

Rural Micro-finance and Livestock Support Programme (RMLSP) Project: Veterinary Services in the Northern Region

Donor	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Contractor	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL), Afghanistan
Budget	USD 5,435,637
Period	September 2010 – July 2016
Area	Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, and Bamyan

The Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Programme is a development programme of the Government of Afghanistan funded by IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development). The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen livestock production systems of poor households through increased access to microfinance and livestock services.



The subcomponent 'Veterinary Services in the Northern Region' focuses on strengthening of animal health service provision. This should lead to improved livestock production and productivity, and should help farmers to retain greater value for their livestock products. The project specifically targets women, women headed households, poor farmers, and Kuchi.

The project was initially due for completion on August 1st 2014. By that time however the project had proven to be really successful so an extension was approved. Outcome surveys showed that the project had effectively improved the livelihoods and food security of the beneficiaries. In the first four years, DCA-VET improved access to veterinary services by training 27 new paravets and 60 new BVWs.

To support the poorer farmers, DCA-VET conducted 36 deworming campaigns, treating some 40,000 animals. To build the capacity of the poorest farmers, 4,000 poor farmers received extension training by VFU staff. In all of the five target provinces, DCA-VET developed a cashmere value chain providing extra income to the cashmere goat farmers. For dairy farmers, a dairy value chain was set up. DCA-VET trained 4,500 women in milk processing, distributed churning machines, and improved cattle stables.

In September 2013, an IFAD financing mission evaluated the programme. This mission recommended to extend the DCA-VET implemented project by two years and to increase the budget to US\$ 5.4 million.

The aims for the last two years of this project were:

- Consolidation of existing activities to ensure sustainability
- Continuation of activities focussing on the poor and on women
- Improving knowledge and skills of beneficiaries for greater sustainability
- Developing a clear exit strategy
- Strengthening of the process of coordination and monitoring by the local government
- Recording and documenting best practices and lessons learned.

On July 31st, 2016, the RLMSP project concluded after five years of making a difference for the livestock owners in the target area. During the project period, positive changes have occurred in animal production, health, and household income. The number of livestock owners adopting improved herd management practices increased. There was a decrease in the mortality of animals, and as a result farmers reported an increase in livestock production and income. These outcomes cannot be solely attributed to the project because during the project period, the Government of Afghanistan also implemented some vaccination and control programmes in the target area. It is without doubt though that the RMLSP project contributed significantly to the improvement of local animal health services, farmers' knowledge, farmers' skills, and improved health and productivity of the livestock.