement.

a) To upscale crop production by installing an irrigation system in the 5 hectare of land

The first tranche of funding (R557 090.00) was transferred into Avulwamasango's bank account and received on 12 October 2012) and the co-operative started farming operations in earnest. The irrigation system was bought immediately on 30 November 2012 at a cost of R143 900.00. The irrigation system was delivered with no pumps/lateral tubes and sprinklers- consequently the co-operative sourced these separately.

Cala's favourable location- with the Tsomo River cutting across its villages as it streams into the Great Kei River has been a huge advantage for the irrigation system. The co-operative's 15 hectares of land sit alongside the body of the Tsomo River. This presents huge advantages for the irrigation system as it means that the irrigation system can pump water out of the Tsomo River faster than any routine or technique and distributes it to the entire field uniformly so that each plant has the amount of water it needs.

The irrigation system bought by the co-operative covers only 2 hectares of land. This, according to Njobe has meant that certain portions of the field (i.e maize) are not watered and have to rely on rain season. As a result vegetation is on the vegetable side of the field. The vegetable section is 5 hectares of land and after 4 hours of irrigation the co-operative moves the irrigation system to another 2 hectares until atleast 4- 6 hectares of land is covered.¹²

The 10 hectare piece of land is divided as follows in terms of crop farming: 10 hectares is dedicated to maize farming; cabbage, spinach, carrot, onions, beetroot, potato and beans each have half a hectare of farming land.

Overall the introduction of an irrigation system has seen a marked difference in crop production. Crop production is higher due to the irrigation system. The maize harvest season is next year. Potato and cabbage have been harvested since the introduction of the irrigation system with the first harvest in May 2013. In a focus group discussion held during the evaluation- co-operative members stated that 97 potato bags were produced and no cabbage was produced because of the hail storms that hit the region from February- April 2013. The yield from the potato harvest is beyond words according to co-operative members.¹³ As a result of this astounding yield Avulwamasango was able to provide bulk supplies to Boxer and Spar supermarket at a rate of R20.00 per bag. A similar rate is also supplied to Vendors and Traders in the town of Cala. Co-operative members expressed confidence that at the rate at which the other vegetables are growing on the field- their yield will be good as well.

Whilst the irrigation system has resulted in marked improvements in potato production- the running of the system has not been without any challenges. The costs of maintaining and running the irrigation system are very high according to Tomsana.¹⁴

¹² Interview with Mr Mntuwabantu Njobe, Co-ordinator of Avulwamasango on 21.05.2014.

¹³ Focus group discussion with co-operative members held on 21.05.2014.

¹⁴ Tele- interview with Mr Fanele Tomsana, Chairperson of Avulwamasango on 06.06.2014.

Diesel consumption per month averaging 120 litres is R1 680.00 at R14 per litre. Njobe also notes that the irrigation system has been serviced 6 times since it was bought 7 months ago. The co-operative also bought pumps/ lateral tubes and sprinklers after the irrigation system was delivered. Other costs that have been borne by the co-operative also include the sourcing of fertiliser/ manor at R308 77 per bag with a requirement of 16 bags per hectare per month. Thus for 5 hectares, manor/ fertiliser costs incurred for the duration of the project is R24 701 60. In addition to the costs that have been incurred in the face of a very successful potato production yield the co-operative also notes that the high costs of transporting the potato bags from the site to town (Cala) have been prohibitively high at R300 per load. Ferrying of 97 potato bags was undertaken in 5 loads at a total R1 500.00. Further Mrs Nothusile Zayedwa also noted that the potato yield would have been a bit higher if the co-operative had potato diggers and a grader. Currently members use sikles, ploughs and hands to dredge up potato from the soil. Potato diggers cost R132 each and 10 will be enough for all co-operative members to share during harvest. The advantages of using a potato digger is that it does not damage a potato- it even locates the smaller potatoes and separates the potato from the weed and soil without removing the stem. A grader on the other hand makes a difference in terms of price because it accurately separates potatoes according to weight so that price determination is easier. Currently a standard price is allocated for all potatoes and this means that the co-operative is losing on the big potatoes.¹⁵

In addition to purchasing an irrigation system- the co-operative also bought a tractor at R257 200.00 a Landini 90 make from Weir's Agri Centre in the town of Dordrecht. The amount for the Tractor is inclusive of the planter and a disc plough. The co-operative has noted that the current tractor is not suited for the type of land that is along a big river- it does not have traction for the current soil type. The costs borne thus far by the co-operative for operating the tractor are: R3000 on its servicing and R420.50 per month on insurance underwritten by Standard Bank, Cala.

b) To improve household food security

The co-operative has successfully met the deliverable of improving household food security of its members. After the May 2013 harvest, 18 co-operative members were allocated two bags of potatoes each. The cabbage that was saved from the hail storm of February- April 2013 was all allocated to the 18 co-operative members. The focus group overwhelmingly stated that food security and the upkeep of homes has improved significantly as a result of the 15 hectares of land being productive since the beginning of 2013.¹⁶

- ***To capacitate co-operative members on crop production, project management and marketing***

Training was successfully rolled out on the following topics:

¹⁵ Interview with Mr Mntuwabantu Njobe Co-ordinator of Avulwamasango on 21.05.2014.

¹⁶ Focus group discussion with co-operative members on 21.05.2014.

- Financial Management and Governance. Took place at Allen Grove Hotel in Maclear on 7 February 2013.
- Project Management and Marketing. Took place at Victoria Manor Lodge in Queenstown on March 2013.
- Crop Production. Took place at the Chris Hani Municipality Centre on 21 July 2013.

All the training programmes were attended by three nominated co-operative members who came back and reported on the skills acquired. Mr Malibongwe Mafololo was sent by the NDA provincial office in February 2014 to undertake training on Financial Management and Governance at the co-operative's site.

- ***To develop a business plan for the project***

At the time of the evaluation- the co-operative was looking for an appropriate service provider to develop its business proposal to ensure that going forward funding proposals can be submitted to other agencies and institutions beyond NDA funding. Mrs Mbuzo Ntlonze noted that the training on financial management and governance received on site (facilitated by Mr Malibongwe Mafololo in February 2014) enables them currently to consider three submissions and quotes from consultants- a skill they didn't know before. The skills received from the training programmes are not only applied in the farming operations but also in the financial and administrative day to day running of the co-operative.

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

Efficiency is judged on the basis of management processes, timeousness of planned activities and the ultimate delivery of outputs to beneficiaries. It is concerned with the use of resources (inputs) to produce budgeted outputs set out in the Grant Agreement.

The evaluation findings showed that the project was well executed within the project time frames set out in the Grant Agreement and within budgeted line items.

2. CAPACITY OF THE ORGANISATION

Avulwamasango has a well constituted board and management committee. The evaluation also noted the solid administrative and supervisory capabilities the co-operative's co-ordinator Mr Mntuwabantu Njobe. The unwavering commitment of the board and members resonates in the milestones the co-operative has achieved since its founding and specifically during the period under review. Further the co-operative through the recommendation of the NDA provincial office engaged the services of an established commercial farmer in Cala- Mr Mbulelo Mkhuthuku at a rate R8 000.00 a month to mentor the co-operative. The partnership according to the co-operative has benefitted the co-operative immensely particularly in the intricate and highly technical

areas of crop production: selection and application of manor/ fertilisers; crop cultivation and logistical support.¹⁷

Administratively; the co-operative maintains a good filing and financial book-keeping system- this was evident during the evaluation where records of payments, project activities were presented with ease.

Finally the evaluation finds that Avulwamasango's capacity to undertake crop production at a large scale beyond NDA funding is without doubt.

3. CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Centre Development is concerned with the extent to which the project ensures the community is developed. The co-operative's board and management committee have benefitted immensely from training programmes rolled out during project implementation. Even more, the evaluation finds that the farming and life competency skills derived from the training programmes are currently being used by the co-operative (i.e crop production and financial administration). Further the co-operative has benefitted its 18 co-operative members not only from a food security point of view but through securing their earnings on a long term basis. The board, management committee and co-operative members haven't drawn a salary from the co-operative's earnings since project inception. The co-operative has decided to save the earnings and remunerate the members when the project has reached a steady growth path. An exception is the tractor driver who is paid R50.00 per shift and per month is able to make 6 shifts.

It is also worth- pointing out that the success of the project is prompting community members in the Tsengiwe Village to join the co-operative. Njobe states that since the beginning of the year (2014) the co-operative has been inundated with requests for new membership which they have put on freeze for now. The co-operative has decided to ride on the stability of the current membership collective before they open up membership to new entrance.¹⁸

4. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The project has made tremendous impact on the lives of its members and if one considers that the current project has met all its deliverables under the Grant Agreement- impact has undoubtedly been made.

According to Kirkpatrick (2004) evaluations of most projects have focused on cost benefit approaches by assessing their use of project funds in delivering project specific goals. However some outputs of development projects such as capacity building improvements and food security are difficult to measure using a cost benefit analysis. Indeed the decisive measure of project success is not whether the planned outputs

¹⁷ Focus group discussion with Co-operative members on 21.05.2014.

¹⁸ Interview with Mntuwabantu Njobe, Co-ordinator of Avulwamasango on 21.05.2014.

have been achieved but what impact the activities of the project have provided and whether the stakeholders are satisfied- in this instance the co-operative members and their families.

Feedback generated from members pointed to an acknowledgement that beneficiaries have benefitted immensely from the project from a food security point of view. The resolve to re- invest earnings derived from each harvest also guarantees the long term financial security of co-operative members.

Further, the project as at evaluation comprises 15 (3 dies in 2012 and 2013 respectively) direct beneficiaries 9 being women. The difference that the project has made to households headed by women especially not the general upkeep of families it has enhanced cannot be overemphasised.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is concerned with the capacity of the project to achieve its objectives over a long time and the durability of the project within the broad social, economic and political environment in which it is located. In this particular instance, preconditions for sustainability include; governance; professional capacity; community and buy- in from community structures to roll out project intervention, infrastructure and political support.

The evaluation finds that Avulwamasango has created a formidable foundation to roll out the project beyond NDA support. The co-operative's stability, solid capacity from within its organisational ranks coupled with the support and mentorship received from individuals in key government departments such as the provincial Department of Agriculture (Mrs Nonqeno), the Sakhisizwe Municipality (Mr Jentile), the Cape Agricultural Co-operative (Mr Mnukwana) and the local traditional authority (Chief Msengana) has put the organisation in good stead to roll out crop production on a large scale beyond NDA funding.

The evaluation finds that the project will flourish beyond NDA support.

6. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The evaluation undertook an examination of activity reports provided for the NDA head office and provincial office. The evaluation found that co-operative financial book-keeping, reporting mechanisms and payment systems to be very impressive. Further the project expressed satisfaction with financial disbursement protocol between itself and the NDA provincial office.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Evaluation Findings

The current evaluation- consistent with the NDA's Strategic Document evaluates the impact of the Crop Farming Project pursuant to funding support granted for the 2012-2014 period:

- The project successfully met the deliverable of upscaling crop production through the installation of an irrigation system in the 5 hectares of land.
- The evaluation finds that the installation of an irrigation system has seen a marked difference in crop production. Potato production yielded 97 bags. Cabbage was damaged by hail storm and the remainder was allocated to each member for food security and household upkeep requirements of members.
- Potato bags were sold to Spar, Boxer and Vendors at 20 per bag.
- Long term supplier arrangements have been secured with Boxer and Spar supermarket Cala and local Vendors.
- Fertilisers/ manor have been successfully procured for the entire duration of project implementation at R308 77 per bag with a requirement of 16 bags per hectare per month. Thus for 5 hectares, manor/ fertiliser costs incurred for the duration of the project is R24 701 60.
- The co-operative successfully procured a tractor at R257 200.00 a Landini 90 make from Weir's Agri Centre in the town of Dordrecht. The amount for the Tractor is inclusive of the planter and a disc plough.
- The evaluation also finds that the co-operative membership- over and above attending training on Financial Management and Governance; Project Management and Marketing and; Crop Production At the time of the evaluation- the co-operative was looking for an appropriate service provider to develop its business proposal to ensure that going forward funding proposals can be submitted to other agencies and institutions beyond NDA funding. Mrs Mbuzo Ntlonze noted that the training on financial management and governance received on site (facilitated by Mr Malibongwe Mafololo in February 2014) enables them currently to consider three submissions and quotes from consultants- a skill they didn't know before. The skills received from the training programmes are not only applied in the farming operations but also in the financial and administrative day to day running of the co-operative.
- The evaluation also notes the solid administrative and supervisory capabilities the co-operative's management and the unwavering commitment of the board

and members as a positive attribute for the sustainability of the project beyond NDA funding support.

- Finally the evaluation commends the decision of the co-operative to defer their monthly earnings and proceeds derived from harvests until the co-operative is financially secure.

7.2 Challenges and Lessons Learnt

- The evaluation notes that there are lessons to be learnt in the procurement of assets by the co-operative in this particular case the tractor and the irrigation system. Ion system: after payment and upon delivery the system was not tailored to the specifications on order. Going forward the co-operative needs to exercise a high level of diligence and accuracy when procuring assets. The same applies to the tractor which was bought and on delivery it transpired that its traction control is not suited for the soil type of the project.

7.3 Recommendations

As indicated in the evaluation findings section above- there is a need to ensure that the co-operative exercises a high level of diligence and caution when procuring assets. The evaluation notes that there are lessons to be learnt in the procurement of assets by the co-operative in this particular case the tractor and the irrigation system. After payment and upon delivery the system was not tailored to the specifications on order. For example the irrigation system delivered covers only 2 hectares of land. The irrigation also did not have pumps/ lateral tubes and sprinklers. This also applies to the tractor which after delivery has required intermitted services and is not suited for land where the co-operatives undertakes farming. This is worrying when one considers that it is the NDA East London office that recommends these manufacturers and suppliers to co-operatives. A proper screening of the manufacturers and suppliers need to be undertaken before referrals are made to project.

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SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED (AND ATTACHED WITH THIS EVALUATION)

Grant agreement between the NDA and Emazizini
Avulwamasango Project Budget (2012-2014)
Avulwamasango Project Proposal
Avulwamasango Monthly Activity Reports (2012- 2013)



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