

Evaluation Report

Agricultural Development in Sheki area, Azerbaijan, 2005 – 2007 (ADPP-Sheki)

Project owner: NHE (Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise) – Azerbaijan
NORAD's project number: GLO-01/451-219
BN's project number: 10529

April 2007
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1. Summary

This evaluation took place in March of 2007, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year before the end of the project period for the Pilot Project. Our overall impression of the project is positive. We recommend that this project should be prolonged with a new project lasting for 5 years, with an expanding period of 3 years and building down the activities during the last 2 years. We recommend that a new evaluation should take place after the first 3 years of the new project, before the building down period starts. See recommendation in chapter 7.1.

2. Background information

This document contains an evaluation of the project ADPP-Sheki (Agricultural Development Pilot Project in Sheki area). The project area for this pilot project contains the regions of Sheki, Oguz and Qabala. This pilot project is based on experiences made by NHE through the work with their agricultural project in Ganja (NHE-AP-Ganja), which started in 2002, and with their micro finance activities through their sister organization Viator Micro Credit Azerbaijan. The project period is three years, from January 2005 to December 2007. This evaluation is carried out in the spring of 2007, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year before the project period ends. This timetable is according to the strategy pointed out in the Project Plan [8].

3. The focus of this evaluation

Both the Terms of Reference [1] and the Project Plan [8] address this evaluation to put focus on two main aims:

1. To assess the project implementation and status of the project in comparison with the project objectives and goals.
2. To provide needed input in the process of deciding the future development of the project.

4. The approach and working methods of this evaluation

In this evaluation we try to be forward looking. We address the points

- Why ADPP-Sheki was started
- What is ADPP-Sheki / what it should not be
- How effective the project has functioned to address its mandate.

In our approach we combine these methods

- The study of the plans and reports of the project
- Interviews
- Field observations.

5. The evaluation of the specific objectives

For each topic we examine these points

- **The original situation** (meaning the situation before the project started)
- **The specified goals of the project.** (Where the Terms of Reference (ToR) [1] points out specific objectives to examine, they are mentioned here.)

- **The results** (meaning a qualitative and/or a quantitative measure of whether the project has reached the specified goals). In the right column of the table, with the heading “The Results” we simply state what we have observed and which information we were given.
- In the cases where we see the need for giving some remarks to what we have observed before we go to the next topic, we do this in a new table cell with the heading “**Remarks made by the evaluation team**”.

5.1. *Project plan and relationships with other actors*

This point discusses both the process of creating the project plan and its contents.

| <p>The original situation.</p> <p>In preparing the implementation of this pilot project NHE started early and had open dialogues with other actors in the district. Based on the achieved experiences from the work with the agricultural project in the Ganja area, the first study in this region was held in 2002 [11]. The second pre study activity was held the next year [10]. There were two main external actors in the agricultural field recognized in the project area; the local authorities and the resource centre funded by the World Bank. It seems as if NHE has had a good dialogue with these parties in the process of implementing the project plan and the project. (E.g.: the local authorities had one member in the team that conducted the feasibility study.) Other Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are also involved in the agricultural sphere in these regions. These NGOs, as well as NHE’s sister organization Viator Micro Credit Azerbaijan, should also be important collaborators.</p> <p>The project plan [8] presents useful, well structured, background information and analysis of the country in general and especially of the three provinces in the project area.</p> | |
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| The specified goals of the project / ToR. | The Results. |
| The project will have a close contact with the local authorities in the three regions covered by the project area [8]. | We recognized that the regional administrations and the local municipality leaders were informed ahead of starting activities in villages, and that there are established durable positive relationships. |
| The project will be in close cooperation with other organizations working with agriculture in the regions, including the resource centre in the Sheki-region funded by the World Bank [8]. | <p>The resource centre: there was a kind of knowledge of one another, but there was not established any close collaboration. The project has had meetings with five other organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gabala Regional Recourse and Training Centre; Oguz - “Wheat Growers” Social Centre; Sheki - “Land owners” Social Centre; - CHF Regional office; - Sheki Business Training Centre <p>The project has taken some initiatives, but the others are cold in following up these initiatives. [12].</p> <p>There are totally 70 NGOs in the region.</p> |

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| | 10 of these deal with agriculture. The project has contact with 6 of these 10 NGOs with agricultural programs. When it comes to credit institutions, there are around 20 of them, banks included. |
| The project will not start any activities which are already run in the region by other organizations, but rather facilitate mutual contact with adequate milieus in Azerbaijan and internationally [8]. | We saw no such conflict. During the report study, we see that the project has followed up the plan according to their goals. |
| The ADPP concept and the concept's continued relevance within its socio-economic political environment [1]. | This project starts from the ground level. People from the most marginalized groups in society are being tied together in small groups and unions on village level, which in the future will form important cells in building the civil society. |
| Cooperation and coordination with the government and other NGOs in the area [1]. | We recognized that the regional administrations and the local municipality leaders were informed ahead of starting activities in villages, and that there are established durable positive relationships. When it comes to the collaboration with other NGOs, we do see that the project uses the expertise from the other organizations in their training programs. It would be useful if there could be established even better relationships with some other NGOs. It seems to us that this project tries to establish open relationships, but that the other NGOs do not follow up their initiatives. In this situation the project will have to give priority to their own activities in the field. |

5.2. *The overall purpose of the project*

Initially to this point we underline that this, as the overall purpose, is more emphasized than the quantified specific goals mentioned later in this report.

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| The original situation. | |
| After the breakdown of the old Soviet collective farms, the authorities implemented a land reform. This created a new structure with many small farms with few resources. Many of the new farmers have been made passive, where the agricultural land is not in use or is rented out to big contractors growing wheat. This is more relevant in the Sheki-province. | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |

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| <p>The overall objective of the project is to help the many small and poor farmers to achieve a better exploitation of their limited resources through more active use of their own farms. To achieve this it is necessary to start using the land for more land- and labour-intensive productions, which can bring better income to the owner.</p> | <p>By concentrating the efforts on working through groups and unions, we got the impression that the project has been successful in reaching its goal. The project could even have been still more brave in testing out different other activities as well.</p> |
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5.3. *The project organization*

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| <p>The original situation.</p> <p>The Soviet period left behind a major lack of organizational structures in the population. The new farmers' unions established through the influence of this project (see paragraph 5.5) will immediately be considered as local partners with the project.</p> | |
| <p>The specified goals of the project / ToR.</p> | <p>The Results.</p> |
| <p>A.</p> <p>During the pilot period a plan shall be worked out for a steering model to be used in a long term project that is intended to follow the pilot period [8].</p> <p>Use and selection of local staff [1].</p> | <p>Agayev Fagan as Program Manager (40%); Abdulkarimov Abdulkarim as Project Assistant/Manager in a daily base (100%); Norwegian advisor (probably will come to the country during the autumn 2007); women motivator/assistant, has been employed for 8 months in 2006, a new one will probably be employed during May 2007 (50%); Project veterinarian, following needed activities connected to project work (50%); Project Cashier, following cash operations connected to the project (20%); 2 night guards (2 x 75%).</p> <p>The structure of responsibility is like this: Program Manager is leading the project and coordinating the project activities. He is also responsible for abroad contacts and reporting to donors. Project ass/manager is responsible for all practical activities in the project, responsible for staff and office. Project Veterinarian is doing necessary insemination and other work connected to project activities. Women motivator/assistant is responsible for all work among women.</p> |
| <p>B.</p> <p>Governance, organizational and functional structure [1].</p> | <p>The implementation of this project is located at the office in Sheki, while the direction is located in Ganja – here is a travelling distance of 160km. This distance could be seen as a disadvantage, but in total our impression is that the close contact with the other activities which goes on in Ganja is an</p> |

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| | <p>even greater advantage for the project. Since the project activities started in Ganja some years earlier, the project in Sheki profits from the experiences made there.</p> <p>Our impression is that the governance of the project functions well.</p> |
| <p>C. 2006: 3-4 local partners established, well organized partnership and cooperation [7].</p> | No information available. |
| <p>D. 2007: Choosing of 4 new participants groups to the project [5].</p> | No information available yet. |
| <p>Remarks made by the evaluation team:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>We regret that the woman trainee was engaged late and had to quit after $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year. We hope the project will succeed to find a new one soon, and that a stable working situation for her will be established.</p> <p>Our overall impression is that the team which is present at the project today functions well together.</p> <p>In the section A. above, the project plan [8] addresses the need of building up a local board for the project. This overall goal is later, in the annual plan for 2006 [7] (as stated in section C.) and in the annual plan for 2007 [5] (as stated in section D.), divided into concrete measurable quantitative goals. As we could observe there were not yet taken any steps towards fulfilling this objective. We see the need for the project to start working with this issue. The clients of the project should take part in a board for the project. It is crucial important that there will be built up a local advisory board, consisting of the ones benefiting of the project activities. This local advisory board will be the one to decide whether they will build their own organization, or find other options, for operating the project activities when the project period is ended.</p> <p>We see the establishing of the local board as a major issue of both sustainability and democracy building.</p> | |

5.4. The target groups

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| <p>The original situation.</p> <p>The target group for this project is farmers living in the regions of Sheki, Oguz and Qabala. Special focus should, according to the project plan [8], be put on the most marginalized groups among the farmers: refugees, Internal Displaced Peoples (IDPs), minority groups (e.g. the Udis), female farmers.</p> | |
| The specified goals of the project / ToR. | The Results. |
| | 2005: 10 women involved [6]. |
| Engagement of at least one female motivator in the project [8]. | One female trainee started at date 1 st of April 2006 ended her engagement at date 30th of November 2006, because of not |

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| | so good collaboration with project assistant. There are plans for recruiting a new one. |
| Development of special local women groups [8]. | There are 2 unions and 1 group with only women, there are women in the other groups too. |
| An aim of at least 40% female customers [3]. | 2005: 31% (10 families out of 32) 2006: 10% (36 families out of 346). |
| Level of involvement of defined focus groups: refugees, IDPs, (women-see above) and minority groups (mainly Udi people) [1]. | 2005: 19% Refugees/IDPs, 31% Minority groups 2006: 19% Refugees/IDPs, 36% Minority groups |
| 2006: 30 women involved [7]. | 36 women involved (3 of them union leaders) [12]. |
| 2007: 10 new women involved [5]. | No information available yet. |

5.5. *Farmers' unions*

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| The original situation. | |
| <p>Building up of collaboration structures among farmers in the region is regarded a main goal for this project. This is needed to achieve development of cost-effective and appropriate agricultural production, in this region where the resources of each farm are so limited. There has been very little cooperation and collaboration between the farmers since the Soviet Union broke up. People's negative feelings from the collective systems in the past, could be an obstacle for achieving needed results in this area. See also paragraph 5.9 of this document.</p> | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| A. New farmers' unions [8] - Initiated by farmers - Run by farmers | Number of groups and unions in the year: 2005: 0. 2006: 6 unions, 9 groups. 2007: 3 new unions, 3 new groups. |
| B. Number of established farmers' unions [1] / [8]. | (in addition there are single persons as well) Many of the people we talked to in the field made remarks that now there are many people that are motivated to form new groups and unions in the future. |
| C. Quality and impact of farmers' unions' interaction and functioning [1] / [8]. | We met unions on different levels. The direction was good for all of them. They showed initiative, had received different kind of assistance and had got hope for the future. |
| D. Number of women involved in farmers' unions [1] / [8]. | Number of women involved in farmers' unions: 17 in total: 2005:0; 2006:10; 2007:7. |

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| E. Prospects regarding future sustainability of the farmers' unions after phasing out of external assistance [1]. | There are individual differences, but all groups develop in the right direction – to become self supporting. Three groups said: even if the project stops today, we will continue, we have already received important basic knowledge and courage to go on. |
| F. 2006: 3 simple organized unions [7]. | 2006: 6 farmers' unions established [12]. |
| G. Farmers' unions engaged in plans for new processing activities (dairies, slaughter-houses etc) and in network with other milieus (e.g. positive interaction with local authorities) [8]. | No information available. |
| Remarks made by the evaluation team. | |
| C. There is a need for interchanging information between the different groups. E. It seems to us that a group or union needs a year or two of assistance before it can operate autonomously. | |

5.6. *Development of the different agricultural sectors*

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| The original situation. | |
| After the land reform there are small resources to each farm [8]. | |
| The specified goals of the project / ToR. | The Results. |
| Focus on possible land- and labour-intensive productions and manufacturing [8]. | We observe and acknowledge that the project has put focus to these tasks. About the different sectors, see below. |
| Increase of local production of milk, cheese, vegetables etc [1] / [8]. | Yes, we saw that the effect of the activities was that these productions were increased. |

5.6.1. Vegetable / fruit production, including greenhouse

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| The original situation. | |
| The greenhouse technology is known from the Soviet period. Production of tomatoes and cucumbers gives good profit. The main markets are cities like Ganja and Baku [8]. | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| Increase of local production of vegetables etc [1] / [8]. | All greenhouse growers who took part in project activities, were satisfied with their results and had a good alternative income to their family budget. One group of greenhouse growers (2 |

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| | families) had harvested a very good yield of cucumbers and tomatoes. Another group of greenhouse growers (2 families) harvested not so good yield of pepper, aubergine, tomatoes and cucumbers. |
| 2006: 4 greenhouses established (1 from scratch), all 4 well functioning [7]. | 2006: 2 greenhouses, 4 families involved [12]. |
| 2007: 5 greenhouses established (2 old and 3 new), well functioning [5]. | No information available yet. |

5.6.2. Animal husbandry / cattle breeding, particularly milk production

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| The original situation. | |
| There is a large import of milk and dairy products, consequently there is a potential increased market for local production of fresh milk, yoghurt, cheese and butter. There is a great potential for an increase in milk production per animal. Good results with the use of semen from Geno-Norway (NRF), and with better feeding of the animals, have been achieved in the Ganja project [8]. | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| Motivation for increased milk production [8]. | This is going on all the time . We saw very motivated people. |
| Chilling tanks (from Norway or Turkey) bought in and leased out to farmers [8]. (It will be hard to do on this stage of the project, but NHE has some plans of establishing a local company which later on will be responsible for equipment and semen doses supply according to veterinarians need.) | Chilling tanks for semen: used by the veterinarian in the project! During the years 2005 and 2006 insemination equipment and semen doses were bought in Norway and now in use by project veterinarian. In our plans to by new semen doses during the year 2007. |
| Increase of local production of milk, cheese etc [1] / [8]. | Yes, we saw that the effect of the activities was that these productions were increased. |
| Inseminating 15 cows per month from the start of the project [8]. | 2005: 43 inseminations performed within two months, 20 per month [6]. |
| 2005: 80 inseminations, 15 inseminations per month [6]. | |
| 2006: 180 inseminations, 15 per month [7]. | 2006: 188 in total, 15/mnth (hereof 49 2 nd generation) [12]. |
| 2006: 55 new born calves [7]. | 45 calves born [12]. |
| 2007: 240 inseminations, 20 per month [5]. | No information available yet. |
| 2007: 130 new born calves [5]. | No information available yet. |
| Remarks made by the evaluation team. | |
| Regarding this work time will be needed to see the great results. This is due both to the | |

nature of the problem, and to the fact that we here work with marginalized groups. People in this target group need to observe the results for themselves to get motivated. But we do see that changes already take place. The fulfilment of goals in this area is good.

5.6.3. Wheat

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| The original situation. | |
| Wheat production is the main agricultural sector in these regions. Sheki is known as the wheat chamber of Azerbaijan. | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| NHE, through this project, will not deal with the major challenges of the whole wheat production sector. One only concentrates on initiatives for improvement on the farm level, such as sustainable agricultural/ecological topics, storing, appropriate technology etc [8]. | 2005: 32 families involved, 33ha of wheat [6]. 2006: 93 families involved in growing activities, all with good yield except for some wheat growers (wheat, maize, lucerne, barley) [12]. |

5.6.4. Pigs for slaughter

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| The original situation. | |
| Pig farming is a major business among the 4.400 Udi inhabitants in the village of Nich in Qabala region, and among Udi people in different minor villages in the Oguz region [8]. Also other people participate in this activity. | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| Development of this business through systematic improvement of the breeding and feeding [8]. | Information goes on for helping reducing the mortality rate. Some activities will take place during the visit from Tomb in April 2007. |
| Plans for building a new slaughter-house [8]. | The preparation work continues, and seems to come closer to a solution. |
| 2006: mortality rate <20% for newborn pigs [7]. | Work is started / no statistics, not measured in annual report 2006. [12]. |
| 2007: mortality rate <15% for newborn pigs [5]. | No information available yet. |
| Remarks made by the evaluation team. | |
| We have not seen too many results so far. There are lots of interests for this production. One should give priority to those people who are motivated to see a change. | |

5.6.5. Other agricultural sectors with a potential

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| The original situation. |
| Beekeeping [8]. |

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| Nuts [8]. Fish production [8]. | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| The projects objective was to try to identify new sectors, which could become profitable new ways of getting income to the small farms. | Areas tested out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beekeeping ➤ Nuts ➤ Conservation |
| 2007: Beekeeping: 1 union (3 families), increasing of bee box numbers [5]. | No information available yet. |
| | 2006: new activity: Conservation for vegetables, 2 families involved. [12]. |
| Remarks made by the evaluation team. Fish is such a sector with potential, but since this is taken care of by another project run by NHE, it is not a part of the activities in this project and not a part of this evaluation. For further discussions, see chapters 6 and 7. | |

5.7. Markets

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| The original situation. | |
| There is a large import of cheese and butter, which could be produced locally [8]. | |
| The specified goals of the project / ToR. | The Results. |
| Use of local products in households [1] / [8]. | The producers use the products in their own households, and the surplus is sold on the market. There is a well functioning local market for agricultural products. If the producers to an even greater extent would be encouraged to store their products, they could sell them on the market when prices increase about a month after the harvest. |

5.8. New technology

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| The original situation. | |
| The specified goals of the project / ToR. | The Results. |
| Use of improved and appropriate technology [1] / [8]. | Appropriate technology is used to a great extent. E.g. cheap local building materials for greenhouses, seems to function well. This is technology which is not new for the country, but new for the region. Crop rotation principles are important. This seems to be given attention from the project. Appropriate technology is used, with one important and necessary exception: |

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| | <p>The importation of new genetic material is necessary for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Husbandry, for improving the animals' production potential (semen) ➤ Seed materials, for improvement of production potential and resistance of diseases; less dependent on chemicals. |
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5.9. Information and training

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| <p>The original situation.</p> <p>Some know-how from the Soviet period collective farms' huge agricultural production still exists in the population. There are major psychological barriers hindering the use of this human skill [8], see also paragraph 5.5 of this document.</p> | |
| The specified goals of the project. | The Results. |
| It is an important but difficult challenge to adapt the existing human capacity into the new political and economic situation [8]. | We observed that participants in the project activities were given hope for their future, and had got the courage to take their skills into action. |
| 2005: 3 trainings and 1 brochure [6]. | 2005: 1 printed brochure [6]. |
| 2006: 60 training events hosted, 20 brochures printed [7]. | 20 trainings done, 12 brochures printed, 3 stands prepared. [12]. |
| 2006: A functioning Resource Centre established [7]. | 2006: A resource center was established, a training center and an office for the project, located together with 2 other projects for the owner organization, NHE [12]. |
| 2007: 12 trainings done and 5 brochures printed [5]. | 2007: 7 trainings, 0 brochures so far. |
| 2007: Special training for farmers in Qabala about mortality rate of newborn pigs [5]. | 2007: Trainings will come later this year. |
| | We saw that the people in the villages were very open and eager to receive information, participate in trainings etc. |
| <p>Remarks made by the evaluation team.</p> <p>Our impression is that the project should put even more emphasis on this important field. Information work is extremely important – forming new ideas, giving people new technical information and having them interchange their own experience. One should also try to collaborate with other organizations when it comes to common production of brochures and other information materials, and the distribution of materials produced by one another.</p> | |

6. Discussions and conclusions

Fish.

Fish is not part of this project, this sector is covered by another project, and is not part of this evaluation.

Insemination and feeding.

There has been put much emphasis on the field of insemination. There is no doubt, as we also observed by ourselves, that to improve animals genetically is a very important key to obtain a higher income on the small farms. But we also saw that some of the hybrids were insufficiently fed. Without a better feeding of the hybrids, there will be little net effect. The veterinarian who does the insemination should use his time on the farm to give advice on feeding the hybrids.

The semen used is of the Norwegian race NRF (Norwegian Red Cow). The semen is exported from Norway via Tomb Agricultural School, which has got the legal rights for exporting from Norway to this project in Azerbaijan. We heard that initiatives were already taken to pass these legal rights over to the Azerbaijanians, to import the semen from Geno in Norway. The project should assure that this process of turning the legal rights over to the Azerbaijanians will be accomplished.

We also met with a veterinarian working in a project for another NGO dealing with the inseminations of cows. Our project should take contact with other actors to discuss the possibilities for collaboration both on a short term and on a long term basis. The project should try to develop national structures which could continue this work when the project period is ended.

Greenhouse.

Things have already started to happen. It will take some time to introduce this sector. We observed that in some regions there is a lack of water at certain periods. Different aspects must be taken into consideration in planning for the implementation of the greenhouse sector:

- The availability of water for irrigation
- The proximity to the markets
- We believe this production should be clustered in some few regions, to assure interchange of experiences between the people working in this field.

We believe the production of vegetables has got a potential of being an important source of income for small farms. The use of cheap local materials and appropriated technology is of crucial importance to assure that this field could be advantageous for the small farms and the marginalized groups.

Beekeeping.

We saw some bee boxes. Especially in the older generation there was some knowledge of beekeeping. At the same time we recognized that the know-how and skills in this field was rather poor. The few beekeepers we visited showed a lack of understanding for some basic topics of beekeeping. We believe this field has got a potential of higher income, also because the traditions for use of honey are good, and the market is well functioning. The project should bring in competence, and give courses in modern beekeeping.

Pigs for slaughter.

We were a bit surprised that so many Muslims both eat pig meat and hold pigs for slaughter. More than 50% of the Muslims around Sheki eat pig meat, mostly in the villages.

The efforts of the project on this field should be mostly directed to the small farms, with from one to three mother pigs. It is also crucial important that the efforts are directed towards the ones who are motivated to see a change. We believe the areas of priority should be feeding, housing and environment. One should also be a bit careful in this field, since the project operates in a traditionally Muslim environment.

Poultry.

We saw very little poultry, except for the traditional level where a few hens were walking around in the yard. It should be possible, with small efforts, to establish a bit bigger and a more intensive poultry breeding. It is important, before starting up any activities, to ensure the nutrition supply for the poultry. The project should take initiative for holding courses in poultry, to see if there will be any interest for activities in this sector.

Wheat.

Wheat prices are regulated by the government. The wheat production is not an intensive production, which should be emphasized in this project. To the extent that wheat plays a role in a crop rotation system, it is right for the project to deal with this issue. We do not recommend that wheat growing is given too much emphasis in the project. The wheat prices increase during the storage season. It is therefore important to urge people not to sell while the prices are low.

Processing (e.g. cheese production and conservations of vegetables)

We saw two examples of processing of raw materials from the farms.

- Some had started the production of cheese for sale on the local market. We also met some who on the basis of this activity had started their own shop on the farm.
- A couple of families had, by the help of the project, started to make conservations of vegetables for sale on the local market.

These activities address itself towards a traditional, well functioning market. As such this is a sustainable approach. The project should pay more attention to activities that give the farm products an increased value ahead of presenting them on the market. We see this as a good way of meeting the overall purpose mentioned in chapter 5.2. in this report.

Training.

The goals of the project in the area of training were not quite met. It is crucial important for the project to give priority to the training activities. The project is to work with changing of minds and passing over of knowledge to obtain durable changes for the target groups. The degree of success and sustainability depends on the active course activities of high quality. The project should intensify the use of hired technical expertise from other NGOs or elsewhere in the area nearby where this might be available.

Farmers' unions and groups.

An important basic key for obtaining durable changes and a sustainable development, is to create and develop well functioning local structures. The forming and development of groups and unions will become important elements in the construction of the civil society, and will be a measurement of the sustainability of the project on the local level.

The project has already reached some important steps in this field. It is of crucial importance that the project also in the future gives high emphasis to the work of assuring that the forming and development of groups and unions will become a durable success.

The project area.

The project covers a huge area. To assure a good and durable effect of the efforts, one should avoid spreading out to too large parts of the area at the same time. It will be better to concentrate the work in some parts of the area at a time, and let the project wander from village to village. In this way it should be possible to reach the entire project area within a given space of time. During a year or two the groups and unions should be able to go further on by themselves. The project should work out a strategy and a schedule of how to reach the

whole project area. This should be done while working out a new project plan for the coming period (see details below).

The local staff.

The woman trainee's engagement in the project stopped after ¾ of a year. It is an important and a difficult challenge to find a female staff member who will be able to work in this way in the project area. We still want to encourage the project to be brave in recruiting a female staff member. The degree of success relative to the target groups depends of a capable female staff member. The right person in this position will give important signals about the projects profiles and priorities.

The collaboration with Tomb Agricultural School in Norway.

The professional collaboration with Tomb gives extra motivation to the staff of the project. We advice that this collaboration should continue according to local needs in the project area, and under local direction. It is important to use appropriate technology to be able to meet the needs of the target groups in a sustainable way. We see that this collaboration is of mutual importance for both parties. Both students and teachers from Tomb can learn a lot from the project.

Overall conclusions.

According to the plans and the specified goals of this pilot project, it should test out different productions to see which areas would give the best effect. Most of the activities have been successful, but we have in some passages above pointed out some potential for improvement. This shows the direction for the new project period. As a pilot project, with very limited time and relatively small resources available, it has reached very far. The project has got a good reputation in the region, and the clients are satisfied that the project has helped them to improve their own situation and given them new hope for the future.

7. Recommendations

7.1. *We recommend*

- That the project continues.
We suggest a duration of 5 years, from January 2008 to December 2012.
 - Increasing the activities the first three years, 2008 – 2010.
 - Building down during the last two years and handing the activities over to local partners or other local structures.
 - Evaluation after three years.
 - We recommend that the project applies for funds from BN and NORAD in Norway.
- A future project should address the same target groups as the pilot project (marginalized groups as refugees, IDPs, minority groups, female farmers).
- The main target should be to mobilize and motivate the poor farmers, help them to change their attitudes, so they will be encouraged and given the opportunities to improve their own situation. The success of the project depends on whether or not the people in the target groups will be motivated to change their own situation by using their own recourses.

7.2. *Suggestions to the project plan*

We advice that the points mentioned below will be taken into consideration when working out the project plan.

- The main activity must be linked to the goals mentioned above by creating groups and unions, give them education and encourage them to become autonomous. These new structures established by our project will be of vital importance in building the social society, also after the end of the project period.
- The project should try to keep in even closer contact with the local authorities. This will be important both for assuring the continued progress of the project, but also for the purpose of helping the newly established groups and unions to play a greater role in democratic interchange with their own local authorities also when the project period is over.
- When it comes to the collaboration with other NGOs in the same area, the project should continue to have an open mind towards the others. To some extent, we can also in the future experience the situation when other organizations do not answer the initiatives for collaboration positively. Then the project must give priority to the work in the field with the people on the ground level. The project should try to find NGOs of which one can have a mutual help, and concentrate the efforts on the relationships with these.
- Regarding credits given from the project, one should try to do this in close collaboration with NHE's sister organization Viator Micro Credit Azerbaijan. The project should consider taking interests in loans covering the expenses of Viator. In addition one should try to provide the target groups with more funds for long term credits. In this way a new sustainable structure can be built up, which can continue to serve the target groups after the project period.
- The use of appropriate technology is crucial important to ensure that the project will serve the defined target groups in a good way. E.g.:
 - Equipment for beekeeping locally produced.
 - Simple improvement for the housing conditions for the animals, especially cattle.
- A well organized and well structured training program is important. In these training activities the project should to an even greater extent have close contact with and use as expertise:
 - Personnel from the other NGOs in the area
 - The education institutions in Azerbaijan with priority to local institutions (e.g. The Academy in Ganja).
 - Continue and develop the contact with Tomb and Gjennestad agricultural schools in Norway, according to the goal of the project. E.g. exchange of innovation participants.

Interchange of experience between farmers in other parts of the project area could be important, both by presenting them different seminars and courses and letting them see each others activities in the field. One should to some extent also organize study trips abroad, to the countries in the region, like Turkey.

The project should also establish a strategy for frequent educational programs for its own staff members. Topics for such education could be teaching the insemination personnel to give guidance for feeding, ventilation and light in the barn, and other

environmental topics for the animals. The insemination personnel will in this way be enabled to give such guidance while on the farm doing insemination.

- We suggest the overall purpose for the prolonged project:

To find good land and labour intensive production areas which can give an increased income from the small farms. This is the same overall purpose as stated for the pilot project, see the project plan [8]. The different activities may vary from time to time, depending on the change of the situation. At present we see that the project will take advantage in continuing with the same activities as in the pilot project, including insemination, greenhouse, beekeeping, nuts etc.

Appendix 1. Members of the evaluation team, with abbreviated CVs

Mr. Øen Terje, Norway, team-leader:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Education: | |
| 1971-1974 | Cand.Agric., with husbandry, from Norwegian University of Agronomy, Norway |
| 1978 | Pedagogy seminar from Norwegian University of Agronomy, Norway |
| Working Experience: | |
| 1976-1979 | Teacher at different agricultural schools in Norway |
| 1980-1983 and 1985-1990 | Development worker in Cameroun, Africa |
| 1983-1985 and 1990-1996 | County agronomist in husbandry, in Hordaland and Rogaland counties in Norway |
| 1997- | Leader of the advisers team in TINE, the dairy cooperative in southern Norway |
| Different tasks: | |
| 1991 | Evaluation of a rural development program in Bolivia |
| 1993-1999 | Evaluation of three different rural development programs in Madagascar in the period |
| 2003 | Preliminary project research in Azerbaijan |
| 2003 and 2006 | Evaluation for development programs in Cameroun |
| 2001-2006 | Member of the board of “Norsk Misjons Bistandsnemnd” |
| 1998, 2001, 2002 and 2004 | Study trips to Ethiopia, Madagaskar, USA and Kenya |
| 2005-2007 | Sensor at University College for Agriculture and rural businesses, Norway |
| Present | Leader for the networks for feeding and ecology in “TINE Dairy Cooperative - Norway”. |

Mr. Østtveit Audun, Norway, secretary:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Education: | |
| 1977-1978 | Agronomist from Telemark Agronomy School, Norway |
| 1978-1982 | Cand.Agric. from Norwegian University of Agronomy, Norway |
| 1982 | Pedagogy seminar from Norwegian University of Agronomy, Norway |
| 2006-2007 | Geographical Information Systems (GIS) from Telemark University College, Norway |
| Working Experience: | |
| 1982-1983 | Agronomy leader of Nome municipality, Telemark, Norway |
| 1983-1986 | County agronomist in cultivation, plants and soils in Telemark county, Norway |
| 1985-1990 | Organizational consultant in Norwegian Farmers' Union, Telemark branch, Norway |
| 1989-1991 | Director of the development program PIDEB (Programme Intégrée du DEveloppement de cercle de Bafoulabé) in Mali, West-Africa |
| 1991-1994 | Administrativ and professional leader of the local branch of The Norwegian Agricultural Extension Service in Eastern-Finnmark, Norway |
| 1994-1997 | Teacher in cultivation, plants and soils at Oslo Agricultural School, Norway |
| 1998-2000 | Agronomy leader of Bø municipality, Telemark, Norway |
| 1999-2005 | Agronomy leader and business development consultant of Siljan municipality, Telemark, Norway |
| 1983-1989 and 1995-2005 | Farmer in Sauherad, Telemark, Norway. Growing: fruits, cereals as seeds, seeds for meadow-fields. Both ecologically and conventionally. Forestry. |
| Different tasks: | |
| 1986-1988 | Chairman of the board of the local Farmers' Union in Sauherad municipality, Telemark, Norway Member of the board some years before and in a later period |

Mr. Aliyev Oktay, Azerbaijan:

| | |
|---|--|
| Education: | |
| ... - 1982 | Graduated from Azerbaijan Agriculture Institute. |
| 1995 - | Finished his education and past exams on being Master. |
| Working Experience: | |
| 1982-1986 | Worked as veterinarian in one of “kolxoz” in Russia. |
| 1986-1990 | Scientist in Animal Husbandry Institute. |
| 1990-1995 | Director of veterinarian committee in the region of Khanlar. |
| 1995-present | Teacher in Agriculture Academy. |
| Generally: | |
| Was born 20 th of February 1959. | |
| Married, has 3 children. | |
| Has his own hobby and alternative income for the family through beekeeping. | |

Mr. Aliyev Teuf, Azerbaijan:

| | |
|---|--|
| Education: | |
| ... - 1987 | Graduated from Azerbaijan Agriculture Institute. |
| ... - 1996 | Finishing education, passing exams on being Master. |
| Working Experience: | |
| 1987-1996 | Scientist in Azerbaijan Plant Protection Institute. |
| 1996-1998 | Director at “Science and Production Enterprise”. |
| 1998-present | Back to his work in Plant Protection Institute. Has published 12 scientific articles. |
| Generally: | |
| Was born 15 th of February 1964 in Georgia. | |
| Married, has 3 children. | |
| Has his own hobby and alternative income for the family through greenhouse growing. | |

Appendix 2. Program for the evaluation team activities in the project area

Friday 23rd of March:

The international team members arrive Baku in the evening.

Saturday 24th of March:

The Norwegian team members travel from Baku to Sheki by bus.

Sunday 25th of March:

The Azerbaijanian team members arrive Sheki from Ganja.

The first team-gatherings, planning the coming activities.

Monday 26th of March:

The whole group travels together, visiting the region of Qabala.

Program manager Agayev Fagan and Project manager Abdulkarimov Abdulkarim follow the team. One extra external female translator.

1.

The Farmers' Union at the village Ovculu, with the 5 families: Kidayatova Hokuma, Hidayatov Haytulla, Agasiyev Niyazi, Mamedov Tarlan, Ayasiyev Rafiq.

The leader of the Union is Mrs. Kidayatova Hokuma, a widow with Agricultural education.

The five families of this union are all relatives. They do cattle and cow breeding. The plot of land they use together is 17ha.

2.

Visiting a refugee camp with Lesgie IDPs. This is a group of 4 women. Their leader, Mrs. Hasanova Latifa Huseyn. was not present, but her husband informed us together with the other ladies of the group. They had got bees and sheep by credit from the project. They milk the sheep and sell both cheese and consumer milk. They do not have any area for growing outside the yard of the house of 0,02 ha, as refugees they are not allowed to own their own land, so they have to buy all the fodder for the sheep.

3.

We visited one widow in the village of Mirzabayli, Mrs. Masimova Ekuna Aliyar, her father-in-law and her husbands' brother. She had some Luzern seeds on credit from the project.

4.

In the same village: a group of 4 men who want to start. They want seeds. 2 families started, the 3rd wants to join. They want to start a hazel nut garden, they think that their region is to dry for vegetables.

5.

Nich village. We met with the local municipality leader, Mr. Dallari Romik, who also is member of the Farmers' Union. Another person, Mr. Asaturov Gennadiy Andiki, is their union leader. This union consists of 4 families, with 23 people altogether. They do growing for feeding, cattle, pigs, potatoes. We saw a plot of 1ha newly cleared from bushels which probably will be used for growing nuts.

Tuesday 27th of March:

Visiting the region of Oguz.

The team is divided into two groups:

Group A: Øen Terje & Aliyev Oktay, followed by Agayev Fagan.

1.

In the village of Bayan, together with the veterinarian of the project, Mr. Samadov Samad, visited a woman, Mrs. Samadova Sudaba (Samadov Nasrulla-husband), with a 7month old calf born after insemination with NRF-semen. She also had bees.

2.

In the same village the group visited Salamov Baxtiyar. He had a hybrid of 6 months age. On this place they mixed grass into the concentrate, which seems to have been a success.

3.

In the village of Qarabaldir, visiting a new group of 3 families. One other person was also present, who wanted to form a new group. Qafarov Elshad Vahid has plans for sunflower, soy, rice, maize, nuts, etc.

4.

A widow Hasanova Afat, husband previous soldier, 2 sons + one daughter. Has previously received help from NHE with house construction. Has got sheep, potatoes, luzern on credit from the project. She was very thankful that NHE and the project had created hope for her future.

5.

A union in the village of Shirvanli, 5 families, 23 people, 15 kids, 8 old people. They had 3,5ha of land, luzern, calves, buffaloes.

Group B: Østtveit Audun & Aliyev Teuf, followed by Abdulkarimov Abdulkarim and the external translator Atayev Mubariz Vahman.

1.

Visiting the village of Bayan, the secretary of Municipality, Mr. Hashimov Valeh. He is at the same time the leader of a group of 6 families growing wheat, corn (corn for feeding and corn for popcorn), potatoes and other crops.

2.

Visiting a widow at the village of Padar, Mrs. Yusifova Sadagat. She and her son, Asif, showed us her farm. She has got one cow and two sheep. She is a teacher in Oguz, and plans to be a full time farmer when she retires in some years. She grows potatoes, nuts (her nut garden is 5 years old, and gives some yield, but not top yield yet). There are some relatives and other neighbours who are interested in joining her and form a farmers' union with her as leader. She showed us her 1ha plot sowed 1 week earlier, with barley and clover/luzern and grass-seeds. There are 450 families in the village, and many of them want to join the project.

3.

Visiting a greenhouse, also in Padar village. There are three families in the group. They had the pre planting plants in greenhouses. There were onion, cucumber - after the cucumber they

plan to sow melon and water melon, pepper and aubergine. They have put their plots of land together, and have got 2ha of land altogether. We saw this plot, which was tilled. In the first 0,2ha they had planted the potatoes only 6 days before. - This potato land they had planted by hand, because after a period of heavy rainfall, they did not want the tractor to destroy the soil structure. Their plan for the rest of the plot was: 0,3ha of cucumber, 0,4ha of tomatoes and the rest for the melon. (Potatoe seeds: 300kg/0,2ha, or 1,5t/ha, Minerals: 100kg of Azotphoska/0,2ha, or 500kg/ha (NPK:18%-18%-18%, gives pr ha: N: 90kg/ha, P: 90kg/ha, K: 90kg/ha)). For all other vegetables: only cattle-manure from the village, no minerals.

Wednesday 28th of March:

The Sheki region.

Group A:

1.

Visiting Sheki Regional Advice Centre. The leader of the organization, Mr. Alifov Alif Ramazan, gave information on their activities. They form credit unions in each region, with a goal of ending up with the establishing of an agricultural bank. They are now funded 30% by Azeri government and 70% by the World Bank, which will gradually be transformed to 100% local funds.

Their project area consists of the 5 regions of Sheki, Oguz, Balakan, Qax and Zagatala.

The collaboration with our project had not yet been much developed, but they were interested in future cooperation especially through spreading information about our activities (brochures, photos and different materials).

2.

Visiting a pig breeder in Asagi Goynuk, Mr. Asvarov Tacaddin.

3.

Visiting another NGO, the CHF, funded by USA-ID (International Development). Their leader, Ms. Gulrux Aynar, informed us. This NGO's main goal is to solve peoples' social problems. They mainly work with well organized groups in the whole villages. They work with democracy / transparency issues.

Group B:

1.

Visiting the Sheki regional administration, the secretary of finance and economical affairs, Mr. Aliyev Firon.

2.

Visiting a greenhouse at the village of Cumakand. A group of two brothers with their families. We met with the group leader, Mr. Ibrahimov Shamil.

3.

Visiting the clients of both the project and Viator: at the village of Kichic Dahna. They are a group of 6 families, of them two brothers. One of the two brothers' wife is the leader of the

group: Gachayeva Zarangiz. They deal with cattle and wheat; have got credit through Viator for seeds for 4ha of wheat and for 1 cow and 2 sheep and some foddering.

Thursday 29th of March:

The whole group, in office in Sheki, working on discussions and recommendations.

Friday 30th of March:

Travelling from Sheki, via Ganja, to Baku.

Saturday 31st of March:

The international team members depart from Baku early in the morning.

Appendix 3. List of background documents

- [1] Terms of Reference (ToR). First external evaluation of the NORAD-funded pilot project “Agricultural development in Sheki area” (ADPP). English.
- [2] BN’s recommendation to NORAD for the year 2007 for this project. Norwegian/English.
- [3] BN’s recommendation to NORAD for the year 2006: “Program plan - Azerbaijan”. English.
- [4] 27th of July 2006, by Sture Nils M: “2007 Sheki Agricultural Development Program, Azerbaijan – project presentation”. English.
- [5] 8th of May 2006, by Bjelland Svein, Agayev Fagan, Feidal Jon Petter and Abdulkarimov Abdulkarim: Annual plan 2007. English.
- [6] 29th of March 2006, by Agayev Fagan: Annual report 2005. English.
- [7] 1st of June 2005, by Agayev Fagan and Feidal Jon Petter: Annual plan 2006. English.
- [8] Project Plan 2005 – 2007 for Pilot Project Agricultural Development in Sheki area. English.
- [9] 22nd of July 2004, by Sture Nils M: “Prosjektpresentasjon i Aserbajdsjan – Nytt prosjekt i 2005”. - Project presentation in Azerbaijan – new project in 2005. Norwegian.
- [10] December 2003, report from an initial study made by Øen Terje and Bøe Lars Olav: “NHEs landbruksprosjekt i Sheki”. - NHE’s agricultural project in Sheki. Norwegian.
- [11] 30th of October 2002, by Bøe Lars Olav: “Rapport fra tjenestereise til Aserbajdsjan 21.-27. oktober 2002”. - Report from an expedition to Azerbaijan 21st to 27th of October 2002. Norwegian.
- [12] 29th of March 2007, by Agayev Fagan and Abdulkarimov Abdulkarim: Annual report 2006. English.