# Executive summary

**Evaluation purpose**

The objective of this document is to provide a sectoral evaluation of Czech Development Cooperation (CDC) intervention in agricultural sector in Ethiopia. The aim of this assignment is not only to analyse the evaluation criteria at the level of the implemented projects, but also to analyse activities carried out in the sector as whole, assess the potential and opportunities of integration of development activities into broader structures, evaluate the coordination and communication among CDC stakeholders as well as with other donors active in the country of interest in the same sector, etc. Sector evaluation should serve as groundwork for further decision-making concerning future support of CDC in the sector of agriculture and its aims, taking into account the strategic needs of Ethiopian farmers and scope of CDC (especially the amount of support) and activities of other donors.

Sector evaluation is based on assessment of four projects. Those can be approached rather as two couples of projects, each of them consisting of an initial project and its follow-up project. The first phase of the projects was implemented in 2011-2013, the second phase followed in 2014-2015.

**Brief description of evaluated interventions and their context**

The four evaluated projects are following:

1. „Support of farmers and agricultural education in Damboya and Alaba Woredas, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region, Ethiopia“ (2011 – 2013, implementer People in Need, hereinafter PIN I)
2. „Support of Small Farmers and Agricultural Education in the District Alaba, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region, Ethiopia“ (2014 – 2015, implementer People in Need, hereinafter PIN II)
3. „Enhancement of Quality and Extent of Extension Services of Angacha Woreda, Kembata Temboro Zone” (2011 – 2013, implementer Czech University of Agriculture, hereinafter CZU I)
4. “Enhancement of Quality and Extent of Extension Services of Angacha Woreda, Kembata Temboro Zone II ” (2011 – 2013, implementer Czech University of Agriculture, hereinafter CZU II)

All these projects have very similar objectives: they work towards food self-sufficiency of farmers and their families (decreasing their dependency on external supplies), commercialization of part of their production and decreasing negative impacts of agricultural production on the environment. Support provided to the farmers is carried out the through support of Farmer Training Centres (FTC) providing consultancy, education and innovation transfer.

Projects are aimed at strengthening of the already-existing and developing system of FTCs by supporting chosen FTCs and improving their physical background (facilities), material equipment, increasing qualification and capacities of development agents (DAs) and education of both model and “normal” farmers. In addition, activities aimed at capacity development and at diversification of income sources of final beneficiaries were implemented.

**Main findings and conclusions**

The **relevance** of CDC in the field of agriculture in Ethiopia is assessed as high. The intervention was based on capacities of training centres that have been built and supported by public authorities of Ethiopia with the aim to further strengthen these centres and increase their effectiveness and impact on local farmers. The objective of the support was in accordance both with strategic documents of Ethiopia and support orientation of CDC.

The projects partly aimed at the development of physical infrastructure and material equipment necessary for proper operation of FTCs and partly at rising capacities of development agents, who are key persons for agricultural education and innovation transfer to the final beneficiaries. Part of the support was also provided directly to the final beneficiaries, in one case the activities aimed at final beneficiearies specifically supported the most endangered group within final beneficiaries – the poorest women in rural areas.

The communication concerning the intervention and its necessity was, in some localities, inadequate and cooperation with local authorities problematic, which decreased the relevance of the project perceived in these communities.

The objectives of CDC in the sector and country were formulated differently by each of the implementer, however, they intersect at support to raising the food security and standard of life of rural population in supported localities through raising the efficiency of farming that is achieved by the means of raising the accessibility to as well as quality of agricultural extension services.

These project objectives were mostly achieved; however it was not possible to accurately quantify the **effectiveness** of the interventions at the level of results, due to the lack of baseline data by most of the initiatives as well as inability to differentiate between the project’s effects and other external effects. The decision to implement follow-up projects, thus prolonging the implementation period and developing activities in accordance with the experience from the original projects, significantly strengthened the effectiveness of the intervention.

The evaluator registered positive trends in farmers’ yield and diversification of their production. A negative factor, from the intervention effectiveness point of view, proved to be the climate conditions, which significantly decreased not only the effectiveness of the intervention (introduction of new plants, which could not resist long-term droughts) of one of the projects (PIN II), but also decreased the trust of locals with respect to the introduced innovations.

Activities aimed at introduction of new crops and diversification brought higher effectiveness than activities aimed at animal breeding. From the know-how transfer point of view, it proved to be more effective to support the farmers directly than to rely on model farmers to mediate the transfer.

The evaluation of **efficiency** of the projects is rather negative. Low efficiency of the support resulted particularly from low financial capacities of the FTCs and incorrect order of activities implementing investments in processing capacities. Support of tool rental service, investment into animal farming, community granaries and processing technologies proved inefficient. On the other side, activities aimed at supply of education materials and manuals used by FTCs and their clients proved high efficiency.

To increase the intervention efficiency in future, it is necessary to improve the focus and concentration of the support at equipment which is essential, moreover, clear ownership of such investments must be assured upfront.

**Impact** of the evaluated projects differ, however, in general the capacities of supported FTCs and their services provided to the farmers have improved. These services directly generate modernization and intensification of agricultural production, which lead to enhancing of farmers and their families life standard. In some of the supported areas, where good cooperation between the implementer and local WADO was established, these modernization efforts are being disseminated to nearby areas that were not directly supported by CDC.

The impacts of the projects were, due to their focus on modernisation and innovation in agriculture, strongly affected by climatic conditions. This conclusion was verified in Alaba woreda, where the droughts in 2015 had a devastating effect on the positive impacts of the project.

A significant negative impact was identified already in the first phase of the projects: namely their contribution to further widening of the gap between poorest and better-off farmers who, unlike the former, can afford to buy improved seeds and fertilizers. One of the follow-up project showed effort to mitigate this negative impact by the provision of direct support to ordinary farmers; and even more importantly, by implementing activities directly affecting poorest women in supported communities.

**Sustainability** of the project results was particularly affected by the short time frame of their implementation and in supported areas. Projects did not implement any explicit exit strategies, nor did they have sufficient time to focus on their exit in general. In result, issue of output ownership proved to be highly problematic and was further worsened by poor communication and cooperation of the implementers and WADOs in some areas. In effect, a substantial part of purchased equipment and investments is not used and deteriorates.

Another aspect contributing to lower sustainability of the projects is the economic weakness of the FTCs, which hinders the sustainability of introduced services both in their scope as well as quality. Sustainability is therefore highly dependent on personal qualities of the staff of FTCs and motivation and abilities of DAs.

From the sector point of view, the CDC aimed at enhancing of a system of extension services that is being implemented by the central administration, aiming at the weak points of this system. This focus is well directed and represents added-value of CDC as opposed to the governmental system.

A weakness of CDC intervention in the sector is that the implementation its initiatives is isolated and the potentials of cooperation among CDC projects as well as with other projects implemented by different donors is largely unused. Furthermore, for successful implementation of CDC project it was crucial to establish quality cooperation with partner institutions at woreda level. In those areas, where the cooperation was established and developed smoothly, some follow-up initiatives and multiplication/dissemination of project results were observed. On the other hand, projects whose cooperation with WADO was problematic are not followed by any further activities. Cooperation with public institutions at woreda and well as local levels was a key determinant of successful implementation of a project – if it was well-established, it contributed **to dissemination of good practice in public institutions**.

Regarding **environment and climate**, no significant impacts were registered. The projects had rather minor positive impact on **gender equality** due to their support of the poorest women and strengthening of the roles of women within their communities in general by the means of provision of education to both sexes.

The evaluation cycle and learning within the original project (in the first phase) implementation resulted in improved aiming of the follow-up projects and can be regarded as an example of good practice.

Table: conclusions summary

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| **Criteria** | **PIN I** | **PIN II** | **CZU I** | **CZU II** | **Sector evaluation** |
| Relevance | high | high | rather high | rather high | high |
| Effectiveness | rather high | rather high | rather low to rather high | rather low to rather high | rather high |
| Efficiency | rather low to rather high | rather high | rather low | rather low to rather high | rather low to rather high |
| Sustainability | rather low | rather low | low | rather low | rather low to low |
| Impacts | rather high | rather low to rather high | rather high | rather high | rather high |

**Important recommendations**

Based on these conclusions, a set of recommendations enlisted in tables below was formulated. These recommendations reflect key evaluation conclusions particularly on the criteria of effectiveness and sustainability. One of the key recommendations is to prolong the time frame of project implementation and to introduce a multi-annual financial framework. By doing that, future projects will be able to concentrate not only on the introduction of an innovation as such, but, even more importantly, on their incubation, verification and consequent dissemination within the supported community as well as outside. Moreover, more efficient investments into processing and other capacities will be enabled by implementation of these measures as these require due distribution in longer period of time (with the investment itself being introduced rather towards the end of the process, not on its start – as it was the case with some of the evaluated projects).

Further recommendations are also focused on the issue of added value of CDC in the context of strengthening the capacities of structures that are set up by the Ethiopian government (namely FTCs). The added value should be found in testing of particular innovations relevant to local contexts, that are, however, replicable in broader region – provided they prove to be effective.

Crucial recommendations aim at raising the concentration of support to a rather narrowly delimited thematic field (also when it comes to the modes of implementation) as well as project areas and at combining of initiatives from related sectors into more complex projects. Following the Government Resolution No. 631/2016, project in the sectors of water and sanitation, forestry and agriculture (along with education and healthcare) will be supported in 2017. Combining these interlinked sectors into joint projects implemented in the same area and time will raise the efficiency of CDC – as significant synergies are observed between these sectors.

**Recommendation of process and system character:**

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| Recommendation | Level of importance | PCM phase | Recipient |
| Extend the project implementation period and introduce multi-annual financial frame. | 1 | Programming | CzDA |
| In case of implementation of more grant projects which are similar (time, topic, geographic location), create a formalized coordination platform for the implementers. | 2 | Implementation | ČRA |
| Strengthen project monitoring using high quality indicators and obligatory data collection. | 2 | Monitoring and evaluation | CzDA |
| Promote the self-evaluation process and monitoring of the implementation of accepted recommendations. | 3 | Monitoring and evaluation | ČRA |
| Set up a system for reporting of critical problems/issues concerning interaction with public authorities. | 1 | Implementation | MFA - embassy, (additionally CzDA) |

**Project recommendations**

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| Recommendation | Level of importance | PCM phase | Recipient |
| Pay special attention to the impacts of the project on the target group of poor farmers within the project frame design; ensure balanced impacts/contribution throughout the community | 1 | Identification, formulation | Implementers, additionally CzDA |
| Stress the education of target groups, especially of ordinary farmers; support not only agricultural education, but also education in other activities ensuring sustainability of the projects. On the top of education activities also provide support to supervision, facilitation and couching in target locality, particularly at DAs | 1 | Formulation | implementers |
| Request the exit strategy and promote its implementation frame. | 1 | Formulation | CzDA |
| Stress gender-specific education and further strengthen participation of women. | 3 | Identification, formulation | CzDA and implementers |
| Eliminate or weaken activities and investments with low-efficiency, rationalize investment into material equipment. | 2 | Implementation | implementers |
| Stress the economy analysis of supported investment activities. | 1 | Implementation | CzDA |
| Develop activities aimed at communication, PR, advocacy, etc., strengthen strategic approach to communication and dissemination. | 2 | Formulation | implementers |
| Implement activities directed towards the woreda bodies within the project frames; include woreda bodies’ staff in the intervention target groups. | 2 | Identification, formulation | CzDA |

**Recommendation for further CDC in Ethiopia in agriculture sector:**

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| Recommendation | Level of importance | PCM phase | Recipient |
| Increase the concentration of the CDC support in given sector and country and formulate strategic approach to agriculture support. | 1 | Programming | MFA |
| Continue with the „extension services“ support by stressing the replicability of the support and its dissemination. | 1 | Identification | CzDA |
| Support more complex, cross-sector projects. | 1 | Identification, programming | CzDA |
| Stress proper setting of chronology (order) of planned activities within the logic models / Theories of Change | 2 | Formulation | CzDA |
| Put more emphasis on the experience of an applicant and/or his local partner in the target region and its institutions in the selection process concerning project implementers. | 2 | Identification | CzDA |