

GCF Observer Network of Civil Society, Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities

Intervention on

FP269: Dairy Interventions for Mitigation and Adaptation (DalMA)

Access the document: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b42-02-add11>

While we appreciate the intent to transform a sector, in this case dairy, toward “sustainability and climate resilience”, this cross-cutting programme raises serious concerns across both its adaptation and mitigation components.

We recognize that mitigation is complex; however, the planned 29% reduction in emissions intensity, coupled with a 34% increase in milk production, raises concerns. This project plans only a 4.01% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions at a cost of \$165 US dollars per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent. Such a decrease seems negligible and inefficient given the scale of the programme. And while methane emissions from dairy are critical drivers of the countries’ greenhouse gas emissions, methane from enteric fermentation will decrease by only 4.61%, while methane from manure management would only decrease by 5.93%.

Additionally, the baseline state of emissions measurement is admittedly inadequate, but improving the reporting is cast as an opportunity to capture more climate finance. This framing magnifies our fears that the goal is the capture of funds for the industry more than a meaningful reduction of its climate impacts or access to resilience-building measures for the smallholder farmers involved.

Indeed, ITAP notes that the endeavor not to increase the overall cattle head count is beyond the programme’s control because such decision-making ultimately lies with the farmers and producers, and acknowledges that the project’s incentives driving efficiency and effectiveness could lead to herd size increases. Furthermore, we share ITAP’s concern that project results could be undermined by the documented climate impacts such as heat stress and decline in milk yields, or increases in disease vectors, paradoxically resulting in herd increase as productivity per cow might decrease. Additionally, one programme component is supporting the development of a carbon certification system for the dairy sector, and given the consistent failure of carbon certification systems to validate any real emissions reductions whenever investigators and certifiers take a closer look, this programme further risks institutionalizing the imagined in place of the actual.

While these mitigation results achieved at a high cost remain unconvincing, many questions are also raised from an adaptation perspective. This proposal purports to serve pastoralists as well as smallholder farmers, but the outlined activities often speak to the additional focus

on medium to large-scale extensive farmers, leaving us to wonder who ultimately benefits. The types of activities reveal the scale of the interventions. The capacities of countries to support artificial insemination and have storage facilities with liquid nitrogen speaks directly to the industrialization of the sector, while commensurate activities to preserve pastoralist knowledge and traditions are not seen. Instead, farmers will be trained in digital apps to monitor their herds.

Furthermore, climate resilience is at one point assumed to be achieved merely through the increase in agricultural GDP growth, which calls into question yet again the precise adaptation credentials of this cross-cutting project. ITAP even recommends that the programme implementation manual include a “clear statement of the intended adaptation impact of the project”.

The potential negative impacts that step-gains in efficiency and effectiveness among larger farmers, as well as the consolidation of power facilitated by an injection of funding, may have on smallholders is a risk utterly unacknowledged. With one programme aim focused on attracting additional private sector finance, a throughline throughout the proposal is the idea of the marketization of dairy value chains and strengthening partnerships with the private sector, supporting the idea that the primary beneficiaries are indeed not pastoralists and smallholders and the fundamental benefits are not household stability and improved nutrition, but private sector dairy actors working at a much larger scale. The cost of using scarce public financing for this gambit is too high.