

# Plantwise Pakistan Evaluability Assessment 2016

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. During June – October 2016 an evaluability assessment (EA) was carried out concerning the Plantwise programme in Pakistan (PW-P, 2012–2016). The purpose of an evaluability assessment is to investigate the extent to which a programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. It took place on request of CABI which wanted to see if an impact evaluation (IE) for the PW-P would be feasible and if the questions it wanted to ask would be answerable and the context issues feasible.

The EA team's work was divided in a preparatory phase, which focused on document review, interviewing and logistical arrangements, and a field phase in which data collection and analysis in Pakistan took place. Interviews were held with 22 (male) government officials and field staff involved in the PW-P, 3 (male) staff of PW-P, 7 CABI/ Plantwise staff (6M, 1F), and, in addition, conversations took place with 9 male farmers visiting two plant clinics in Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan.

2. Data collection and analysis were guided by a framework that the EA team had developed using existing approaches for evaluability assessments. It included three inter-related focus areas of an EA, namely:

- *Programme design*: Is the intervention logic adequate for what it is trying to achieve and what can be said about its clarity, relevance, coherence, and feasibility?
- *Information availability and quality*: Is it feasible to measure impact?
- *Stakeholder demand*: Would an impact evaluation be useful and used?

and a fourth focus area concerning the *Practicality of the evaluation*: Would implementation be feasible? which is highly context related.

3. Concerning each of EA's key questions the EA team found the following:

- EA's key question 'Is the intervention logic adequate for what it is trying to achieve and what can be said about its clarity, relevance, coherence, and feasibility?' (*programme design*): insufficient evidence-based arguments exist to positively answer this question because PW-P lacks a well-developed Theory of Change and a well-elaborated country specific logframe, and a situational analysis/baseline has not been conducted. As for the relevance of the intervention logic, interviews and the evaluation carried out in 2015 point to the importance of the programme for decision making on policies and strategies. The national and provincial level stakeholders find the programme in line with the agricultural policy ecosystem in Pakistan.
- EA's key question 'Is it feasible to measure impact considering *information availability and quality*?': measuring impact and establishing causal attribution will be a challenge to an impact evaluation team because neither the PW staff nor its partners collect data about PW-P interventions beyond the output level. They also do not gather qualitative information on performance, processes, and the like, at both the farmers and the organisational level. Moreover, CABI/Plantwise started to roll out a formal M&E system only in 2015.

- EA's key question 'Would an impact evaluation be useful and used?' (*stakeholder demand*): it is likely that the results of an impact evaluation will be used because government officers at higher level show high ownership of PW-P and want to learn more about the impact of the plant clinics, since plant health is felt of critical importance to the agriculture sector. However, interviewees did not bring forward clear ideas about the use of an IE. That may not be surprising since the higher-level officers did not have full understanding about the Plantwise programme and its potential impact. Also, their knowledge about the programme is limited to the output level.
- EA's last question: Would implementation be feasible? (*Practicality of the evaluation*): not much insight could be gained on these issues, mainly because of limited experience with impact evaluations both at CABI/Plantwise and government, more especially concerning plant health/clinics. However, given CABI/Plantwise close coordination with the government counterparts at all levels, practicality of IE seems positive.

4. It is concluded that the impact of the Plantwise programme in Pakistan could be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion (overall question of the EA), provided that the impact evaluation of PW-P is designed based on ground realities articulated in term of the building blocks for Terms of Reference. CABI's planned revision of the Plantwise ToC and the results expected of the M&E system that is rolled out since 2015 will facilitate impact assessment. It is further recommended that PW-P contextualises the overall Plantwise logframe/ToC.

5. The EA team drafted a tentative ToR for an impact evaluation (annexed) based on building blocks for a ToR described in section 4.2 of the main report and guidelines/ suggestions for CABI/Plantwise on issues that go beyond the knowledge and mandate of consultants, such as scope of the evaluation, budget, timeline, and the like. The suggested building blocks for the TOR of IE include:

- *IE objective*: refining the objective to better reflect the implementation realities in terms of geographical and capacity differentials, and the interests of CABI/Plantwise and government actors in Pakistan, thus enhancing a utilisation orientation;
- *Evaluation questions*: realigning the questions in terms of context specific parameters of sustainability, impact and process and bringing in the beneficiaries' – both farmers and the system itself – perspective to explore new dimensions of usefulness of the Programme;
- *Approach and methodology*: using a mixed method approach, focusing on quantitative and qualitative information gathering and applying a quasi-experimental design at farmers' level along with participatory methods and tools to involve different stakeholders, paying attention to age and gender;
- *Organisational set-up and timing*: pitching a combination of national and international experience in impact evaluation of agricultural/rural programmes with country level facilitation and support/ facilitation of the Global CABI/Plantwise M&E unit. To ensure quality an external reference group with evaluation experts is recommended. The IE is suggested to take place in the second half of 2017 the earliest because by then more data will be available through the M&E system and two requirements, CABI's planned revision of the Plantwise ToC and the contextualisation of the overall Plantwise logframe/ToC towards the programme in Pakistan are likely to be fulfilled