

Kingdom of Cambodia

**Community-Based Rural Development Project in
Kampong Thom and Kampot**

PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT





Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Independent Office of Evaluation

Kingdom of Cambodia

Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot

Project Performance Assessment

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Photos of activities supported by the Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot

Front cover: Successful irrigation scheme in Beung Nimol (under sustainability)

Back cover: Boy at open well supported by the project in Preytahon village in Kampong Thom Province (left); Freshly harvested mangoes from Kampot province which will be exported to Vietnam (right).

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Preface

The objectives of the Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot in Cambodia were to increase food production and farm income and increase capacity of the poor to use the services available from the Government and other sources for their social and economic development. According to the present assessment, the project's support to farmers contributed to increased agricultural and livestock production and better livelihoods through improved infrastructure work and related access to services and markets. The project also made use of farmer-to-farmer extension methods which have spread beyond the immediate demonstration areas. It was a front-runner in terms of putting Cambodia's decentralization policy into practice.

There were some weaknesses in the hydrological and engineering design and the site selection, which impacted on the functionality of irrigation systems. Operation and maintenance of irrigation but also of roads remain a challenge, although the sustainability of the extension services is likely to benefit from the emerging commercialization, market linkages and resultant contract farming. The assessment recommends that future IFAD projects pay more attention to the role of markets and facilitate farmer promoters to become agricultural input suppliers, in order to strengthen the rural development process.

This project performance assessment was conducted by Catrina Perch, Evaluation Officer, with contributions by Steven Shepley, consultant (agricultural specialist). Internal peer reviewers from the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD – Fabrizio Felloni, Senior Evaluation Officer, and Miguel Torralba, Evaluation Officer, provided guidance and comments on the draft evaluation report. Linda Danielsson, Evaluation Assistant, provided administrative support to the evaluation.

The Independent Office of Evaluation is grateful to IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division and the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for their insightful inputs and comments at various stages throughout the evaluation process and the support provided to the mission.



Luciano Lavizzari
Director
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Women at the Beung Nimol irrigation scheme supported by the project in Kampot Province harvesting peanuts.
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Contents

Currency equivalents	ii
Abbreviations and acronyms	ii
Map of the project area	iii
Executive summary	iv
I. Objectives, methodology and process	1
II. The project	2
A. The project context	2
B. Project implementation performance	4
III. Review of findings	6
A. Project performance	6
B. Rural poverty impact	13
C. Other performance criteria	18
D. Performance of partners	25
E. Overall project achievement	26
IV. Conclusions and recommendations	26
A. Conclusions	26
B. Recommendations	27

Annexes

1. Rating comparison	29
2. Basic project data	30
3. Terms of reference	31
4. Methodological note on project performance assessments	35
5. Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE	39
6. List of key persons met	40
7. Bibliography	41
8. Nine critical control points	43
9. Organization chart of institutional relationships	44
10. Current livelihood profile	45
11. Malnutrition	46

Currency equivalents

Currency Unit = Cambodian Riel (KHR)
US\$1 = KHR 3,974.0
US\$1 = EUR 0.675
(1 May 2011)

Abbreviations and acronyms

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAAEP	Cambodia Australia Agricultural Extension Project
CBRDP	Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot
COSOP	country strategic opportunities paper/programme
DED	German Development Service <i>(Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst)</i>
EIRR	economic internal rate of return
FWUC	farmer water user committee
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation <i>(Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)*</i>
ISFs	irrigation service fees
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
LTC	local technical committee
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MTR	mid-term review
MVF	most vulnerable families
O&M	operation and maintenance
PCR	project completion report
PCRV	project completion report validation
PDWRAM	Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology
PIA	project impact assessment
PPA	project performance assessment
PPMS	Project Portfolio Management System
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VAHW	village animal health worker
WFP	World Food Programme

* Referred to as GIZ as of 1 January 2011. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) fuses three German entities: the German Development Service ([Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst](#) [DED]), German Agency for Technical Cooperation ([Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit](#) [GTZ]), and Capacity Building International ([Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung](#) [InWEnt])

Map of the project area

Kingdom of Cambodia

Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot

Project performance assessment



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.



Map compiled by IFAD

27-09-2012

Executive summary

1. **Background.** This report presents the findings of the project performance assessment (PPA) of the Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot (CBRDP) in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The PPA builds on the project completion report validation, and adds findings from a mission to Cambodia, including interviews in the capital and in the field. The PPA's objectives are to:
 - Assess the results of the CBRDP.
 - Generate findings and recommendations for the implementation of ongoing operations in the country, as well as the design of future ones.
2. The PPA placed a particular emphasis on agriculture, targeting, gender, and operation and maintenance. The agriculture component was chosen because it was the component that was ultimately going to increase food production and farm incomes and therefore merited special attention. Targeting, through its focus on the most vulnerable families, was identified in the project completion report as the most effective project tool to have the largest impact on the poor. Further research was required to assess the design assumptions and implementation modalities as well as the replication and scaling up potential for the most vulnerable families. Also, gender was not sufficiently covered in the project completion report. Finally, objectives related to operation and maintenance had only been partially achieved according to the project completion report. The reasons for this were further examined.
3. The CBRDP started in 2001 and was completed in 2010. It was cofinanced by IFAD, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (now the German Agency for International Cooperation), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid), the World Food Programme and, later, the United Nations Development Programme. The CBRDP was a broad-based rural development project aimed at reducing the poverty of some 77,400 households living in Kampot and Kampong Thom Provinces in Cambodia. It had four components: community development; agricultural development; infrastructure; and institutional development. Total costs at approval were US\$22.85 million of which the IFAD loan component was US\$10.00 million.
4. **Relevance.** The CBRDP was in line with the Government's poverty reduction and decentralization agenda. The project was relevant to the poor, although the poverty focus initially received less attention, and the needs of the poorest were not always met. The project design included many components and involved a large number of international and national partners, which complicated coordination and the overall implementation of the project. It was mainly supply-oriented and there were weaknesses in the design of the irrigation component and monitoring and evaluation.
5. **Effectiveness.** The project was successful in promoting the adoption of technologies. As a result production increased and food security was improved, but more follow up could have improved the quality of the extension activities. The target set in terms of extension events was not achieved and farmers proved unwilling to pay for agricultural services. However, promoting farmer-to-farmer extension methods as a way of promoting adoption of new techniques appears to have created a diffusion effect within project areas. There was general satisfaction with government services.
6. **Efficiency.** Efficiency in terms of meeting most expenditure targets was adequate. Robust internal rates of return were achieved for wells and some irrigation systems. However, the internal rates of return for irrigation systems with low dry season to wet season cropping ratios, and for rural roads, were less satisfactory.

7. **Impact.** In target villages during the project period, household income and assets rose, and there was a modest decline in rural poverty. The project contributed to the general trend of rural poverty reduction throughout the country as a result of increased trade and investment. This was achieved through the establishment of an extension system, improved infrastructure and related access to services and markets. The impact on agricultural output was significant. The CBRDP contributed to increased productivity of rice by an average of 1.2658 tons per hectare, and of cattle by 50 per cent. The emphasis on capacity-building contributed to increased ability of some villagers to maintain infrastructure and group revolving funds, as well as articulate their own priorities. However, some of the poorest households did not benefit significantly from the project.
8. **Sustainability.** Of all the project activities, the ones relating to the agricultural and institutional processes (such as decentralization, and local institutional development and coordination) are likely to be the most sustainable. The rural infrastructure investments are only partially sustainable in that the current operation and maintenance arrangements can only cope with minor repairs.
9. **Innovations and scaling up.** The CBRDP was considered to be an innovative project because of the novel processes used for project implementation such as engagement of commune councils in mainstreaming rural livelihoods through specific funds and the introduction of village animal health workers and local technical committees. It paved the way for implementing the decentralization policy, and introduced new approaches to pro-poor service delivery. The CBRDP piloted a targeting approach ("most vulnerable families") that is now being scaled up at national level through the Ministry of Planning.
10. **Gender.** The CBRDP offered an innovative opportunity to mainstream gender issues throughout all project activities and processes. However, the project only partially reached its gender targets. The CBRDP invested in gender awareness training for staff and beneficiaries, but failed to follow this up. Women participated in various groups, and benefited from improved road access, water supply and access to financial services. However, in terms of decision-making, their role remained limited. They received some extension services, but targets in terms of adoption were not met.
11. **Monitoring and evaluation.** Efforts to generate quantitative data through the project impact assessment indicators were hampered by the lack of a baseline study and control groups.
12. **Performance of partners.** The mission identified some design weaknesses (e.g. irrigation component) for which mainly IFAD was responsible. However, appropriate follow up was undertaken subsequent to the mid-term review which helped resolve many implementation issues. The Government had to "learn by doing" in an environment where coordination and participation were unfamiliar concepts to relatively inexperienced project staff at both provincial and national level. Project ownership improved, even though the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology and the two Provincial Departments of Water Resources and Meteorology continued to operate in a top down way, with little commitment and support to water users' committees.
13. **Conclusion.** The CBRDP's main purpose was to reduce poverty for the target population. It sought to do so by intensifying and diversifying food and livestock production, and increasing the capacity of the poor to use the services available from government and other sources for their social and economic development. The approach was intended to promote poverty reduction through a broad range of issues and to do so in a mainly supply-driven way. There were some design weaknesses in the irrigation component and in monitoring and evaluation. The project, however, contributed to increasing household income and there was a modest decline in rural poverty. The project was helped in this effort by external

factors, which expanded the cash economy through trade with neighbouring countries, and provided new opportunities for many farmers across Cambodia. The CBRDP contributed to this trend by, among other activities, promoting farmer-to-farmer extension methods as a way of promoting adoption of new techniques. It appears that this created a diffusion effect within project areas. The fact that the poorest households may have derived few benefits prevented the agricultural component from being an unqualified success.

14. The project became a front-runner in terms of putting Cambodia's decentralization policy into practice. This was not an easy process, and caused some delays as well as a momentary loss of the more production-oriented objectives. Training and technical assistance played an important part, but capacity was also built through learning by doing.

Recommendations

15. **Support a demand pull strategy for agriculture.** In order for farmers to meet consumer preferences with higher returns and improved household incomes, future projects should be value chain anchored as well as production-oriented. By focusing on both production and consumption, it is possible to work for a "double win" scenario where the emerging global market is taken into consideration.
16. **Facilitate farmer promoters to become agricultural input suppliers and produce traders at the village level.** Future projects should promote a combination of contract farming-driven agricultural development, with farmer promoters becoming agricultural input suppliers and produce traders at the village level. In this way, farmer promoters would be able to earn service fees from input sales, while also delivering technological advice to their client farmers on input use for productivity gains.
17. **Improve irrigation system rehabilitation.** In order to achieve satisfactory impacts, irrigation planning should avoid a compartmentalized approach, and ensure that a number of critical points¹ (e.g. participatory crop irrigation and planning, water user empowerment and dry season hydrology) are taken into consideration. In addition, irrigation system areas should be kept small (100-200 hectares) as they tend to generate greater economic internal rates of return.
18. **Improve monitoring and evaluation system design and functionality.** To improve impact assessment monitoring, surveys of households before (baseline) and after projects need to be undertaken. In doing so, and where feasible, the use of control groups may be desirable. Making use of a limited carefully selected number of indicators may also improve the functionality of the monitoring and evaluation system.

¹ See annex 8 for a list of all nine steps.

I. Objectives, methodology and process

1. **Background.** The Peer Review of IFAD's evaluation function, undertaken in 2010, recommends that IOE focuses on two forms of project evaluations: Project Completion Report Validations (PCRVs) and Project Performance Assessments (PPAs). The PCRV consists of a desk review of the Project Completion Report (PCR) and of any other supporting documents.
2. The PPA is undertaken shortly after the PCRV and involves field visits. The PPA is not expected to investigate all the activities financed under the project, or to undertake an in-depth impact assessment. The purpose of the PPA is to fill major information gaps, inconsistencies and analytical weaknesses of the PCR; to validate further the explanations, conclusions and lessons learned presented in the PCR; and to shed light on selected features of project implementation that are not adequately analysed in the PCR, thereby contributing to learning and accountability.
3. **Objectives.** The objectives of the PPA are to: (i) assess the results and impact of the project under consideration; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design of future and implementation of on-going operations in the country.
4. **Methodology.** The PPA follows IFAD's Evaluation Manual¹ and Guidelines for PCRV and PPA.² It relies on extensive desk review of available documents undertaken as part of the preparation of the PCRV, including the project appraisal, Mid-Term Review (MTR), supervision and implementation support reports, the project completion report, PCRV and relevant IFAD policies.³ In addition to these documents, three beneficiary impact assessments and one quantitative project impact assessment of household level project results (2007) were undertaken by CBRDP. There was also an Assessment of Sustainability of Rural Institutions in IFAD-supported Projects in Cambodia (2009) and a study on Rural Productive Service Delivery for two IFAD projects (2009). This data provides the basis for most of the evaluation's assessment, and is supplemented with data from the mission interviews and visits.
5. Primary data was collected in the field in order to verify available information, and to reach an independent assessment of performance and results. Due to time constraints, a qualitative approach was adopted for data collection, using semi-structured interviews. Data collection methods included focus group discussions with members of the Project Support Unit, Ministry staff, provincial line agencies, executive committee and beneficiaries.⁴
6. Although efforts were made, through the quantitative Project Impact Assessment (PIA), to provide key impact data on indicators such as agricultural productivity and malnutrition, these were greatly hampered by the lack of a baseline study. In addition, no control groups had been established.
7. **Process.** The PPA mission⁵ was conducted from March to April 2011. It was carried out with the support of the Ministry of Rural Development. A presentation, with preliminary findings and identified issues, was shared with project stakeholders at a wrap up meeting in Phnom Penh on 8 April 2011.⁶ The draft report benefitted from comments of the IFAD management and the Government of Cambodia.

¹ Available on the following link: http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/index.htm.

² For more information on the methodology and what a PPA is please refer to annex 4.

³ A complete list of reviewed documents is presented in annex 7.

⁴ A complete list of persons met is presented in annex 6.

⁵ The mission was led by Ms. Catrina Perch, lead evaluator, IOE, and included Dr. Steven Shepley, consultant, IOE (agriculture and operation and maintenance).

⁶ For the full Terms of Reference please refer to annex 3.

II. The project

A. The project context

8. According to the World Bank Poverty Assessment (2006), Cambodia enjoys relatively favourable conditions for development in terms of geographical endowments. Its land is not particularly fertile, and the hydrological regime is complex, but Cambodia has a deep-water port, plenty of flat cultivable terrain, productive freshwater fisheries and a considerable stock of timber. The country's most important asset is its favourable geographical position in a fast growing region, with land borders that allow access to markets in Thailand and Vietnam.
9. Cambodia's poverty is primarily due to almost three decades of conflict. Civil war began in 1970, ending in victory for the Khmer Rouge. Under their rule, population levels fell by one fifth between 1975 and 1979. The 1980s were characterised by Cambodia's slow recovery in the context of a 'low intensity' conflict and international isolation. The civil war has severely affected the nation's human capital, destroyed infrastructure, and weakened or distorted social, economic and political institutions.
10. Despite this background, Cambodia has, since the 1990s, experienced remarkably rapid growth, poverty reduction and increased delivery of services. Economic growth has contributed to significant poverty reduction. More particularly, the national poverty prevalence was reduced from around 45-50 per cent in 1994 to 30 per cent in 2007.⁷ The decline in poverty during this period reflects significant growth in real per capita household consumption (the measure of living standards used in Cambodia). However, rapid economic growth between 2004 and 2007 has been associated not only with falling poverty but also with rising levels of inequality.⁸ In addition, the nation's growth has proved fragile, and vulnerable to global economic and financial crises.
11. CBRDP, the third IFAD-funded project in Cambodia, was approved by the IFAD Executive Board in December 2000, signed in January 2001 and declared effective in March 2001. The project closed in June 2010, following two extensions from January 2008 and January 2009.⁹
12. **Project objectives.** The goal of the project was 'to reduce the poverty of targeted households in the project area'. The immediate project objectives were:
 - i) increased food production and farm income for 39,150 poor households due to intensified and diversified crop and livestock production; and
 - ii) increased capacity of the poor to use the services available from government and other sources for their social and economic development.
13. After the MTR in 2004, a third objective was added, namely:
 - iii) poorer households, their village organizations and commune councils jointly with government and non-government service providers efficiently implement development activities for their economic and social well-being.
14. The project had four components which included: community development; agricultural and livestock development; rural infrastructure; and support to institutional development. A breakdown of the project costs, including the percentage of the base costs for each of the components, is provided in table 1.

⁷ Project Design Document Community-Based Agricultural Productivity Project 2010.

⁸ Changes in the Gini coefficient for Cambodia went from 41.7 in 2004 to 43 in 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2172.html>.

⁹ Memo dated 23 January 2008 from the Director, Asia and the Pacific Division to the Minister of Economy and Finance; and memo dated 9th January 2009 from Director, Asia and the Pacific Division to the President of IFAD.

Table 1
Summary of project costs US\$

Components	Total US\$ million	% of base costs
Community Development	3 477 547	17
Agricultural and Livestock Development	6 759 564	34
Rural Infrastructure Development	5 938 317	30
Support to Institutional Development	3 939 233	20
Total base costs	20 114 661	100

Source: IFAD Report and Recommendation of the President, 2000.

15. **Project costs.** Total project cost at approval was US\$22.85 million, of which the IFAD loan (highly concessional) amounted to US\$10 million (44 per cent); the government contribution was US\$1.82 million (8 per cent); the German Government through the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ [now GIZ]) and *Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst* (DED [German Development Service]) US\$8 million (35 per cent); Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid) US\$0.55 million (2 per cent); World Food Programme (WFP) US\$1.3 million (6 per cent) in food for work assistance to help finance the cost of infrastructure investment; and beneficiaries US\$1.30 million (6 per cent) as a contribution in cash and labour for infrastructure investment and operation and maintenance (O&M).
16. **Project area and target groups.** The project comprised 1,134 villages in Kampong Thom and Kampot provinces, situated respectively north and south of the capital Phnom Penh. Based on WFP data, these two provinces were classified as among the four most vulnerable to food insecurity in the country. The project sought to build on interventions by GTZ in supporting grass-root organizations in their social and economic development. The project's target group comprised an estimated 77,400 rural households (40 per cent of the local rural population) who lived below the poverty line of US\$112 per capita per year. At full development in project year 10, the total estimated number of direct beneficiary households was 49,600 (39,150 poor households benefitting from crop and extension programmes and irrigation development, and an additional 10,450 households benefitting from improved rural water supply and access roads).¹⁰ Women were considered a significant part of the target group because of their important role in crop and livestock production and community activities.
17. **Supervision and implementation support.** Between 2001–2007, the project was supervised by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and an MTR was carried out in 2004. IFAD took over direct supervision in 2007. UNOPS organized a total of five supervision missions from 2002–2007. There were two follow up missions in 2004 undertaken by IFAD, which related to the following subjects: review of the feasibility study for Steung Phe irrigation project in Kampot (August 2004); and the implementation of the agriculture component (November 2004).
18. **Implementation modalities.** The project's executing agency was the Ministry of Rural Development, which housed the Project Support Unit. In parallel with this

¹⁰ The Project Impact Assessment (PIA) estimates the beneficiary households as 219,000, or 165,000, when excluding indirect beneficiaries. It categorizes all sampled households in the project areas as belonging to one of four main beneficiary subgroups. This assumption implies that, due to the wide ranging interventions implemented by CBRDP, any household in the project area that is not a direct beneficiary is considered to have received some indirect benefits, and therefore is an indirect beneficiary. These indirect benefits appear somewhat intangible, and seem to relate to an improvement in overall cooperation and communication between people and administrative structures. It is the mission's opinion that it would be more appropriate to concentrate on direct beneficiaries and refrain from making tenuous assumptions concerning indirect beneficiaries where the quantification of impacts is less tangible. However, as the mission had to rely extensively on the PIA, this assessment has had to refer to this categorization when citing it.

unit, the *Seila* Task Force¹¹ had a secretariat in Phnom Penh, and provided policy guidance on the decentralization of government functions, and inter-ministerial coordination when the Project Support Unit was unable to resolve coordination issues. At the provincial level, project implementation involved the Provincial Rural Development Committee; its Executive Committee; the Provincial Department of Rural Development; the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Provincial Services of Water Resources and Meteorology; and the Provincial Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. At district level, project implementation involved the District Development Committee and district based staff in provincial line agencies; in communes, the Commune Development Committees (replaced by the commune councils after the election in 2002) and their administration. At the village level, the beneficiaries, self-help groups, village development committees, extension groups, etc. played a major role in project planning and implementation (see organizational chart of institutional relationships in annex 9).

B. Project implementation performance

Changes to project design

19. **Several** changes to the project and its context occurred during implementation. Major changes were made after the election of commune councils in 2002, and the subsequent move from nationally controlled service delivery to a decentralized system.¹² The new system incorporated the commune councils, the commune planning process and the Commune/Sangkat Fund.¹³
20. The logical framework was revised following the MTR in 2004, to reflect the development role and financing of the commune councils, and also to simplify the project design.¹⁴
21. The project was extended by 21 months from 30 September 2008 to 30 June 2010.¹⁵ Although the PCR was carried out in 2008, some activities were extended until 2010, and one supervision mission took place in 2009.

Implementation results

Component 1: Community development

22. The role of the community development component was to help build the communities' capacity to: i) participate in the planning and implementation of their own development; ii) enable them to sustain their small scale infrastructure investments; iii) make better use of the resources to which they have access and; iv) use services available from the government and other sources. This included establishing and developing rice banks, village development committees and other community based organizations working on local development. In addition, extensive support was given to strengthen the participation and cooperation of commune councils. This involved training elected councillors in understanding their roles and responsibilities. CBRDP also provided capacity building for facilitators from non-governmental organizations and provincial departments with regard to their day-to-day management, organization of meetings, and reporting to their

¹¹ A Khmer word meaning foundation stone. The name was originally given to the government's approach to decentralized planning and development, an initiative to strengthen local governance as the key to sustaining poverty alleviation in Cambodia.

¹² Project Completion Report 2008.

¹³ Sangkat is the basic administrative level of local areas in the city.

¹⁴ More particularly, this meant that from 2005, the rural infrastructure sub-component was implemented through commune councils by introducing the Rural Infrastructure Investment Fund and an Operation and Maintenance Fund used by Local Technical Committees (LTCs). In the Agriculture Component, additional activities were developed in order to explicitly target the most vulnerable households in the villages, and to support local governance structures.

¹⁵ The purpose of the extension was twofold. First, to use SDR868,956 in the Loan Account and Special Account in June 2008 to reactivate the project's activities to focus on the most vulnerable families (MVF). These households were adversely affected by the rise in food and other prices in 2008. Secondly, to allow the completion of irrigation canal construction work at Steung Phe phase II (which had to be rebid in 2007), and to continue the development of Steung Phe Phase II and the other project-financed irrigation schemes (Memo dated 9th January 2009).

members and commune councils. Special attention was given to understanding and promoting the principles of democratic decentralization and civil society participation through village networks.¹⁶ According to project documentation, these activities have resulted in the establishment and training of village networks in 550 villages and the participation of the local population in commune and district planning, project implementation and the provision of demand oriented services. In addition, over 900 local technical committees have been established, trained and supported in their tasks to manage O&M of village infrastructure. At the village level most vulnerable families (MVF) lists have been established in all districts.

Component 2: Agriculture development

23. The project sought, through district outreach teams, to provide extension services to farmers through training, field demonstrations and direct input supplies (in form of mini kits with seed and fertilizer). Extension contents included System of Rice Intensification (SRI), improved rice seed and fertilizer use, pest control, vegetable production, and chicken and pig raising. CBRDP also promoted private service providers such as Village Livestock Agents and Farmer Promoters/Trainers.
24. According to project documentation,¹⁷ during the lifetime of the project over 1,000 villages were targeted in 173 communes and 15 districts within both provinces. Each year on average, 680 field demonstrations were conducted, and each year over 12,500 participants attended farmer training courses on various new technologies.

Component 3: Infrastructure

25. The project provided funds for the construction and maintenance of rural infrastructure, such as rural roads and water supply systems. Up until 2004, the Provincial Departments of Rural Development managed these activities. In 2005 and 2006, each commune in the target districts received a contribution to their Commune/Sangkat fund provided through the project's Rural Infrastructure Investment Fund.
26. The project reached its targets in terms of roads constructed or rehabilitated with a total of 354.6 km. During the project, 765 drinking water points were constructed according to Seila standards: shallow wells, deep well, ponds, etc. In addition, seven irrigation schemes were built in the provinces of Kampot and Kampong Thom. The irrigation schemes in Kampot covered 400 ha in both seasons (wet and dry). In Kampong Thom they covered 750 ha in the wet season and 70 ha in the dry season. All schemes constructed in both provinces have a farmer water user committee (FWUC) responsible for O&M and water distribution.
27. For other infrastructure activities, local technical committees (LTCs) were elected at the planning stage. These groups were trained by staff at the Provincial Department of Rural Development, and were involved in implementation, monitoring, and maintenance of the physical structures for effective and sustainable use.
28. More than 75 per cent of LTCs were reported to be meeting regularly. However, less than 50 per cent functioned properly in terms of having and following a written set of statutes, managing their finances, keeping records, etc.¹⁸ Seventy five per cent of wells were properly maintained, but only about 40 per cent of roads function all year round.

¹⁶ The purpose of a village network is to form a group of active individuals at village level to organize themselves, represent villagers' interests, assist in solving their problems, and act as an intermediary between citizens and commune councils.

¹⁷ CBRDP brochure.

¹⁸ Romano, Monica "Assessment of Sustainability of Rural Institutions in IFAD Projects in Cambodia", December, 2009, page 11.

Component 4: Institutional development

29. CBRDP provided considerable capacity development to improve coordination and cooperation between various administrative levels, and to foster participatory decision making and demand-driven service delivery. Assistance included supporting sub-national government agencies through coaching and advice, study trips, and formal training on understanding decentralization and its implication for development, steering and coordination of development activities, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and financial management. Support was also provided for provincial administrative units through provision of capacity building measures to the commune councils.
30. Based on project documentation, these activities resulted in 173 communes and their commune councillors being able to steer the yearly process to implement development measures properly, and to respond to people's problems and needs. Provincial and district government agencies considerably improved their understanding of the commune planning process, project implementation, civil registration and procurement during the project's implementation. In addition, four Commune Council District Forums were established in Kampong Thom province in 2005, serving as spaces where councillors can share common issues and concerns.

Key points

- The project was a broad-based rural development project, and was the third IFAD-financed project in Cambodia.
- The overall goal of CBRDP was to reduce poverty of targeted households.
- The election of commune councils in 2002 provided commune councils with more authority.
- The project included national and international partners and donors.
- Output targets were mostly achieved.

III. Review of findings¹⁹

A. Project performance

Relevance

31. **Objectives.** CBRDP objectives were highly relevant to the Royal Government of Cambodia's policies for poverty reduction as set out in the First Socio-Economic Development Plan (1996-2000); the Rectangular Strategy for growth, employment, equity and efficiency (2004); and the National Strategic Development Plan (2006-2010). The project had interventions in three of the four strategic growth angles namely: i) enhancement of the agricultural sector; ii) continued rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure; and iii) capacity building and human resource development. By working with provincial, district, commune and village institutions, the project supported the policy of decentralization and involved a number of civil society organizations. The project's relevance to government policy was facilitated by being entirely implemented by provincial and commune government agencies, with policy guidance provided by national focal points.
32. CBRDP was also consistent with IFAD's corporate strategic frameworks (2002-2006 and 2007-2010) that highlight the importance of agricultural productivity and access to markets for improving the livelihoods of the rural poor. It was also generally consistent with the 1998 country strategic opportunities paper (COSOP) for Cambodia.²⁰

¹⁹ See annex 5 for a summary of definitions of evaluation criteria used by the Independent Office of Evaluation.

²⁰ For example, the CBRDP build on two previous projects in the target area funded by GTZ namely, the Provincial Development Project in Kampong Thom, and the Food Security Programme in Kampot, thus complying with the approach outlined in the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) of partnering with other donors. However, it did not apply the COSOP's stipulation of simple project design.

33. **Project design.** The project design was complex and perhaps overly ambitious. It had many components and activities (e.g. gender, infrastructure, community development, project management) and stakeholders (Ministry of Rural Development; Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology; Ministry of Women's Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; IFAD; GTZ; United Nations Development Programme; and AusAID), and built on two quite different GTZ projects. In addition, although the commune council elections were foreseen at appraisal, the advent of these councils dramatically changed the delivery, support structure and mechanism at provincial and district level. For example, provincial departments initially played a major role in the identification, planning and implementation of project activities, in particular infrastructure activities. This situation changed as the commune councils became more active and took over responsibility for the development of their communes.²¹ At the time of project design the institutional changes were already on the horizon but were not confirmed so it might be considered to be risky to design a project delivery mechanism (decentralized coordination mechanism) based on a still uncertain political situation. However, CBRDP's alignment with the National Seila Programme, which was designed by the Government to coordinate external assistance and national development efforts with regard to decentralization, facilitated the implementation process.
34. Initially gender was not mainstreamed in a coherent manner throughout the project (it was only clearly identified as a sub-component of community development). However, after the MTR, gender became a separate objective with its own, albeit limited, resources. Gender training activities for staff in other components were limited, and consequently gender considerations were not fully integrated into all project activities, and were not explicitly monitored with, for example, systematic assessments of capacity as foreseen in the revised logframe of the MTR.
35. CBRDP had six outputs with 44 indicators that contributed to the project's objective. The PCR notes that this excessive number of indicators contributed to insufficient data collection, and IOE concurs with this assessment.
36. There were some design faults, such as the selection of some of the irrigation systems to be rehabilitated (e.g. some irrigation systems were constructed on marginally irrigable land and/or were poorly designed²²). This lead to suppressed yields, inadequate dry season command areas, low water productivity, and reduced farmer income which in turn, suppressed farm profitability and resulted in farmer dissatisfaction with services, and unwillingness and incapacity to pay irrigation service fees (ISFs).
37. **Relevance to the needs of the rural poor.** The large majority of rural households in the two target provinces, Kampong Thom and Kampot, are farmers with farming systems dominated by rice. In 2001, low rice harvest yields did not meet subsistence needs, and diversification of income opportunities was therefore required. There was also limited basic infrastructure such as roads, water supply and irrigation, as well as very limited capacities to upgrade them.
38. Satisfaction rates expressed by villagers in beneficiary impact assessments, as well as provision of labour and time in LTCs and water users committees, suggest that the activities were relevant to their needs.
39. **Targeting.** The project design focused on crop demonstration and extension activities that helped poor rural households who had access to some land, while the landless were likely to be the poorest group were missed by this. The irrigation component rehabilitated existing irrigation schemes, thereby providing water to

²¹ Project Completion Report, 2008.

²² More particularly, these deficiencies resulted in highly restricted dry season command areas. The dry season water delivery did not match crop root zone requirements and failed to adequately compensate of evapo-transpiration).

households who may already have had some access to it. Similarly, project training and promotion of improved methods for raising cattle and buffaloes were of more interest to the households that already owned these animals. However, the female-headed households in the project areas (21 per cent of direct beneficiaries) tended to have, on average, less land, fewer and lower total value of assets; in other words, these were among the poorer households. Therefore, the direct beneficiaries of the project were a mix of households whose depth of poverty ranged from the poorest of the poor to the less poor, with the latter category benefitting most and the former category benefitting the least from the agricultural component.

40. From MTR onwards, CBRDP introduced new approaches that focused more explicitly on the identification of poor households, targeting MVFs directly with agricultural and other activities. More particularly, with support from commune councillors and representatives from the villages, MVFs were identified and encouraged to form groups (mainly revolving credit fund groups). MVFs were provided with special identity cards to provide them with free access to government services and donor support activities.
41. **Relevance rating.** CBRDP's strong policy alignment, poverty orientation and attention to decentralization issues are considered as positive contributions to project relevance. This is despite some design weaknesses (such as with the irrigation component), a very broad scope and overly complicated monitoring system. The PPA relevance rating is therefore moderately satisfactory (4).

Effectiveness

42. Effectiveness refers to the extent to which project specific objectives²³ were achieved.

Objective 1: Increased food production and farm income for 39,150 poor households from intensified and diversified crop and livestock production

43. This objective was principally covered by the agricultural component, which focused its efforts on increasing the awareness and adoption of intensified and diversified crop and livestock production to improve household income and food security. These objectives were partially achieved.
44. In terms of adoption rates, the target indicator (16,000 adopters) was fully achieved (see table 2 below) if 'adoption' means having adopted an average of 2-3 CBRDP recommended innovations. If adoption means having adopted only one innovation, then the target indicator was over achieved (100,000 farmers).

Table 2
Adoption rates

No. of technologies adopted	Male adopters	Female adopters	Total adopters	Share of female household
1 technology adopted	37 800	17 200	55 000	31.3%
2 technologies adopted	16 900	2 100	19 000	11.1%
3 technologies adopted	9 200	1 800	11 000	16.4%
More than 3 technologies adopted	13 600	1 400	15 000	9.3%
Total adopters	77 500	22 500	100 000	22.5%

Source: Results of RDP/CB-RDP Summary Assessment 2002 to 2007, Final Report.

²³ The formulation of the objectives varies from one document to another but the main gist of the objectives has remained the same. Some of the objectives figures interchangeably as objectives and goals in the various logframes. In addition, the word purpose is also used for one of the objectives.

45. The most successful technology adoption rates were for 'cattle vaccination', followed by 'use of compost', 'use of improved seeds', 'SRI', 'pig vaccination' and 'split use of fertilizer'. This sequence is, by and large, confirmed by the agriculture impact assessment.²⁴
46. However, targets related to adoption rates by female-headed households (at least 30 per cent) were not reached. They ranged from 9 per cent to 31 per cent of all adopters (on average 22.5 per cent of adopters).
47. To put these adoption rates into perspective, it is necessary to consider that there was no functioning extension system in the project villages at the commencement of CBRDP. At this time, average rice yields in the Cambodian rice belt were around 1,200 kg/ha in the wet season and 2,600 kg/ha in the dry season.²⁵ Presently, yields range from 2,400 to 2,700 kg/ha in the wet season and from 4,200 to 5,000 kg/ha in the dry season. Focus group discussions conducted by the mission in project villages confirm that mean rice yields within the project area are equal to, or better than, the national average for this point in time. This suggests that CBRDP extension activities have contributed to boosting agricultural productivity within the project area. The discussion on the income effects from increased productivity is provided in the section on household income and assets paragraph 67-69.
48. The training of **village animal health workers** (VAHW) in CBRDP was a successful approach to privatising extension services in the villages, although the target number of extension events was not achieved. About 50 per cent (54 per cent in Kampot and 46 per cent in Kampong Thom) of beneficiary households (110,000) used the services of VAHWs in 2005/2006.²⁶ Most frequent services used were 'pig treatment' (76 per cent, 83,000 households), 'cattle/buffalo treatment' (65 per cent, 71,000 households), followed by vaccination of cattle and pigs (16 per cent, 17,500 households for each type of animal).²⁷
49. The promotion of **farmer promoters** was more challenging, as farmers proved unwilling to pay for agricultural extension services. Many output targets were reached (such as the number of demonstrations) but there was concern about their quality, including the frequency with which they were held and followed up. Overall, the use of farmer-to-farmer extension methods as a catalyst for promoting farmer adoption appears to have created a diffusion effect within project areas. Farmer promoters, using field days to help outlying farmers to become aware of new technologies, spread the extension influence beyond the immediate demonstration areas.

Objective 2: Increased capacity of the poor to use the services available from government and other sources for their social and economic development

50. This second objective was pursued through community and institutional development components. Indicators included: households and community based organization/village networks satisfaction with commune councils; commune councils fulfilling their tasks to the satisfaction of provincial local administrative units; commune councils involving the population and their village organizations in exercising their duties; commune councils considering effective the cooperation with decentralized administrative institutions at province and district level.

²⁴ However, the agriculture impact assessment (Schiller, 2006) does not show data on cattle and pig vaccinations.

²⁵ Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Report, Commodity Intelligence Service, 2010.

²⁶ Schiller. Agricultural Impact Assessment Kampot and Kampong Thom, 2006.

²⁷ Ibid.

51. The logframe in the PCR indicates that most targets were achieved. Overall satisfaction of households with government services was 90 per cent, and with non-government services 80 per cent.²⁸
52. The weakest satisfaction level, with only 20 per cent satisfaction, concerned people's involvement in commune council meetings. Satisfaction was greater regarding commune councils' involvement of community-based organizations. More than 75 per cent felt that they or their representatives were invited to meetings, had the chance to speak and could participate in decision-making.
53. Overall, it would appear that the community development process ensured that project activities corresponded to local needs, and this resulted in a sense of ownership amongst the villagers - as demonstrated by their high satisfaction scores. Feedback provided by beneficiaries to the PPA mission is generally consistent with these findings.
54. It is important to note that the levels of satisfaction were recorded against no baseline data. It is also important to note that the commune councils and villagers may have tended to compare levels of cooperation and service delivery with those of the pre-decentralization period, when cooperation and service delivery were, for all intents and purposes, non-existent.

Objective 3: Poorer households, their village organizations and commune councils jointly with government and non-government service providers efficiently implement development activities for their economic and social well-being.

55. This objective was to a large extent covered by the infrastructure component. The PPA mission confirms the findings of the PCR that indicators related to infrastructure O&M were only partially achieved. The project met performance targets for wells, but not for roads or irrigation schemes. Mission anecdotal evidence acquired from interviews with LTCs and FWUCs revealed a willingness and commitment to maintain road and irrigation infrastructure; however, their effectiveness in discharging their mandates was often constrained by lack of suitable equipment, technical capacity and financial resources.
56. Infrastructure achievements at the output level, and their effectiveness are shown in the bullet points below:
 - 12,000 households benefitted from the rehabilitation of 250 km of rural roads.
 - 12,000 households benefitted from 815 wells.
 - 12,000 households benefitted directly from rural roads.²⁹
57. **Effectiveness rating.** The project objective of increasing food and farm incomes from intensified and diversified crop and livestock production; and increasing the capacity of the poor to use the services available from government and other sources for their social and economic development was achieved to a great extent. The project was successful in promoting the adoption of technologies, although more follow up could have improved the quality of the extension activities. There was general satisfaction with government services, and the project's investment in rural infrastructure contributed to reducing poverty through the provision of access to irrigation, drinking water, and markets. Based on this, the overall rating for effectiveness is moderately satisfactory (4).

²⁸ Ayres & Sovadhanak, Community Based Organizations Assessment, 2007.

²⁹ Bauer Eberhard, Results of RDP/CB-RDP Summary Assessment 2002-2007, Final Report, 2008.

Efficiency

58. The Appraisal Report estimates the overall Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR)³⁰ of the project, including all costs and quantified benefits, as 17 per cent. The PIA fails to provide a full recalculation of the project EIRR. The PCR attempts to compensate for this by calculating crude economic analyses of the infrastructure components, but there is no overall economic analysis of the entire project. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether EIRR estimated at appraisal was, in fact achieved. However, given the robustness of the appraisal sensitivity analysis, showing that the project would have to sustain a 59 per cent increase in project costs, or a 63 per cent reduction in benefits before the project would become uneconomical, it is plausible that the project had a satisfactory rate of return which was above the presumed opportunity cost of capital of 10 per cent.
59. The table below compares EIRR estimates for the infrastructure component from the different reports.

Table 3
Benchmarking of EIRR estimates for the infrastructure component in different reports

	<i>EIRR Appraisal</i>	<i>EIRR PCR</i>	<i>Comments PPA Mission</i>
Irrigation			
Kampong Thom			EIRR of the site visited by the PPA mission (Beung Nimol) was 26%. Key determinant of irrigation scheme viability is the ratio of dry season cultivated area to wet season cultivated area. Dry season cropping is another important factor affecting EIRR e.g. high value crops such as vegetables.
Kampot	26-42%	1-32%	EIRR of the site visited by the PPA mission was 8% (Roulos).
Average	13%	13%	The average of 13% was validated by the PPA mission.
		1-32%	Average cost per hectare at appraisal was US\$600; actual costs ranged from US\$ 157-US\$ 797 (mean US\$ 351/ha).
Irrigation (Overall)		24%	There is reasonable consistency between appraisal PCR and PPA EIRR of irrigation schemes.
Wells			
Kampong Thom		110%	The high return reflects the lower investment cost per well (US\$415). ³¹
Kampot		65%	Average cost per well US\$890. ³²
Wells (Overall)			High EIRR reflects the doubling of beneficiary families. Unit costs are reasonable.
	52%	87%	Quantified benefit is the 0.5 hour time saved collecting water per household per day, and takes no account of the potential health benefits. Despite high investment costs, the returns are high. Wells also generate additional benefits from watering of home gardens in household compounds.
Roads			
Kampong Thom		6%	Average investment cost (2008 prices) US\$16,000/km.
Kampot		24%	Average investment cost (2008 prices) US\$ 7,150/km.
Roads (Overall)		11%	Potential returns are likely to be underestimated.

Source: Appraisal Report, 2001, PCR, 2008 and PPA interviews.

³⁰ The Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) is the discount rate at which the Net Present Value (NPV) is equal to zero. The appraisal sensitivity analysis evaluated the impacts on the EIRR and the NPV of the project according to a range of cost escalation and benefit decline assumptions. The analysis found that costs would have to increase by 59 per cent and with a benefit decline of 63 per cent before the EIRR would fall into the unacceptable range of less than 10 per cent.

³¹ As per 2008 prices.

³² Ibid.

60. The average investment costs per hectare of irrigation, unit road costs, and periodic maintenance are all within or well below the regional norms (see table 4).

Table 4

Benchmarking of average investment costs for CBRDP and in the region

	Average investment costs CBRDP (2008)	Average investment costs Lao PDR (2008)
Per hectare of irrigation	US\$157 to US\$797	US\$1 200 and US\$2 000/ha
Unit road costs	US\$7 150 and US\$16 000/km	US\$18 000-US\$19 000
Periodic maintenance	US\$250/km	US\$250-US\$600/km

Sources: Appraisal Report, 2001; PCR, 2008, and ADB Loan 1949, Smallholder Development Project, Project Completion Report, 2010.

61. The loan to the Government of Cambodia for the execution of CBRDP became effective three months after board approval. This is significantly quicker than IFAD's global average (12.5 months), the average for the Asia and Pacific Division of IFAD (9.2 months), and close to the average of IFAD-funded projects in Cambodia (2.5 months). The completion date was extended twice, from 31 March 2008 to 30 June 2010.
62. The actual project management costs were slightly lower (17 per cent of total project costs)³³ than the estimated costs as reported in the President's Report (20 per cent of total project costs).
63. There is insufficient information to compare all actual costs and financing with the full appraisal estimates, as there is no cost information for some counterpart contributions.³⁴

Table 5
Sources of project funds

Source of funds	Appraisal budgets in US\$ millions	%	Actual costs in US\$ millions	Actual costs in %
IFAD	9.995	44	9.994	43.74
GTZ	7.882	35	9.500	42.60
WFP	1.300	6	1.30	5.7
AusAid	552	2	Na	Na
Government	1.822	8	1.885	8.24
Beneficiaries	1.301	6	1.3	5.69

Source: PCR, PPMS and Appraisal Report.

64. In conclusion, efficiency in terms of meeting most expenditure targets was adequate. However, this rating was pulled down by the inability of CBRDP to capture the full benefits from irrigation and road infrastructure. The causes of this shortcoming are physical rather than institutional weaknesses. Poor irrigation system engineering and hydrological design prevented a more viable balance between wet and dry season cropping, and were the main causes of irrigation inefficiency, shown by less than satisfactory EIRRs (less than 10 per cent) on some irrigation schemes. In the case of roads, unanticipated heavy traffic generated by agricultural commercialization, was the major determinant of inadequate road

³³ Calculated from PCR, annex 4, table 1 on Project Financing by Financier – Expenditure by Component.

³⁴ In addition there are some inconsistencies between data retrieved from PPMS and the PCR. The figures use in table 3 are from PPMS. According to the PCR, it was not possible to establish the breakdown of actual disbursements from various donors. There is no data on AusAid contributions which seems to have been cut with the introduction of the Cambodia-Australia Agricultural Extension Project II (CAAEP) as compared to CAAEP I which operated at the design of the project.

maintenance, leading to shortened economic life spans with substandard EIRRs on some CBRDP roads.

65. **Efficiency rating.** From PPA mission findings and assessments of available project literature, efficiency is rated, moderately satisfactory (4).

B. Rural poverty impact

66. There are weaknesses in the information available on rural poverty impacts. Despite the considerable effort that went into the PIA, there is little information on household income or expenditure, and limited data on agricultural outputs or yields per household. There has been no monitoring of environmental impacts. Trend data is not available for the duration of the project and, most importantly, there are no baseline data or control groups. There has been little disaggregation of data, so it has not been possible to analyse the extent to which specific positive trends were present throughout the target area or limited to particular types of villages or households. Finally, in the absence of information on non-project villages, it is not possible to say whether any identified impacts were the result of the project or a synergy of project and non-project influences.

Household income and assets

67. **Household income.** The income effects from increased productivity and beneficiary livelihood diversification are shown in Table 6, below.

Table 6

Household productivity changes from agricultural transformation to which the CBRDP contributed (US\$)*

	Before	After
Wet season yield (kg/ha)	1 485	2 750
Dry season yield (kg/ha)	2 685	4 200
Wet season income (US\$/ha)	221	310
Dry season income (US\$/ha)	300	440
Pig raising (US\$)	36	333
Chicken raising (US\$)	52	157
Vegetables	171	896

* Calculated from project area cost of production budgets in Kampot and Kampong Thom and verified for consistency with surveys conducted by Agricultural Sector Development Project, ADB Loan- CAM. Income data are real adjusted from the base year 2010=130.1. The adjustment factor for 2012 is 146.4 (source: World Bank, the ratio of 2012/2010 (incremental adjustment factor) is 1.12 from 2010 to 2012.

68. These income impacts do not include additional household income generated by non-agricultural employment, such as construction labour, cross border employment, transport, trading and Non Forest Timber Products collection. Increased income from multiple sources has led to savings in the form of increased asset accumulation. During the period of CBRDP implementation, the productivity of labour increased from US\$0.76 to US\$4.39/day.³⁵
69. **Household asset accumulation.** The PIA shows that households increased their assets between 2002 and 2007 by 27 per cent, the indirect CBRDP beneficiaries by 39 per cent and the direct beneficiaries by 24 per cent.³⁶ Female headed households (all beneficiaries) increased their assets considerably less than male

³⁵ Calculated before and after adoption farm budgets provided by Agricultural Sector Development Project, ADB Loan, CAM and verification from village focal group discussions and farm budgets provided in the PCR. The productivity factors have been adjusted to real prices.

³⁶ Neither the PIA nor the draft PCR included an explanation or discussion of this finding.

headed households (around half as much).³⁷ The PIA reports average aggregated household asset values increased from US\$1,071 to US\$1,805 in real terms between 2002 and 2007.

70. Applying the real GDP deflator from 2002 to 2012 (1.33), the real average asset value in 2012 are for direct beneficiaries, almost two-thirds (66.2 per cent) experienced an increase in asset holdings. This corresponds to approximately 116,618 households in the project areas.
71. PPA focus group discussions in villages confirmed that asset accumulation in the form of motorbikes, farm equipment, livestock, etc. has been increasing. This was the case throughout Cambodia during the project time frame. While it is impossible to disaggregate growth patterns in project and non-project villages because of the absence of a base line survey and control groups, the reasonable assumption is that the project contributed to rural livelihood improvements in synergy with other growth influences that affected development within the CBRDP area.
72. The project's road sub-component has had significant impact on improving farm to market linkages. The PIA reports that CBRDP-supported village roads have had widespread, benefits for project area households, as well as for nearby villages whose residents occasionally use them. Principal benefits include reduced travel time to common destinations (including markets, schools, clinics, etc.), increased value of land near roads, and increased commercial activity in the villages with road access. This observation is confirmed by the mission.
73. **Rating.** On average, household incomes rose and poverty fell in project villages, with some differentiation within and between villages. It appears that this was a general trend in Cambodia, and it is difficult to know how much of the impact can be attributed to the project. However, the project did act as a catalyst by providing extensive advice on high yielding varieties, SRI and livestock, as well as by connecting villages to market through investment in roads and infrastructure. Based on the documentation reviewed and the field visits the rating for household income and assets is moderately satisfactory (4).

Human and social capital and empowerment

74. The empowerment of villagers increased through the establishment and strengthening of various groups such as MVFs and groups to maintain infrastructure investments (roads, water schemes, irrigation schemes). These groups ensured participation of villagers and civil society in local governance. For example, some well-functioning road maintenance committees were able to secure funding from the commune council to help maintain their roads. The committees generally included at least one or two women, most of whom were made responsible for financial management. From mission conversations with villagers, it appears that the perception of commune councils as institutions where villagers can seek redress is widespread. Although CBRDP cannot solely take credit for this achievement, its community development activities have contributed to this.
75. The mission also noted an emerging solidarity among villagers. For example, neighbours helping a widow with labour or food, or villagers organising themselves to solve problems.³⁸ Although evidence is anecdotal, it is considered important in light of the legacy of fear and mistrust due to decades of atrocities in Cambodia. This structural poverty could only be addressed through capacity building, democracy building and structural changes, for which the project's community development activities must take some credit. **Rating.** The rating of this domain of rural poverty impact is satisfactory (5).

³⁷ This indicator relied on memory recall over a long period by members of the households surveyed, which is generally not a reliable approach to securing information.

³⁸ One village had, on its own initiative, established a pumping committee which allowed villagers to pump water from a nearby lake to irrigate land, thus enabling dry season cultivation.

Agricultural productivity and food security

76. **Agricultural productivity.** According to the PCR, farmers increased their yields due to the impact of demonstration and extension activities. In 2007, improved varieties of seed outperformed local varieties by an average 1,265 kg/ha – an increase of 53 per cent.³⁹ This figure is equal to, or better than, changes in productivity within Cambodia’s rice belt.⁴⁰
77. There were important increases in livestock. The mean increase of cattle owning households was from two to three head (50 per cent). The monetary value of this can be crudely estimated from the asset valuation of the PIA. The estimated monetary value per beneficiary household prepared by the PPA mission is, therefore, one head/US\$237 over 5 years (2001 to 2006) equals an average of US\$47/year.
78. The principal reasons for increased production of cattle reported by CBRDP beneficiaries were ‘better animal health’ (35 per cent), ‘vaccination programmes’ (16.5 per cent), ‘more money to buy animals’ (16 per cent) and ‘other’ (31.7 per cent). Given that CBRDP supported agriculture activities, it can be assumed that at least half the reasons for ‘improved production of cattle’ can be attributed to CBRDP interventions.⁴¹
79. The PIA concludes that an estimated 15,532 Kampong Thom households and an estimated 35,749 Kampot households increased their holdings in cattle (cows/buffalo) and/or pigs and/or poultry by at least 50 per cent. These numbers exceed the logframe targets for the Kampong Thom by a factor of (almost) two, and for Kampot by a factor of about seven.
80. A large part of these increases are due to CBRDP interventions that successfully established animal health services. The effectiveness of these services was widely recognized during PPA village focus group discussions with project beneficiaries.
81. Other factors that contributed to productivity and income gains include rice intensification, which released land, labour and capital for other household enterprises.⁴² The role of CBRDP in this process was to catalyse technology transfer and adoption through Farmer Promoters and VAHWs. In addition, with improved accessibility, rural livelihood systems diversified and expanded during project implementation (see annex 10 for the current livelihood profile).
82. The PIA reports that 14 per cent (31,000) of all beneficiary households grow crops other than rice. Eighty nine per cent (28,000) of these households are direct beneficiaries. 51 per cent (14,000) reported increases in crop production other than rice (no quantification of production increases possible).
83. The main reasons for increased production of other crops are ‘better soil management’ (31.0 per cent); ‘good rainy season’ (20.2 per cent); ‘better cropping methods’ learnt from CBRDP (15.5 per cent); ‘more land for other crops’ (8.3 per

³⁹ Project Completion Report, 2008.

⁴⁰ National data shows that between 2000 and 2008, wet season rice productivity increased from a mean 1.25 tons/ha to 2.6 tons, while dry season cultivation increased from 2.6 to 4 tons per hectare from the evolution of a national extension system developed by Cambodia Australian Agricultural Extension Project (CAAEP) and the development of High Yielding Varieties and SRI Rice technologies by Cambodian Agricultural Research Development Institute. Both the CAAEP and the Cambodian Agricultural Research Development Institute inputs underpinned the agricultural extension component of the CBRDP.

⁴¹ Project Impact Assessment, 2007.

⁴² The agricultural transformation process now underway in the CBRDP area and much of Cambodia follows the same pattern as Thailand. In the mid-1970s, Thailand had a mono crop economy. Government extension agents introduced new technologies and new varieties. This permitted farmers to increase yields and generate marketable rice surpluses. Income from marketed rice surpluses assisted farmers to diversify their agriculture, with the help of technology from private-sector extension agents, and quality standards provided by buyers and sellers within the backward and forward linkages of emerging multi-crop value chains. In the Lao PDR, commercial agricultural development has been totally private-sector driven as public-sector extension systems have been dysfunctional since their inception in the mid-1980s.

cent); 'better irrigation' (6.0 per cent); 'improved seeds' (3.6 per cent); and 'market access' (13.1 per cent).

84. **Food security.** Based on PIA data, CBRDP beneficiaries who adopted project-delivered technologies achieved a reduction in malnutrition rates⁴³ between 2000 and 2007. Malnutrition was reduced moderately in Kampong Thom (stunting: 47-43 per cent, underweight: 49-44 per cent) and considerably in Kampot province (stunting: 49-30 per cent and underweight: 41-32 per cent) (see annex 11 for details). The PPA project site visits saw no visible evidence of malnutrition⁴⁴ in the villages visited.
85. The indicator to measure food security was '39,150 target households with food security for nine months p.a'. The PCR states that CBRDP contributed directly to improving food security throughout the project areas for both direct and indirect beneficiary households. It is estimated that, partly as a result of CBRDP interventions, 57 per cent (over 94,000) of the direct beneficiary households feel that their own household food security has improved since 2001. According to the PIA, food security improved (household full food security 57-69 per cent), and household with food insecurity declined (43 per cent-31 per cent). The anecdotal evidence acquired during the PPA mission suggests that food insecurity has indeed declined during the project period.⁴⁵ Table 7 below, summarises CBRDP food security impacts.

Table 7
CBRDP food security impacts*

Months with enough food	2002		2007		Changes from 2002 to 2007
	% of all	% of all	No. of households		
0-3 months	2%	2%	4 380		-
3-6 months	6%	4%	8 760		-2%
6-8 months	13%	6%	13 140		-7%
8-11 months	22%	19%	41 610		-3%
All 12 months	53%	61%	133 590		+8%
More than 12 months	4%	8%	17 520		+4%
All households	-	-	219 000		-

* Results of RDP/CB-RDP Summary Assessment 2002 to 2007, final report.

86. **Rating.** As can be seen from the table above, 12 per cent of 219,000 families, or an additional 26,300 families have reached food security (i.e. changed from below 12 month to the 12 month and above categories). However, if the indicator reads as 39,150 additional households reaching food security (i.e. changed from the below -12 months to the 12 and above 12 months categories), the indicator was not fully achieved.⁴⁶ Given the above analysis, the PPA rating of 4 (moderately satisfactory) is assigned to agricultural productivity and food security.

Natural resources and environment and climate change

87. CBRDP was not expected to have any irreversible impact on the environment. The project followed national policies whenever required. For example, the Ministry of

⁴³ Malnutrition indicators considered here are limited to height for age (stunting) and weight for age (underweight). The reason for this is that the third common malnutrition indicator (weight for age, wasting) shows incredible positive and negative jumps over time in all sources. Such jumps are unrealistic and cannot be seen as meaningful in terms of explaining trends over time.

⁴⁴ Including marasmus, kwashiorkor and oedema.

⁴⁵ PPA Focal Group discussions.

⁴⁶ This argument is made in the Results of RDP/CB-RDP Summary Assessment 2002 to 2007. However, strictly speaking the indicator refers to 9 months and not 12 months.

Rural Development required a ground water survey prior to any construction of water points, and these were undertaken. The PCR notes that there was growing awareness on environmental issues during the course of the project's implementation, and that environmental mainstreaming has taken place. It is not explained how the project contributed to this. Inevitably, the construction of roads and irrigation will have had some impact on the surrounding environment. However, the PCR states that the construction of rural roads involved upgrading existing earth roads and construction of culverts to improve drainage, rather than constructing new roads. Likewise, the irrigation investment involved rehabilitating existing schemes, with flood control as one of the benefits. No M&E of environmental impacts took place, it is therefore difficult to measure and determine the extent to which mitigating measures were taken.

88. The PCR identifies a number of positive project impacts. For example, an Organic Rice Producer Association was established in the target province, and is cited as a model for other provinces. The PCR highlights village networks and the adoption by Farmer Promoters of the 'farmers to farmer' approach as essential in propagating environmental issues with the communities and the local authorities. The mission was not able to look at this in depth, but there is no doubt that the project promoted environmentally friendly technologies, such as SRI and production of organic rice. These technologies were widely disseminated beyond the target areas within each target province.
89. Climate change is a reality in Cambodia, and is affecting the target area.⁴⁷ Some wells are drying up, and there is a lack of adequate water for irrigation during the dry season. Cambodia has also been affected by natural disasters, such as the typhoon Ketsana that flooded more than 30,000 hectares of rice crops, and destroyed over 2,000 homes in 2009. Floodwaters also took cattle, and destroyed roads and other social infrastructure, including some of the irrigation put in place by the project. The COSOP of 1998 did not make any reference to climate change and the project did not include any specific mitigation measures.
90. **Rating.** Based on the data available, the rating for natural resources and environment is moderately satisfactory (4).

Institutions and policies

91. CBRDP played an important role in strengthening of government institutions at the state, provincial and commune level. Overall, the project was complex and involved several ministries, their respective local partners, and a number of different donors. The project required considerable coordination and management, and there were problems along the way. However, the fact that the project was executed through the existing government structures resulted in government ownership and 'learning by doing.' A major achievement of the project was thus that it improved the capacity of the Ministry of Rural Development/project support unit and the Executive Committee to manage and coordinate a multi sector and multi donor project.
92. A considerable capacity development effort supported by GTZ/DED (training, backstopping, technical advice) and to some extent the Partnership for Local Governance (the government's National Decentralization and De-concentration Programme) provided the overall framework and training. The PCR states that, as a result, commune councils were actively preparing commune development plans and managing the Commune/Sangkat Fund in a generally prudent manner. Through this support, bottom up planning and local accountability have been developed. This is a considerable achievement given that many of these institutions were developed in conjunction with the project, and that because of

⁴⁷ Source: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam_in_action/emergencies/cambodia-typhoon-ketsana.html.

cultural factors there was fear, fatigue and general lack of trust in government institutions.⁴⁸ This finding was confirmed by the PPA mission.⁴⁹

93. The project objectives did not explicitly aim at changing or creating new policies. Nevertheless, it can be concluded based on PPA analysis, that the project directly supported and promulgated the government policy of decentralization, that in turn contributed to improved enabling environment for economic and social activities, thus positively affecting the livelihoods of the poor.
94. **Rating.** The improvement in the capacity of the implementing line agencies and commune councils, and the increased pro-poor approach adopted by these agencies, are major achievements of the project. The rating for institutions and policies is therefore satisfactory (5).
95. **Overall rating for rural poverty impact.** The logframe specified that poverty incidence should be reduced by 50 per cent between 1990 and 2015. The absence of a base line survey, and the coverage of the goal impact beyond the project time frame make it impossible to directly address this indicator.
96. The impact on rural poverty was variable in the CBRDP area but, mean, household incomes and assets rose, and there was a modest decline in rural poverty. This conclusion is based on the correlation between asset accumulation and poverty classification.⁵⁰ The project assisted many farmers in evolving from subsistence farmers to producers of diversified and marketed crops that, in turn, generated savings and assets for this group. This was achieved through the establishment of an extension system, improved infrastructure and related access to services and markets. Despite concerns about the quality of and the follow up of the extension activities CBRDP contributed to increasing the average productivity of rice, through introduction of high yielding rice, improved technologies (SRI) and irrigation, giving an additional net profit of US\$120 per household per year for adopting households. There were also increases in cattle production of more than 50 per cent for 26,500 farmers, due to the effective vaccination programme promoted by VAHW. Food insecurity decreased from 43-31 per cent, and there are indications that malnutrition declined as well. Access to water increased, with positive health impacts on both animals and humans. The emphasis on capacity building for villagers and government staff increased the ability of some villagers to maintain infrastructure and group revolving funds although not all are well functioning. It also improved the response of local service providers, public as well as private, to respond to these priorities. On the less positive side, the poverty levels of some of the poorest households did not benefit significantly from the project. The rural poverty rating is therefore moderately satisfactory (4).

C. Other performance criteria

Sustainability

97. **Community development and institutions.** The PCR praises CBRDP for successfully developing community-based organizations, and highlights the importance of civil society participation in local governance as a core element of decentralization. It stresses efficient and effective capacities of local communities

⁴⁸ Source: *The Challenges of Decentralization Design in Cambodia*, Caroline Rusten, Kim Sedara, EngNetra and Pak Kimchoeun Cambodia Development Resource Institute Phnom Penh, October 2004.

⁴⁹ Conversations with staff at the National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development.

⁵⁰ This conclusion is based on an extrapolation of national rural poverty reduction trends and the high and significant correlation between asset accumulation and poverty reduction. According to the World Bank, rural household asset accumulation in the poorest quintile of sampled households increased by 65 per cent in real value terms from 2004 to 2007. Its 2006 report shows asset accumulation in the second poorest quintile increased by 45 per cent during the same period. The PIA sets an increase of asset accumulation values within the project area of 39 per cent for direct beneficiaries, and 24 per cent for indirect beneficiaries. Thus, the conclusion for poverty reduction within CBRDP area appears founded on empirical evidence. This level of asset accumulation is within the general order of magnitude of World Bank findings for rural areas in Cambodia. Given the relative consistency of asset accumulation in CBRDP villages, and the national average for rural areas, it is also concluded that poverty levels were reduced proportionally in project areas as well.

and their community based organizations as pre-requisite for sustainable development.

98. The community development process ensured that project activities corresponded to local needs, and this resulted in a sense of ownership amongst the villagers - as demonstrated by their high satisfaction scores. Feedback provided by beneficiaries to the PPA mission is generally consistent with these findings.
99. However, the technical and institutional capacity of project implementers at village and district level has been variable. The capacity of project staff involved in community development work, agricultural extension, rural infrastructure and institutional strengthening has been enhanced by CBRDP, but capacity still needs further strengthening. Continued government support will be needed in the short term to maintain the services launched by the project.
100. CBRDP was implemented mainly by government authorities. This direct involvement contributed to creating ownership within the government because of the project's alignment with government decentralization and poverty reduction strategies. However, several challenges were identified that will be relevant in the future. These include the ability of local institutions to raise revenue from the local tax base, which will be required to maintain government services over the long term. Even with government goodwill, operating budgets are likely to be constrained and further capacity consolidation will be needed before project initiatives can be considered fully sustainable.
101. According to the PCR, the sustainability of the **agricultural component** is contingent on continued government financial support to extension agents, in the form of adequate remuneration to compensate and motivate extension work. From PPA village interviews, CBRDP provided incentives to farmer promoters and VAHWS in the form of a US\$40 top up of their US\$50 government salaries, plus per diems, motorcycles and petroleum, oils and lubricants support for extension agent field work. While these incentives were in place, extension worker performance was satisfactory as rated by CBRDP beneficiaries. Performance of public sector extension agents has been declining following completion. This decline was noted in the PCR, and confirmed by the PPA mission during village interviews.
102. The PPA mission disagrees with the PCR's view that public sector subsidies are needed in perpetuity to maintain the momentum of agricultural extension. The relevant issue is whether agriculture must be permanently driven by the public sector or whether the public sector should play more of a transitional role in catalysing and launching agricultural development.⁵¹
103. With respect to CBRDP, the transformation of agriculture from auto-subsistence to commercially oriented farming systems was driven by the provincial department of agriculture and some 500 farmer promoters. The fact that average rice wet season yields jumped from 1.25 to 2.6 tons/ha and dry season yields increased from 2.6 to 4.0 tons per ha is adequate testament to the impact of project extension and market mechanisms. In the short term, continued government support may be required to sustain the momentum of the past eight years. Over time, the PPA expects the private sector to replace the public sector as the main driver of agricultural development with the emergence of vertically integrated value chains in an increasingly globalized market place.
104. VAHW are more sustainable than farmer promoters because farmers are less willing to pay for agricultural extension services than for veterinary services. According to government policy, each village should have at least one VAHW to provide animal health service and to act as an extension agent (farmer promoter)

⁵¹ In Thailand, the public sector extension apparatus launched the transformation with the private sector, taking over as major suppliers of inputs, technology and market linkages after farmers started to commercialize their agricultural production.

at village level. The main reason for having a single person perform dual functions is to economise on personnel expenditure. The PPA mission agrees with the PCR assessment of the impracticality of single agents providing dual livestock and agricultural extension services because the skills required by each function are mutually exclusive. It is clear that agricultural extension sustainability will depend on finding viable mechanisms to reward extension workers for their expenditure in time, labour, land and capital in the service of wider agricultural development.

105. Some rehabilitated **irrigation systems** are sustainable and some are not. A number of the rehabilitated irrigation systems encounter problems of poor hydrological and engineering design, which, in turn, impacts on systemic functionality. O&M on the less viable schemes has been impeded by the *vicious cycle* of poor engineering designs in marginally irrigable areas. Inadequate engineering and poor site selection often lead to severe water resource constraints for dry season cropping. This, in turn, suppresses farm profitability, resulting in farmer dissatisfaction with services, and unwillingness and incapacity to pay ISFs. This spiral of events creates further system deterioration with greater user incapacity to pay irrigation fees. On the other hand, this observation of irrigation dysfunctionality of some systems is only part of the total picture.
106. With more viable schemes, adequate system irrigation designs in more irrigable areas has created a virtuous cycle with greater balance between wet and dry season water delivery. Adequacy of water delivery enables farmers to double crop both rice and non-rice high value crops, leading to high farm profitability with greater satisfaction and willingness and capacity to pay irrigation fees. This linkage of positive phenomena results in adequate maintenance and effective system performance.⁵²
107. Where irrigation system design and hydrological parameters deliver adequate water supply for dry season cropping, FWUCs appear capable of managing and conducting routine and periodic maintenance. However, major maintenance expenditure is required in the event of damage caused by flooding and other emergencies. No clear commitment is available from the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology (PDWRAM) to meet these costs, nor do the FWUCs have the capacity to make such repairs.⁵³ This situation may be a threat to the long-term sustainability of the weaker schemes. However, the successful schemes have shown dynamic long-term sustainability as evidenced by enhanced productivity in both the wet and dry seasons, adequately functioning FWUCs, sufficient level of systemic maintenance and farmer income growth from participating in irrigated agriculture.
108. Assessments from the PCR show that indicators related to infrastructure O&M were partially achieved. The performance target for wells was met, but not that for roads.⁵⁴
109. The sustainable maintenance of **roads** has been more challenging for several reasons. The rehabilitation of rural access roads has induced higher traffic flows from agricultural and produce traders and collectors, and input suppliers. It may be that the increased traffic flow over the life of CBRDP was not anticipated during the design stage, because at the time of appraisal there was little commercial agricultural activity. The estimated average annual maintenance cost of US\$250 per linear meter would have been sufficient under 'normal' circumstance at loan

⁵² PPA mission field assessments of CBRDP infrastructure component at three schemes: Beung Nimol in Kampot and Rolous and Op Ao in Kampong Thom.

⁵³ PCR, ibid.

⁵⁴ The meeting of performance targets for wells is understandable since the PPA mission found that maintenance of 40 meter depth tube wells is manageable within the limitations of village technical and financial resources. The management of open ring wells is more problematic, given susceptibility to easy contamination by surface water, and the tendency for the water table to fall below the 12 meter average well depth during the dry season.

effectiveness, but became insufficient as roads deteriorated due to higher than anticipated traffic volumes.

110. Over 900 LTCs have been established, trained and supported in their tasks to manage O&M of village infrastructure. Some shortcomings of the LTCs were identified in the PCR.⁵⁵ PPA interviews with committee members showed a willingness to help protect infrastructure investments, however, LTCs are sometimes constrained by insufficient funds and inadequate farm tools, which hinder them in performing all but simple routine maintenance operations. If the construction/upgrading of rural roads, are to be fully sustainable, commune councils need to prioritize maintenance and allocate appropriate funds. It should be noted that some commune councils started to allocate monies in 2006 from their Commune/*Sangkat* Fund resources, for regular routine road maintenance. This is an encouraging development.
111. **Exit strategies** were prepared for all components, but this was only done towards the end of the project when time and resources were no longer adequate to mainstream such strategies.⁵⁶ The global exit strategy for CBRDP focused on capacity building and turnover. The strategy for irrigation was the development of FWUCs to collect water user fees and maintain irrigation works, and the development of LTCs for fee collection and maintenance of rural water works and roads. It was anticipated that commune councils would provide some supplemental funding support for infrastructural O&M; the PSWRAM and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries would provide continued technical support to FWUCs, and Farmer Promoters and VAHWS; and the Provincial Department of Rural Developments would provide support to LTCs for maintenance of wells and roads. To some extent, the exit strategy has been successful, but more effort is required by local institutions before the strategy can be called an unqualified success.
112. **Rating.** Of all the project benefits, the ones relating to the agricultural component and institutional processes are likely to be the most sustainable. There are positive signs that the productivity, marketing and income will remain sustainable. For example, the sustainability of the extension service will probably be assisted by the emerging commercialization, market linkages and resultant contract farming which will allow farmer promoters to become agricultural input suppliers and produce traders at the village level. The project activities, relating to institutional processes such as decentralization and local institutional development and coordination are likely to remain. However, the rural infrastructure investments are partially sustainable in that the current O&M arrangements can only cope with minor repairs. The sustainability rating is therefore moderately satisfactory (4).

Innovation and scaling up

113. While the COSOP of 1998 did not refer to an explicit innovation strategy, the 2008 COSOP includes a section on opportunities for innovation. CBRDP introduced several innovative features, most of which refer to institutional processes rather than the development of new technologies. It can be argued that the project acted as a pilot in translating the decentralization principles from an administrative concept into a concrete development model and tool. Although many of these processes have become common to rural development projects, they were considered innovative at the time for Cambodia.

⁵⁵ The road LTCs were established, with project support, before or sometimes after road construction. Where roads were inter-communal roads, there was, according to the PCR, very limited participation from local people. In addition, the PCR questioned the composition of the committee that consisted of District Governor, Chief of District Office of Provincial Department of Rural Development, technical staff and commune councillors. It was pointed out that this was not the community-based approach envisaged by the appraisal document, and that it indicated limited community participation in maintenance.

⁵⁶ Sources: Results-based country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP), 2008; and Annual Implementation Progress Review of 2008.

114. One such innovation was increased **targeting** of the poor through the project's focus on the MVFs. More specifically, this poverty targeting involved a participatory and consultative process carried out by villagers in rural areas that determined which households were poor, and the poverty level of these individuals. There were two poverty categories to which poor households could be assigned: Poor level 1 (very poor) or poor level 2 (poor). These categories were assigned based on questionnaire scores (according to specific cut-off points) and consideration of the special circumstance of households. They provided an opportunity to improve communication and coordination between the village and commune levels, to encourage the poor to raise their voices and to target poor households specifically through service providers. The process involves a high degree of participation and consultation with villagers that increases the transparency of the process and the accuracy of the results, and therefore the acceptability to local people. A positive side-effect of this process is the strengthening of democratic values in communities, such as raising local leaders' levels of concern about the welfare of their constituents and their degree of accountability to them; active public involvement in community affairs; and enhancing the level of consultation and the transparency of decision making.
115. Another innovation was the **engagement of local authorities**, especially the commune councils, in mainstreaming rural livelihoods in their local development planning. This was done through the provision of specific funds to the commune councils (e.g. through the Rural Infrastructure Investment Fund to allocate funds in the commune investment plan for road maintenance).
116. The use of **beneficiary impact assessment** as a management tool to assess service provision was mentioned in the PCR as a successful cost effective approach in comparison with more traditional M&E approaches. The advantage of this is that it focuses on beneficiary perceptions, and the process allows for discussion and adjustment of preliminary findings. In addition, unlike the initial monitoring, it is outcome and impact oriented rather than focused on inputs and activities. A drawback might be the length of the questionnaire and the fact that villagers might not have much to compare with (e.g. satisfaction with commune councils which were non-existent previous to the project).
117. **Pro-poor and decentralized service delivery.** the services provided by VAHWs and LTCs were needed by the poor to enhance their livelihoods. These associations were located where services were required, and thus delivered effectively and efficiently. The advantage of their proximity to service users is that the feedback loop is short, and response is quick. In addition, the use of local people as agricultural service providers builds local capacity, grows local leadership, localises agricultural extension services and promotes private sector development. The establishment of VAHWs seem to have been particularly successful because they were working on a fee for service basis.
118. **Scaling up.** Despite no specific scaling up targets in the various COSOPs,⁵⁷ the MVF approach has been scaled up at the national level by the Ministry of Planning. The advantage of developed standardized national procedure for identification of poor households is that it will reduce the administrative costs of selecting target groups, and allow a more efficient distribution of scarce development resources to those who need them most. Other donors have also used this categorization in the target areas to e.g. assist the government in delivering health benefits to the population, and the approach is being replicated in two other ongoing IFAD-supported projects, namely the Rural Poverty Reduction Project in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng, and the Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project in Kratie, Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri.

⁵⁷ While the 2008 COSOP includes a section on innovation, neither of the COSOPs have defined specific pathways for scaling up, nor included scaling up targets. However, the annual implementation progress review of the 2008-2012 COSOP mentions that a number of innovations will be replicated in new IFAD-supported projects.

119. **Rating for innovation and scaling up.** At the time of its design, CBRDP was considered an innovative project because of the novel processes used for project implementation. It paved the way for implementing the decentralization policy, and introduced innovative approaches to pro-poor decentralized service delivery. Many of these approaches are being adapted and replicated in other IFAD-funded projects in Cambodia. CBRDP made use of a targeting approach that is now being scaled up at national level through the Ministry of Planning. The rating for innovation and scaling up is thus satisfactory (5).

Gender and women's empowerment

120. By end of project, expenditure on gender mainstreaming was about US\$229,763, which was 15 per cent of total community development expenditure, and 2 per cent of total project expenditure.
121. IFAD's Gender Plan of Action from 2003⁵⁸ identifies three overarching objectives which IFAD has to adhere to. The plan provides a useful platform for structuring and analysing CBRDP's contribution to impact in this domain.
122. The first objective relates to **expanding women's access to and control over fundamental assets –capital, land, knowledge and technologies**. CBRDP's strategy involved providing considerable support to the formation of community based organizations. One such group was the revolving credit groups established on the basis of MVF lists. According to the supervision report of 2009, approximately 75 per cent of borrowers were women (many of whom are widows). This is slightly lower than the mission's findings. The credit scheme is functioning well and is a valued assistance for this particular target group. The supervision mission of 2009 states that beneficiaries reported there had been some reduction in the duration of food shortages from the adoption of chicken production and introduction/expansion of off-farm income generating activities. Generally, women are in control of money earned from the scheme, and spend the profit on children, clothes and food.
123. Extension is a more challenging area for gender mainstreaming. According to the PCR logframe, the number of female VAHWs and Farmer Promoters is low. Only 56 women out of 400 were VAHW in Kampong Thom, and in Kampot only 16 out of 227. For Farmer Promoters, 51 out of 264 were women in Kampong Thom, and 47 out of 249 in Kampot. There do not seem to be any cultural/social barriers or discrimination for women to access extension services.⁵⁹ However, women may be in a disadvantaged position by the selection process for Farmer Promoters and VAHW, which involves other villagers in consultation with the village chief; and the selection criteria are willingness to take up the job, ability to read and write, and being active and outstanding farmers. Women have a number of household chores in addition to their farming activities and it is estimated that household work and childcare take up 91 per cent of their time. Moreover, 57 per cent of women in the poorest households are illiterate.⁶⁰
124. The second objective includes **strengthening women's agencies – their decision making role in community affairs and representation in local institutions**.
125. Gender training for provincial, district and commune authorities and villagers was undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The training focused on gender concepts, the roles and responsibilities of man/woman/husband/wife, domestic violence, nutritional education for pregnant women and family planning. Overall, the frequency of the training at village level was low (approximately once a year). Villagers appreciated the training, but there is limited evidence of the women's

⁵⁸ Available at: <http://www.ifad.org/gender/policy/action.htm#poa>.

⁵⁹ Sustainability of Rural Institutions, IFAD-supported projects in Cambodia, IFAD, 2009.

⁶⁰ Cambodia Gender Assessment, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2008.

situation being eased as a result of it. The PCR states that violence went down. It is not known how this was measured. However, many women reported that decisions were made mutually by men and women, and that husbands were taking on more responsibilities at home.

126. According to the PCR logframe, 90 per cent of community management groups (out of a target of 100 per cent) have women in leadership positions, and 17 per cent have a women leader, exceeding the target of 10 per cent. Most of community based organizations with female leaders are cash associations and well-LTCs, because women are considered to be good at keeping money, and are tasked with collecting water.
127. The target of having at least 30 per cent of women as members of well/water points and road LTCs was only partially met.⁶¹ With regards to irrigation schemes, female membership in user groups was far below the target.⁶²
128. According to the logframe, 250 gender focal points in commune councils and line departments should have increased their capacities to perform their tasks (80 per cent reach at least 60 per cent score). The PCR states that in terms of numbers this was achieved, but no evaluation of built capacity was undertaken. Another indicator was that training was conducted according to training plans and annual work programmes and budgets. According to the PCR, this was also achieved.
129. Although there was gender mainstreaming to promote women's participation in development projects, this is still limited. The Beneficiary Impact Assessment states that women's participation refers to the physical presence of women in decision taking bodies only. Their involvement in actual decision taking is much lower, because their voices are not heard and supported by either men or women. This is due to villagers' prevailing perception that men have more knowledge and information, and are good in situation analyses.
130. The third objective seeks **to improve women's wellbeing and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure.**
131. Through the support to roads and wells, CBRDP contributed to reducing travel time to common destinations such as markets etc. and time spent on collecting water. This particularly impacts on the lives of women and children whose task it is to collect water. Unfortunately, there are no estimates of time saved as was originally envisaged in the logframe. The PCR reports that there have been health benefits (also for animals) but, again, these have not been measured.
132. **Rating.** In conclusion, CBRDP offered an opportunity to mainstream gender issues throughout all project activities and processes, and that was innovative at the time. However, the project reached its gender targets only partially. CBRDP invested in gender awareness training for staff and beneficiaries, but failed to follow this up. Women did benefit from improved road access, improved water supply and improved access to financial services. They also participated in various groups, but in terms of decision making their role remained limited. They received some extension services, but targets in terms of adoption of technologies were not reached. Gender targets were generally poorly monitored. The budget allocated to gender issues was low, and the ambitious targets of the logframe were not achievable within that framework. The rating for this criterion is moderately satisfactory (4).

⁶¹ According to the logframe 46 per cent of members of well LTCs, but only 17 per cent of road LTCs are women.

⁶² 29 per cent in Kampong Thom and 8 per cent in Kampot compared to the targets of 50 and 35 per cent respectively.

D. Performance of partners

IFAD

133. IFAD was closely involved in the design of CBRDP. Substantial resources were invested in the formulation and appraisal processes. Nevertheless there were a few design weaknesses such as the irrigation systems, broad scope and complicated monitoring system. However, IFAD's internal review processes were thorough, and comments drew on lessons learned from similar projects. IFAD also encouraged collaboration with other donors in the appraisal process. The MTR was conducted at the appropriate time, and helped resolve many implementation issues. According to the PCR, follow up missions were supportive and conducive for the smooth implementation of the project. In addition to the loan, IFAD provided the following services: recruitment of consultants to work on subjects such as gender mainstreaming, decentralization and de-concentration in agriculture and rural development; project impact analysis training; invitation of project staff to various workshops: portfolio reviews and thematic subjects: PIA, M&E, planning, local knowledge, credit, Results Impact and Management System; and TA: The International Centre for Research in Agroforestry missions to Cambodia. In addition, the project loan agreement (Schedule 3.A. paragraph 15)⁶³ stipulated that the government, through the IFAD Agricultural Productivity Improvement Project, would post two long term volunteers to provide TA. However, PDWRAM never used the volunteers for the IFAD-funded irrigation schemes. The refusal to use the services of UN volunteers as intended was in contravention of the Loan Agreement.

134. **Rating.** The PPA has rated IFAD's performance as moderately satisfactory (4).

Government

135. According to the PCR, initial implementation was problematic, and prior to the MTR performance of the implementing agencies and project support unit was inadequate. However, there were substantial improvements following the MTR both at provincial and national levels, although M&E remained problematic throughout, not helped by the lack of a baseline survey. The PCR states that acceptance and greater familiarity with Decentralization and De-concentration and the role of the Executive Committees (of the Provincial Rural Development Committee) contributed to this situation. However, Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology and the two provincial departments of water resources and meteorology continued to operate in a top down way with a lack of commitment and support for water users' committees. Issues were also raised regarding low government salaries and project allowances that were a disincentive for good performance.
136. The government had to 'learn by doing' in implementing this project. Coordination and participation etc. were unfamiliar concepts to relatively inexperienced project staff at both provincial and national level. There are indications that there is ownership of the project. This has been helped by the project's alignment with government goals and policies, and the government's active involvement as an implementer, cofinancier and supervisor. The project was one of the first in Cambodia to be implemented through government structures.
137. **Rating.** The PPA assigned a moderately satisfactory rating to Government performance (4).

⁶³ Loan Agreement, IFAD, 2001.

E. Overall project achievement

138. The overall project rating is moderately satisfactory (4). The areas of strength included the development of human, social capital and empowerment and institutions as well as up-scaling. Although attempts were made to reach the target group through MVF, these measures were introduced late in the project implementation and the poorest households may have derived few benefits from the agricultural component. In addition the prospects of sustainability are mixed.

Key points

- CBRDP was relevant to government policies on decentralization and poverty reduction.
- The focus on decentralization meant that the poverty objective received less attention.
- There were some design faults in terms of site selection and engineering of the selected irrigation systems.
- Household income rose and poverty diminished in the target villages during the project period and community assets were improved through construction of roads and water supply schemes.
- Village empowerment was enhanced through increased participation in public fora, MVF and other community based organizations, but women's participation in decision making is still limited.
- There were substantial improvements in agricultural outputs and yields.
- Food security has improved but the target was not reached and it remains seasonal.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

139. **A challenging project context.** Developing pro-poor service delivery instruments and diversification of crops, when such activities were to be implemented by commune councillors (whose devolved responsibility and capacity for service delivery were barely established, and the majority of whom were illiterate) was a tall order. However, the project was able to contribute to this purpose in several ways (paragraph 9, 74-75).
140. **CBRDP project design was complex but coherent with the thinking of the time.** It focused on poverty reduction through the development of a broad range of issues including gender, decentralization, community development, agricultural productivity and infrastructure and was mainly supply driven. However, the design did not fully appreciate the difficulties of delivering these in the specific project context, where decentralization were being established. CBRDP adapted well to these challenges but momentarily lost its poverty focus. While all the interventions were relevant, complicated projects will face challenges, and deliver limited impact, because they require different skills to implement, manage and coordinate (paragraph 33-41).
141. **Poor hydrological and engineering design and site selection impacted on the functionality of irrigation systems.** This often led to severe water resource constraints for dry season cropping. This, in turn, suppressed farm profitability, resulting in farmer dissatisfaction with services and unwillingness and incapacity to pay ISFs (paragraph 36, 105-108).
142. **The important role of agriculture as the driver of rural development and improvements in rural households' livelihood systems.** On average, rice farmers were able to double their gross margins from the main rice crop. This enabled many farmers to diversify their agricultural and livestock production activities and improve their livelihoods. There were equally important livestock

impacts from CBRDP, with estimated increases in cattle holdings (cows/buffalo) and/or pigs and/or poultry by at least 50 per cent (paragraph 76-83).

143. **The key role of farmer to farmer extension methods as a catalyst for promoting farmer adoption.** This approach created a diffusion effect within project areas as Farmer Promoters spread the extension influence beyond the immediate demonstration areas. This helps to explain why project area productivity growth has been able to keep pace with, and in some cases exceed, national averages. The Farmer Promoter extension mechanism was particularly significant because farmers tend to acquire knowledge through informal rather than formal channels.⁶⁴ The fact that the poorest households may have derived few benefits has prevented the agricultural component from being an unqualified success (paragraph 49).
144. **The use of MVF as a targeting approach.** The MVF approach was used in the CBRDP during the later part of its implementation to identify the poor and then enrol them as the project beneficiaries. This approach helped the project target the poorest of the poor. It has been adopted by the government and is being up scaled at national level (paragraph 40, 115).
145. **Gender mainstreaming was only partially achieved.** The attempt to mainstream gender was only partially achieved, however women have benefited from the overall growth and economic development in the country (paragraph 34, 121-134).
146. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Although efforts were made, through the quantitative Project Impact Assessment (PIA), to provide key impact data on indicators such as agricultural productivity and malnutrition, these were greatly hampered by the lack of a baseline study. In addition, no control groups had been established (paragraph 6)
147. **The prospects of sustainability are mixed.** The overall effect of CBRDP has been to strengthen the momentum of on-going processes. The sustainability of the extension service will probably be assisted by the emerging commercialization, market linkages and resultant contract farming which will allow farmer promoters to become agricultural input suppliers and produce traders at the village level. However, O&M of roads and irrigation remain a challenge. (paragraph 97-112).

B. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The need for a supply push/demand pull strategy for agriculture and rural development

148. The agricultural development dynamics of CBRDP are mainly supply driven, as there is no marketing component. While markets have played a role in the development of CBRPD villages, the project did not envision the role of markets in helping to drive the rural development process. Future projects should be value chain anchored, with specific components targeted on backward and forward linkages of the chain. In this context, farmers' production decisions should be based on market demands (the forward linkage) and produce quality and handling should be driven by consumer preferences (the backward linkage). This paradigm shift from targeting only production to dual targeting of both production and consumption is required for a double win scenario in vertically integrated value chains of the emerging global market place (paragraph 141).

Recommendation 2: Facilitate farmer promoters to become agricultural input suppliers and produce traders at the village level

149. In order to build on best practice of using farmers as extension agents whilst ensuring their sustainability post project, it is recommended that future projects

⁶⁴ Source: Agricultural Sector Development Project, ADB Loan- CAM, ibid.

promote a combination of contract farming driven agricultural development with farmer promoters becoming agricultural input suppliers and produce traders. In this capacity, farmer promoters would be able to earn service fees from input sales while delivering technological advice to client farmers on input use for productivity. (paragraph 144, 148).

Recommendation 3: Irrigation system rehabilitation and improvement

150. In order to achieve satisfactory impacts, irrigation planning should avoid a compartmentalised approach to irrigation system planning and ensure that the nine control points are taken into consideration.⁶⁵
151. In addition, irrigation system command areas should not be more than 100 or 200 hectares as larger systems are more difficult for water user groups to manage. More particularly, larger systems do not show robust returns because of lower than estimated productivity and high capital costs for civil works construction. Smaller systems, designed, built and operated by community irrigators tend to generate EIRRs greater than the presumed opportunity cost of capital of 10 per cent, used by most donor agencies in Cambodia (paragraph 142).

Recommendation 4: Improving M&E system design and functionality

152. A shortcoming in the impact monitoring of CBRDP was the absence of a baseline survey and the use of control groups.
153. To improve impact assessment monitoring, there is a need for undertaking surveys of households before and after the project. In doing so and where feasible the use of control groups may be desirable. Making use of a limited carefully selected number of indicators may also improve the functionality of the M&E system (paragraph 147).

⁶⁵ See annex 7 for a list of all nine steps.

Rating comparison

<i>Core performance criteria</i>	<i>IFAD-PMD ratings^A</i>	<i>PPA rating^A</i>	<i>Rating disconnect</i>
Project performance			
Relevance	4	4	0
Effectiveness	3	4	+1
Efficiency	4	4	0
Project performance^B	3.67	4	-0.33
Rural poverty impact			
Household income and assets	3	4	+1
Human, social capital and empowerment	4	5	+1
Food security and agricultural productivity	4	4	0
Natural resource, environment and climate change	4	4	0
Institutions and policies	4	5	+1
Rural poverty impact^C	4	4	0
Other performance criteria			
Sustainability	3	4	+1
Innovation and scaling up	5	5	0
Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	4	0
Overall project achievement^D	4	4	0
Performance of partners			
IFAD	4	4	0
Government	4	4	0
Average net disconnect			0.33

^A Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory; n.a. = not applicable.

^B Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

^C This is not an average of ratings of individual impact domains.

^D This is not an average of ratings of individual evaluation criteria. The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall assessment.

Basic project data

Basic project data ^A			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region/province	APR	Total project costs	22.85		22.96	
Country	Kingdom of Cambodia	IFAD loan and % of total	9.99	43.7%	9.99	43.5%
Loan number	551-KH	Borrower	1.82	8.0%	1.82	7.9%
Type of project (sub-sector)	Agriculture development	Co financier 1 GTZ	7.88	34.5%	7.88 (PPMS figures) 9.5(PCR figures)	34.3% (PPMS figures) 120%(PCR figures)
Financing type	F	Cofinancier 2 WFP	1.30	5.7%	1.30(PPMS) Unknown according to PCR	5.7%(PPMS) Unknown according to PCR
Lending terms ^B	HC	Cofinancier 3 AusAID	0.55	2.4%	unknown	
Date of approval	7 December 2000					
Date of loan signature	11 January 2001	From beneficiaries	1.30	5.7%	1.30 (PPMS) According to PCR unknown)	5.7% (PPMS) (According to PCR unknown)
Date of effectiveness	29 March 2001	From other sources: DSF small grant as of 27 December 2007			0.115	0.5%
Loan amendments	3 ^C	Number of beneficiaries (if appropriate, specify if direct or indirect)			49 600 ^D households (39 150 direct) (10 500 indirect)	219 272 ^E (165 575 direct) (53 697 indirect)
Loan closure extensions	1	Cooperating institution			UNOPS	
Country programme managers	Youqiong Wang 26 January 2001 to date	Loan closing date			30 September 2008	30 June 2010
Regional director	T. Elhaut	Mid-term review			27 August 2004	September 2004
PCR reviewer	Catrina Perch	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)			100%	88% in SDR (6.91 m)
PCR quality control panel	A-M. Lambert M. Torralba					

Sources: President's report, PCR, PPMS, LGS, MTR, Appraisal Report, Supervision Reports.

^A There are inconsistencies between data retrieved from PPMS and the PCR especially regarding contributions from the beneficiaries. These inconsistencies are reflected in this table and will be further investigated as part of the PPA.

^B There are four types of lending terms: (i) special loans on highly concessional terms, free of interest but bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75%) per annum and having a maturity period of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (ii) loans on hardened terms bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75%) per annum and having a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (iii) loans on intermediate terms with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to 50% of the variable reference interest rate, and a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 5 years; (iv) loans on ordinary terms with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to one hundred per cent (100%) of the variable reference interest rate, and a maturity period of 15 to eighteen 18 years, including a grace period of 3 years.

^C Loan amendment letters dated: 24 March 2006, 23 January 2008 and 13 July 2009.

^D According to the PCR the MTR revised logical framework at the purpose level refers to 39 150 as the number of households in the project area assisted to sustain increased food production and farm incomes from intensified and diversified crop and livestock production. It mentions no other groups of beneficiaries. In the appraisal report 39 150 was the number of households who would benefit directly from the agricultural development programme.

^E According to the PCR indirect beneficiaries are defined as all households in the project area who did not receive any services directly from CBRDP (or agencies supported by CBRDP). The PCR argues that this assumption assumes that due to the wide ranging interventions implemented by CBRDP e.g. training of provincial administrators and commune councillors, the RIFF provided to all Communes in the target districts and the diffusion of technology etc., any household in the project area that is not a direct beneficiary is considered to have received some indirect benefits and therefore to be an indirect beneficiary. However, these benefits might be not very tangible, but relate more to an overall better cooperation and communication between people and the administrative structures. Therefore, when attempting to quantify the number of project beneficiaries it would seem more sensible to focus on the numbers of direct beneficiaries and not to make assumptions about the numbers of indirect beneficiaries.

Terms of reference

A. Context and objectives of the evaluation

1. The Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation (IOE) conducted by the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) in 2010 recommended that IOE transform its approach to project evaluations by conducting Project Completion Report Validation (PCRV) and a limited number of Project Performance Assessments (PPA).
2. The PCRV consists of an independent desk review of the Project Completion Report (PCR) and other available and relevant project documentation. The PPA is conducted soon after selected PCR Validations have been completed and includes focused field visits.
3. The IFAD-financed Community Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) in Kampong Thom and Kampot Provinces, in Cambodia has been selected to undertake a PCRV and a PPA.
4. The objectives of the PPA are to: (i) assess the results and impact of the project under consideration; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design of future and implementation of on-going operations in the country.
5. **Project description.** The project comprised 1,134 villages in the two provinces of Kampong Thom and Kampot, situated respectively north and south of the capital Phnom Penh. Based on WFP data these two provinces were classified as among the four most vulnerable to food insecurity in the country. The project sought to build on interventions by GTZ (now GIZ) in supporting and empowering functioning grass-root organizations in their social and economic development.
6. The strategic goal of the project was "to reduce the poverty of targeted households in the project area".
7. The immediate project objectives were:
 - i. Increased food production and farm income for 39,150 poor households from intensified and diversified crop and livestock production; and
 - ii. Increased capacity of the poor to use the services available from Government and other sources for their social and economic development
8. After the midterm review in 2004 a third objective was added, namely that:
 - iii. Poorer households, their village organization and commune councils jointly with government and non-government service providers efficiently implement development activities for their economic and social well-being.
9. The project was built on the following four components:
 - i. Community development
 - ii. Agricultural and livestock development
 - iii. Rural infrastructure; and
 - iv. Support to institutional development
10. The project had the following elements:
 - i. Social mobilization and participatory development as the entry point for improving the capability of the poor to use their natural resources effectively and to access the services available for their social and economic development;
 - ii. Initial targeting of areas where a start had been made by GTZ in developing the necessary institutional framework and later expansion of these approaches to other areas as staff capacity is further developed with project assistance;
 - iii. Through extension and demonstration programmes transfer simple and proven crop and livestock production technologies to address the

- constraints of the target group and increase their farm incomes;
 - iv. Rehabilitation of small and medium scale irrigation and water control schemes to improve water availability for both wet and dry season crops;
 - v. Provision of access to safe drinking water and road communications to improve target -group health, labour productivity and marketing opportunities;
 - vi. Beneficiary contribution to the construction costs and full responsibility for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of rural infrastructure investments to ensure sustainability and beneficiary ownership;
 - vii. Project implementation using contracts with the line agencies to enhance transparency and accountability; and
 - viii. Provision of institutional support to local service providers to strengthen their capacity to deliver services to the target group effectively and in a demand -driven and participatory manner.
11. The project's target group comprised the estimated 77,400 rural households (40 per cent of the local rural population) who live below the poverty line of US\$112 per capita per year. Women were considered a significant part of the target group because of their important role in crop and livestock production and community activities.

B. The process

- 12. IFAD's Office of Evaluation is currently preparing the PCR for the CBRDP in Cambodia which will be shared with IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division (APR) for comments prior to the undertaking of the PPA.
- 13. The PPA mission is scheduled from 28th March to 8th of April 2011 and will include a programme of field visits to CBRDP sites, interaction with the Government of Cambodia authorities, beneficiaries and other key informants. At the end of the PPA mission, a short wrap-up session will be held in Phnom Penh with government representatives where a PowerPoint presentation will summarise the preliminary findings of the mission and key strategic issues.
- 14. At the conclusion of the field visits, the draft PPA Report will be prepared and subject to IOE internal peer review system for quality assurance. The PPA Report will then be shared with APR for comments. On this basis, IOE will prepare a revised report with an audit trail showing how APR comments were treated. Afterwards, the PPA Report will be shared with the Government for any further comment. Upon receipt of the Government's comments, IOE will finalize the report and prepare the audit trail.
- 15. In compliance with the Evaluation Policy but taking into consideration the different nature of the PPA, the main stakeholders of the CBRDP will be involved throughout the evaluation to ensure that the evaluators fully understand the context in which the project was implemented, the opportunities and the constraints faced by the implementing organizations. An intense cooperation and information exchange will be established, starting with the sharing of this Terms of Reference at the outset of the process for review and comments by APR and the Government. Formal and informal opportunities will be made available for discussing findings, recommendations and lessons from the process.

C. The assignment

- 16. Given the short time available, the PPA is not expected to investigate the whole set of activities financed with the CBRDP. Likewise, the PPA is not provided with the resources required for in-depth impact assessment. The main objective of the PPA of the CBRDP is rather to gather additional evidence on major information gaps in the PCR or issues which merit further analysis and to assess the causal nexus, and the extent to which certain effects can be attributed to the project.

17. **Agricultural development.** The agricultural component was ultimately the component that was going to increase food production and farm incomes and therefore merits special attention. The PCR notes that although the project met most targets in quantitative terms, it did not score so highly using qualitative measures. The PCR points to some causes for this which relate to lack of farmer training that limited impact of demonstrations. The PPA will assess the effectiveness of the agricultural component in reaching project goals and objectives.
 18. **Targeting.** The identification and targeting of MVF had, according to the PCR, the largest impact on the poor and delivered benefits directly to targeted poor households. The project's other components (especially agriculture) provided special support to the MVF families. The agriculture component provided grants to the MVF groups for productive activities. Each member received a loan, which had to be repaid within 6-12 months with an interest of 1 to 3 per cent per month (depending on the group). The revolving fund was used to provide loans to new members of the MVF Group. Further research is required to assess the design assumptions and implementation modalities as well as the replication and up-scaling potential of the MVF.
 19. **O&M.** The PCR highlights that the indicator related to infrastructure O&M was only partially achieved. The performance target for wells was met, but not that for the roads or the irrigation schemes. Support for empowering the poor through their active involvement in the local technical committees (LTCs), water users committees (WUC) and other user organizations to sustain the infrastructure investments lagged behind the level envisaged in the project design. The PCR identified limited understanding by Provincial Department of Rural Development staff of their community development role and limited capacity and commitment to forming and training of water users committees by Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology as hampering establishing maintenance committees. The PPA will assess the sustainability and functioning of the O&M.
 20. **Gender.** The PCR does not include any comprehensive analysis of gender issues. Instead the main information is to be found in the log frame where the project has reported on each indicator. From this it would seem that in quantitative terms the project has only partially achieved its main gender goals. More than 50 per cent of women participated in local planning but less than 50 per cent participated in the follow up process (decision making and project management). 250 gender focal points in Commune Councils and line departments successfully increased their capacities to perform their task but no evaluation of capacity building exercises was done. Gender training for other focal points, NGOs, and individuals was conducted according to training plans and AWBP. Other indicators state that food security between 2001 and 2007 went up for all households from 57 per cent to 69 per cent and for female-headed households from 52 per cent to 64 per cent. On the agricultural side female headed households constituted on average 22 per cent amongst adopters of technologies. According to the Supervision report (2009) Gender sensitivity improved in the provinces at all levels. This was reflected in women's increased active participation in grass root level groups, training, agricultural activities and village and CC administrations. It is also reported that domestic violence decreased. The PPA will analyse the strategy and assess its effectiveness.
- D. Human resources**
21. Ms. Catrina Perch, IOE Evaluation Officer, was appointed as lead evaluator for this exercise. Ms Perch will be assisted by Mr Steven Shepley as agriculture and infrastructure consultant.

E. Methods

22. First of all, the PCRV relies on a desk review of available documents related to the CBRDP (see section 8). During the PPA mission, additional data will be collected to verify available information and to reach an independent assessment of performance and results.
23. Data collection methods will mostly include qualitative participatory techniques. Questionnaire-based surveys are not applicable: the short duration of the mission would not allow the generation of an adequate sample size. The methods used will be individual interviews, focus-group discussions with beneficiaries and direct observation. The PPA will also make use – where applicable – of the additional data available through the CBRDP M&E system that was not reported in any documents under section F. Triangulation will be applied for validating findings emerging from different information sources. This will allow the evaluation to reduce the risk of bias that may come from single informants or measurement errors associated with the application of single data gathering methods.

F. Background documents

Methodology

- IOE (2011). Guidelines for the Pilot Phase of the Project Completion Report Validation (PCRV) and Project Performance Assessment (PPA).
- IFAD (2009). Evaluation Manual.

Content

- IFAD (2000). Report and Recommendations of the President – CBRDP.
- IFAD (2007). Final (Quantitative) Project Impact Assessment of Household level Project Results.
- IFAD (2008). Results of RDP/CBRDP Summary Assessment 2002-2007, Final Report.
- IFAD (2009). Project Completion Review – Final Draft.
- IFAD (2009). Supervision Report.
- IFAD (2004). Mid-Term Review.
- UNOPS (2006, 2007). Supervision Report.
- IOE (2011). Draft Project Completion Report Validation of the Community Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot Provinces in Cambodia

Methodological note on project performance assessments

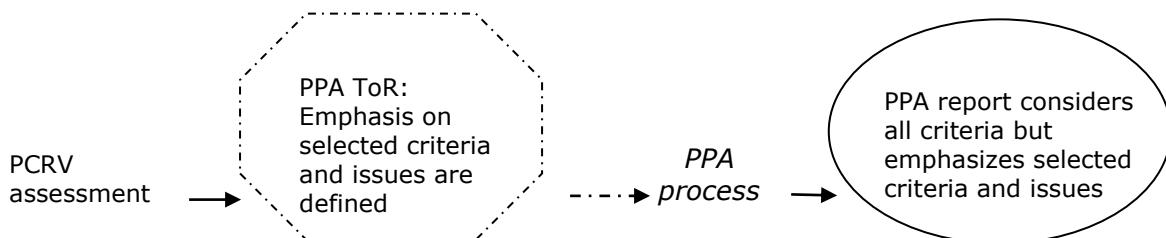
A. What is a project performance assessment?¹

1. The project performance assessment (PPA) conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) entails one mission of 7-10 days² (as opposed to 20-25 for past project evaluations) and two mission members³ (compared with 3-4). PPAs are conducted on a sample of projects for which project completion reports have been validated by IOE, and take account of the following criteria (not mutually exclusive): (i) synergies with forthcoming or on-going IOE evaluations (e.g. CPEs or CLEs); (ii) major information gaps in PCRs; (iii) novel approaches; and (iv) geographic balance.
2. The objectives of the PPA are to: assess the results and impact of the project under consideration; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of on-going and future operations in the country involved. When the PPA is to be used as an input for a CPE, this should be reflected at the beginning of the report. The PPA is based on the project completion report validation (PCRV) results, further desk review, interviews at IFAD headquarters, and a dedicated mission to the country, to include meetings in the capital city and field visits. The scope of the PPA is set out in the respective terms of reference.

B. Preparing a PPA

3. Based on the results of the PCRV, IOE prepares brief terms of reference (ToR) for the PPA in order to sharpen the focus of the exercise.⁴ As in the case of PCRVs, PPAs do not attempt to respond to each and every question contained in the Evaluation Manual. Instead, they concentrate on the most salient facets of the criteria calling for PPA analysis, especially those not adequately explained in the PCRV.
4. When preparing a PPA, the emphasis placed on each evaluation criterion will depend both on the PCRV assessment and on findings that emerge during the PPA process. When a criterion or issue is not identified as problematic or in need of further investigation, and no additional information or evidence emerges during the PPA process, the PPA report will re-elaborate the PCRV findings.

Scope of the PPA



¹ Extract from the PCRV and PPA Guidelines.

² PPAs are to be conducted within a budget ceiling of US\$25,000.

³ Typically, a PPA mission would be conducted by an IOE staff member with the support of a consultant (international or national). An additional (national) consultant may be recruited if required and feasible within the evaluation budget.

⁴ Rather than an approach paper, IOE prepares terms of reference for PPAs. These terms of reference ensure coverage of information gaps, areas of focus identified through PCRVs and comments by the country programme manager, and will concentrate the PPA on those areas. The terms of reference will be included as an annex to the PPA.

C. Evaluation criteria

5. The PPA is well suited to provide an informed summary assessment of project relevance. This includes assessing the relevance of project objectives and of design. While, at the design stage, project logical frameworks are sometimes succinct and sketchy, they do contain a number of (tacit) assumptions on mechanisms and processes expected to generate the final results. At the post-completion phase, and with the benefit of hindsight, it will be clearer to the evaluators which of these assumptions have proved to be realistic, and which did not hold up during implementation and why.
6. For example, the PPA of a project with a major agricultural marketing component may consider whether the project framework incorporated key information on the value chain. Did it investigate issues relating to input and output markets (distance, information, monopolistic power)? Did it make realistic assumptions on post-harvest conservation and losses? In such cases, staff responsible for the PPA will not be expected to conduct extensive market analyses, but might consider the different steps (e.g. production, processing, transportation, distribution, retail) involved and conduct interviews with selected actors along the value chain.
7. An assessment of effectiveness, the extent to which a project's overall objectives have been achieved, should be preferably made at project completion, when the components are expected to have been executed and all resources fully utilized. The PPA considers the overall objectives⁵ set out in the final project design document and as modified during implementation. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to capture good performance or under-performance in areas that were not defined as an objective in the initial design but emerged during the course of implementation.
8. The PPA mission may interview farmers regarding an extension component, the objective of which was to diffuse a certain agricultural practice (say, adoption of a soil nutrient conservation technique). The purpose here would be to understand whether the farmers found it useful, to what extent they applied it and their perception of the results obtained. The PPA may look into reasons for the farmers' interest in new techniques, and into adoption rates. For example, was the extension message delivered through lectures? Did extension agents use audio-visual tools? Did extension agents engage farmers in interactive and participatory modules? These type of questions help illustrate *why* certain initiatives have been conducive (or not conducive) to obtaining the desired results.
9. The Evaluation Manual suggests methods for assessing efficiency, such as calculating the economic internal rate of return (EIRR),⁶ estimating unit costs and comparing them with standards (cost-effectiveness approach), or addressing managerial aspects of efficiency (timely delivery of activities, respect of budget provisions). The documentation used in preparing the PCRV should normally provide sufficient evidence of delays and cost overruns and make it possible to explain why they happened.
10. As far as rural poverty impact is concerned, the following domains are contemplated in the Evaluation Manual: (a) household income and assets; (b) human and social capital and empowerment; (c) food security and agricultural

⁵ Overall objectives will be considered as a reference for assessing effectiveness. However, these are not always stated clearly or consistent throughout the documentation. The assessment may be made by component if objectives are defined by components; however the evaluation will try to establish a correspondence between the overall objectives and outputs.

⁶ Calculating an EIRR may be challenging for a PPA as it is time consuming and the required high quality data are often not available. The PPA may help verify whether some of the crucial assumptions for EIRR calculation are consistent with field observations. The mission may also help shed light on the cost-effectiveness aspects of efficiency, for example whether, in an irrigation project, a simple upgrade of traditional seasonal flood water canalization systems might have been an option, rather than investing on a complex irrigation system, when access to markets is seriously constrained (annex 3.C.3).

productivity; (d) natural resources, the environment and climate change;⁷ and (e) institutions and policies. As shown in past evaluations, IFAD-funded projects generally collect very little data on household or community-level impact indicators. Even when impact data are available, both their quality and the methodological rigour of impact assessments are still questionable. For example, although data report significant increases in household assets, these may be due to exogenous factors (e.g. falling prices of certain commodities; a general economic upturn; households receiving remittances), and not to the project.

11. PPAs may help address the “attribution issue” (i.e. establishing to what extent certain results are due to a development intervention rather than to exogenous factors) by:
 - (i) following the logical chain of the project, identifying key hypotheses and reassessing the plausibility chain; and
 - (ii) conducting interviews with non-beneficiaries sharing key characteristics (e.g. socio-economic status, livelihood, farming system), which would give the mission an idea of what would have happened without the project (counterfactual).⁸
12. When sufficient resources are available, simple data collection exercises (mini-surveys) may be conducted by a local consultant prior to the PPA mission.⁹ Another non-mutually exclusive option is to spot-check typical data ranges or patterns described in the PCR by means of case studies (e.g. do PCR claims regarding increases in average food-secure months fall within the typical ranges recorded in the field?). It is to be noted that, while data collected by a PPA mission may not be representative in a statistical sense, such data often provide useful reference points and insights. It is important to exercise care in selecting sites for interviews in order to avoid blatant cases of non-beneficiaries profiting from the project.). Sites for field visits are selected by IOE in consultation with the government concerned. Government staff may also accompany the PPA mission on these visits.
13. The typical timing of the PPA (1-2 years after project closure) may be useful for identifying factors that enhance or threaten the sustainability of benefits. By that stage, the project management unit may have been disbanded and some of the support activities (technical, financial, organizational) terminated, unless a second phase is going forward or other funding has become available. Typical factors of sustainability (political support, availability of budgetary resources for maintenance, technical capacity, commitment, ownership by the beneficiaries, environmental resilience) can be better understood at the ex post stage.
14. The PPA also concentrates on IFAD’s role with regard to the promotion of innovations and scaling up. For example, it might be observed that some innovations are easily scaled up at low cost (e.g. simple but improved cattle-rearing practices that can be disseminated with limited funding). In other cases, scaling up may involve risks: consider the case of a high-yield crop variety for which market demand is static. Broad adoption of the variety may be beneficial in terms of ensuring food security, but may also depress market prices and thereby reduce sale revenues for many households unless there are other, complementary activities for the processing of raw products.
15. The PPA addresses gender equality and women’s empowerment, a criterion recently introduced into IFAD’s evaluation methodology. This relates to the emphasis placed on gender issues: whether it has been followed up during implementation, including the monitoring of gender-related indicators; and the results achieve.

⁷ Climate change criterion will be addressed if and when pertinent in the context of the project, as most completed projects evaluated did not integrate this issue into the project design.

⁸ See also the discussion of attribution issues in the section on PCRVs.

⁹ If the PPA is conducted in the context of a country programme evaluation, then the PPA can piggy-back on the CPE and dedicate more resources to primary data collection.

16. Information from the PCR may be often sufficient to assess the performance of partners, namely, IFAD and the government. The PPA mission may provide further insights, such as on IFAD's responsiveness, if relevant, to implementation issues or problems of coordination among the project implementation unit and local and central governments (annex 3, C.8). The PPA does not assess the performance of cooperating institutions, which now has little or no learning value for IFAD.
17. Having completed the analysis, the PPA provides its own ratings in accordance with the evaluation criteria and compares them with PMD's ratings. PPA ratings are final for evaluation reporting purposes. The PPA also rates the quality of the PCR document.
18. The PPA formulates short conclusions: a storyline of the main findings. Thereafter, a few key recommendations are presented with a view to following up projects, or other interventions with a similar focus or components in different areas of the country.¹⁰

¹⁰ Practices differ among MDBs, including recommendations in PPAs. At the World Bank, there are no recommendations but “lessons learned” are presented in a typical PPA. On the other hand, PPAs prepared by AsDB include “issues and lessons” as well as “follow-up actions” although the latter tend to take the form of either generic technical guidelines for a future (hypothetical) intervention in the same sector or for an ongoing follow-up project (at AsDB, PPAs are undertaken at least three years after project closure).

Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Definition^A</i>
Project performance	
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies. It also entails an assessment of project design in achieving its objectives.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
Rural poverty impact^B	Impact is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income and assets • Human and social capital and empowerment • Food security and agricultural productivity • Natural resources, the environment and climate change • Institutions and policies 	<p>Household income provides a means of assessing the flow of economic benefits accruing to an individual or group, whereas assets relate to a stock of accumulated items of economic value.</p> <p>Human and social capital and empowerment include an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the empowerment of individuals, the quality of grassroots organizations and institutions, and the poor's individual and collective capacity.</p> <p>Changes in food security relate to availability, access to food and stability of access, whereas changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields.</p> <p>The focus on natural resources and the environment involves assessing the extent to which a project contributes to changes in the protection, rehabilitation or depletion of natural resources and the environment as well as in mitigating the negative impact of climate change or promoting adaptation measures.</p> <p>The criterion relating to institutions and policies is designed to assess changes in the quality and performance of institutions, policies and the regulatory framework that influence the lives of the poor.</p>
Other performance criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Innovation and scaling up • Gender equality and women's empowerment 	<p>The likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life.</p> <p>The extent to which IFAD development interventions have: (i) introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction; and (ii) the extent to which these interventions have been (or are likely to be) scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.</p> <p>Relevance of design in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. Level of resources of the project dedicated to these dimensions. Changes promoted by the project at the household level (workload, nutrition status, women's influence on decision making). Adoption of gender-disaggregated indicators for monitoring, analysis of data and use of findings to correct project implementation and to disseminate lessons learned.</p>
Overall project achievement	This provides an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the analysis made under the various evaluation criteria cited above.
Performance of partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD • Government 	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation. The performance of each partner will be assessed on an individual basis with a view to the partner's expected role and responsibility in the project life cycle.

^A These definitions have been taken from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management* and from the IOE Evaluation Manual (2009).

^B The IFAD Evaluation Manual also deals with the "lack of intervention". That is, no specific intervention may have been foreseen or intended with respect to one or more of the five impact domains. In spite of this, if positive or negative changes are detected and can be attributed in whole or in part to the project, a rating should be assigned to the particular impact domain. On the other hand, if no changes are detected and no intervention was foreseen or intended, then no rating (or the mention "not applicable") is assigned.

List of key persons met

Phnom Penh Province

Ministry of Rural Development

H.E. Chan Darong, Director General

Mr Song Sophal, Deputy Director General

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Fisheries

Mr Hok Kimthourn, Deputy National Project Coordinator

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Ministry of Women's Affairs

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Mr Jean Yves Dekteister former TA for Community Development (Kampot)

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Mr Sim Veasna, Executive Committee accountant

Mr Khy Neang, Former Deputy of Provincial Water Resource and Meteorology

Ms Hout Ry, Deputy of Women's Affairs Department

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Mr Sea Kheang, Community Development Manager

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Mr Chhour Kimthy, Chief agriculture PDA

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IFAD website: www.ifad.org

Oxfam International: <http://www.oxfam.org>

World Bank: www.worldbank.org

World Food Programme: www.wfp.org

Nine critical control points¹

1. Dry season hydrology

- Dry season base flow in liters/sec/ha;
- Planned crop water requirements at root zone in liters/sec from evapo-transpiration and crop coefficients (example rice needs 1liter/sec/ha at the root zone);
- System losses from seepage and evaporation (in Laos about 3 liters/sec/ha based on ADBCMI design, giving irrigation efficiency of 25 per cent);
- From 1, 2 and 3 above, determine dry season irrigation constraints.

2. Participatory crop irrigation planning

- Farmer technology transfer (extension)
- Cropping pattern based on water needs and available dry season base flow.

3. Civil and agricultural engineering management

- System design to optimise available dry season water supply (minimise losses and improve irrigation efficiency)
- Dry season water balance (base flow –crop root zone needs-system losses)

4. Social dimensions - Water user empowerment

- Water Use Associations (WUAs) and Water Use Groups (WUGs) have full legal authority to collect the irrigation service fees (ISFs). ISF sufficient for sustainable O&M is 4 per cent of capital cost per hectare.
- WUGs/WUAs training in on-farm water use and management, O&M, finance and agronomy

5. Physical system sustainability

- ISF collected at least 4 per cent of capital cost per hectare
- Routine annual maintenance including canal cleaning and head works maintenance
- Periodic maintenance with canal cross section design restoration and pump/weir repair
- Durability of 15 years

6. System viability

- Optimal crop yields
- Farmers willing and able to pay ISF
- Head and tail end farmers have equitable water distribution to meet optimal crop water requirements

7. Productivity gain (supply side)

- Higher commercial crop production (yield, quantity and quality)
- Reduced subsistence agriculture

8. Marketing (demand side)

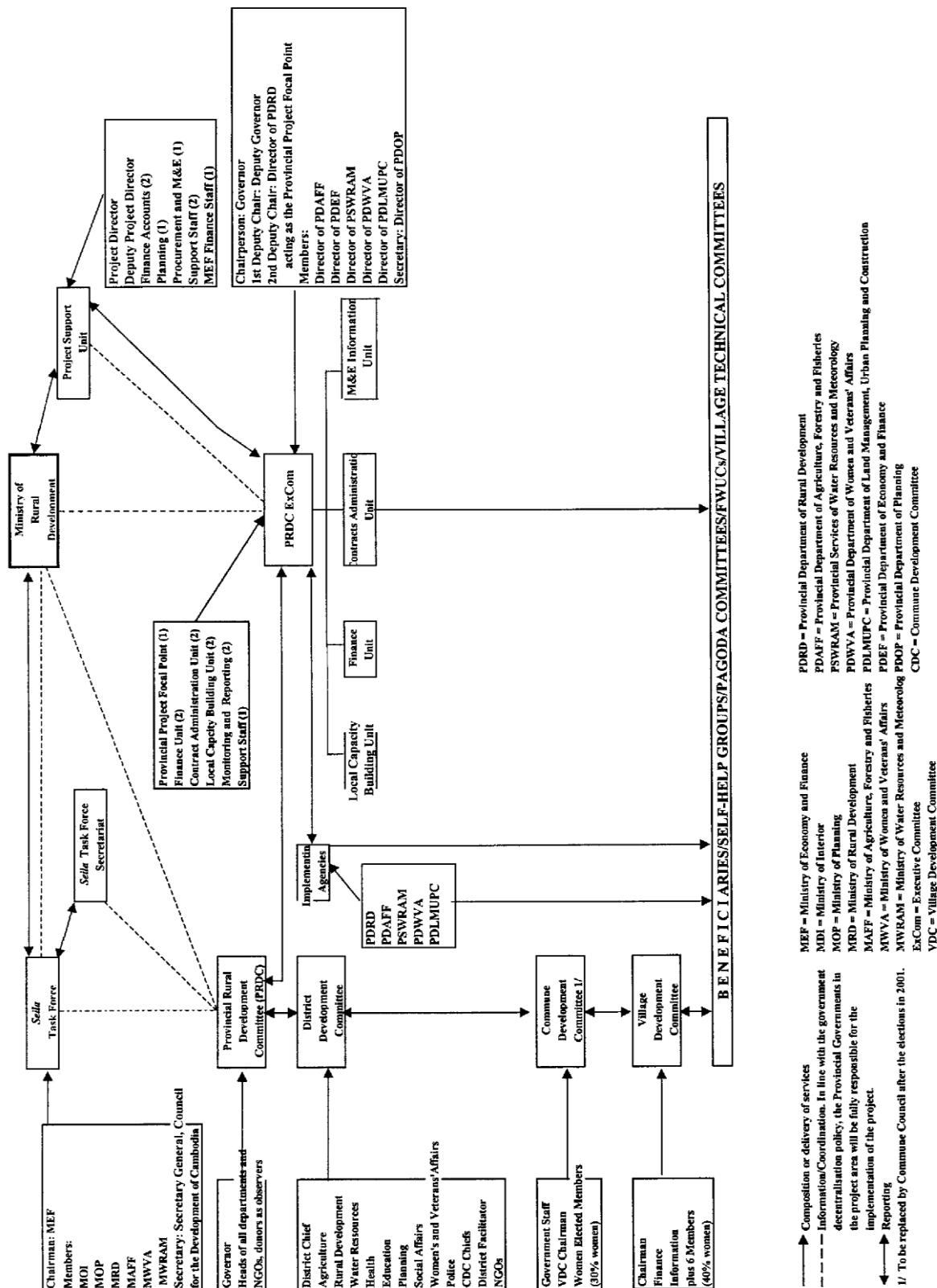
- Grading and sorting
- Value adding
- Improved gross and net margins
- Agricultural trade linkages

9. Socioeconomic impact

- Farmer household income improvement
- Increased rural employment generation
- Dependency ratio decline
- Poverty reduction
- Household savings and asset accumulation
- Growth of rural enterprises

¹ Shepley, Steven. ADB PPTA Stung Chinit Water Resources Development Project, Draft Final Report, August 1997.

Organization chart of institutional relationships¹



¹ Source: appendix 9 of Appraisal Report, 2001 (IFAD).

Current livelihood profile¹

- Rice production/consumption/marketing
- Livestock raising/marketing
- Vegetables/marketing
- Mango harvest and marketing
- Fishing
- Non timber forest products collection/marketing
- Coconut collection/marketing
- Construction
- Transport
- Cross border labour marketing

¹ Village focal group discussions of PPA mission.

Malnutrition*

- Kampong Thom: height for age (stunting) from 47 per cent (National Institute of Health/National Institute of Statistics) to 43 per cent (2007a); weight for age (underweight) from 49 per cent (National Institute of Health /National Institute of Statistics) to 44 per cent (2007a). Both reflect a decrease of these rates of about 10 per cent.
- Kampot: height for age (stunting) from 49 per cent (National Institute of Health/National Institute of Statistics) to 30 per cent (2007a); weight for age (underweight) from 41 per cent (National Institute of Health/National Institute of Statistics) to 32 per cent. These figures reflect a decrease of 30 per cent (stunting) and 20 per cent (underweight)

* Weiss Eric. Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) in Kampong Thom and Kampot Provinces, Kingdom of Cambodia, Final Quantitative Project Impact Assessment of Household Level Project Results, 2007.



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to overcome poverty

**International Fund for
Agricultural Development**

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