

Summary of Evaluation

I. Outline of the Project		
Country: Republic of Zimbabwe		Project Title: The Project for Zimbabwe Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (ZIM-SHEP)
Issue/Sector: Rural and Agricultural Development		Cooperation Scheme: Technical Cooperation Project
Division in Charge: Agricultural and Rural Development Group 2, Economic Development Department		
Period of Cooperation	(R/D): October 19, 2018 March 2019 - March 2025, including one-year extension period from April 2024 to March 2025	Partner Country’s Implementing Organization: Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (MoLAFWRD)
		Supporting Organization in Japan: None
Related Cooperation Project: None		
1. Background of the Project <p>In Zimbabwe, about 65% of the employment (as of 2017) is engaged in agriculture, with agricultural production accounting for 8.3% of GDP (as of 2017) and tobacco exports accounting for about 23% of total exports (2016), positioning the agricultural sector as an important industry in the Zimbabwean economy¹. Horticulture is also a key export earner and one of the subsectors with great potential to position agriculture as a robust sector to reduce hunger, poverty, and improve livelihoods. Although economic growth has been strong since the country’s independence in 1980, the land reform in 2000, economic crisis and hyperinflation, led to the loss of commercial agricultural production techniques, and a decline in agricultural production. The land reform in 2000 saw the evolution of different classes of farmers, some large farms previously owned by individual large-scale farmers were sub-divided to accommodate many new farmers. The knowledge base among new farmers has been difficult to ascertain since they have come from different backgrounds and there has been disintegration of agricultural knowledge and production systems that used to run profitably. The political and economic situation stabilized in 2009. In recent years, the Zimbabwean Government has focused on improving the productive capacity of small-scale farmers, who have become major players in the agricultural sector since the land reforms of 2000, and has provided support to increase production of cereals and horticultural crops, particularly for smallholder farmers with land with access to irrigation. However, they face various challenges, such as limited farmers’ access to markets and inability to secure appropriate sales outlets, inadequate cultivation techniques and concentrated harvesting periods that lead to price crashes.</p> <p>In order to promote the wide-area implementation of the Market Oriented Agricultural Promotion (SHEP² Approach) as expressed at the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) held in 2013, JICA has been conducting the Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) “Market-oriented Agriculture Promotion” (Administrative Officer Course and Extension Officer Course) since 2014, and the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) and the Crop Production Division dispatched their officers to the training program. Subsequently, pilot projects based on action plans developed by the training participants were implemented in five irrigation sites in Mashonaland Central Province and Mashonaland East Province selected by AGRITEX. Having evaluated the effectiveness of these activities and the SHEP approach, the Government of Zimbabwe requested Japan’s assistance to further disseminate the SHEP approach in the country and to strengthen the productivity and marketing of smallholder horticultural farmers to improve their livelihoods.</p>		

¹ World Bank. (2023). Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP) - Zimbabwe. Retrieved May 16, 2024, from World Bank Data: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZW>

World Bank. (2024). Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate) - Zimbabwe. Retrieved May 16, 2024, from World Bank Data:

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=ZW>

² Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion.

In response to this request, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) decided to implement the Project for Market-oriented Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (ZIM-SHEP) based on the SHEP Approach, which aims to strengthen the productivity and marketing capacity of smallholder horticultural farmers through the establishment and implementation of a market-oriented agricultural approach suited to Zimbabwe's current situation. The project started in March 2019 with a five-year project period, and due to the interruption of project activities by the COVID-19³ pandemic that occurred especially between 2020 and 2021, the project period was extended for one year up to March 2025.

2. Project Overview

(1) Overall Goal

Agricultural extension services using the SHEP approach will be scaled up in Zimbabwe.

(2) Project Purpose

Smallholder horticulture farmers in the target irrigation schemes practice farming as business through agricultural extension services using the SHEP approach contributing to increased horticultural income.

(3) Output

Output 1: A basis for implementing and disseminating farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach is established.

Output 2: The materials to implement farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach are developed.

Output 3: The resource persons to implement farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach are trained.

(4) Input

Japanese side:

[Dispatch of experts]

186.5 person-months of long-term experts (Chef Advisor, SHEP approach, Horticulture, Training, etc.), 1 person-month of short-term expert (cultivation technique and extension), a total of 187.5 person-months (as of July 2024)

[Procurement of machinery and equipment]

Four vehicles, a laptop computer and printer (140,717 USD, equivalent of 15,758,718 JPY) (as of July 2024)

[Training in Japan and a third country]

30 trainees

[Operational costs]

714,549 USD (as of March 2024), including cost for purchasing 103 tablets

Zimbabwean side:

[Counterpart (C/P) assignment]

A total of 7 C/P staff at the national level. 15 cumulative C/P staff as of July 2024

[Facilities and equipment provided]

One project office and electric/water, parking and water at car wash (as of July 2024)

[Operational Cost]

119 UDS contributed by the national government (Fuel costs for provincial staff traveling to and from Harare) (until 2023)

In implementing the 2nd cycle, the target provinces and districts made budgetary contributions either through AGRITEX's regular extension budget or by incorporating SHEP into the activities of other donor-supported projects.

II. Evaluation Team

Members of
Evaluation
Team

[Zimbabwean side]

• Mr. Tendai CHIDZIVA, M&E officer, Department of Strategic Planning,
Monitoring and Evaluation (SPME), MoLAFWRD (Leader of Zimbabwean side)

³ Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Rutendo R. CHIKOSHANA, Engineer, Department of Irrigation Development (DOI), Water Resources, Irrigation Development and National WASHP Coordination Directorate, MoLAFWRD Ms. Sibongile MANGENA, Chief Agronomist, Agricultural & Rural Development Advisory Services Directorate (ARDAS), MoLAFWRD <p>[Japanese side]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Harue KITAJIMA, Senior Advisor, JICA (Leader of Japanese side) Mr. Saitaroh MIURA, Economic Development Department, JICA (Cooperation Planning) Dr. Kumiko SHUTO, Senior Consultant, IMG Inc. (Evaluation and Analysis/ SHEP Approach) 		
Period of Evaluation	August 19 – September 4, 2024	Type of Evaluation	Terminal Evaluation
III. Results of Evaluation			
1. Project Performance (1) Inputs <p>Although the JICA Experts had to work remotely in Japan for about 10 months due to the global outbreak of COVID-19, Japanese inputs were generally provided as planned. Regarding the provision of equipment and local operation costs, the necessary equipment and funds for ToT and farmer training were provided as planned. In particular, 103 tablets were procured, enabling extension staff to collect information from farmers efficiently. Trainees had been accepted into the SHEP KCCP since 2014, before the project started, and 24 government staff participated in the training during the project period. Seven national government staff with high competencies and skills are assigned as C/Ps. An office is also provided for the use of the JICA Experts. However, the local cost payments are negligible at the national level, with only the cost of fuel for provincial staff traveling to and from Harare being paid. At the provincial and district levels, the 2nd cycle of activities are carried out with their own funds.</p>			
(2) Outputs [Output 1: A basis for implementing and disseminating farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach is established.] <p>Output 1 is expected to be achieved by the end of the project through further efforts. Regarding the national government's SHEP promotion activities, it is necessary to formulate a human resource development plan in the future.</p>			
	Indicator	Level of achievement	
1-1.	Lessons and knowhow on providing agricultural extension services using the SHEP approach are shared with all districts in 8 Provinces.	<Expected to be achieved> <p>Lessons and knowhow have not been formally shared yet. Informal information sharing is being conducted on a day-to-day basis using the social media such as WhatsApp within the target provinces and also across provinces. The guidelines for implementing the ZIM-SHEP package are currently being prepared. It is expected to be completed by the end of the project. Lessons learned and know-how will be shared using the completed guidelines with the eight provinces at the final workshop. Each province will be asked to share the knowledge with its districts after the workshop.</p>	
1-2.	ARDAS develops a specific implementation plan for future farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach.	< Expected to be achieved> <p>All the target provinces and districts of the 3rd batch made an implementation plan for the 2nd cycle during the In-field Training ToT. For the 1st, 2nd, and 4th batches, the plan has not been made. In the final workshop, all the provinces and districts will be asked to make and/or review the implementation plan. At the national level, a human resource development plan for</p>	

		<p>implementing the SHEP approach needs to be specified in the future.</p> <p>Apart from that, the Department of Training and Information and Department of Irrigation Development have incorporated, or are in the process of incorporating key activities of the SHEP approach, such as market survey, crop selection, and crop calendar, into existing ToT or farmer training curriculums.</p>
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[Output 2: The materials to implement farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach are developed.]

The indicator in Outcome 2 has been achieved. Further improvements, such as the addition of specific examples and good practices, preparation of summary papers outlining key points that will be useful for implementing the 2nd cycle activities, will further enhance the quality of the teaching materials.

	Indicator	Level of achievement
2-1.	Training materials and tools to implement farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach are developed.	<p><Achieved. Further improvements can be expected in the future.></p> <p>All materials and tools for farmer training have been developed. These materials and tools have been reviewed and continuously improved with each activity. By the end of the project, it will be possible to make further improvements by adding specific examples and good practices of ZIM-SHEP experiences in the field to the teaching materials, and preparing summary papers outlining key points that will be useful for implementing the 2nd cycle activities. This will enable the Project to aim for even higher quality teaching materials.</p>

[Output 3: The resource persons to implement farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach are trained.]

Output 3 is expected to be largely achieved. However, for the two provinces in the 4th batch, the project period will end without sufficient promotion activities to implement the 2nd cycle. In addition, some cases were observed where the 2nd cycle farmer training was not practical, especially in terms of how market surveys were conducted. Despite the constraints in training budgets, the core activities of the SHEP approach, especially market surveys, need to be conducted in a practical manner.

	Indicator	Level of achievement
3-1.	24 AGRITEX and DOI staff of 8 Provinces and 48 AGRITEX staff of 24 Districts learn how to implement farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach.	<p><Expected to be achieved></p> <p>In the 1st to 3rd batches of six provinces, 18 provincial AGRITEX and DOI staff and 36 district AGRITEX staff in 18 target districts have learned the SHEP approach through ToT.</p> <p>In the 4th batch of two provinces, six provincial AGRITEX and DOI staff and 12 district AGRITEX staff in six target districts are now learning the SHEP approach through ToT.</p> <p>If the 4th batch of ToTs are implemented as scheduled, the target is expected to be achieved by the end of the project.</p>
3-2.	50 AESs and AEOs are trained.	<p><Expected to be achieved></p> <p>In 18 districts in the six provinces of the 1st to 3rd batches, 38 AES and AEOs were trained.</p> <p>In six districts in the two provinces of the 4th batch, 12 AES and AEOs are currently undergoing training.</p> <p>If the 4th batch of ToTs are implemented as scheduled, the target is expected to be achieved by the end of the project.</p>
3-3.	8 Provinces implement	< Largely achieved in six provinces of the 1st to 3rd batches.

	<p>staff and farmer training incorporating the SHEP approach on their own for non-target horticultural farmers.</p>	<p>The two provinces in the 4th batch will have difficulty in achieving the indicator></p> <p>For the six provinces in the 1st to 3rd batches, the 2nd cycle ToT or farmer training has been conducted in all provinces. 238 staff (92 male and 123 female staff) in 10 districts (including 3 new districts not included in the 1st cycle) attended ToTs focusing on market survey, target crop selection, and crop calendars.</p> <p>Regarding farmer training, the 2nd cycle farmer training was conducted in 23 of the 24 target districts, excluding Gweru District in Midlands Province, with a total of 4,789 farmers (1,659 males (35%) and 3,130 females (65%)) in 82 farmer groups benefiting from the training. These figures also include the 2nd cycle farmer training in four new districts in the 3rd batch, Mashonaland West and Masvingo Provinces. However, some cases were observed in which farmer training in the 2nd cycle, particularly the market survey training, was not practical, and improvements are needed in the future.</p> <p>For the two provinces in the 4th batch the current schedule makes it difficult to conduct outreach for the implementation of the 2nd cycle during the project period, as the project is planned to end immediately after the completion of the 1st cycle.</p>
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(3) Project Purpose

[Project Purpose: Smallholder horticulture farmers in the target irrigation schemes practice farming as business through agricultural extension services using the SHEP approach contributing to increased horticultural income.]

The data from the 1st and 2nd batches confirmed that the target farmers improved their cultivation techniques, improved their ability to practice agriculture as business, and increased their income. The results of the endline survey for the 3rd batch will be compiled in the near future, and if the similar data as in the 1st and 2nd batches are obtained, the Project Purpose is expected to be achieved.

	Indicator	Level of achievement
1	Average adoption rate of “General Horticultural Crop Production and Postharvest Handling Techniques” increases in all target irrigation schemes of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd batches.	<p><Expected to be achieved></p> <p>Endline surveys for the 3rd batch will be conducted in the near future.</p> <p>For the target irrigation schemes in the 1st and 2nd batches, the average adoption rate of the recommended technology increased in all of them. For the 1st and 2nd batches as a whole, the rate increased by 28 percentage points from 61% at the time of the baseline survey to 89% at the time of the endline survey (N=2,031 farmers⁴).</p>
2	Average practice rate of “Farming as Business” increases in all target irrigation schemes of the 2nd, 3rd batches.	<p><Expected to be achieved></p> <p>Endline surveys for the 3rd batch will be conducted in the near future.</p> <p>The practice rate for the 2nd batch increased in all irrigation schemes. Overall, the 2nd batch increased from 40% at the time of the baseline survey to 77% at the time of the endline survey, an increase of 37 percentage points (N=1,402 farmers, 1,401 farmers⁵).</p>

⁴ The number of sampled farmers in the baseline and endline surveys.

⁵ The former is the number of sampled farmers in the baseline survey and the latter is the number of sampled farmers in the endline survey.

3	Over 50% of farmers who adopted the SHEP approach of each target irrigation scheme of the 2nd, 3rd batches recognize increased horticultural income.	<Expected to be achieved> Endline surveys for the 3 rd batch will be conducted in the near future. In the target irrigation schemes of the 2 nd batch, 92% of farmers felt that their horticultural income had increased (N=424 farmers).
4	Over 50% of farmers of each target irrigation scheme of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd batches increase horticultural income.	<Expected to be achieved> Endline surveys for the 3 rd batch will be conducted in the near future. 68% of farmers in the target irrigation schemes in the 1 st and 2 nd batches increased their horticultural income (N=1,947 farmers).

(4) Implementation Process

<Positively influenced factors>

a. Effectiveness of SHEP Knowledge Co-Creation Program

Since 2014, the Government of Zimbabwe has been sending government officials involved in extension and irrigation to SHEP KCCP. As pilot activities were being conducted by ex-trainees as of 2019, when the project started, there was already a strong sense of ownership of SHEP at the start of the project. The know-how needed to implement field activities had also been accumulated, and personnel capable of implementing SHEP had been trained. These ex-trainees took the lead in mainstreaming SHEP.

b. Efficient Baseline and Endline Survey data collection using ICT

When conducting the participatory baseline and endline surveys, data was not calculated on a paper basis, but rather using tablets provided by the Project and an application called ODK. This facilitated the data tabulation and analysis process and improved project efficiency.

<Negatively influenced factors>

a. External factors such as COVID-19 and various national events

The spread of COVID-19 made it difficult to carry out planned activities and hampered the efficiency of the project. In addition, farmer training was sometimes delayed when various national events took place.

b. Unstable economic conditions

Significant inflation, exchange rate fluctuations, and switching of official currency occurred during the project period, making it difficult to accurately capture changes in farmers' incomes, an important factor in measuring the effectiveness of the SHEP approach.

c. Historic droughts and frequent power outages

Historic droughts occurred in 2018-2019 and 2023-2024. Despite efforts by target farmers to improve their farming business, some irrigation schemes experienced poor production and sales due to extreme weather conditions. In some irrigation schemes which rely on electric irrigation pumps, frequent power outages made it impossible to irrigate the fields sufficiently, resulting in crop failure. In these areas, it was difficult to obtain data showing income gains during the endline survey. However, it was confirmed that even in such cases farmers' behavioral changes for practicing agriculture as business were evident as in other irrigation schemes.

2. Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

Relevance is high.

Zimbabwe's development policies and plans are consistent with the Project's focus on promoting market-oriented agriculture and strengthening the marketing and business skills of smallholder farmers. Small-scale farmers in Zimbabwe face many challenges in market access, production technology, and maintenance of irrigation facilities, etc. The Project uses the SHEP approach to teach farmers how to conduct market surveys and strengthen farmers' capacity to conduct market-oriented horticultural businesses, which is consistent with the needs of the beneficiaries.

The project uses the SHEP approach, promoted by JICA since 2014 and implemented globally. Combining human resource development and practical application, it leverages Japan's expertise in market-oriented agricultural extension. Collaboration with JICA HQs' SHEP promotion activities enhances the project's effectiveness, demonstrating Japan's comparative advantage.

(2) Coherence

Coherence is high.

The Project is in line with Japan's Country Development Cooperation Policy for the Republic of Zimbabwe, which aims to support agricultural and rural development through the promotion of market-oriented agriculture. The project's area of activities of improving the livelihoods of farm households using the SHEP approach is to achieve effective use of agricultural resources as described in the policy. JICA's SHEP initiative aims to enhance the livelihoods of one million small-scale farmers by 2030. It contributes to SDGs Goal 1 "No Poverty", Goal 2 "Zero Hunger", and Goal 5 "Gender Equality", utilizing Japan's expertise and technology.

(3) Effectiveness

Effectiveness is high.

Regarding the Project Purpose of farmers practicing "farming as business" and income improvement, for the target farmers in the 1st and 2nd batches, the degree of improvement in cultivation techniques, the degree of practicing farming as business, and the degree of income improvement have all exceeded the target values. Farmers in the irrigation schemes are now able to pay contributions required to run the irrigation schemes more easily, and the operation and maintenance of the irrigation facilities have become smoother due to improved horticultural incomes. In addition, the gender awareness training conducted by the Project has been effective as household members are now able to discuss and make informed decisions regarding resources and labor in the household. The 3rd batch of data is planned to be collected in the near future, and if the results are the same as so far, it can be concluded that all four indicators of the Project Purpose will have been achieved, and that the target farmers are practicing farming as business and increasing their incomes. The main reasons for the effectiveness of the SHEP approach include the development of effective training materials that incorporate both theory and practice, the implementation of ToT and the training of 92 provincial, district staff and extension staff through field activities, and the implementation of demand-driven farmer training.

(4) Efficiency

Efficiency is relatively high.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic forced the JICA Experts to carry out their work remotely from Japan for about 10 months, the Japanese inputs were basically carried out as planned. Of particular note is the acceptance of Zimbabwean government staff in SHEP KCCP and SHEP international workshops, which have been ongoing since 2014. This has enabled effective human resource development for C/P staff.

As for the inputs from the Zimbabwean side, highly capable and skilled C/Ps were deployed and played a major role in driving the project. An office for the JICA Experts was also provided, but the national government was unable to secure sufficient C/P funds, and activity costs to date have been very small, which is an impediment to efficiency.

(5) Impact

Impact is relatively high.

The Overall Goal of upscaling agricultural extension services using the SHEP approach is likely to be achieved, as SHEP-based extension activities have already been implemented in four districts other than the target districts. Scale-up of the SHEP approach to date includes farmer training for 82 farmer groups and training for 238 non-target government staff, mainly on SHEP market surveys. However, the need for improvement in the 2nd cycle activities and the lack of a budget for SHEP promotion in the national government are concerns for achieving the Overall Goal. How to materialize the promotion measures and obtain funding for them in the future, or how to incorporate the SHEP approach into the projects of other development partners, are the factors that will determine the achievement of the Overall Goal.

The positive impact of the project on issues such as gender, poverty and the environment has been

confirmed, as the gender awareness training undertaken by the project has promoted joint decision-making between couples, and the increased income has led to improvements in education, health care and nutrition. In addition, post-harvest losses have been reduced and irrigation water has been used more efficiently. Furthermore, there has been a spillover effect from the project, as SHEP is being mainstreamed within the government and to other agencies. SHEP is also being used in livestock and other enterprises and SHEP methods are being disseminated to neighboring farmers.

(6) Sustainability

Sustainability is relatively high.

[Policy sustainability: High]

Various national policies on agriculture clearly state that farming as business will continue to be promoted in the future, and this policy trend is expected to be maintained even after the project is completed. In addition, the government intends to prepare national policies on extension and training, which will include the promotion of market-oriented extension activities advocated by the SHEP approach. Thus, the policy direction promoting the SHEP approach is expected to be maintained in the future and thus has high policy sustainability.

[Institutional sustainability: High]

The Project has been promoting the SHEP approach in a manner that is consistent with the normal extension implementation structure in Zimbabwe. After the completion of the project, the departments in charge of extension at each level, i.e. national, provincial and district, will implement extension activities based on the SHEP approach in their regular work as a means of realizing “farming as business”. Since the current organizational structure for SHEP implementation will be maintained after the project, it can be judged that institutional sustainability is high for the areas covered by the project.

[Technical sustainability: Relatively high]

As for the staff targeted for human resource development in the Project, their understanding of market-oriented agriculture has deepened and their practical skills have improved. Thus, their technical sustainability is judged to be high. However, for the two provinces in the 4th batch, the Project will end without having fully developed the staff's field leadership skills because the period of activity implementation is shorter than in the other batches. Therefore, technical sustainability is expected to be somewhat lower.

In some cases during the 2nd cycle of activities, market survey training for farmers ended with lectures only, and training was not accompanied by practice. This needs to be improved to increase technical sustainability, as it is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the intervention.

For the districts not covered by the Project, the technical sustainability will depend on the willingness and resources of the provincial government to roll out SHEP to as many districts as possible, since the provincial government will have to improve the technical skills of its staff mainly through their self-help efforts. At the national level, it is also necessary to improve technical sustainability by planning specific human resource development in preparation for personnel changes that may occur in the future, such as personnel transfers and new hires of provincial and district officials.

[Financial sustainability: Fair]

The national government secured only a small amount of C/P funds, and it is unlikely that it will be able to secure sufficient financial resources for promotion activities of SHEP after the project is completed. Financial sustainability will need to be enhanced by utilizing the budgets of existing government programs and donor-supported projects and incorporating the SHEP approach into the extension component of those projects. This is highly feasible since such an arrangement is already being adopted now. In the future, the national government will need to more systematically and deliberately promote the mainstreaming of SHEP in other projects and ensure that budgets for its implementation are secured.

3. Factors promoting better sustainability and impact

(1) Factors concerning planning

The Project was launched smoothly, as government officials started to attend the SHEP KCCP in 2014

and had taken strong ownership of SHEP activities even before the Project started. Furthermore, mainstreaming of SHEP was also facilitated by the ex-trainees of SHEP KCCP.

(2) Factors concerning implementation process

As explained in “1 (4) Implementation Process”.

4. Factors inhibiting better sustainability and impact

(1) Factors concerning planning

None.

(2) Factors concerning implementation process

None.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of SHEP increased the horticultural income of most of the target farmers, which in turn improved their livelihoods. In addition, a virtuous cycle was observed that contributed to continuous improvement of farming practices, as it became easier to cover the costs of use, operation and maintenance of irrigation facilities. In particular, the Project's strengths include the fact that the C/Ps, mainly ex-trainees of SHEP KCCP, took strong ownership of SHEP implementation and called for mainstreaming of SHEP from the early stage. However, the project activities in the two target provinces of the 4th batch are on a tight schedule and there is insufficient time to compile good practices that are useful for the future 2nd cycle implementation. Therefore, it is deemed appropriate to extend the project period by three months to better ensure the project's outputs and sustainability improvement.

6. Recommendations

[Recommendations to the Project (To be addressed mainly in the remaining project period)]

(1) Revision of PDM

The current PDM defines three indicators for Overall Goal, but does not set numerical targets. There are other aspects of the PDM where terminology should be changed. Therefore, it is recommended that the PDM be revised. The details of the proposed revision items are described in the Joint Terminal Evaluation Report.

(2) Formulating the SHEP Promotion Plan

It is recommended that the Project, together with ARDAS and the DOI, formulate a concrete activity plan on how to promote SHEP. Promotion of SHEP includes implementation of SHEP for enterprises other than irrigated horticultural agriculture, i.e., rainfed crop production, livestock production, etc., which were not the main activities of the project. Furthermore, it is important to develop a training plan for the staff members who were not the target of the project's ToT, because how to provide continuous human resource development, at national, provincial and district levels, and technical assistance to them will be the key to ensure sustainability. In addition, given the tight government budget, incorporating SHEP activities into other donor-supported projects is a realistic approach to mainstreaming SHEP. Thus, it is recommended that specific information on which projects could make use of SHEP be carefully examined and included in the plan.

These efforts should not be limited to the project period. They should continue to be implemented by the C/P after the project is completed.

(3) Clarifying “core activities” in SHEP guidelines

It is likely that future SHEP activities conducted as part of government budgets or other donor-supported projects will focus on a few highly effective activities rather than all of them. Therefore, it is recommended that the guidelines clearly indicate which are the “core activities” centered on market surveys so that they are user-friendly and can be used to ensure that farmers can be instructed in the “farming as a business” recommended by SHEP even under budget and time constraints. Regarding market survey, which is one of the most important core activities, it is strongly recommended that farmers not only be verbally informed about the importance of market survey and its methods, but also be given

guidance to improve their practical skills by distributing hard copies of the questionnaire, and conducting role plays, and taking farmers to the market for hands-on training.

(4) Collecting and documenting good practices

External factors such as COVID-19 have caused the activities to proceed without time to spare, and it has been difficult to obtain opportunities to carefully collect field case studies. It is encouraged to collect and document qualitative information, such as good practices and/or difficult cases, and reflect them in ToT materials, etc., and to use the knowledge gained during the project period as organizational knowledge. It is also advisable to include the collected qualitative information in a leaflet particularly for development partners, so that it can be utilized even after the project has concluded. In addition to qualitative information, quantified qualitative data from the endline surveys regarding improvements in farmers' livelihoods should also be included, with the aim of creating a compelling publication that objectively demonstrates the effectiveness of SHEP to development partners.

(5) Improving the reporting system for the implementation of the 2nd cycle

In the 2nd cycle, farmer training is flexibly implemented in a way that focuses on SHEP core activities according to the resources of each province and district. However, with regard to teaching market survey methods to farmers, a particularly important activity, as in the 1st cycle, in some cases farmers were actually taken to the market for the exercise, while in other cases the importance of market survey was explained only verbally. Both cases were reported as SHEP being implemented. However, since the impact on farmers varies greatly depending on the strength of the intervention, it is recommended that a reporting system be introduced to objectively determine the level of the intervention, even if the same market survey training was conducted.

[Recommendations to C/P]

(1) Articulating the SHEP approach in national policies

The Government of Zimbabwe intends to develop national policies on extension and training and it is recommended that the policies clearly articulate the Government's intention to provide market-oriented extension services based on the SHEP approach.

(2) Introducing SHEP into mandatory online staff training curriculum

The Department of Training and Information is formulating a training strategy and planning to incorporate a curriculum that teaches the SHEP approach into its online training for government staff. In doing so, it would be desirable to have SHEP adopted as a mandatory module, rather than as an elective, and to arrange for all staff involved in extension to learn about the SHEP approach. In addition, it is recommended to encourage the government budget to be secured in the future to provide face-to-face ToT training, which is currently rarely secured.

(3) Conducting follow-up activities and endline surveys in the two provinces of the 4th batch

Follow-up activities and endline surveys for the 1st cycle farmers in the 4th batch provinces should be conducted around June 2025 and March 2026, respectively. Since the Project will have been completed by then, it is recommended that the provincial and district budgets be secured to conduct these activities. During the endline surveys, it is advisable to collect and analyze the data efficiently using the ODK application, as was done during the project period.

(4) Incorporating SHEP into existing and new other donor-supported projects, government programs, etc.

It is proposed to incorporate SHEP into various existing and new donor-supported projects (WFP Integrated Rural Resilience Building Program, IFAD SACP⁶, HEEP⁷, Green Climate Fund, etc.) and government programs (Village Business Unit, Master Farmer Training, National Irrigation Competition, etc.), which include market-oriented extension components and farmer capacity building training. In

⁶ Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project

⁷ Horticulture Enterprise Enhancement Project

doing so, it would be desirable that SHEP is not only implemented at the discretion of local implementers, but that the implementation procedures of each project clearly states in the official project document that SHEP's market survey, or "market survey by farmers themselves," will be conducted, and that staff training and farmer training will be provided for this purpose. To achieve this, it is recommended that the national government continue to pitch SHEP to other projects, with technical assistance from JICA as needed.

(5) Examining a strategy for expanding the coverage of SHEP

The Overall Goal is to extend SHEP to a greater number of farmers. While expanding to new districts not covered during the project period is a possible strategy, it would necessitate the training of new district staff and extension staff by the provincial officers. In contrast, a more rational approach, from the perspective of efficiently utilizing existing human resources, would be to maximize the use of personnel already trained by the Project and to disseminate SHEP within the target districts, covering a greater number of wards and farmer groups. Specifically, extending SHEP to farmers around the target irrigation schemes is particularly effective, as it allows for easier visits by the trained SHEP implementers. Furthermore, there have been numerous cases where neighboring residents, having heard of the success of SHEP, have expressed a strong desire to learn more about it. For these reasons, it is recommended that, upon the project's conclusion, priority be given to expanding SHEP within the target districts rather than venturing into new districts.

[Recommendations to JICA]

(1) Inviting Zimbabwean government officials to SHEP KCCP and SHEP International Workshops

Participation in the SHEP KCCP has contributed significantly to the capacity building of Zimbabwean government officials and their ownership of the SHEP approach. JICA should continue inviting the Zimbabwean government officials to SHEP KCCP and SHEP Online Training after the project is completed to support the roll-out of the SHEP approach throughout the country. In addition, the participation of Zimbabwean government officials in SHEP International Workshops should be supported to provide opportunities to apply learning from other countries to scale-up activities.

(2) Extending the project period

Since the schedule for the remaining activities in the 4th batch is tight, it is recommended that the project duration be extended by three months to ensure completion of the 1st cycle activities and to allow time to compile good practices.

7. Lessons Learned

(1) A virtuous circle through SHEP implementation in irrigation schemes

While the SHEP approach has proven to be highly effective for horticultural farmers, the project specifically targeted horticultural farmers in irrigation schemes and strategically implemented the activities for them. This not only increased the income of each farmer, but also strengthened the cohesiveness of the farmer group and improved the maintenance of irrigation facilities through improved cash flow. The increased income has led to better management of irrigation facilities, which in turn has improved crop productivity and further stimulated the local economy, forming a model of sustainable development.

(2) Effectiveness of C/Ps' efforts to mainstream SHEP

The C/Ps, who fully understood the features of the SHEP approach through participation in the SHEP KCCP, explained to other staff even before the project started that the SHEP approach is not a project but a way of extension. From the very beginning, SHEP activities have been implemented using the usual extension delivery system, and the C/Ps have been advocating for the scale-up and mainstreaming of SHEP within the organization. The SHEP approach is treated as a versatile instrument for realizing "farming as business," and SHEP's important activities such as market surveys, target crop selection, crop calendar making, etc. are actively incorporated into extension activities outside the project. These efforts include, but not limited to, including SHEP in the "National Irrigation Competition" and other

donor-supported projects such as IFAD SIRP⁸ and SACP, as well as the curriculum used to train staff. As a result, efforts to mainstream SHEP have increased and the sustainability of the project has improved.

(3) Effective collaboration with development partner projects

WFP's "Integrated Rural Resilience Building Program" aims to build assets by supporting small-scale farmers to improve their field facilities, thereby increasing their adaptability to climate change and helping them climb out of poverty. However, even if assets are created, if farmers cannot effectively use them as a means of income generation, they will not be able to improve their livelihoods. Therefore, WFP decided to leverage the SHEP approach as a means of strengthening farmers' market responsiveness and building their skills to sustainably produce and market crops from the assets. WFP is steadily implementing SHEP ToT and farmer training on the ground with technical support from ZIM-SHEP and by participating in online SHEP training hosted by JICA headquarters for staff training. The complementary and strategic collaboration between development partners and the SHEP technical cooperation project is having an unparalleled impact in terms of the scale of beneficiaries that could not be achieved by the project on its own.

⁸ Smallholder Irrigation Revitalisation Programme