



Final Report

Participatory Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Rural Development in line with Carbon Sequestration in Desertified Areas¹

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1. Background

The first phase of this Project was initiated in the South Khorasan Province with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2003. In this phase, the Project demonstrated that organic carbon stored in the soil and vegetation amounts to 1450 kg/ha after 5 years, which showed the great capacity of arid lands as carbon sinks. It also had great success in the identification of local capacities, improving social and human capitals, especially in the areas of women and youth economic empowerment, while supporting the community-based restoration of degraded lands. During the 2nd phase (2017 - 2021), the Project was replicated in 18 sites across the country which let it evolve in various environments and different conditions sticking to the principles in applying a bottom-up and integrated approach. Given its success and the willingness of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization (NRWO)¹ and a considerable number of provincial authorities demanding the implementation of the Project, in their provinces, a new agreement to initiate the third phase of the Project was signed in June 2017 between NRWO and UNDP to be implemented with cost-sharing modality in 4 new pilot sites in Golestan, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, and Yazd provinces.

The phase 3 was a multi-purpose initiative devised to mainly test and upgrade the initial model set associated with sustainable land management and natural resources restoration. The challenges that CSP was trying to address including land degradation and desertification (specifically Sand and Dust Storms), are the main global challenges and development priorities for the Iranian government. The major role of socio-economic causes in the phenomena adds to the complexity of its nature, reminding the necessity of considering all aspects of the issue to approach a consistent solution. To meet its purpose, the Project has simultaneously addressed ecological and socio-economic problems at the field level, which complied with the integrity of globally agreed goals on Sustainable Development and the strategies of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The Project was implemented in four (4) sites and aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the model in new arid sites as well as at a site in a humid Hyrcanian zone where it contributed to the development of more effective environmental and Natural Resource Management (NRM) policies, restoring degraded natural resources, improving the socio-

¹ .The name of Forest Range and Watershed Management Organization (FRWO) has recently changed to Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization (NRWO)



economic status of local communities and enhance ecosystem resilience and services. The third phase, implemented in 4 sites, addressed three main objectives as follows:

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the model in a forest site in humid Hyrcanian vegetation zone, and three new sites in desert lands
- Restore degraded natural resources in the pilot sites
- Improve the socio-economic status of local communities and enhance ecosystem resilience and services.

2. The Project's budget and financial projections

The total contribution of UNDP for the third phase has been 360,000 USD. The government also committed to an amount of 7.6 million USD (each USD equal to 80,000 IRR), but it received a verdict from Supreme Accounting Court to stop disbursing the government's contribution to the cost-sharing fund at the beginning of the Project which temporarily disrupted the implementation. So, the Project was financed directly by the government until Nov. 2019 when as a result of the 'Project's follow-ups, the ban was removed. Meanwhile, the government plans to allocate a total amount of 76 billion IRR in 2022. The 'Project's 5 -year financial performance is projected in the table below:

Table 1. The 5 - year financial commitments and performance

Project Document		Expenditure					Total
Source of fund	Amount USD	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
UNDP	380,000	79,233.69	4,688.49	9,486.37	8,916.39	3071.08	105,574.02
National GOV.	Cost-sharing	-	-	7,448,083,006	-	24,040,184,300	31,488,267,306
	Direct Funding to PRJ pilots	32,500,000,000	38,600,000,000	46,700,000,000	53,290,000,000	63,297,000,000	234,387,000,000
Provincial government budget	7,600,000	27,975,000,000	15,868,000,000	14,990,000,000	9,539,000,000	12,000,000,000	80,372,000,000
Total	7,980,000						346,247,267,306

3. Year 2022 Progress

3.1 Holding the third Project Steering Committee meeting

The third meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carbon Sequestration Project was convened in February 2022 with the agenda to review the performance of 2021 and approve the 2022 workplan underlying an exit strategy set toward documentation of achievements and suggesting the 'Project's transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency. The workplan with a total amount of 40,000 USD included terminal evaluation (TE), audit, the study of the effectiveness of ecological activities, preparing the updated executive model, developing a comprehensive 5 - year performance report, lessons learned, final report, etc.

3.2. Project Audit

Inclusive audit examinations were carried in line with the scope prescribed in the TOR, which covers the overall management of the 'Project's implementation, monitoring, and supervision. This includes reviewing work plans, progress reports, project resources, project budgets, project expenditure, project delivery, recruitment,

operational and financial closing of projects, and disposal or transfer of assets (if applicable). The findings of the report are as follows:

1. The Project did not start until 2019. The Project has performed considerably below targets in the following 3 years from 2019 to 2021. Additionally, it appears that because of the 2-year delay in the start of the project, its term has to be extended to achieve the target foreseen in the project document. Low delivery of the Project was due to lack of and delay in allocation of the budget, which relates to two issues:

- Since the cost-sharing mechanism was not recognized by the Iranian Supreme Audit Court, NRW was banned from depositing the government contribution to Cost-Sharing Fund by late 2019. As a result of the follow-ups, it was recognized to enable cost-sharing.

- The government made its endeavor to stand by the committed co-financing amount of 7.6 million USD. However, the devaluation of the Iranian currency downscaled the delivery rate in USD.

- During the years in which the Project was impeded from disbursing the budget into the cost-sharing fund, the government kept on allocating and implementing the related activities without being financially reported. In fact, the actual allocated amount was much higher than what was deposited into the cost-sharing fund and accounted for by auditors.

2. In contract with employees (consultancy contract), responsibility for payment of relevant taxes and social security has been passed to the employees. Legally, the employer is responsible for such deductions and remittances to the relevant authorities. Of course, the problem happened due to an unclear modality.

3. At the time of our field audit, we noted the documents and records (Face forms, supporting documents, workplan, APPR, final CDRs, and asset lists) were not properly filed at the project office and those introduced to us as being in charge of finance, did not have the necessary knowledge about the location of records and documents. There have been problems in filing project financial data and their classification. It is concerned with the lack of sufficient training for new staff as well as inconsistencies between the timeframe of restoration contracts in NRW and UNDP. However, the project office succeeded in categorizing the information in the way asked by auditors in a few days.

3.3. Conducting Terminal Evaluation

The terminal evaluation was conducted in April-June 2022. As part of Phase 3, a terminal evaluation was conducted according to UNDP's guidance, rules, and procedures. The evaluation is intended to assess the achievement of project results and to draw out lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this Project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. In assessing the Project and its alignment with the broader Project Document, the TE also examined the following areas: relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency, impact and sustainability, project design, project management, project implementation and adaptive management, gender equality, and COVID-19. TE was conducted through a desk-top review of pertinent documents. It also included site visits with key informant interviews (KIIs) / consultations and some virtual meetings. Overall, the evaluation was intended to be forward-looking, it captured lessons learned effectively and provided information on the nature, extent, and, where possible, the results achieved. The evidence collected by this End-of-Project Evaluation (EPE) was derived from an extensive document review, KIIs / consultations, in-person site visits that included meetings and interviews, and virtual meetings/interviews, as illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

The evaluation took a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data and methods to inform its evidence-based findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Specific methods included document review, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, stakeholder consultation, and, where applicable, results achievement case studies for lessons learned. The findings of the TE confirm that based on the evidence reviewed, the evaluators conclude that, during its implementation, the Project has served as an important channel to ensure that:

1. Participatory natural resources management is further strengthened in target areas to rehabilitate degraded lands and to mitigate drivers of sand and dust storms, with the impacts of rehabilitation activities on carbon sequestration monitored and documented.

2. Local communities are further empowered, and their livelihoods are improved.

There is much insight that has been gained from this evaluation. Overall, it is seen by the main local stakeholders as a positive project, with many opportunities for:

- Participatory approaches and institutional strengthening
- Participatory approaches that involve stakeholders at all levels to improve the livelihoods of local people through their own active participation,
- Institutional strengthening of the provincial governorate organizations.
- Socio-economic and environmental benefits

- Women's economic empowerment (*nomadic and rural*) and improving their professional skills to result in boosting poor households' economic status and livelihoods, reducing vulnerability, and transferring skills to other groups within communities
- Enhance a systematic approach to the production and marketing of local products produced by the local micro-enterprises
- Reduced pressure on the natural environment because of land rehabilitation and diversified livelihoods.

In accordance with the recommendations of TE accepted/partially accepted, the project prepared a management response.

1. With the capacity of CSP's facilitators built during the Project's first and second phases, they established the National Union of Iranian Facilitators, which acts as the syndicate for the facilitators across the country.
2. The CSP introduces its facilitators to other similar projects and offices.
3. The CSP has encouraged and supported the facilitators to initiate their own facilitation businesses.

In case the facilitators are still interested in joining the government, the CSP will help the process, despite its legal challenges. For example, some of the facilitators have already been recruited. e.g., in Yazd province, while because of some regulatory challenges, the recruitment of Golestan pilot facilitators is facing legal limitations.

3.4. Assessment of Project's Carbon Impact

This study was carried out from June -September. According to this activity, the achievements of the 'Project's restoration operations were assessed by defining some indicators to measure the changes before and after the project implementation in terms of Carbon Sequestration, vegetation, wind erosion, soil properties, etc. This short time study was carried out with the aim of investigating the effectiveness of the ecological measures of the third phase of the Carbon Sequestration Project in 4 provinces of North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Yazd, and Golestan. In this regard, the implementation steps and the indicators to determine the effectiveness of the ecological measures of the plan were approved by the technical committee of the Desert Affairs Office of NRW. The indicators for determining the effectiveness of each restoration activity, after determining the representative area in the reclamation and control sites, were the percentage of vegetation, production, species diversity (richness and uniformity), carbon sequestration (soil and plants), and soil erosion control. The difference in the results related to the determination of each index in the restoration and control sites was considered as the effectiveness of the implementation of ecological measures. Vegetation percentage and production indices by transect and plot methods in a random-systematic way, species diversity index by Shannon-Weiner method, plant carbon index by combustion method, soil carbon index by Walkley Black method and soil erosion control index by estimation model, wind erosion index by IRIFR method were determined.

1. South Khorasan province:

The total amount of Carbon sequestered as a result of the restoration measures of the third phase of the Project in South Khorasan province is 1.56 million tons. It is necessary to mention that the effectiveness of these measures will increase significantly in the coming years because not much time has passed since these measures were undertaken. In this regard, if we consider at least a 10% annual increase in carbon sequestration, the future effectiveness of these measures in terms of the amount of sequestered carbon for the next 10 years is 4.04 million tons. It is noteworthy that an increase in the amount of organic carbon stored in soil and plants in Firozabad site has been reported 1321 kg/ha for 5 years, consistent with the findings of M&E of 1st and 2nd phases. The total amount of carbon sequestered as a result of the ecological measures of the third phase of the carbon sequestration project of South Khorasan Province is 1.56 million tons. It is necessary to mention that the effectiveness of these measures will increase significantly in the coming years because not much time has passed since these measures were taken. In this regard, if we consider at least a 10% annual increase in carbon sequestration, the future effectiveness of these measures in terms of the amount of sequestered carbon for the next 10 years is 4.04 million tons. The effectiveness of the ecological measures of the carbon sequestration project in South Khorasan province is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The effectiveness of the ecological measures of the carbon sequestration project in South Khorasan province

Index	Planting in Firouzabad	Planting in Valiasr	Planting in Sahlabad	Planting in Mazar Seyyed Ali	Runoff Management in Salh and the wetland	Sum
Vegetation (percent)	10.7	11.3	19.2	21.2	11.3	14.7 ²
production (tons)	230	114	67	116.1	70.9	598
Species diversity	0.28	0.28	0.46	0.4	0.17	0.31 ³
Plant carbon (thousand tons)	175.2	213.5	137.3	229.2	157.9	913.1
Soil carbon (thousand tons)	90.2	197	116.9	98.6	148.5	651.2
Sum of carbon deposited in soil and plants	265.8	410.5	257.2	327.8	306.4	1564.3
Soil erosion control (thousand tons)	1.52	2.3	2	1.8	2.7	10.3

2- North Khorasan province:

The total amount of carbon sequestered as a result of the ecological measures of the third phase of the carbon sequestration project of North Khorasan province is 358.6 thousand tons. It is necessary to mention that the effectiveness of these measures will increase significantly in the coming years because not much time has passed since these measures were taken. In this regard, if we consider at least a 10% annual increase in carbon sequestration, the future effectiveness of these measures in terms of the amount of sequestered carbon in the next 10 years is 1.9 million tons. Table 3 shows the results of the ecological measures of the Carbon Sequestration Project of North Khorasan province.

Table 3. Ecological measures of the Carbon Sequestration Project of North Khorasan province

Index	Planting and runoff management in Kababa	Planting and runoff management in Darvazeh Bini	Planting in Dasht	Planting in Rabat-e Qara Bil	Sum
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². This number is an average

³. This number is an average

Vegetation (percent)	5.8	6.7	18.1	6.2	9.2 ⁴
Production (tons)	11.2	3.55	16.5	11.4	42.65
Species diversity	0.19	0.31	0.48	0.16	0.285 ⁵
Plant carbon (thousand tons)	8.6	97.6	18.1	132.8	257.1
Soil carbon (thousand tons)	10	9.7	21.4	16	57.1
Sum of carbon deposited in soil and plants	18.6	107.3	39.5	148.8	314.2
Soil erosion control (thousand tons)	0.52	0.45	0.12	0.27	1.36

3. Yazd

The total amount of carbon sequestered as a result of the ecological measures of the third phase of the carbon sequestration project of the Khatam pilot site is estimated at 322 thousand tons. These measures are described in table 18-4:

- Development and cultivation of medicinal plants with low water need
- Creation of a model farm for the cultivation of *Ferula Asafoetida* medicinal plant
- Construction of a cistern through a collaborative approach in the pastures of the carbon sequestration project
- Construction of Rahmatabad embankment dam
- Construction of Karkhangan diversion embankment dam
- Providing solar water heaters in target villages of carbon sequestration project through a collaborative approach
- Plantation and runoff management
- Medicinal and industrial plant cultivation

4. Golestan

The total amount of carbon sequestered as a result of the ecological measures of the third phase of the carbon sequestration project of Galikesh is estimated at 1.53 million tons.

The ecological measures of the third phase of Golestan province's carbon sequestration project are:

- Collaborative planting toward conservation agriculture
- Creation of a model raspberry farm
- Conversion of dryland farm to Alfalfa farm
- Converting sloping dryland farms into gardens
- Converting sloping dryland farms into medicinal plant farms
- Converting sloping dryland farms into rose farms
- Converting sloping dryland farms to saffron fields
- Wood farming
- Conservation agriculture
- Runoff management (construction of crescent catchment and contour trenching)
- Preventing and controlling forest fires
- Developmental activities

3.5 Development of project implementation and conceptual model

This activity was carried out from June – September with the aim of compiling various steps and actions of the Project as a consolidated framework, including its process and procedures associated with improving 5

⁴ .This number is an average

⁵ .This number is an average

capitals, including physical, natural, social, human, and financial capitals. Furthermore, the strength and weaknesses were recognized to set policies used in the 7th National Development Plan of the country. The conceptual model based on the five capital is presented in Figure 2. The conceptual model and executive cycle of participatory management of natural resources and sustainable rural development are present in Figures 3 and 4, respectively.

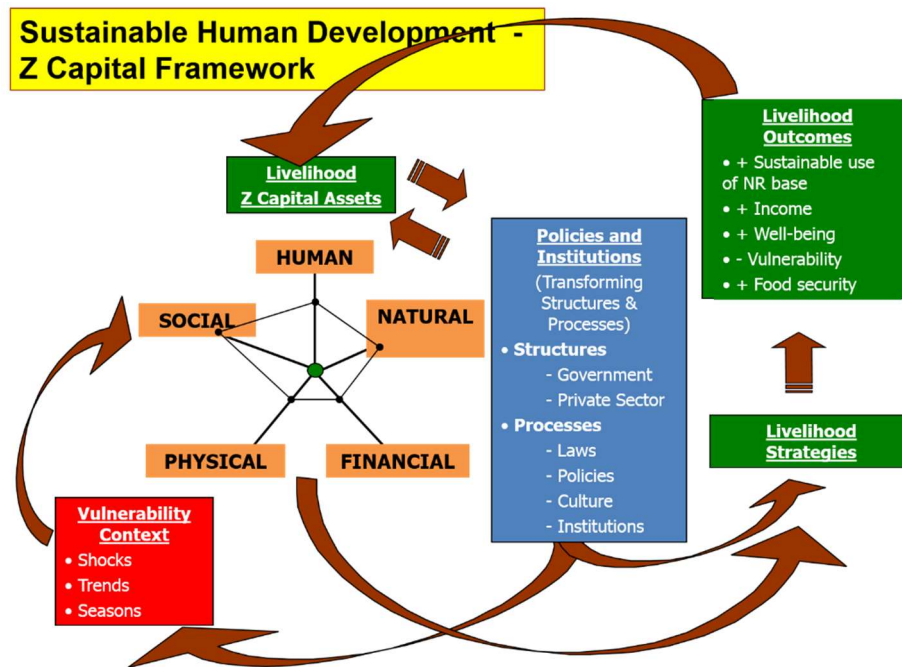


Fig 2. A conceptual model based on the five-capital

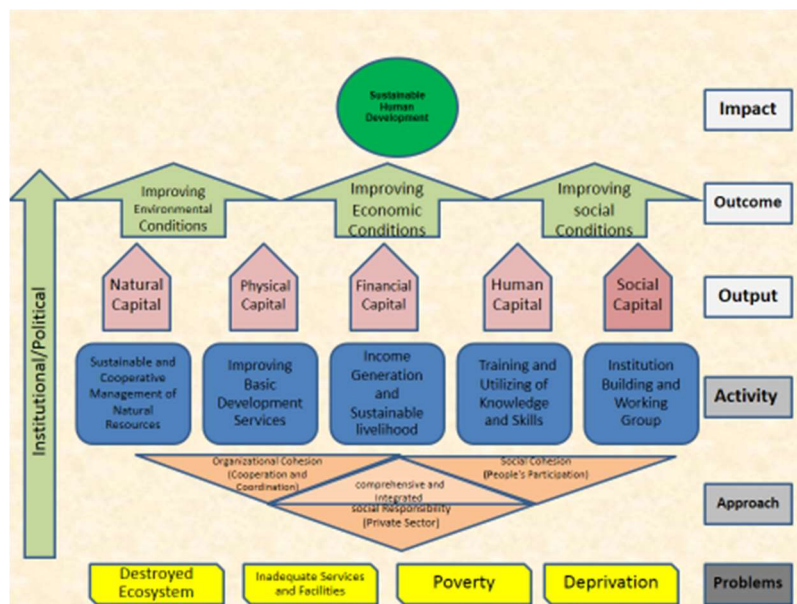


Fig 3. Conceptual model of participatory management of natural resources and sustainable rural development

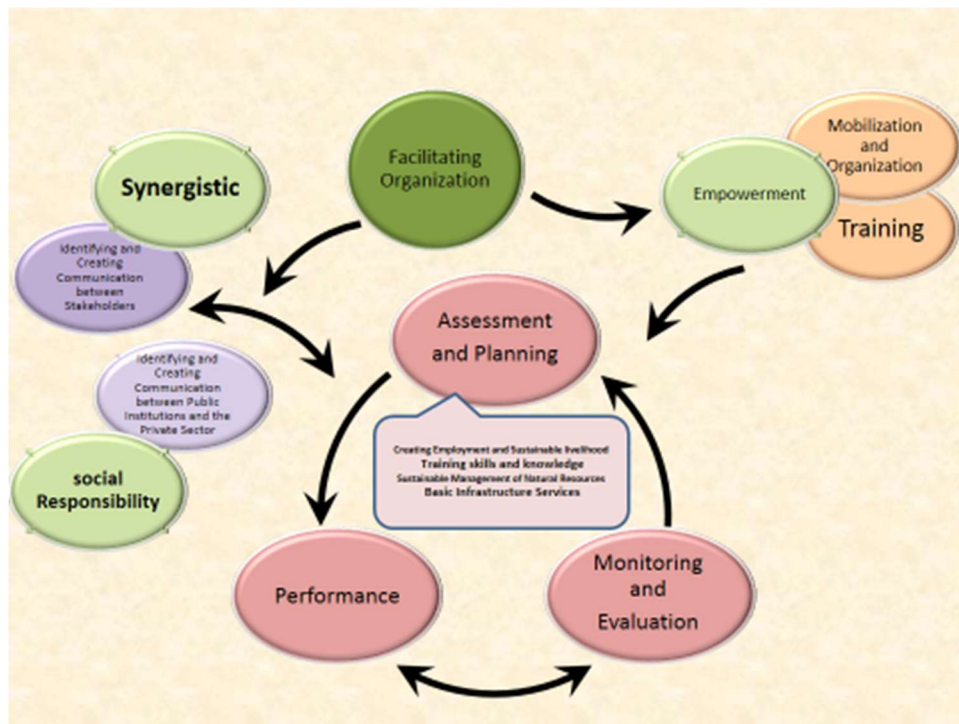


Fig 4. Executive cycle of participatory management of natural resources and sustainable rural development

3.6 Documentation of project 5- year activities and achievements

This task was carried out from June – September. According to this task, a 5-year report (to review project performance reports, hold consultative meetings with the project team, and finalise the formulation of the framework and performance guidelines) was prepared. to be later presented to the upper policymaker and other users. Highlights of the report are as follows:

4. Summary of 5-year performance and achievement

The target and achievement of CSP (phase 3) by the end of 2021 in 4 sites are presented in tables 4 -7.

Activity	Target by the end of 2021	Achievement by the end of 2021	Progress percentage
Rehabilitation	1,000 ha	608 ha	60
Number of the participatory watershed and village-level management plans	At least 30% of the villages in pilots have VLPs by the end of the 4 th year (8 villages and 988 households)	3	+100
Establishment of Micro-Credit funds	At least 1 MCF in each village by the end of the 4 th year	8	+100
Number of jobs generated	At least 24 people benefited from project livelihoods opportunities		

Table

Number of LoAs signed and working between stakeholders	per pilot	363	+100
Establishment of local cooperatives	At least 5 LoAs signed and working by end of the 4 th year	12	+100
Application of renewable sources of energy	At least 1 local cooperatives by the end of the 4 th year	5	+100

4. The target and achievement of CSP (phase 3) by the end of 2021 in South Khorasan

Table 5. The target and achievement of CSP (phase 3) by the end of 2021 in North Khorasan province

Activity	Target by the end of 2021	Achievement by the end of 2021	Progress percentage
Rehabilitation	1,000 ha	754 ha	75
Number of participatory watershed and village-level management plans	At least 30% of the villages in pilots have VLPs by the end of the 4 th year (8 villages and 988 households)	11	+100

Establishment of Micro-Credit funds	At least 1 MCF in each village by the end of the 4 th year	13	+100
Number of jobs generated	At least 24 people benefited from project livelihoods opportunities	150	
Number of LoAs signed and working between stakeholders	per pilot	19	+100
Establishment of local cooperatives	At least 5 LoAs signed and working by end of the year	2 Abadgaran Tabiat Niandasht Sankhast and Garmeh SABZ Aftabgardan	+100
Application of renewable sources of energy	At least 1 local cooperatives by the end of the 4 th year	220 green solar water heater and gassy oven	+100

Table 6. The target and achievement of CSP (phase 3) by the end of 2021 in Yazd province

Activity	Target by the end of 2021	Achievement by the end of 2021	Progress percentage
Rehabilitation	1,000 ha	608 ha	60
Number of participatory watershed and village-level management plans	At least 30% of the villages in pilots have VLPs by the end of the 4 th year (8 villages and 988 households)	3	+100
Establishment of Micro-Credit funds	At least 1 MCF in each village by the end of the 4 th year	8	+100
Number of jobs generated	At least 24 people benefited from project livelihoods opportunities	363	
Number of LoAs signed and working between stakeholders	per pilot	12	+100
Establishment of local cooperatives	At least 5 LoAs signed and working by the end of the 4 th year	5	+100
Application of renewable sources of energy	At least 1 local cooperative by the end of the 4 th year	4 green solar water heater	44

Table 7. The target and achievement of CSP (phase 3) by the end of 2021 in Golestan province

Activity	Target by the end of 2021	Achievement by the end of 2021	Percentage
Rehabilitation	1,000 ha	957 ha	95
Number of participatory watershed and village-level management plans	At least 30% of the villages in pilots have VLPs by the end of the 4 th year (8 villages and 988 households)	11	+100
Establishment of Micro-Credit funds	At least 1 MCF in each village by the end of the 4 th year	22	+100
Number of jobs generated	At least 24 people benefited from project livelihoods opportunities	657	+100
Number of LoAs signed and working between stakeholders	per pilot	7	+100
Establishment of local cooperatives	At least 5 LoAs signed and working by the end of the 4 th year	1 Padideh Sabz Galikesh	+100

5. Project lessons-learned

- To proceed with collaborative natural resources management as a partnership by which various stakeholders agree on sharing rights and responsibilities among themselves, constitutions including some basic principles and agreements were written for VDGs and MCFs, which drastically decrease conflicts.
- Contracting the restoration actions to local communities fostered a sense of ownership in the Project.
- Getting para B of Article 29 certificate for the cooperatives launched by the Project facilitated contradicting restoration activities to local communities.
- Convincing local communities is much easier than drawing the attention and cooperation of governmental institutions. In addition, change in governments is a serious challenge. To overcome this, continued advocacy and extensional meetings were followed up by the Project.
- Women got involved in the Project with more enthusiasm rather than men.
- Teaching every mother will contribute to breeding aware and responsible generations.
- Coordination at the local level is more effective than at the national level. To attain this, the Project used the capacity of town-level Programming and Development Committees.
- Alignment of the Project with the crucial policies of the government in job creation and rural development resulted in local authorities support.
- Women's economic empowerment (nomadic and rural) and improving their professional skills boosted poor households' economic status and livelihoods, reduced vulnerability, and transferred skills to other groups within communities.
- Lack of a systematic monitoring and evaluation framework in the 3rd phase was a weakness. To deal with the problem, a study was undertaken to review the "Effectiveness of CSP restoration activities" to find out changes in



organic carbon, vegetation cover, wind and water erosion, etc. Yet, designing an exclusive M&E system in the begging of the Project has a couple of advantages, in particular, that could facilitate adaptive management.

- As VLP/WLPs were developed and implemented for the 1st time in a natural resources project. Thus, it needs an inclusive evaluation to find out its strengths and shortages.

- Financial contribution and also technical support of UNDP in the 3rd phase has been insufficient.

- Social mobilization steps were perused precisely.

- Social and economic information was collected in PRA workshops which provided the project team with the required knowledge and entry points.

- Rural development activities have had two complementary functions: 1). Gaining the trust of the local communities; and 2). Reducing the pressures on natural resources. Furthermore, acceptance of the CSP by local communities smoothed through development activities, livelihoods, and infrastructural delivery.

- High-water demanding crops were replaced by drought-resistant plants. For example, especially in the Khatam site in Yazd, many farmers applied to cultivate medicinal plants such as Ferula (Anghozeh in Persian) in abandoned agricultural lands. One advantage of the new product is that it has a high market price.

- To reduce water erosion, wheat and barley cultivation in steep slope farmlands were replaced with multi-year products such as Alfalfa. In Galikesh, the facilitators encouraged some farmers to plant medicinal plants, which consume less water and have higher prices – these are just a few examples.

- There was no baseline that can be compared. Basic studies should be in a way to provide essential data.

- There is some evidence that the CSP III activities enabled local communities to be further empowered, and their livelihoods were improved. Social capacities were improved in some respects through the establishment of Village Development Groups (VDGs) and the provisioning of the required training.

- Unsustainable farming and gardening negatively affected the land through erosion. However, through CSP III interventions such as agroforestry, the farmers changed the way they use their lands and the type of plants that they cultivate.

- To mitigate erosion in farmlands and orchards, conservation farming as no- tillage and low- tillage cultivation was applied. - The local-level social and economic platforms were legalized through the establishment and registration of local cooperatives.

- Facilitators were connectors between communities and provincial and national levels institutions.

- Villagers received extensive support from the Project. Empowerment is the main tool of the Project to support the rural.

- The project local team obtained local coordination and cooperation among the governmental and other stakeholders.

- All pilots documented activities and achievements to a satisfactory degree. However, further capacity building associated with documentation cannot be ignored since a main part of the project lesson is not brought on paper.

- The goal of the Project has been to introduce a paradigm shift that is being materialized through the development of its executive model. For this, some key steps have been taken. Though, it is necessary to take bigger and more rapid steps.

- A comprehensive M&E plan and tracking during project implementation against indicators and outputs are critical to demonstrate success and to inform adaptive management.

- Result based work plan of the Project has been one of its pillars.

- Reporting should be used as an opportunity to present good progress as well as challenges.

- Influential stakeholders are identified and involved from the onset

- Jointly preparing of WLPs is a strong tool to facilitate inter-agency collaborations.

- Universities and research centres had a major role in evidence production for the Project.

- The Project devised business plans to support the raising and marketing rural products. However, it is necessary to assess the sustainability of established businesses.

6. Progress against the Project Results Framework

Objective/Outcome/Output	Indicator	Targets (including annual milestones)	Results
The long-term goal to which the project will contribute is to combat desertification and address land degradation to mitigate the effects of and adapt to climate change (including mitigation of drivers of sand and dust storms) as well as to build resilience in local communities.			Please write 1-3 paragraphs about the major impact of the project.
Objective To reduce land degradation and manage drivers of sand and dust storms in areas susceptible to desertification through local community empowerment and participation	Reduction in intensity of desertification in pilot areas	At least 1 class of reduction in intensity of desertification by end of the project	Based on an assessment study conducted, the intensity of wind erosion has decreased by 2 classes in South Khorasan (7.42 ton/ha), North Khorasan (3.1 ton/ha) and Yazd 1 class. In Golestan province, where water erosion is predominant, erosion decreased about 0.64 tons per hectare (since vegetation is too young with very limited growth and canopy in initial years of plantation).
	Increase in carbon stock in degraded landscapes in pilot areas		

Objective/Outcome/Output	Indicator	Targets (including annual milestones)	Results
Outcome 1 Participatory natural resources management is further strengthened in target areas to rehabilitate degraded lands and to mitigate drivers of sand and dust storms, with the impacts of rehabilitation activities on carbon sequestration monitored and documented	% of vegetation cover	20% increase in vegetation cover by end-project	Based on a study conducted vegetation cover by end-project have been Increased in South Khorasan 14.74 (perc/ha) and in North Khorasan 18.4 (perc/ha).
Output 1.1 Rehabilitation of degraded natural resources planned and implemented at the watershed and village levels through local participation	ha of rehabilitated areas	Restoration of an average of 250 ha per pilot annually (1000 ha in 4 years)	Restoration results in 4 pilot sites are as follows: South Khorasan: 965 ha (96.5%) including plantation and runoff management North Khorasan: 2204 (220 %) ha including 861 plantation in desertlands, 862 ha runoff management and 396 ha forest enrichment, 85 ha agroforestry Yazd: 355 ha (35.5%) including runoff management 200 ha, 20 ha agroforestry, medicinal plants 100 ha, orchards 35 ha., 2 Earth dams to control floods and recharge aquifers with 54000 cubic meters embankment. Golestan: 1075 ha (100.7%) including plantation 601ha, 340 ha forage species farming, and 134 ha medicinal herbs plantation
	Number of participatory watershed and village level management plans	Each pilot has 1 WLP by end of year 2021 At least 30% of the villages in each pilot have VLPs by the end-year of the 3 rd year	South Khorasan: 3 villages targeted out of 8 pilot villages Achievement: VLPs were prepared for 8 villages North Khorasan: 6 villages targeted out of 19 pilot villages Achievement: VLPs were prepared for 10 villages Yazd: 3 villages targeted out of 8 Pilot villages Achievement: All 8 villages benefited from

Objective/Outcome/Output	Indicator	Targets (including annual milestones)	Results
			VLPs prepared Golestan: 6 villages targeted out of 18 villages Achievement: 11 villages benefited of VLPs prepared
Output 1.2 Application of renewable sources of energy as well as other new technologies introduced and promoted to reduce degradation of natural resources	Adoption of renewable energies and other new technologies by households	At least 5% of coverage in pilot villages (households)	South Khorasan: 108 households targeted out of 545 pilot households. Achievement: 40 houses equipped to solar water heater (37 %) North Khorasan: 443 households targeted out of 2215 pilot households. Achievement: 220 houses equipped to solar water heater (49 %) Yazd: 199 households targeted out of 988 pilot households. Achievement: 4 houses equipped to solar water heater (2 %) Golestan: 590 households targeted out of 2954 households. Achievement: No household received these facilities
	Number of adopted new technologies	At least 4 new technologies adopted by Project reports technologies end-year 3	South Khorasan: 40 solar water heater North Khorasan: 220 solar water heater and gassy oven Yazd: 4 solar water heater
Outcome 2 Local communities further empowered and their livelihoods improved	Level of socio-economic capitals in project sites	Social capital increased by 40% Economic capital increased by 10%	
Output 2.1 Social capacities improved through establishment of Village Development Groups (VDGs) and provision of required trainings	Number of VDGs	At least 1 VDG in each village by end-year 3	South Khorasan: 240 VDGs North Khorasan: 130 VDGs Yazd: 8 VDGs Golestan: 95 VDGs
Output 2.2 Economic capacities improved through establishment of micro-credit funds and provision of required trainings	Number of MCFs	At least 1 MCF in each village by the end of the year 3	South Khorasan: 9 MCF (900 %) North Khorasan: 13 MCF (1300 %) Yazd: 8 MCF (800 %) Golestan: 22 MCF (2200 %)

Objective/Outcome/Output	Indicator	Targets (including annual milestones)	Results
Output 2.3 Local level social and economic platforms are legalized through establishment and registration of local cooperatives	Number of local cooperatives	At least 1 local cooperative per pilot by end-year3	South Khorasan: 1(100 %) North Khorasan:2 (200 %) Yazd:5 (500 %) Golestan:1 (100 %)
Output 2.4 Sustainable alternative livelihood initiatives adopted by local communities and required capacities and skills enhanced to reduce pressure on natural resources	Number of adopted sustainable alternative livelihoods (disaggregated by sex)	A minimum of 30 sustainable alternative livelihood initiatives per pilot by end-project	South Khorasan: 6 groups of sustainable alternative livelihood (20 %) North Khorasan:11 groups of sustainable alternative livelihood (36.66 %) Yazd:17 groups of sustainable alternative livelihood (56.66 %) Golestan: 17 groups of sustainable alternative livelihood (56.66 %)
	Number of people benefiting from project livelihood opportunities (disaggregated by sex and province)	At least 120 people benefited from project livelihood opportunities per pilot by end-project	South Khorasan: 217 people North Khorasan:51 people Yazd:233 people Golestan:1352 people
Output 2.5 Inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation mechanisms established and strengthened at the provincial and local levels to facilitate sustainable rural development	Number of LoAs signed and working between stakeholders	At least 5 LoAs signed and working by end-year4	South Khorasan: 5 (100%) North Khorasan:19 (380 %) Yazd:12 (240 %) Golestan:7 (140 %)
Outcome 3 An effective and efficient project management system is maintained and project implementation monitored and documented	Delivery rate of the project	Over 95% delivery rate	Commitment of UNDP has been 380,000 USD but while disbursed nearly 105,000 USD
	Project Board meetings	At least two Project Board meetings annually (mid-year and end-year)	Commitment of Iranian Government has been 282 billion IRR for which allocated 346 billion IRR
Output 3.1 Project effectively managed	Updates of project risk-logs/issue-logs	Risk-logs and issue-logs updated bi-annually	Risk-logs and issue-logs updated annually
	Project Review Committee	At least quarterly meetings of PRC	Totally 4 meeting of PRC were held

Objective/Outcome/Output	Indicator	Targets (including annual milestones)	Results
	meetings		
Output 3.2 Progress and impacts of project continually monitored and documented	Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package	PAPRP completed and submitted on-time	PAPRP prepared and submitted in due time in beginning of every year
	Annual Project Progress Report	Quality APPR prepared and submitted on time	Quality APPR prepared and submitted in due time at the end of every year