

Project Evaluation Series

Evaluation of the project “Technical assistance to support the establishment of a National Animal Identification, Registration and Traceability System (NAITS) in Georgia”

Project code: GCP/GEO/009/SWI

Management response

Management response to the Evaluation of the project “Technical assistance to support the establishment of a National Animal Identification, Registration and Traceability System (NAITS) in Georgia”					10/2022
Evaluation recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			Further funding required (Y or N)
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	
<p>Recommendation 1.</p> <p>FAO should further support the Government on strengthening the NAITS and building the capacity of the participated parties (including the system end-users), as planned under phase II of the project. FAO should also keep supporting the engagement and inclusion of all relevant parties of the supply chain and developing a proper public-private partnership model to secure real-time data gathering and recording.</p> <p>The development and fully-fledged functioning of the NAITS require coherent coordination across the NAITS supply chain (farmers, slaughterhouses, etc.). Phase I of the project successfully engaged all of the slaughterhouses in the data gathering and recording process. However, the GoG needs to develop strategies to improve the engagement of the medium-sized and large farmers and livestock owners. Taking into account the lack of incentives and low IT illiteracy among Georgian farmers are considered to be the main constraints for their engagement, a combination of incentive schemes for livestock owners and the engagement of the representatives of farmers’ organizations in real-life data entry would significantly increase the system efficiency, as well as its data coverage and quality.</p>	Accepted	The recommendation has been embedded in the Pro Doc objectives of the second phase of the NAITS, which has already been funded.	REU and FEGEO	01/01/2022	Yes
<p>Recommendation 2.</p> <p>The FAO should further support the Government in strengthening the sustainability facet of the NAITS, which covers a range of dimensions linked to the system development/acquisition process, ownership over the system, open data sharing, the level of engagement of the system’s direct users and beneficiaries, business processes backing up</p>	Accepted	Sustainability is a core element of the Objectives identified in the Pro Doc of the second phase of the NAITS, which has been already funded.	REU and FEGEO	01/03/2022	Yes

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<p>its functioning and system maintenance, and system integration with other relevant platforms.</p> <p>The FAO should facilitate a discussion with the GoG and other stakeholders to address the multidimensional facet of system sustainability. In this regard, the FAO needs to support the GoG with the development of the NAITS sustainability plan, which represents a comprehensive set of requirements and resources needed to gather and share the data, support, maintain, and operate the system. The plan should also incorporate detailed operations and sustainability costs, including the human resources needed for the follow-up support and maintenance.</p> <p>Plans for project sustainability should consider actual costs which might be greatly affected by aspects requirement volatility (associated with the needs entailed in evolving the system to address changing realities and additional requirements), lack of documentation (efficient software-related documentation which might result in extra troubleshooting time and cost), and a lack of proper system maintenance and support planning (complex systems are more unstable and difficult).</p> <p>In addition, while phase II of the project addresses the needs of integrating the NAITS with other databases and initiatives (including the EIDSS), it also highlights that: “In case the EIDSS does not materialize for any reason, the project will consider the development of a simplified disease case management module in the NAITS.” However, the integration of the NAITS with the EIDSS is one of the prerequisites for adding value to the system and will contribute to strengthening and supporting the monitoring and prevention of dangerous diseases within the “One Health” concept. While the system</p>					

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integration might be subject to external factors and lack of actions from the GoG (as it was during the phase I of the project), this system integration might face similar challenges during the phase II of the project. Therefore, the GoG needs to proactively cooperate with the FAO and other relevant donors to develop the system integration, which will contribute to the longevity and sustainability of the NAITS and its successful replication in other transition and developing economies.					
<p>Recommendation 3.</p> <p>The FAO should keep supporting the interested parties (transition and developing economies) in developing and customizing the animal identification, registration, and traceability system. While considering to replicate the results of this project, the FAO needs revise its approach of developing cross-country/regional ICT-based applications and conduct a thorough analysis of existing legal, and technical frameworks as well as the actual compared to the declared political will and capacity of the partnering countries to invest in and secure sustainability in cross-country system and data integration.</p> <p>While ICT serves as an enabler of development, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the application of ICT in the development context is a complex intervention, which requires a thorough analysis of all internal and external factors of success and impediments. Georgia’s experience of developing the NAITS has the potential to provide lessons for other countries which face similar development challenges. Besides, several transition economies have already demonstrated their interest in exploring the Georgian experience. The FAO needs to take into account the recommendations made in this evaluation (e.g.,</p>	Accepted	High level dialogue with MEPA/NFA.	REU and FEGEO	N/A	Yes

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<p>feasibility assessment, multi-faceted sustainability approach, public-private partnership, and inclusion of the relevant parties) and support the system’s development along with change management and business process re-engineering approaches. The thorough feasibility analysis (including legal, institutional, political) of a complex regional initiative that incorporates the application of ICT in development should be an integral part of project /program planning. In this regard, the stakeholders (Donors, the GoG and the FAO) are strongly advised to obtain an official commitment of the participating countries to pursue and support the regional system integration before finalizing the commitment in order to account for unforeseen developments. FAO is also advised to assess any existing bi-lateral or multilateral frameworks and/or agreements) that lay foundation for cross-country and or cross-regional cooperation on the matter, the extent and scope of these cooperation defined in the above-mentioned frameworks/agreement. Moreover, in case FAO’s committing to contribute to regional and cross-country cooperation, it should insist that project investments are based on bi-lateral or multilateral frameworks/agreements signed between the governments. Also, the y analysis should address all aspects of developing, implementing, and sustaining/maintaining digital (ICT-based) solutions including maintenance of cross-country/regional systems as the commitments of the governments always might not materialize. Overall, it will help to confirm if the identified existing business processes and legal environment are being implemented or not, and the changes required at legal/policy and institutional levels to achieve the foreseen net benefit of the system.</p>					

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<p>Recommendation 4.</p> <p>FAO is encouraged to continue strengthening existing strategic partnership arrangements with the relevant agencies of the GoG (such as NFA, MEPA, and other relevant state agencies) and keep developing their capacity and guiding them across legal, institutional and individual capacity facets to secure the full ownership from the side of the GoG and ultimately sustainability of the NAITS. In addition, FAO is encouraged to keep developing collaboration and partnership with other relevant stakeholder either defined in its “Stakeholder Mapping and Status” (which was presented in the NAITS phase II project document) or identified in the course of the NAITS (phase II) to ensure the inclusion of all relevant parties of the supply chain that would contribute to developing a proper public-private partnership model to secure real-time data gathering and recording.</p> <p>The European Union (EU) explicitly classifies animal identification as part of its “food safety” programs and introduced mandatory programs for the major commercial animal species. Given that the NAITS also serves the objectives of safeguarding animal health and improving access to markets, the capacity-building and knowledge sharing among private and public entities about the importance of the NAITS and its benefits for both the industry (through the voluntary participation of its constituents, medium-sized and large farmers and livestock owners) and the GoG (that would operate and maintain the NAITS) would incentivize interest in the system’s net benefits and would potentially lead public-private partnership arrangements across sectors laying foundation for the system sustainability, increased impact on the country’s economy and its integration into the EU market.</p>	Accepted	FAO will keep developing collaboration and partnership with relevant agencies and stakeholders defined in its “Stakeholder Mapping and Status” in the NAITS phase II project document.	REU and FEGEO	01/02/2022	Yes

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<p>Recommendation 5.</p> <p>FAO is encouraged to consider introducing time-bound key performance (output and outcome) and target indicators whenever it is feasible; in other words, there should be a timeframe linked to the indicators to define the frequency with which the data linked to the indicator is collected and/or measured.</p> <p>Given the modalities of ICT-based technical assistance, the evolution of NAITS is a dynamic process volatile to external factors. In this regard, the development of time-bound outcome and output indicators should take into account the nature of the NAITS and complexity of its components and outputs under each component. It is obvious that it could be unfeasible to set a precise timeline against specific indicators at the planning stage of NAITS (phase II). As an alternative, the assumption based indicative timelines linked to the indicators (which could be subject to further adjustments) could be useful for both elaboration of risk mitigation strategy and follow up assessment of exogenous factors influencing the system development. The latter would serve as an important constituent of the lessons learned to be considered during the replication of similar interventions in other countries and/or regions.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>Time-bound indicators can act as limiting factors, in particular in the case when the FAO depends on the performance of the Government. As such in particular in complex situations, when the assumptions have not considered all possible scenarios or have changed, the indicators will not be flexible to change too. In fact, the evaluation has considered changes in the indicators and an implementation issue instead of positive adaptive approaches to address the risks and changes in the assumptions. Adding time-bound indicators across all indicators can only aggravate such discrepancies and reduce the flexibility of the project.</p>	<p>Time-bound indicators will be considered for the second phase, but only added where needed.</p>	<p>FEGEO</p>	<p>03/01/2022</p>	<p>No</p>

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