

**SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT CORPORATION
NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE
PAKISTAN**

**End Of Phase Evaluation
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*Ms Norah Gibson
Mr Brian Rowe
Ms Els Boerma
Ms Aroona Kamal*

**Novib, The Hague
SRSC, Pakistan**

Femconsult, The Hague

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past two years, SRSC has made significant progress in improving management capability. SRSC has a Chief Executive who is well-regarded both inside and outside the organisation. SRSC has established functional linkages with other organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, and is now positively regarded by these organisations. SRSC responded well to the crisis in Charsadda and programme activities can continue (though the reintroduction of credit disbursement may be delayed). Decentralisation is proceeding smoothly. Staff turnover was at 16% in 1997. SRSC may experience difficulty in retaining staff, especially females, as the work often entails unsociable hours and salaries are not as competitive as they were. The salary review approved by the Board of Directors should be implemented.

Whilst staff capacity for programme implementation and monitoring has improved, there is still a need for training at all levels in planning, report writing, credit and enterprise. Consultancy support to SRSC should be provided in order to: develop an overall strategy and proposal for the next Phase; to prepare a staff development plan; to develop a conceptual framework and plan for future Gender activities (institutional and operational); to strengthen as soon as possible staff capacity in credit and enterprise. An Impact Evaluation of SRSC's activities to date, including participation of and benefits to the poorest and of the impact of the HRD training, would be timely.

Records at community level suggest that a reasonable proportion of CO/WO membership and recipients of credit belongs to the target group (the "poorest"), but this information is not presented in consolidated reports and is not always clearly stated in impact studies. Proformas for baselines, progress reports and impact studies should be modified to ensure that categories of beneficiaries can be presented. Effect of activities on income over time and on household food security should also be routinely monitored.

The concept of activists at community level to subsume eventually much of the responsibility of SRSC's front line staff is basically sound and should increase chances of sustainability and programme cost-effectiveness. The rate at which women's organisations can mature is constrained by very low literacy levels, limited mobility and exposure to experiences outside the home. More time and extension input is therefore required for WOs than for COs and this must be planned for by SRSC.

SRSC has a comprehensive system for PMER, through which much information is generated. Streamlining is required to ensure that this information is easily applied as a management tool. Standard formats should be introduced for community profiles, progress reports, annual reviews etc and to the extent possible donors should assist SRSC in this regard by standardising their reporting requirements to the extent possible.

Credit has become a major activity of SRSC and is considered by them as vital for successful social organisation. Whilst the system in place is appropriate, it is not at present sustainable and measures must be introduced to increase recovery rates and efficiency.

The enterprises supported through credit are generally appropriate and Gender sensitive, though training in simple business skills, including feasibility and marketing, is required for front line staff and group members.

Following its entry into the NOVIB Gender Focus Programme, SRSC has made considerable progress in the integration of Gender into programme sections and in the sensitisation of SRSC staff. There is, however, need to draw the various activities into a cohesive framework, relating activities to identified problems, priorities and stated objectives with the expected impact over time to be defined.

In view of the needs for strengthening proposed in this report, it is suggested that for the short term, SRSC consolidate its activities and that any expansion be limited to increased coverage of target households in the programme areas where SRSC is already established.

SRSC is a limited liability corporation. Donors may wish to ascertain ownership of any assets should the corporation for any reason be terminated.