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**Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations in Asia and the Pacific Region**

**Thematic Evaluation**

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# Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations in Asia and the Pacific Region

## Thematic Evaluation

### Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	iv
Agreement at Completion Point	vii
Executive Summary	xvii
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS</b>	<b>3</b>
A. Case Study Project Briefs	3
B. Project Document Reviews	5
C. Field Interviews	10
<b>III. INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>IV. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	
1. Terms of Reference – Case Study Consultants	27
2. Case Study One - Cambodia	35
3. Case Study Two - China	41
4. Summary of India Case Studies	45
5. Case Study Three – India (Andhra Pradesh)	47
6. Case Study Four – India (North-East Region)	53
7. Case Study Five - Nepal	57
8. Case Study Six - Philippines	65
9. Case Study Seven – Sri Lanka	77
10. Case Study Eight – Vietnam	85
11. Stakeholders’ Workshop Concept Note	93
12. Stakeholder’s Workshop Concluding Statement	99

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACP	Agreement at Completion Point
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADESS	Agricultural Development Support Project to Seila
AEA	Ago-ecological Assessment
AIP	Agricultural Improvement Programme
BNRMP	Barangay Natural Resource Management Plan
CADT	Certificate of ancestral domain title
CASCADE	Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCAP	Central Cordillera Agricultural Program
CDB	Community Development Board
CHARM	Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management
CLP	Core Learning Partnership
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Paper
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CSM	Country Strategy Mission
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines
DFO	District Forestry Officer
ENRAP	Electronic Network for Rural Poverty Alleviation in Asia and the Pacific
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GCC	Girijan Co-operative Corporation
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HADP	Highland Agriculture Development Project
HLFFDP	Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project
HPM	Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICO	Integrated Community Organization
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFS	Integrated Farming System
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRDPs	Integrated Rural Development Projects
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
LGU	Local Government Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFIs	Micro-finance Institutions
MFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
NER	North-Eastern Region, India
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUFFIC	Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation
OE	Office of Evaluation
OP	Operational Plan
PI	Asia and Pacific Division
PDAFFs	Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia
PMO	Project Management Office
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSO	Project Support Office
PSP	Production Start-up Programme
PSU	Project Support Unit
RDB	Rural Development Bank

SBIRDP	Second Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project
SHG	Self-help group
SIDA	Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
SPM	Special Programming Mission
STF	<i>Seila</i> Task Force
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States Dollar
VCU	Village Coordination Unit
VND	Vietnamese Dong
VHW	Village Health Worker
VLA	Village Livestock Assistant
WFP	World Food Programme
WUGs	Water User Groups



**Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations  
in Asia and the Pacific Region**

**Thematic Evaluation**

**Agreement at Completion Point**

**A. The Core Learning Partnership and the Users of the Evaluation**

1. The members of the Core Learning Partnership (CLP) included representatives of IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division (PI) and Office of Evaluation, UNOPS Asia Office, Professor Anil Gupta (NGO SRISTI and IIMA), Mr Wietse Bruinsma, Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation (NUFFIC), the Cambodia Agriculture Development Support Project to Seila, China Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Agricultural Development Project, India Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project, India North-East Region Community Resource Management Project, Nepal Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development Project, Philippines Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project, Sri Lanka Second Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project and Vietnam Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities.

2. This ACP was accomplished with members of the CLP and others including: Bangladesh Agricultural Diversification & Intensification Project, Laos Ouomxay Community Initiatives Support Project, Indonesia Post Crisis Programme for Participatory Integrated Development in Rainfed Areas, Vietnam Ha Tinh Rural Development Project, the co-ordinator of the Electronic Network for Rural Asia/Pacific (ENRAP), representatives of the Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand) and the Global Knowledge Partnership Secretariat (Malaysia), Centre for Integrated Agricultural Development (China), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD, Nepal), NGO Seilanithin (Cambodia), NGO Chaitanya (India), Janaseva Foundation (India), NGO DEPROSC (Nepal), CONCORED (Consortium of NGOs, Philippines), Sri Lanka Women's Conference, the representative from the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation (Bangkok), and representatives from the Governments of Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, as well as several IFAD consultants (Messrs Roberto Carpano, Sarath Mananwatte, Gian Marco Luberti, Roger Norman, J.P.L. Srivastava, and B.N. Yugandhar).

3. The ACP contains the main evaluation findings, insights and recommendations. It builds on the outputs of the thematic evaluation and includes the key recommendations generated during the regional workshop on the topic organised by IFAD in Bangkok in the week of 21 July 2003.

**B. The Main Evaluation Findings**

4. The documentation reviewed during the thematic evaluation provides useful insights into the issues as well as efforts involved by IFAD in the promotion and development of local knowledge systems and innovations. Neglecting local technologies, local skills and natural resources has perpetuated dependence and distorted the social fabric among the very people whose progress is the major objective. In whichever manner we analyze and study the accumulated experience, it is obvious that each community has to develop its own local competence to find alternate routes, to collect information, screen, select, acquire, adapt and utilize given technologies, to generate and transfer relevant technologies and to link science and technology base with education, extension and production systems. The need of the poor is not "relief", but "release" of their inherent potential for individual growth, economic productivity and social and political responsibility.

5. Similarly, the eight case studies undertaken in the context of the thematic evaluation have provided important findings and recommendations. Even as they acknowledge the contribution of local knowledge and the primacy to be accorded to it, the existing situation bristles with several issues

and problems. Important issues relevant to a proper framework for the promotion and development of local knowledge and innovations arise out of these case studies. They are:

- Absence of an explicit, formal and comprehensive process of capturing and disseminating local knowledge and innovation. This may be due to inadequate recognition by the official hierarchy of the contribution that the beneficiaries' knowledge and capacity for innovation can make to the success of the project. This was accompanied by failure to incorporate local knowledge into the administrative, technical and organizational structures of the projects;
- Design of projects and programmes tends to be dominated by considerations of financing institutions, government strategy and *modus operandi* of the delivery system. The beneficiary perspective was usually secondary to this priority. Those who control the finance have also tended to control knowledge in the development process;
- In most operations, both management and beneficiaries find themselves struggling to bridge the gap between a priori commitments to project targets and local knowledge systems. This is happening, *inter-alia*, due to lack of flexibility in the implementation phase. That is, in the context of local knowledge system, there was tension between the approved blue print and the field conditions;
- There was greater focus on physical and financial progress in the monitoring and evaluation systems and marginalization of the local knowledge in all aspects of the project cycle;
- There was a nominal commitment to participation. Even when appropriate policy and legal environments exist, results are restricted due to lack of institutionalization of participatory approaches. This has led to perpetual dependency and exclusion of local knowledge and innovations in subtle ways;
- Participation should extend to the processes for formulating and governing policies, as well as the management of the projects and programmes. In most interventions, such participatory platforms were neither established or where they existed, they performed subordinate ritualistic functions. Implementing agencies/partners were often more preoccupied with their own perspectives and procedures;
- Local knowledge and innovations was considered or promoted only for those problems for which normally no solution existed in exogenous knowledge. In other words, efforts to build upon the local knowledge in all aspects were not made and flexibility to adopt indigenous options even in situations where exogenous options existed was not provided; and
- It was not enough to focus upon beneficiaries' knowledge in the technical domain only. Such technical knowledge and innovations were not usually elicited and incorporated into project design and implementation. The exclusion of beneficiaries from the managerial and procedural domains associated with the project design and implementation was more evident and remedial action for the future should focus upon this.

6. In the Country Strategic Opportunities Papers (COSOPs) reviewed, the role of the community and their involvement in the identification of the sub-projects is stressed (Bangladesh COSOP). Similarly, the scope for mobilizing local knowledge networks using indigenous knowledge as the starting point for blending local and new technologies is referred to (China, Nepal). There is also an

emphasis upon local initiatives and local institutions as well as upon partnership building with local communities, especially with the poor and the marginalized. The need to tap the traditional knowledge of the upland dwellers, to sift through their specific practices, identify opportunities and communicate this knowledge to other upland groups are mentioned (Philippines). A demand driven approach to recognize tribal farmers' local knowledge in soil and water conservation measures is given priority (India). Enabling the poor to access knowledge and technology to generate income on a sustainable basis is highlighted (Vietnam).

7. However in all this, institutional mechanisms relevant to the promotion and development of local knowledge and innovations are not spelt out in adequate detail. Though recognized as a strategy, necessary project components and implementation tools are not suggested. The strategies do not talk sufficiently about the knowledge and technology already available with the poor. COSOPs, in general are silent upon structured initiatives, operational mechanisms or investments required for using local knowledge and improving upon it. The scope provided for the local knowledge systems in participatory development programs is at the most incidental and in some cases anecdotal. The key issues relate to the methodologies and processes to enable the communities creatively scout for solutions to their problems, test new options and build upon their accumulated knowledge. These issues need to be addressed at the level of project design as well as during the process of facilitation. Pre-determination of a package of technological practices implies a lack of recognition of the complexity and diversity of the social and economic situation of the poor. Ability to generate a range of technical options from out of which they may choose and adapt is an index of participation. The strategy for local knowledge should basically weave in modern methods into the local-level technology tapestry.

### **C. Evaluation Insights**

8. One important insight emerging from the thematic evaluation is that, in our efforts to alleviate rural poverty the disadvantaged communities shall be empowered to overcome social, technical, cultural and psychological barriers through self-managed organisations. In such a way, they will be able to attain higher productivity with improved skills and asset base and utilise resources at their command to full potential and gain full access to services. Participation of concerned communities and respect to their knowledge systems and abilities are among the core principles governing these efforts. Promotion and development of local knowledge and innovations is undoubtedly a prime mover in the complex mechanics whereby science and technology gets transmitted into the communities of the poor.

9. Creation of technological capability among the poorest is very much like climbing a tall ladder, each step a base for greater heights. Experience reveals the importance of a long range vision and of a gestation period for the seeds to germinate. As in the case of institution building and capabilities development, the participative approach for the development of local knowledge and innovations demands a certain degree of commitment and consensus which could greatly aid subsequent implementation steps. Increased understanding would also promote a flexible approach, which is a vital element in managing local knowledge and people centred science and technology approaches. A cursory analysis of the achievements in integrating the science and technology structures with local knowledge and innovations reveals that these were not the result of big research laboratories or leading scientists responding to 'technology pushes' or 'market pulls'. They were achieved through an accumulation of innumerable and ceaseless small improvements in the production processes and quality brought about by the beneficiaries of development projects.

10. If local knowledge is disappearing, it is primarily because pressures of modernization and cultural homogenization that threaten the life-styles, practices, and the cultures of the small agricultural producers, the poor and the indigenous people. Their knowledge certainly cannot be saved in an archive, if they themselves disappear. What is important is to make the science and technology programme more acceptable to the people whose knowledge we wish to highlight and appropriate for the common good. Recognition of the multiplicity of logics and practices that underlie the creation

and maintenance of different knowledge systems is essential for this endeavour. Useful knowledge is unavoidably anchored in institutional origins and cultural moorings. In situ conservation cannot succeed without populations living at the grassroots level gaining control over the use of lands in which they dwell and the resources on which they rely. Those who are seen to possess knowledge must also possess the right to decide on how to save their knowledge, how to use it, and who shall use it.

11. Decentralized and people centred implementation of development projects have become sine-quo-non of success. Social mobilization and group building have become important building blocks for promotion of participation and sustainability. There is abundant field experience in IFAD projects to suggest that a ladder of participatory groups of primary stakeholders leads to better accountability, transparency and success. This ladder of community-based organizations basically comprises of different types of groups at the grass-root level (e.g., self-help groups, user groups and commodity groups) and community-based organizations at the management level (e.g., federation of groups at the village level and also at cluster/intermediate level and finally an apex body representing all these community-based organisations at the project/district level). A social platform comprising of all these groups at different levels is an essential element for enhancing participatory approaches as well as for the promotion of local knowledge and innovations at the grassroots level. The sustainability of these groups and management bodies is stressed for genuine empowerment of the community. Such social capital reinforces the efforts towards building physical and financial capital. It is also considered as an important pre-requisite for providing due recognition and stimulus for efforts to promote science and technology and local technical know-how in development projects. On-going experience has clearly shown that any management structure, which has emerged out of heterogeneous communities, is far less sustainable and effective than the structures built upon the organic evolution of community based organizations built upon self-help groups and their apex organizations functioning as management bodies.

12. The socio-economic situations under which the families of the poor earn their livelihoods are heterogeneous and dynamic. The relevant infrastructure, their access to resources, their level of education, their participation in work and the size of their families are all undergoing a continuous process of change. Similarly, the rapid and explosive scientific and technological advancements impinge upon the generation of new technologies not only through exogenous research process, but also through indigenous research process. Therefore, it is appropriate to focus upon the families who could generate need based technologies through participatory adaptive research. The platforms for these researches should be the specific situations under which the poor families live and operate. Likewise, the participating families should be viewed as co-research workers rather than mere beneficiaries. It has often been commented that the poor should have countervailing power to match the power of providers in the formal knowledge system. It means that they should be able influence the content of what they need and what is provided and also determine how the knowledge provided will be used. Locating, acknowledging, using and promoting knowledge of the poor is an essential process in their empowerment.

13. The thematic evaluation highlighted that intellectual property rights forges several challenges to the domain of local knowledge and innovations. The eight case studies undertaken in the evaluation revealed that people and communities in the concerned projects and in developing countries at large are anxious that inappropriate patenting of biological materials or local knowledge should not take place. In the light of this, the World Trade Organisation is in the process of examining proposals suggesting that an applicant for a patent relating to biological materials or to local knowledge should provide, as a precondition to acquiring patent rights:

- i) disclosure of the source and country of origin of the biological resources and of the traditional knowledge used in the invention.
- ii) evidence of prior informed consent through approval of authorities under the relevant national regime; and
- iii) evidence of fair and equitable benefit sharing under the relevant national regime

14. Against this backdrop, IFAD and its partners need to contribute to the protection of intellectual property rights involving a four pronged approach; (a) there should be appropriate monitoring systems against outsiders especially commercial interests from trying to patent the local knowledge and grassroots innovations; (b) in the event of an outside interest trying to exploit local knowledge and innovation commercially, there is need to institute a policy framework that mandates the outside interest to share the benefit with the concerned local community; (c) in its future operations, PI should assist local communities in exploring the feasibility and desirability of patenting its knowledge and deriving full benefits, and (d) a review of the existing legal provisions would be useful to provide for better protection for biological and genetic resources and indigenous knowledge, particularly the provisions contained in the legislations relating to patents, protection of plant varieties and farmers rights and bio-diversity conservation.

15. Preparing an inventory of local knowledge and innovations and periodic updating of such an inventory can contribute positively to the enabling environment for local knowledge and innovations. Such an inventory, besides making it difficult for outsiders to derive commercial benefits out of local knowledge and innovations without prior informed consent of the local community, will facilitate proper monitoring of action by the local community in respect of each and every item of local knowledge and innovation.

#### **D. Recommendations Agreed upon by Partners**

16. **Need for explicit policy and strategy statement.** The Asia and the Pacific Division (PI) of IFAD has acquired some experience in revitalizing local knowledge systems and blending them with modern technology in a broad range of areas, such as soil and water conservation, crop and livestock husbandry, participatory research, agriculture technology and even traditional medical practices. These activities boost the productivity and enhance the resilience of the concerned local communities. More importantly, the simple fact that their own knowledge systems were the starting point enhances their self-esteem. Blending local and modern technologies enhances the ecological sustainability of the results, leading to production increases, better-quality products and new products. However, the primacy of local knowledge and innovations in development cannot be fully realised, unless all the multiple stake-holders forge a strategic alliance upon raising sensitivity, awareness and emphasis about its benefits. The subject of local knowledge and innovation requires transcending the restricted debate among enthusiasts and specialists and becoming a part of the public agenda and an enriched debate at all levels. An explicit commitment and agreement in suitable policy statements regarding the promotion of local knowledge and innovations and strategies for weaving in modern methods into local technology is very important. Therefore, in spite of the efforts made so far in identifying, promoting and utilising local knowledge and innovations, there is need for PI to articulate in its regional as well as country strategies a clear commitment to the topic under consideration. In addition, it will only be possible to translate such commitment into through adequate allocation of resources at the regional, country and local level.

17. **Embedding local knowledge and innovation in project formulation, appraisal mechanism and implementation aspects.** The project designs are mostly silent on the ‘knowledge component’ – be it technologies, solutions or institutional mechanisms. They implicitly assume that they are ‘there’ or ‘given’ or ‘known.’ Often, this has led to externally framed institutional structures and expert driven technological choices or solutions that are currently fashionable in the development scenario. Recognizing the primacy of local knowledge systems in the project design is the first step towards its promotion. This calls for clearly spelling out the process of knowledge generation and use in the project design. In this context, a shift from “problem solving” mode to “augmenting solutions” has been suggested<sup>1</sup>. This shift would also imply that there are already existing solutions, which can be augmented. In this regard, a key element in the project design is to build in a ‘knowledge generation

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<sup>1</sup> Gupta, Anil, Knowledge Centre/Network: Building upon what people know, Paper presented at the International Conference on Hunger and Poverty, Brussels, November 1995

phase' into the project cycle. This phase helps in mobilizing the community around augmenting the solutions to the problems that the project is addressing. Such a process of embedding the project interventions into the local knowledge system would increase the ownership/involvement of the community.

18. The concerns relating to the use and promotion of local knowledge require also to be translated into an essential facilitation processes in the project design, which should be reviewed and monitored regularly. In larger projects, developing appropriate facilitation processes and their systematization is important. Further, sensitizing the project facilitators and managers on the relevance of the local knowledge systems and building their capabilities is the basic foundation upon which the participatory processes for generation of new knowledge is built upon. Similarly, experimentation and validation through experience are key to adoption and development of local knowledge systems. The external ideas/solutions should also necessarily go through such a process of validation. Processes relating to documentation and communication strategies which help in sharing of knowledge and innovations in between communities are important elements in this facilitation process.

19. Actual utilization/practice of a solution is the ultimate test of validation for local knowledge. An appropriate timeframe is therefore critical for such a validation process to take place before the communities can act upon them. Widening the timeframe for a knowledge generation phase is important, just as a flexible and appropriate timeframe is an essential pre-requisite for any empowerment process. Back- up support of formal science and technology establishments is an essential element in the project design. This support has two important roles to play namely, (i) reflecting upon the local solutions and adding value to them and (ii) promoting scientific tools and attitudes. Providing space for local innovators within the institutional structures is important so that the prescriptive tendencies do not undermine the local knowledge sources. The following elements are some suggested for inclusion in project design and implementation for promotion and development of local knowledge and innovation.

- Provision for an intensive knowledge generation phase
- Provision of resources for experimentation by communities/innovators and generation of experience
- Back-up of formal science establishments
- Reward systems for successful innovators and facilitators
- Venture capital as an instrument in promoting local innovations, particularly for those solutions that have enterprise potential
- Capacity building of the project managers and facilitators
- Inputs to communities and specific innovators in terms of interaction with formal science establishments and exposure visits to other 'successful' communities

20. **Social platform and participatory management for promotion of local knowledge and innovations.** A wide array of experiences in participation at different stages of project cycle can be found in the eight evaluation case studies undertaken. Several of these projects have demonstrated innovative features and a range of possibilities that can be replicated elsewhere. However, participatory management is one dimension that needs to be much better addressed in all projects. In fact, there is need to develop a comprehensive framework on participation, where participation is considered a partnership among key stakeholders and include, among other aspects, the provision of adequate time and budget to build participation, and capacity building to promote and monitor peoples participation. Notwithstanding the efforts to integrate participation at various levels of the project cycle, participation is still viewed in terms of particulars activities, or one-time event, such as a mechanical Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise during project design or a simple incorporation of group formation activities. If it is to be meaningful, participation should be viewed and practiced as a continuous process built into all stages of the project cycle.

21. The following are some of issues that have emerged from the eight case studies, discussions during the Bangkok workshop in July 2003 and review of other documentation for strengthening the institutional structures at the community level for participation not merely on technical matters but in managerial aspects also:

- Existing informal/formal organizations to be taken into account before new organizations are promoted;
- SHGs should be used as basic social foundation to organize other groups, such as user groups, functional groups, livelihood groups, etc. They also form the basis for constituting management bodies, such as Village Organizations and Project level committees;
- CBOs to be involved in the management and ownership;
- Forum for scouting, learning, sharing required at the appropriate levels across different partners; and
- Empowerment of the poorest of the poor, such as agricultural workers, rural persons with disability, women headed families, etc. into separate SHGs, and federating them at the village level with Village Organizations.

22. **Flow of funds and decision-making.** The flow of funds and authority to sanction development works play an important role in the promotion of local knowledge and innovations. Smooth flow of funds and devising of financial mechanisms for expenditure control to the levels at which it is best incurred are vital for success of development projects. It is usually found that those who control finance also seek to control the decision-making in the development process. Thus, the flow of funds tends to be circumscribed by considerations of financing institutions, governmental procedures and the procedures of the delivery systems. The beneficiary perspective and involvement is usually lost in these arrangements. Therefore, the evaluation recommends that innovative solutions be found by the Fund to transfer due resources directly to local communities, which would allow them to control the finances and consequently have a greater say in the choice of technologies and development approaches promoted by the projects. This, of course, will need to be accompanied by adequate training of the communities in the management of funds, monitoring and reporting of disbursements on the one hand, and capacity building in dealing with and supervising the work of contractors, project authorities, public institutions, NGOs and other service providers on the other.

23. **Use of contributory approach and mechanisms for corpus and revolving funds.** In the arrangements for the flow of funds three types of mechanisms have been found useful in providing the beneficiary perspective and involvement. These are:

- As mentioned above, project funds should be directly released to community-based organizations for implementing the development works over which they have a managerial role. Only then their active participation in the program and empowerment truly becomes possible. This should become a formal requirement in project and programme design. The funds should be released and placed at the disposal of the community-based organizations at different levels for their approved action plans. The project implementing agency should incur expenditure only for the management component in overall budget to organize self-help groups and community-based organisations, build their capacity and facilitate preparation of their action plans. The bulk of the program and developmental funds should be released to community for implementation of the approved action plans prepared at implementation levels.
- For meeting the cost of non-recurring items in the project, a contributory approach<sup>2</sup> adopted to build a corpus of funds has been found to be very suitable. This contributory approach secures a better degree of ownership of development efforts by the community and avoids the

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<sup>2</sup> Also referred to as cost-sharing, where the rural people provide contribution in finances or in kind, for the execution of development activities

infirmities associated with top down subsidy-based and patronage-based distribution of funds. It helps in building a corpus fund for the community for future activities and to sustain benefits from these activities. This approach, however, is feasible only if grass-root level organisations and management bodies are established and facilitated efficiently.

- The provision of a revolving fund mechanism would be very useful to sustain the basic building blocks of participation, such as the self-help groups. Mature self-help groups have dynamically involved themselves in project activities and also in efforts for enhancement of their livelihoods whenever support has been provided to them through use of revolving fund.

24. **Process-oriented implementation with focus upon building peoples' institutions and human resource development.** Process-oriented implementation is required for sustainability of development, which also would foster the emergence of local knowledge and innovations. In this regard, the following are selected aspects that need to be addressed with priority in future projects and programmes:

- Building peoples' institutions to manage projects. The projects should become self-managed peoples' movement in which government participates, but not a government program executed for their benefit.
- Primary focus should be on human resource development through capacity building amongst institutions established for the purpose and amongst all agencies implementing the program.
- Operational flexibility in running the projects keeping in view that the normal departmental rules and norms militate against this flexibility. While strategy can be top down, tactics for implementation have to be bottom-up.
- Demystification of technology with participatory local technological development and avoidance of high cost sophisticated technologies.
- The projects with their platforms for participatory development should be used for convergence by all line and technical departments as well as other service providers.

25. Therefore, the success of IFAD-supported projects in Asia depends upon the recognition that local knowledge and innovations should be given explicit focus in project design and implementation. It should be seen as an empowerment strategy rather than a chance event that we may find something and build on it. This implies the realization that knowledge and ability to innovate are there within all the communities and an understanding that the problem is more in the capabilities to facilitate rather than the existence of such knowledge. The realm of effort therefore, needs to be shifted from scouting and identifying to facilitating. The number of independent stakeholders in these projects is several and spread over at different levels. There are several main actors in processes governing the promotion and development of local knowledge. Decision makers should have faith in and committed to the cause and use of local knowledge and solutions.

26. The scientific establishment should recognise their social responsibility and make researches relevant to the needs of the communities. Development Administrators should develop expertise in managing a multi-disciplinary creative endeavour instead of administering rigid rules and guidelines. An intensive capacity building phase for project designers, managers and facilitators is required. Building support mechanisms for validation and up-gradation of local knowledge and arranging effective inputs from formal science and technology establishment need to become integral elements of the processes. Similarly, building the capacities of self-help groups and community-based organisations is critical. One-shot training programs devoid of process oriented approach will not serve much useful purpose. The capacity building phase thus needs to be separated and front-ended to the main implementing phase. This would ensure that only such project implementing authorities and self-help groups and community-based organisations who have qualified in the capacity building phase would carryout the main implementation phase.

27. **Operational flexibilities for technology options and modifications.** In natural resource management and micro-watershed development projects, for example, a series of steps have proved useful in the processes for promotion and development of local knowledge. These are:

- Documentation of technological options including local as well as exogenous solutions
- Orientation of the community about unknown options through exposure visits to successful examples
- Selection of technological options and their location
- Preparation and scrutiny of the selected proposal in a participatory manner based upon agreed parameters
- Preparation of design and estimate of proposed structures/measures after scrutiny
- Technical sanction of design and estimate of agreed proposal
- Consolidation of proposals into an annual action plan
- Facilitation of social approval of the consolidated annual action plan
- Administrative and financial approval of action plan

28. These steps preclude that adequate flexibilities are built into this approach such as: (a) freedom to propose and adapt any other local knowledge which was not included in the list of technological options; (b) flexibility to modify the choice of technological option even during implementation phase as long as the cost estimate is within the original amount or the community is able to absorb any extra cost; and (c) flexibility in adoption of wide range of technological options rather than a limited number of standardized solutions, even if they are based on local knowledge.

29. **Participatory monitoring and evaluation and arrangements for process monitoring.** It can be argued that the past practices of monitoring and evaluation adapted a scientific, technical and more managerial approach in order to obtain data for evaluation purposes. The first three evaluation traditions have been characterised as measurement oriented, description oriented and judgement oriented. Fourth generation evaluation is characterised by negotiation between various stakeholders, participation in every stage of the evaluation process and a focus on action and learning. The arguments generally advanced in favour of participatory evaluation are:

- Enhanced participation, especially of beneficiaries, in monitoring and evaluation helps improve understanding of the development process itself.
- Increased authenticity of monitoring and evaluation findings that are locally relevant.
- Improvement of the sustainability of project activities by identifying strengths and weaknesses for better project management and decision-making.
- Increasing local-level capacity in monitoring and evaluation: this in turn contributes to self-reliance in overall project implementation.
- Sharing of experience through systematic documentation and analysis based on broad-based participation.
- Strengthened accountability to funding agencies.
- More efficient allocation of resources.

30. The process-oriented nature of development projects is currently not adequately reflected in monitoring and evaluation systems of most projects and programmes in PI region. There is largely an absence of process indicators in M&E. Even if it is not considered feasible to redesign the entire system of monitoring and evaluation of ongoing projects, it may be useful to introduce process indicators into the monitoring systems and evaluation procedures. The practise of half yearly or annual process monitoring over and over the regular monitoring system has demonstrated its utility in ensuring that the processes are adhered to thereby improving the quality of implementation.



# **Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations in Asia and the Pacific Region**

## **Thematic Evaluation**

### **Executive summary**

#### **Regional context**

1. Poverty is largely a rural problem in Asia and the Pacific. Areas of chronic poverty are remote, and suffer from social exclusion and a lack of access to adequate services. The rural poor in the region are often landless or have limited access to land. Poor rural households tend to have larger families, with higher dependency ratios, low education rates and higher underemployment. The poor also lack basic amenities such as safe water, sanitation and electricity. Their access to credit, inputs and technology is limited. Other constraints – including the lack of market information, business and negotiating experience and collective organisation – deprive them of the power to interact on equal terms with other, generally stronger, market forces. Low levels of social and physical infrastructure increase their vulnerability to famine and disease, especially in mountainous and remoter areas.

2. The region's less favoured areas are home to some 40% of the rural poor – often the landless, marginal farmers and tenants, indigenous peoples and scheduled castes, and internally displaced persons. Agricultural productivity is very low in upland areas, where ethnic minority groups are dominant. In China, for example, almost all the 65 million officially recognised income-poor live in remote, mountainous areas. Pastoralists and coastal fishermen are important components of the rural poor in certain countries. The marginalisation and poverty of many indigenous communities are closely linked to exploitation by outsiders and to encroachment by migrants. Female-headed households are particularly prone to poverty: women generally have fewer employment opportunities, less occupational mobility, weaker skills and less access to training. Boys typically are fed better and receive better medical care, resulting in poorer survival chances for girls.

3. Globalisation and economic liberalisation have fuelled the rapid economic growth of economies in Asia and the Pacific, but they have also increased vulnerability of these economies to external shocks. The poor, who are also very exposed to economic crises from other factors such as loss of a family income-earner, drought or disease, are particularly at risk. Globalisation – when accompanied by appropriate and pro-poor domestic policies – can promote economic growth and poverty reduction. But it can also increase vulnerability of the poor to market changes.

#### **IFAD's strategy in the region**

4. IFAD is the only (specialised agency) financial lending institution within the UN system. It focuses on rural poverty alleviation through agriculture and rural development programmes, mostly funded through loans, although a small grant component supports mainly research and project preparation activities. The design of IFAD-supported projects and programmes is done in close collaboration with consultants recruited specifically for the purpose. Supervision is primarily done through third parties (i.e. the appointment of co-operating institutions for each project financed by IFAD). Implementation is the responsibility of partners at the country level.

5. Since 1978, IFAD has funded 153 investment projects in the Asia and Pacific region for a total commitment of about USD 2.4 billion. In addition, many grant-funded projects have been implemented in agricultural research, training, policy analysis and implementation support. Many governments have adopted decentralised, pro-poor policies that provide a conducive environment for effective collaboration between IFAD and governments. There is a vibrant civil-society/non-

governmental sector that is playing an increasingly crucial role both in advocacy and in service delivery to the rural poor, complementing the efforts of governments and donor agencies. Most countries of the region have adopted prudent macroeconomic policies and relatively open trade policies, and have invested seriously in education and infrastructure. For its part, the Fund has acquired considerable experience in the design and implementation of projects and programmes for diverse groups, including women and indigenous peoples. It has also pioneered innovative partnerships with national and local governments, civil society organisations and local communities in working with the rural poor.

6. The Asia and the Pacific region is highly populated, diverse, and exhibits a continuing serious and chronic poverty problem. IFAD's strategy is to concentrate on specific, catalytic interventions where it can play an important niche role. The emphasis is on less-favoured areas, with a focus towards women and marginalised minorities. Projects with significant potential 'ripple effects' to carry benefits well beyond the immediate projects areas are a high priority.

## **Thematic evaluation process**

### **Objectives of the Evaluation**

7. The overall objectives of the study were to:
- analyse the current practices and experiences of the Asia and the Pacific Division with regard to scouting, utilising and promoting local knowledge and innovations. The study also documented selected good practices and assessed how the rural people have used local knowledge and innovations to improve their livelihoods and whether this has led to their empowerment; and
  - provide building blocks to ensure greater mainstreaming of local knowledge and innovations into the regional strategy so that all activities in the region will incorporate them. In particular, a series of insights and recommendations was developed that would contribute to improving the design and implementation of IFAD-supported projects and programmes through enhanced use of local innovations, knowledge systems and partnerships. Important attention was devoted to the empowerment of local communities to become more active partners in project design and implementation, and the blending of 'modern' technology and local knowledge to capitalise on the best in local and external expertise.

### **Methodology, Process and Activities**

8. The study explored IFAD's experience and that of other major agencies in the general area of utilising local innovations and knowledge systems as an integral component of project design and implementation. It offered options, insights and recommendations that would particularly serve the Asia and the Pacific Division to develop and enhance its expertise in this area. Overall, the output from the study is expected to improve the Fund's knowledge base and facilitate IFAD in undertaking advocacy, resource mobilisation and policy dialogue functions.

9. The study included the following distinct but related activities:

- 1. Preparation of the Approach Paper** – through consultation with selected IFAD staff (Country Portfolio Managers, Regional Economist, Lead Evaluation Officer, Directors of the Office of Evaluation & Studies and the Asia and Pacific Division, representatives from the Technical Advisory Division, Knowledge Management Facilitation Unit and others).

2. **Document (desk) review of selected IFAD-supported projects** -- The objectives of this review were to make a synthesis of the Fund's approaches and experiences in promoting and using local knowledge and innovations in its rural poverty alleviation activities. The review will lead to the documentation of good practices of local innovation and traditional knowledge, and identification of the process-related and institutional dimensions (as well as incentives) that have contributed to the emergence and utilisation of good practices.
3. **Construction of a map of the work and experiences of other development institutions on the topic** -- A comparative analysis, using information in the public domain, was undertaken of comparable projects by other institutions. This analysis indicates common issues and experiences and provides guidance for the better use of local knowledge in the design of future IFAD-assisted projects and activities. Emphasis was on indicating opportunities for partnerships with IFAD on different topics.
4. **Preparation of detailed case studies in eight IFAD-supported projects in seven different countries in the Asia and the Pacific region** -- The overall objective of the case studies of eight IFAD-supported projects was to: (a) assess the opportunities and challenges offered by project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation in internalising local knowledge and innovations, and (b) suggest adjustments (e.g., to key procedures, guidelines and policies within the Asia and the Pacific Division) that may contribute to better institutionalising the learning from people at the grassroots level, leading to a broader application of local-level knowledge and innovation in IFAD-supported activities.
5. **Competition to scout for knowledge and innovations of the rural poor in all ongoing projects in the Asia and the Pacific region** -- The overall objective of this activity was to identify good practices and innovations of the rural people to showcase the potential of rural people's creativity. The contest was not confined to the rural poor involved in IFAD-assisted projects, but to the communities as a whole in areas where IFAD-supported projects operate. In terms of concrete output, the contest generated entries from the grassroots level on their innovations and knowledge, not only related to agricultural development, but also on social, economic and other developmental-related aspects. Almost 70 entries were submitted from 11 countries. Fifteen entrees were accepted, ranked according to six factors of good practice: uniqueness; novel use/process/effectiveness; use of local materials; safety perception; research and development prospects; and applicability/dissemination. The entries could be divided between those that were traditional and time-tested and those that were the result of innovation. Both types were given due attention as they demonstrate success, acceptance by the community and adaptability in a rapidly changing environment.

10. The first four activities provide the basis for the Thematic Evaluation itself, which follows this Executive Summary.

### **Regional Workshop**

11. A regional workshop was held in Bangkok to focus on the results and key issues emerging from the study, and to raise awareness in general. The workshop brought together project staff, concerned IFAD staff, representatives of IFAD co-operating institutions, NGOs, international organisations, governments, donor institutions, civil society organisations, advocacy groups, researchers, academics and others to jointly reflect on the thematic study and discuss key themes emerging from the study. The workshop also served to lay the basis for the formulation of the study's Agreement at Completion Point containing an action plan for the future. The regional workshop discussed three main issues arising from the thematic evaluation and made recommendations. They are briefly described below.

12. **Enabling Environment for Local Knowledge and Innovations.** The workshop highlighted the need to include a clear policy statement on local knowledge and innovations in IFAD's regional

strategy paper and the various COSOPs. It was also agreed that IFAD and others need to allocate adequate resources to operationalise their strategic objectives related to local knowledge and innovations. There is also a need to undertake a review of IFAD's project design process to ensure the mainstreaming of local knowledge and innovations from the outset of a project. At the policy level, IFAD needs to systematically engage in policy dialogue to promote pro-poor policies and development approaches that pay due attention to local knowledge and innovations.

13. **Pre-requisites for Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations through People's Participation.** The workshop emphasised the importance of the full involvement of primary stakeholders in all key aspects of project formulation. Participation should be a continuous process, thereby enabling participants to take control of their own development and promote their local knowledge and innovations. Community-based organisations need to be given greater management responsibility and control over resources, thereby enabling them to make decisions and be responsible for their own development. The need to develop the approach to revolving funding and cost-sharing mechanisms for mainstreaming local knowledge and innovations was also considered important.

14. **Operational Procedures for Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations.** The workshop highlighted the possible conflict between local knowledge and official norms and the need for IFAD to insist on certain contractual conditions to ensure genuine community participation. Capturing local knowledge and innovations may best be achieved by enabling local people to come up with their own solution. This process of enablement will include decentralisation measures, timely capacity-building programmes and genuinely participatory monitoring and evaluation systems.

15. Recommendations under each of these themes were formulated and agreed upon in the Agreement at Completion Point, which provides the starting point for their implementation.

### Analysis and findings

16. Analysis and findings are drawn together from the eight contributing case studies, which were prepared on the basis of project document reviews and field interviews.

The following projects were selected for review:

Country	Project Name	Effectiveness	Closing
Cambodia	Agriculture Dev. Support Project to Seila	29 Mar 01	30 Sept 08
China	Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Project	10 Dec 93	31 Dec 00
India	Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Dev.	18 Aug 94	31 Mar 04
India	North/East Resources Upland Areas	23 Feb 99	31 Dec 04
Nepal	Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Dev.	18 Feb 91	31 Dec 03
Philippines	Cordillera Highland Agriculture/Resources Dev.	04 Dec 96	30 Sep 03
Sri Lanka	2 <sup>nd</sup> Badulla Integrated Rural Dev.	12 Aug 92	31 Mar 03
Vietnam	Ha Gian Project for Ethnic Minorities	27 Apr 98	30 Jun 04

### Case Study Findings

17. The case studies come to interesting although rather disparate conclusions. For example:

**Andhra Pradesh** -- Had the project designers and reviewers focused on local knowledge systems in time and adequately, a great deal more could have been learned about the creative ways used by people for coping with local stresses and evolving some time-innovative solutions for the same. Local knowledge becomes a means of survival, and thus documentation of these solutions for their dissemination after validation among other communities might improve the livelihood options right away at very low cost. Further, when a local solution is taken note of and recognition ensues through

public appreciation, visit of others to this innovator's place, or through other means, the self-esteem of such knowledge providers and generators also goes up. Much more could be done if local creativity, innovative potential and traditional knowledge were harnessed systematically'.

18. **Cambodia** – The study recognises the enormous advances made by the Kingdom in setting up decentralised State institutions which have achieved a significant, reconciliatory and collaborative rapport between Government and people and also recognises that the project was designed to promote and build upon these developments. At the same time it concludes that although in principle, these arrangements offered considerable opportunity for the elicitation and incorporation of local knowledge and innovations into project activities, this does not appear to have happened

19. **India North-East Region** -- The indigenous knowledge of local communities has not been specifically focussed or emphasised in project objectives, but during the implementation it has received some attention. Overall, however, local knowledge and traditional institutions have not received adequate attention. Moreover, initial focus in the grounding of the project has been on building capacity, introducing new technologies and improving productivity. The processes relating to local knowledge documentation and valorisation were still picking up. Project authorities spent far more time in delivering results through the use of so-called modern science and technology and other institutional support for initiative like micro-finance.

20. **Nepal** -- To suggest that an agent of social and economic change, such as an international funding agency or a poverty alleviation project, should be cognisant of, and respectful of, all the archives of knowledge pre-existing in a given location, is to ask the practically impossible. Not only would the work and expertise involved in collecting and collating these archives be tantamount to several projects in itself, but to respect them all in every detail would actually make change impossible. All poverty alleviation projects entail elements of social and political engineering.

21. **The Philippines** -- The use and promotion of local knowledge in the development and delivery of projects, such as CHARM, can be a critical factor in order to enhance ownership of project activities and their results by the communities involved. Humans tend to care more about what they own; as such, medium- and long-term success in catalysing sustainable community development can be guaranteed only if real ownership is ensured through the course of project design and implementation. The availability and application of local knowledge resources and appropriate provision for facilitating and sharing innovations at the grassroots level will contribute significantly towards attaining project goals and objectives.

22. **Sri Lanka** -- Indigenous knowledge and innovations are the result of a continuous process of experimentation, innovation, and adaptation. They can blend with knowledge based on science and technology, and thus could be considered complementary to scientific and technological efforts to solve problems in social and economic development. The disadvantage of indigenous knowledge, however, is that it could not be captured and stored in a systematic manner. It is primarily because it is handed down orally from generation to generation. Under the circumstance it is likely that indigenous knowledge systems and practices may become extinct. It is, however, encouraging that over the last one decade or so there has been increasing realisation that indigenous knowledge can play an important role in participatory approaches to sustainable development.'

### **Project Document Reviews**

23. The purpose of the document reviews was to see whether or not, as a matter of record at each stage of the project cycle, there had been: a commitment to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations; actual use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; and capture and dissemination of local knowledge and innovation. Subject to availability the reviewed documents have included: the Country Strategic Opportunities Papers (COSOPs) for the countries in which the case study projects are located; key project design documents, notably the Appraisal Reports; Loan Agreements; project Supervision Reports; project monitoring and evaluation reports, and any

supplementary 'special' studies or reports related to the project and concerned with the theme of use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation.

24. **Strategy Documents.** The case studies refer to only one Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP) -- for Cambodia -- that explicitly mentions local knowledge and innovation. Other case study references to strategy considerations include India (Andhra Pradesh), the Philippines and Sri Lanka. However, the issue of incorporating people's knowledge and innovation in the design of various strategies does not appear.

25. **Design Documents.** References to appraisal reports were made in the China, Nepal, India (North-East Region), Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam studies. Highlights include the following:

26. The China study notes that 'the highly detailed provisions of the project's appraisal documents became quite rapidly outdated and posed a threat as a source of inflexibility.'

27. The Nepal study states: 'The Appraisal Report, [similarly], declared: "Obtaining community consensus is considered essential since it is the only way of affording any protection to the poor families who take up the leasing of the blocks of degraded land from potential encroachment by other members of the community"... The Appraisal Report several times refers to the importance of consulting and respecting farmers' preferences regarding the choice of forage crops, fodder trees and fruit trees, and also the use of local materials and practices in terms of off-farm income generation.'

28. The NER comments that: 'the very design of the project did not stress learning from people explicitly'.

29. The Philippines study points out the impact upon design of the evolution of IFAD-supported initiatives and suggests a link with local knowledge and innovations. Even though the use and promotion of local knowledge is not directly mentioned in the design documents of CHARM, the process of participatory planning by the communities involved indicates that local knowledge was to be used to be able to pursue the strategy and objectives of CHARM.

30. In similar vein, the Sri Lanka case study emphasises the evolution of design and in particular the increase in attention to participation.

31. The Vietnam study gives explicit prominence to 'local knowledge' and ethnic traditions in the choice of crops, cropping patterns, use of fertilisers and pesticides, livestock development, utilisation of natural resources, land tenure systems, conservation of biodiversity, management of natural resources and the nature of support services. It also encourages sensitivity to existing systems in the regulation of natural resources, in the shift from swidden to settled cultivation, and in defining 'poverty', where indigenous minorities may not regard themselves as 'poor'. The assessment advocates an interactive education system with sensitised teachers and flexible schedules designed to enhance local skill and knowledge of medicinal plants, basket making, and weaving, blacksmithing and musical instruments. While encouraging comprehensive marketing information system and focussing on collective bargaining power, the document emphasises the continued importance of the existing well-developed 'tribal markets'. Encouraging community self-reliance, the document prescribes priority to traditional herbal healers and members of their families and drafting a manual on herbal plants in the minority language. Research activities to strengthen indigenous crop varieties and minimise the use of external inputs are stressed. In general, the assessment proposes 'locally and culturally specific approaches appropriate to the diverse socio-economic and environmental settings'

32. **Implementation Documents.** Supervision Reports are referred to or quoted in the Andhra Pradesh, China, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam studies. Mid-Term Reviews are mentioned in the studies for Andhra Pradesh, China, Nepal, the North-East Region (India) and Vietnam. Highlights include the following:

33. The Andhra Pradesh study states: 'The supervision report made many suggestions but none dealing with peoples' knowledge systems or their institutions.'

34. The Philippines study reports that 'CHARM's [Project Support Office] PSO has played a vital role together with the supervision of [the Asian Development Bank] ADB in identifying problematic issues and establishing corrective actions. As an example of that are the recommendations on documenting local practices at the field level and requesting a final detailed report on community activities, which will include local knowledge and innovations, by the NGO Consortia.' The study also states that 'There are some special studies that were produced reflecting the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations. One of the most important is the Field Guide for Discovery-based Exercises for vegetable [Integrated Pest Management] IPM, which is a book that includes a series of agricultural field exercises documented in a form which would enable their replication in other countries of the region. This book includes experiences developed at the Farmers Field Schools and the field trails carried out with farmers in the CHARM area. The local University in Baguio produced a document requested by CHARM that documents local practices. This study compiled local technology on agro-forestry and major vegetable systems through workshops and reviews with local people. This study was used to produce a series of technological guides for technicians to carry out agricultural services. Since the basic study also reflects the use of local knowledge compiled through workshops, meetings and visits to farming systems, the techno-guides are believed to promote the use of local knowledge and to improve existing technologies.' Further, 'Local knowledge documentation in the forest management area is being carried out through the implementation of CHARM. [The Department of Environment and Natural Resources] DENR and CHARM personnel are involved in the documentation of the LAPAT system, which is a traditional system of permits and penalties for resource use at the watershed level.'

35. The NER study notes: 'A special effort has been made to document the traditional practices for using non-timber forest products. Other efforts to build upon peoples' knowledge and institutions noted in the mid-term review are: (a) the natural resource management group has decided in some village to regulate grazing by animals so that cultivation of off-season vegetables can be taken up, (b) medicinal plant gardens have been set up in many villages (c) the role of traditional village head is being recognised so that water sources, duration of jhum cycle, allocation of land for cultivation, etc. can take place through the sanction of village headmen. The plan at the moment is only for one year and thus long-term action has not been envisaged.'

36. The Vietnam study states: 'The Mid Term Review contains a separate section on The Utilisation of Indigenous Knowledge.'

### **Field Interviews**

37. The purposes of the field interviews were: to verify and supplement the information derived from the document review with respect to the project's use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; to discover if in fact the project is using and promoting local knowledge and innovation, which is going unrecorded in project-related documentation; to develop recommendations with regard to capturing/recording and disseminating the project's experience with the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; and to assess the opportunities and constraints for project use of local knowledge and innovations with regard to the project's organisation and management culture; technical provision under the project; financial allocation under the project; and the project's policy and legal environment.

38. The field interviews revealed a number of instances in the case study project areas of the use of local knowledge and innovation, which had not been recorded in the reviewed project-related documents. For example, In Andhra Pradesh these included a rose thorn stripper and a cycle based

water pump. In China, the mission came across three instances of the use of local knowledge and innovation, with respect to soil suitability for coffee, increased productivity through irrigation, and increased silkworm production through more frequent cleaning of silkworm trays. The Sri Lanka study reports that some farmers are practising organic farming, though 'the project does not support these activities'.

39. In Nepal, 'The Mission's interviews with foresters from all levels of the Department of Forests confirmed the view that there exists a considerable awareness of the importance of indigenous knowledge and longstanding systems of forest protection, in particular the methods of propagation, the timing and nature of pruning and the suitability of trees and grasses for particular soils and micro-climates. The cultivation of locally known and appropriate grass species was encouraged by the project, which also supported the propagation of the Badahar tree (*artocarpus lackoocha*) for fodder.

40. In Vietnam, the Project Director said that the Mission's visit had alerted the Project Management to the significance of local knowledge and had started them thinking about where it might be sought and how it might be utilised more effectively. He also suggested that someone at provincial level should be assigned the job of collating examples of indigenous Knowledge, which would be the most certain way of ensuring some continuity in this respect. The Project Co-ordinating Unit had prepared a list of thirteen cases where they felt such knowledge had been or might be utilised in the operation of the project.

### **Insights and recommendations**

41. Perhaps the core insight of the case studies is its demonstration, throughout its various findings, of the relationship between knowledge and power. In short, it suggests that there is a political economy of knowledge and innovation. This Thematic Evaluation is perhaps more properly to be recognised as not so much about 'local' knowledge and innovation but rather about beneficiary knowledge and innovation and the factors that govern its exchange rate value with respect to other project stakeholders' knowledge and innovation in the marketplace of Official Development Assistance.

42. A second insight offered by the case studies is the need to differentiate between different types of knowledge and innovation. The studies do not make such a distinction explicitly but their findings and analyses move between at least three categories: technical, political and procedural. In the case studies, the relative incidence and importance of the three types of knowledge and the ratio of beneficiary/non-beneficiary contributions in each category to project knowledge systems, depends upon the timing of the project's design in the evolution of IFAD's thinking and practice, the project objectives and, of course, the context of the projects, whether it be social, political, institutional, economic, etc.

43. In the case studies, the relative incidence and importance of the three types of knowledge and the ratio of beneficiary/non-beneficiary contributions in each category to project knowledge systems, depends upon the timing of the project's design in the evolution of IFAD's thinking and practice, the project objectives and, of course, the context of the projects, whether it will be social, political, institutional and economic etc.

44. The studies make a number of recommendations. For example:

45. Andhra Pradesh

- The data on the biodiversity and medicinal plants and their uses should be re-compiled giving the name and addresses of the key custodian of traditional knowledge. This will ensure that if any benefits accrued by value addition in this knowledge than these could be shared with the local communities and individual knowledge experts.

- A survey of local best practices be taken up in different villages to find out the innovations and traditional technologies.
- Research contracts should be developed with the formal institutes of research on behalf of the local communities to add value to local resources and knowledge.
- Local language literature should be prepared so that this will inspire other people to innovate and develop even better innovations.
- Observation trials should be taken up to find out which local variations in cropping patterns are more efficient than others in the given soil type and agro-climatic conditions. Technologies so produced by the people themselves can thus be replicated first on the trial basis and then on demonstration basis if found efficient and useful.
- The project management system should involve monitoring innovations and traditional knowledge which can improve productivity and generate livelihood choices with or without value addition.

#### 46. North-East Region

- Wherever people have deviated from the recommended package and have tried to do something on their own, this should be given a special attention. Generally in the projects, the conformity and compliance with the project norms is considered an indicator of project success. Exceptions should be recorded, studied and used as basis for identifying the potential for change among the odd balls.
- The local knowledge documentation should be followed up by on-farm research and experimentation. There weren't many examples available in which peoples' knowledge had become the basis for on-farm or on-station trials.
- The role of traditional institutions is well appreciated in the project documents. However, analytical framework needs to be developed to facilitate further strengthening of these institutions and better analysis of their working.
- The unique knowledge such as the extraction of black dye from black ginger and its use in currency industry shows how strategic the peoples' knowledge can be in certain cases... a cell needs to be created with the purpose of identifying peoples' knowledge and creativity efficiently and linking it up with formal science and technology, on-farm and on-station testing and building a whole value chain around global knowledge.'

#### 47. The Philippines

- The current monitoring and reporting practices of the project are essentially geared to assessing and recording physical achievements and financial delivery. These need to be complemented by observing and noting the immense value and role of traditional knowledge and the need for fostering its application and improvement in local communities. That shall contribute to the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and ownership of the project by its most crucial stakeholders and to the lasting success of the project.
- Mission reports tend to be of wide use at higher levels. It would be advisable to have a specific section to evaluate the use and promotion of local knowledge by the projects reviewed.'
- In addition, 'CHARM has identified some important cases of local knowledge that are being documented, but a more comprehensive study could be carried out in such an environment rich in the use and promotion of local knowledge.
- In the future, projects specifically designed to use and promote local knowledge and innovations should avoid complex inter-institutional arrangements for their implementation, such as the implementation by many different governmental organisations. These arrangements can be interesting in the long term, but offer an operational and administrative challenge during the project's implementation phase, with the possibility of compromising the activities with the most important component of the project, local communities.'

#### 48. Vietnam

- The suggestion of the Project Director that future projects of this kind attempt to institutionalise the process of identifying and ‘capturing’ examples of local knowledge by allocating specific responsibility at provincial level seems a sound proposal. Again, what is needed is not instruction in the significance of local initiatives but simply the formal establishing of appropriate fora and channels whereby such knowledge may be communicated and disseminated.’
- Most examples of local knowledge are well-known either within the particular district or within the province and are treated as a matter of common knowledge. The point is to instil from the beginning of a project the idea that such things should be positively pursued, recorded and utilised where appropriate.

### Conclusions

49. Not one of the reviewed projects is reported by the eight case studies to have an explicit, formal and comprehensive process of capturing and disseminating beneficiary (local) knowledge and innovation. It appears a harsh conclusion perhaps, but a core message that seems to come across *prima facie* is that the Official Development Assistance hierarchy does not recognise and care sufficiently about beneficiaries' knowledge and capacity for innovation to the extent that they are prepared to incorporate it systematically into their official technical, political and administrative structures. At the same time, the studies do report some instances of beneficiary knowledge and innovation. It is perhaps worthwhile to explore why there is formal systemic indifference and under what circumstances exceptions occur.

50. The preponderant evidence is that it is quite difficult for beneficiary knowledge and innovation to have a role in the design and implementation of IFAD-financed projects. This difficulty reflects a structure of accountability. In practice this means that the kinds of strategies, objectives, and activities which predominate at any stage of the project cycle tend to reflect the understanding and predilections of those with responsibility for clearing investment decisions. Quite simply, the arrangement of Governments taking loans from IFAD means that design documents primarily have to be couched in terms intelligible and acceptable to Government, IFAD senior management and the IFAD Executive Board. Any beneficiary perspective is necessarily secondary to this priority.

51. A familiar consequence of beneficiary perspectives taking second place in design documents is the tensions that can arise during implementation between the approved 'blueprint', e.g. the Implementation Version of Appraisal Reports, and the actual field conditions in which the provisions have to be realised in the context of beneficiary knowledge systems. In most projects both management and beneficiaries find themselves struggling to bridge the gap between a priori commitments to project activities and targets and local knowledge systems in situations where management can neither enforce its will nor beneficiaries just get on without management intervention.

52. Other instances, besides the design process, of marginalisation of beneficiary [local] knowledge can be found in the rest of the project cycle. The tendency, as reported in the case studies, for monitoring to focus on physical and financial progress is not simply a matter of methodological difficulty; it is rather that management recognises that the minimum requirement of satisfying the accountability structure and its associated financial regulation powers requires records in these two respects.

53. A striking feature of many of the case studies is that although most projects have made a nominal commitment to participation, its realisation has often been in a rather restricted manner. On the one hand there has been beneficiary consultation in the form, for example, of problem censuses. On the other, there appears to be a quite widespread problem with beneficiary representation in policy

and management bodies associated with the projects, sometimes complemented by minimal expenditure on small-scale investments under beneficiary control.

54. Those instances in the studies where there has been use of beneficiaries' knowledge (forestry, medicinal plants) appear to have been motivated by as much by the need to solve development agents' rather than beneficiaries' problems instead of a recognition that the essence of development is the freedom of beneficiaries to build upon their knowledge in the technical, political and procedural domains in order to pursue their social and economic interests and a better livelihood.

55. The case studies started out with a focus on beneficiaries' knowledge in the technical domain. The overall finding is that such technical knowledge and innovation is not usually elicited and incorporated into project design and implementation. The reason seems not to be primarily a matter of the inferiority/superiority of their technical knowledge at all. Indeed the irony is that most development experts would probably starve quite quickly if they had to make their livelihoods in the circumstances with which beneficiaries have typically to cope. The problem would seem to lie with beneficiaries' continuing exclusion from the political and procedural knowledge domains associated with project design and implementation. Remedial action for the future should perhaps focus on this. Meanwhile, it is useful to remember that to assist is not necessarily to facilitate and to teach is not necessarily to educate.



**Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations  
in Asia and the Pacific Region**

**Thematic evaluation**

**Main report**

**Some cross-cutting issues from eight case studies**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This consolidated case studies report draws together the findings and insights of eight case studies carried out in support of the Thematic Study on Local Knowledge and Innovations in the Asia and Pacific Region.

2. The eight projects providing the case study materials were:

Cambodia:	Agriculture Development Support Project to Seila
China:	Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Agricultural Development Project
India:	Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project North-East Region Community Resource Management Project
Nepal:	Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development Project
Philippines:	Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project
Sri Lanka:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Badulla Integrated Rural Development
Vietnam:	Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities

3. The structure of this report is based upon that of the contributing case studies, which in turn were shaped by the provisions of their common Terms of Reference, attached here as Appendix 1.

4. The objectives of the case studies were: (a) to assess the opportunities and challenges offered by project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation in internalising local knowledge and innovations, and (b) suggest adjustments (e.g. to key procedures, guidelines and policies within the Asia and Pacific division) that may contribute to better institutionalising the learning from people at the grassroots level, leading to a broader application of local-level knowledge and innovation in IFAD-supported activities.

5. These case study objectives are subsumed under the overall Thematic Study objectives, namely: to analyse the current practices and experiences of the Asia and Pacific Division with regard to scouting, utilising and promoting local knowledge and innovations. The study will also document selected good practices and assess how the rural people have used local knowledge and innovations to improve their livelihoods and whether this has led to their empowerment. Secondly, to provide building blocks to ensure gender mainstreaming of local knowledge and innovations into the regional strategy so that all activities in the region will incorporate them. In particular, a series of insights and recommendations will be developed that would contribute to improving the design and implementation of IFAD-supported projects and programmes through enhanced use of local innovations, knowledge systems and partnerships. Important attention will be devoted to the empowerment of local communities to become more active partners in project design and implementation, and the blending of 'modern' technology and local knowledge to capitalise on the best in local and external expertise.

6. In order to achieve these objectives, the study included the following distinct but related activities:

- **Preparation of the Approach Paper** – through consultation with selected IFAD staff (Country Portfolio Managers, Regional Economist, Lead Evaluation Officer, Directors of the Office of Evaluation & Studies and the Asia and Pacific Division, representatives from the Technical Advisory Division, Knowledge Management Facilitation Unit and others).
- **Document (desk) review of selected IFAD-supported projects** -- The objectives of this review were to make a synthesis of the Fund's approaches and experiences in promoting and using local knowledge and innovations in its rural poverty alleviation activities. The review will lead to the documentation of good practices of local innovation and traditional knowledge, and identification of the process-related and institutional dimensions (as well as incentives) that have contributed to the emergence and utilisation of good practices.
- **Construction of a map of the work and experiences of other development institutions on the topic** -- A comparative analysis, using information in the public domain, was undertaken of comparable projects by other institutions. This analysis indicates common issues and experiences and provides guidance for the better use of local knowledge in the design of future IFAD-assisted projects and activities. Emphasis was on indicating opportunities for partnerships with IFAD on different topics.
- **Preparation of detailed case studies in eight IFAD-supported projects in seven different countries in the Asia and Pacific region** -- The overall objective of the case studies of eight IFAD-supported projects was to: (a) assess the opportunities and challenges offered by project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation in internalising local knowledge and innovations, and (b) suggest adjustments (e.g., to key procedures, guidelines and policies within the Asia and Pacific Division) that may contribute to better institutionalising the learning from people at the grassroots level, leading to a broader application of local-level knowledge and innovation in IFAD-supported activities.
- **Competition to scout for knowledge and innovations of the rural poor in all ongoing projects in the Asia and Pacific region** -- The overall objective of this activity was to identify good practices and innovations of the rural people to showcase the potential of rural people's creativity. The contest was not confined to the rural poor involved in IFAD-assisted projects, but to the communities as a whole in areas where IFAD-supported projects operate. In terms of concrete output, the contest generated entries from the grassroots level on their innovations and knowledge, not only related to agricultural development, but also on social, economic and other developmental-related aspects. Almost 70 entries were submitted from 11 countries. Fifteen entries were accepted, ranked according to six factors of good practice: uniqueness; novel use/process/effectiveness; use of local materials; safety perception; research and development prospects; and applicability/dissemination. The entries could be divided between those that were traditional and time-tested and those that were the result of innovation. Both types were given due attention as they demonstrate success, acceptance by the community and adaptability in a rapidly changing environment.

7. In addition, a regional workshop was held in Bangkok to focus on the results and key issues emerging from the study, and to raise awareness in general. The workshop brought together project staff, concerned IFAD staff, representatives of IFAD co-operating institutions, NGOs, international organisations, governments, donor institutions, civil society organisations, advocacy groups, researchers, academics and others to jointly reflect on the thematic study and discuss key themes emerging from the study. The workshop also served to lay the basis for the formulation of the study's Agreement at Completion Point containing an action plan for the future. The regional workshop discussed three main issues arising from the thematic evaluation and made recommendations. They are briefly described below.

- **Enabling Environment for Local Knowledge and Innovations.** The workshop highlighted the need to include a clear policy statement on local knowledge and innovations in IFAD's regional strategy paper and the various COSOPs. It was also agreed that IFAD and others need to allocate adequate resources to operationalise their strategic objectives related to local knowledge and innovations. There is also a need to undertake a review of IFAD's project design process to ensure the mainstreaming of local knowledge and innovations from the outset of a project. At the policy level, IFAD needs to systematically engage in policy dialogue to promote pro-poor policies and development approaches that pay due attention to local knowledge and innovations.
- **Pre-requisites for Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations through People's Participation.** The workshop emphasised the importance of the full involvement of primary stakeholders in all key aspects of project formulation. Participation should be a continuous process, thereby enabling participants to take control of their own development and promote their local knowledge and innovations. Community-based organisations need to be given greater management responsibility and control over resources, thereby enabling them to make decisions and be responsible for their own development. The need to develop the approach to revolving funding and cost-sharing mechanisms for mainstreaming local knowledge and innovations was also considered important.
- **Operational Procedures for Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations.** The workshop highlighted the possible conflict between local knowledge and official norms and the need for IFAD to insist on certain contractual conditions to ensure genuine community participation. Capturing local knowledge and innovations may best be achieved by enabling local people to come up with their own solution. This process of enablement will include decentralisation measures, timely capacity-building programmes and genuinely participatory monitoring and evaluation systems.

## II. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### A. Case Study Project Briefs

6. **India: Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project.** Effective in 1994, its objectives are: (a) to raise income levels, ensure food security and improve the quality of life of the tribals within the context of the traditional tribal environment, culture and values; (b) to promote greater self-reliance amongst communities on a sustainable basis; and (c) to reduce and reverse environmental degradation. Its components are: (a) natural resource development, comprising irrigation, soil and water conservation, arable crop development, horticulture, livestock development and off-farm activities; (b) community participation and development comprising village institution-building, savings mobilisation and community education and healthcare; and (c) delivery system development comprising commercial services of Girijan Co-operative Corporation and project management support.

7. **Cambodia: Agriculture Development Support Project to Seila.** Effective on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2000, the project's overall objective is for 64 500 households in the project area to have a sustained increase in farm incomes and a more diversified pattern of crop and livestock production, The expected outputs of the project are: (i) implementation of the Production Start-up Programme (PSP) and the Agricultural Improvement programme (AIP); (ii) empowerment of local communities and beneficiaries to manage their productive resources efficiently and sustainably; (iii) strengthened capacity of local institutions, particularly the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFFs) to target and manage investment programmes in a participatory manner; (iv) an ability of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Micro-finance Institutions (MFIs) to retail savings and credit services for the benefit of the target group leading to capital formation at the local

level; and (v) strengthened capacity of the Rural Development Bank (RDB) to be an effective wholesaler of credit. The project has three components: (a) Agricultural Development which comprises the PSP and AIP and the provision of technical support and capacity building to the provincial and district staffs of the PDAFFs; (b) Rural Micro-Finance Services with funds channelled to MFIs through the RDB; and (c) Project Support and Co-ordination provided by the Project Support Unit (PSU) and the *Seila* Task Force (STF). The project is implemented within the *Seila* framework for decentralised planning, financing and implementation.

8. **China: Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Agricultural Development Project.** Effective end of 1993, the project closed in December 2000. The overall goal of the project was to enable an estimated 100 000 households to improve their standard of living by: (i) assisting all households to improve their food production so as to eliminate their grain deficit; (ii) providing cash-generating opportunities through the promotion of perennial crop production and animal husbandry; (iii) providing special credit facilities to disadvantaged families; (iv) contributing to the expansion of the rural roads network so as to facilitate the supply of inputs and the marketing of existing and incremental production; and (v) establishing permanent Project Management Offices (PMOs) and the development of a self-sustaining credit system. The project aimed to target directly 70 000 households or 280 000 beneficiaries with a Special Credit Facility. The project had seven components: Food Crop Development; Permanent Crop Development; Livestock Development; Credit; Rural Roads; Project Management and Institutional Support; and Applied Research.

9. **India: North-East Region Community Resource Management Project.** Begun in 1997, the project's overall objective is to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base in a way that contributes to protecting and restoring the environment....In order to engender a greater sense of ownership of development initiatives by the communities, the project was adopted a participatory approach to assist communities to select appropriate development options and to draw up and implement their own community resource management plan. All project activities were to be demand driven. The project's components are: (a) capacity-building of communities and participating agencies; (b) economic livelihood activities; (c) community-based bio-diversity conservation; (d) social sector activities; (e) village roads and rural electrification; and (f) project management.

10. **Nepal: Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development Project.** Becoming effective during the 1992/3 fiscal year, the objectives of the HLFFDP are to improve the living conditions and raise the incomes of families below the poverty line, as well as to improve the ecological conditions in the project area, by leasing blocks of degraded and barren forest land to small groups of farmers for rehabilitation...emphasis is also on developing the feed and fodder base for livestock, since the poor depend most on these for their sustenance, and the environmental balance in the Hills is also critically dependent upon them. The project's components are: (a) development activities comprising - regeneration of degraded forest lands; on-farm fodder and fuel wood development; livestock development; off-farm income-generating activities; terrace improvement; and construction/improvement of access trails and footbridges and (b) development support comprising - institutional strengthening; applied research; training; and monitoring and evaluation.

11. **Philippines: Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project.** The project became effective on June 3, 1997. Its objectives are: to improve the efficiency of agricultural resource management utilisation; to promote development practices consistent with sustainability; to exploit comparative advantages despite rugged topography; and to strengthen Local Government Unit capacity and expansion of internal revenue generation. Its components are: 1. Community Mobilisation and Resource Management (a. Community Mobilisation, b. Natural Resource Management); 2. Rural Infrastructure Development (a. Farm-to-Market Access, b. Community Irrigation and c. Domestic Water Supply); 3. Agricultural Support Services (a. Agribusiness Services, b. Adaptive Research Services, c. Rural Financial Services; and 4. Project Management and Co-ordination

12. **Sri Lanka: 2<sup>nd</sup> Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project.** Effective in August 1992, the main objectives of the project are to alleviate poverty and improve food security and nutritional status of poor inhabitants of the most disadvantaged parts of Badulla district; and develop a fully participatory approach to planning and resource allocation through a process of community mobilisation. The SBIRDIP envisages achieving the above objectives through the implementation of its components including: Community Mobilisation and Institutional Strengthening, Agricultural and Non-farm Production, Physical Infrastructure Development, Savings and Credit, NGO Programme and Project Management.

13. **Vietnam: Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities.** In operation in Ha Giang Province since July 1998, the objectives of the project are to: (a) raise household incomes and improve food security for the poorest households, while improving utilisation of natural resources; (b) support the development of appropriate rural and social infrastructure; and (c) develop environmentally sustainable and culturally sensitive development models that can be replicated elsewhere in the northern provinces. The major components consist of: Rural Infrastructure (Pedestrian Roads and Suspension Bridges); Agricultural Development (Irrigation, Farmer Extension, Animal Health, Forest Protection and Development); Income-Diversification Programme (Credit); Social Development (Education, Health) and Project Management and Co-ordination.

## **B. Project Document Reviews**

14. The purpose of the document reviews was to see whether or not, as a matter of record at each stage of the project cycle, there had been: a commitment to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations; actual use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; and capture and dissemination of local knowledge and innovation. Subject to availability the reviewed documents have included: the Country Strategic Opportunities Papers (COSOPs) for the countries in which the case study projects are located; key project design documents, notably the Appraisal Reports; Loan Agreements; project Supervision Reports; project monitoring and evaluation reports, and any supplementary 'special' studies or reports related to the project and concerned with the theme of use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation.

15. **Strategy Documents.** The case studies refer to only one Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP), that for Cambodia, citing the following references to 'a strategic focus on the empowerment of rural communities and the poor to broaden and enhance their traditional technologies' through 'promotion of a consultative forum and development of a feedback mechanism so that development lessons learned and best practices emerged from local initiatives would be an important agenda at the provincial and national policy formulation level'.

16. Other case study references to strategy considerations include India (Andhra Pradesh), the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

17. Thus the Andhra Pradesh study reports: 'The IFAD project never envisaged a focus on incorporation of people's knowledge and innovations in the design of various strategies. The community participation was indeed emphasised very much. But then it was seen from the point of view of ascertaining their expectations, and aspirations about various livelihood needs. The issue of documenting and disseminating local knowledge, innovations, and practices, and adding value to the same for generating enterprises or improving livelihood options did not arise in the project discussions. So much so that a project review as late as January 2002, did not mention this issue at all. Thus neither IFAD expected this aspect of knowledge based approach to development incorporated into the project philosophy nor did the project management team make any explicit effort to pursue this goal.'

18. The Philippines study reports: 'IFAD has not yet produced a Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP) for the Philippines, but conducted a Special Programming Mission (SPM) during 1987 and a Country Strategy Mission (CSM) in November 1991. The recommendations of the CSM

do not cite directly the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations as key objectives of a strategy for sustainable development in the Philippines, but state the basic elements for it to occur. As an example one of the recommendations of the CSM is to “empower the rural poor through proper organisation”.’

19. Finally, 'IFAD's strategy for Sri Lanka includes a participatory approach to project planning and implementation Resource Management based development strategy of the project assists poor farmers forced by population pressure to cultivate degradation threatened land to increase production while reducing the risk of erosion by providing incentives for farmers to undertake soil and water conservation activities.'

20. **Design Documents.** References to appraisal reports were made in the China, Nepal, India (North-East Region), Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam studies.

21. The China study notes that 'the highly detailed provisions of the project's appraisal documents became quite rapidly outdated and posed a threat as a source of inflexibility.'

22. The Nepal study states: 'The Appraisal Report, [similarly], declared: "Obtaining community consensus is considered essential since it is the only way of affording any protection to the poor families who take up the leasing of the blocks of degraded land from potential encroachment by other members of the community"... The Appraisal Report several times refers to the importance of consulting and respecting farmers' preferences regarding the choice of forage crops, fodder trees and fruit trees, and also the use of local materials and practices in terms of off-farm income generation.'

23. The NER comments that: 'the very design of the project did not stress learning from people explicitly'.

24. The Philippines study points out the impact upon design of the evolution of IFAD-supported initiatives and suggests a link with local knowledge and innovations. It reports that 'The design of the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) Project took advantage of the fact that it was conceived as a second or successor phase of the 1987-1993 Highland Agriculture Development Project (HADP)' and 'The experiences and lessons learned during the implementation of the HADP provided an extensive background for important recommendations towards the improvement of beneficiary participation in the planning and design of CHARM.'

25. It asserts subsequently that 'The inclusion of beneficiary participation during the design of CHARM was the starting point to promote local knowledge and innovations..... Thus, even though the use and promotion of local knowledge is not directly mentioned in the design documents of CHARM, the process of participatory planning by the communities involved indicates that local knowledge was to be used to be able to pursue the strategy and objectives of CHARM.'

26. In similar vein, the Sri Lanka case study emphasises the evolution of design and in particular the increase in attention to participation. 'Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDPs) have been an important instrument of national development policy in Sri Lanka since 1979.... Several lessons learnt from these projects have been taken into account in the design of the SBIRD. In earlier projects insufficient attention was paid to the participation of prospective beneficiaries in project design and implementation. SBIRD stresses on innovative approaches to project design and execution...The project document provided that communities would select the activities most suited to their particular circumstances and needs.'

27. Finally the Vietnam study notes: 'The Appraisal report repeats the emphasis on community decision-making and the importance of the [Village Co-ordination Units] VCU (see p. 39). Village-level groups, it says, 'should be embedded in the existing social organisations' (Annex 1/15), and 'VCUs should be encouraged to give their opinions about the quality and quantity of project achievements' (Annex 1/5). Paragraph 196 of the main report states: 'There is a risk that if these

communities are not genuinely involved in the planning process, the impact of the project will be sub-optimal. The design of the project attempts to address this risk both by developing community-based planning processes ... and also by allocating specific resources for the development of farmer extension programmes, educational curricula and community healthcare models that are adapted to the needs of different groups' (p. 52).'

28. The Vietnam study also cites, as follows, a pre-Appraisal design document entitled 'Socio-Economic Assessment of Ha Giang Province (1996).

29. 'The assessment gives explicit prominence to 'local knowledge' and ethnic traditions in the choice of crops, cropping patterns, use of fertilisers and pesticides, livestock development, utilisation of natural resources, land tenure systems, conservation of biodiversity, management of natural resources and the nature of support services. It also encourages sensitivity to existing systems in the regulation of natural resources like wild honey and timber (p. 55), in the shift from swidden to settled cultivation where lack of fallow periods may cause over-exploitation (p. 48), and in defining 'poverty', where indigenous minorities may not regard themselves as 'poor' (p.58). Referring to current interventions, it indicates that policy makers tend to substitute maize for higher value trees and commercial crops (p.11). Roads are seen as conceived and constructed for motor vehicles which may also accelerate the unauthorised exploitation of forest resources, while its users are mainly pedestrians who may gain more from inter-village roads (p. 38).

30. The assessment advocates an interactive education system with sensitised teachers and flexible schedules designed to enhance local skill and knowledge of medicinal plants, basket making, weaving, blacksmithing and musical instruments (p. 70). While encouraging a comprehensive marketing information system and focussing on collective bargaining power, the document emphasises the continued importance of the existing well-developed 'tribal markets' (p.78). Encouraging community self-reliance, the document prescribes priority to traditional herbal healers and members of their families and drafting a manual on herbal plants in the minority language (p.77). Research activities to strengthen indigenous crop varieties and minimise the use of external inputs are stressed (p. 81-82). In general, the assessment proposes 'locally and culturally specific approaches appropriate to the diverse socio-economic and environmental settings'(p.3).'

31. For the reviewed Cambodia project the Report and Recommendation of the President (of IFAD) envisaged wide and thoroughgoing beneficiary participation. It notes that: "The beneficiaries will participate in the participatory development and planning process and in the wealth-ranking exercise that will define the poor and very poor on the basis of their own criteria for targeting assistance. In co-operation with the local community, the beneficiaries will select technically-feasible and financially-attractive activities that are best suited to tackling their constraints; participate in field demonstrations, farmer training sessions, extension, Water User Groups (WUGs), savings and credit associations, field schools and in rice seed production; contribute labour and local material for the construction of community facilities; and participate in training programmes for village extension workers and livestock assistants. One male and one female beneficiary representative from each targeted village will participate in yearly beneficiary monitoring and assessment workshops to discuss their experience with the project and its impact on household food and income security, to report on performance of project staff, and make recommendations for improvement."<sup>1</sup>

32. The Nepal and Vietnam studies cite the respective Loan Agreements. 'According to the Nepal Loan Document, the project 'should follow the options that best suit the targeted households. "Their acceptance and whole-hearted participation in the project would be the first and necessary step to start anything in any direction." Further, "It is increasingly realised that the introduction of community and user-group responsibility is essential to prevent the continued destruction of the forests" (Appendix II, p.3).'

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<sup>1</sup> Report and Recommendation of the President to the Executive Board on a Proposed Loan to the Kingdom of Cambodia for the Agricultural Development Support Project to *Seila*, para. 40, p. 9-10, September 1999.

33. The Vietnam study reports that 'Although the Loan Agreement contains no references to Indigenous Knowledge as such, there are a number of references to the importance of the mechanisms and processes of community-based planning. 'Beneficiaries will be involved in the decision-making of the project, beginning at the village level' (p vi); 'the key organisational structure for the project will be the village co-ordination units' (p. 10); the VCUs, it is explained in Annexe VI – 3, 'will initially include two representatives chosen by the village to represent it on CDB. As project activities are progressively implemented in the village, VCU will be expanded to include representatives from various interest groups (WUGs, S&C groups, farmers groups etc.)'. In para 56 of page 11, headed Involvement of Local Communities, it states: 'Since over 90% of the population in the project area is comprised of about 20 different ethnic minorities, each with their own beliefs, traditions and cultures, project planning needs to be as decentralised as possible so that target beneficiaries are able to express their needs and priorities directly and have these translated into workplans'. As an example of community ownership, it is emphasised that micro-irrigation schemes will be 'farmer-owned and operated' (p.5).'

34. **Implementation Documents.** Supervision Reports are referred to or quoted in the Andhra Pradesh, China, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam studies.

35. The Andhra Pradesh study states: 'The supervision report made many suggestions but none dealing with peoples' knowledge systems or their institutions.'

36. The China study notes that supervision missions were particularly helpful in adjusting provisions made at Appraisal to accommodate changing circumstances, particularly with respect to 'the range of activities for which credit could be made available and the loan ceilings.'

37. The Nepal study quotes: 'Conflict is to be expected,' the 2001 Supervision Report declares, 'when community assets are privatised and especially when the process empowers the poor' (p.15). Although an internal project survey showed that only 8% of groups were 'seriously affected' by conflict, the Supervision Mission felt on the basis of field visits and discussions with field staff, that the extent of conflict was much larger.'

38. The Philippines study reports that 'CHARM's [Project Support Office] PSO has played a vital role together with the supervision of [the Asian Development Bank] ADB in identifying problematic issues and establishing corrective actions. As an example of that are the recommendations on documenting local practices at the field level and requesting a final detailed report on community activities, which will include local knowledge and innovations, by the NGO Consortia.' Further, 'The ADB has played an important role in supervising and recommending critical actions towards the improved participation of local communities targeted with CHARM. For instance, the last Mission, 8<sup>th</sup> ADB Loan Review Mission (12), recommends the proper documentation and an improvement of the incorporation of indigenous management practices in the natural resources management plan at the barangay<sup>2</sup> level.'

39. The study of the Badulla project in Sri Lanka avers: 'The Supervision Reports suggest that if investments in small scale rural infrastructure development are to be supported, there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity of the [Integrated Community Organisations] ICOs and groups so that they can undertake planning, design and construction. Policy design in this area is required to enable adequate technical supervision and co-operation from relevant Government institutions.'

40. In Vietnam, 'UNOPS supervision reports and the Mid-Term Review both stress that the Village Co-ordination Units exist in name only, and that village representation on the [Community Development Boards] CDBs has been ineffective. Various reasons are suggested for this, among them the geographical distances involved, the remoteness of many of the villages and, in certain areas, the

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<sup>2</sup> Smallest local government unit, with population generally in the range of 100 to 350 households

scattered patterns of settlements within so-called villages. Another problem has been the lack of uniformity in the operation of the various project components, so that in many communes only one or two activities have been undertaken. In these cases, the CDB has met infrequently and only for specific interventions, thus having no permanent or sustainable existence in fact. Two villagers (normally the Village Leader and the Leader of the Women's Union) have attended these meetings, but it was admitted to the MTR mission by the project ... that the village representatives were often reluctant to speak up at these meetings. Certainly, the extended VCUs envisaged in the Appraisal Document and consisting also of representatives of Water Users Groups and Farmers Associations did not materialise.'

41. Mid-Term Reviews are mentioned in the studies for Andhra Pradesh, China, Nepal, the North-East Region (India) project and Vietnam.

42. The Andhra Pradesh study comments: 'The mid-term review (1999) noted that multiplicity of project committees and implementation methodology at village level has continued to make the project suffer. The absorptive capacity of the regions was ignored. Sequencing of interventions was improper and conflicting goals of bodies like Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC) in terms of making profit and pursuing social welfare remained unresolved.'

43. The China study notes that the Mid-Term Review for Simao-Yunnan was, like the Supervision Reports for the project, useful in securing changes to the activities and targets laid down in the project's Appraisal Report, especially with regard to credit.

44. The NER study notes: 'A special effort has been made to document the traditional practices for using non-timber forest products. Other efforts to build upon peoples' knowledge and institutions noted in the mid-term review are: (a) the natural resource management group has decided in some village to regulate grazing by animals so that cultivation of off-season vegetables can be taken up, (b) medicinal plant gardens have been set up in many villages (c) the role of traditional village head is being recognised so that water sources, duration of jhum cycle, allocation of land for cultivation, etc. can take place through the sanction of village headmen. The plan at the moment is only for one year and thus long-term action has not been envisaged.'

45. Lastly the Vietnam study states: 'The Mid Term Review contains a separate section on The Utilisation of Indigenous Knowledge which is worth quoting in full:

- Much emphasis is rightly placed by IFAD on the importance of traditional knowledge and its utilisation in Project planning and implementation. The shortcomings in this respect are closely tied to the problems in the conduct of PRA and to the survival of the top-down approach in certain components. The Mission did not encounter any explicit opposition among implementing agencies to indigenous knowledge, but there does appear to be further potential for its utilisation. Some agro-forestry models seem to have been established without due regard to micro-climatic and geophysical factors, with a preference for mango, lichee and longan in all areas. Local knowledge concerning water sources and irrigation systems has not always been respected, and considerable potential exists for the replication of traditional household level irrigation schemes widely practised in Zone 2. On-going SIDA studies on indigenous fodder in Zone 1 and Non-Timber Forest Products and enrichment of forest gardens in Zone 3 provide a good starting point for the development of low-input farming systems based on indigenous knowledge.'

46. With regard to monitoring, the Philippines study comments diplomatically that 'The reports produced by the PSO tend to be succinct in the thematic component and more elaborate in the financial component' and 'The current monitoring and reporting practices of the project are essentially geared to assessing and recording physical achievements and financial delivery.'

47. Secondly the Sri Lanka study notes that 'According to Project Document the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit of PMO would develop a beneficiary contact monitoring system in which beneficiaries would themselves participate, enabling assessment to be made of the extent to which the project is successful in reaching the target population and would undertake qualitative evaluations of the project's impact.' However, 'A prominent weakness shared by all IFAD funded projects is the absence of participatory monitoring and evaluation system built in the project cycle despite the strong emphasis on participatory methods by these projects. The present project has not developed an effective monitoring and evaluation system with the exception of input reporting functions.'

48. Thirdly the Vietnam study finds that 'At PCU-level, the M&E section expressed itself satisfied with the monitoring aspect of its function, and emphasised that the formal requirements of reporting from commune and district level were maintained. Monthly commune reports are collated at district level and forwarded to the province. Alongside this formal process exists the usual informal communications networks. The question as to whether these formal and informal networks are adequate to capture and disseminate significant examples of [local knowledge and innovation] cannot be answered with a straight yes or no. Most examples of local knowledge are well known either within the particular district or within the province and are treated as a matter of common knowledge. The point is to instil from the beginning of a project the idea that such things should be positively pursued, recorded and utilised where appropriate.'

49. The Nepal study is the only one to refer to evaluation and then only in the context of Loan Document provisions when it notes that 'Elsewhere, provision is made for a participatory element in regular evaluation workshops, 'especially with regard to concerns such as community acceptance of the transfer of land to the weakest sections (p.21).'

50. Only Andhra Pradesh and the Philippines studies have sections on special and other studies in their reviews.

51. The Andhra Pradesh study refers to the 'Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute [having] made a compilation of about 150 medicinal plants. The plants were identified along with their scientific names; uses and method of use were recorded. The names of the local knowledge experts, tribal healers and informants and the scouts through whom this knowledge base was generated are also being incorporated in the data base.'

52. The Philippines study states that 'There are some special studies that were produced reflecting the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations. One of the most important is the Field Guide for Discovery-based Exercises for vegetable [Integrated Pest Management] IPM, which is a book that includes a series of agricultural field exercises documented in a form which would enable their replication in other countries of the region. This book includes experiences developed at the Farmers Field Schools and the field trails carried out with farmers in the CHARM area. The local University in Baguio produced a document requested by CHARM that documents local practices. This study compiled local technology on agro-forestry and major vegetable systems through workshops and reviews with local people. This study was used to produce a series of technological guides for technicians to carry out agricultural services. Since the basic study also reflects the use of local knowledge compiled through workshops, meetings and visits to farming systems, the techno-guides are believed to promote the use of local knowledge and to improve existing technologies.' Further, 'Local knowledge documentation in the forest management area is being carried out through the implementation of CHARM. [The Department of Environment and Natural Resources] DENR and CHARM personnel are involved in the documentation of the LAPAT system, which is a traditional system of permits and penalties for resource use at the watershed level.'

### **C. Field Interviews**

53. The purposes of the field interviews were: to verify and supplement the information derived from the document review with respect to the project's use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; to discover if in fact the project is using and promoting local knowledge and innovation,

which is going unrecorded in project-related documentation; to develop recommendations with regard to capturing/recording and disseminating the project's experience with the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; and to assess the opportunities and constraints for project use of local knowledge and innovations with regard to the project's organisation and management culture; technical provision under the project; financial allocation under the project; and the project's policy and legal environment.

54. Interviewees included: ordinary beneficiaries; informal beneficiary champions; formal beneficiary representatives and leaders; project technical and financial staff; project management staff; project area and provincial/national representatives/officials of relevant local and central Government; and representatives of other stakeholders/partners in the project, e.g. co-financiers, co-operating institutions, civil society organisations, and non-governmental organisations.

55. The field interviews revealed a number of instances in the case study project areas of the use of local knowledge and innovation, which had not been recorded in the reviewed project-related documents.

56. In Andhra Pradesh these included a rose thorn stripper and a cycle based water pump. The study reports that a man had 'made a cheap pump which attracted lot of attention from people. Some years ago, a few people came from Hyderabad promising him lot of reward, kept him in a house for six seven days and did not even feed him properly. He somehow escaped and came back go his village. In the meanwhile, somebody told him to file a patent of his pump before doing anything further. He went to the collector...who wrote to the higher authorities in Hyderabad to help him with patents. Nothing of course happened.'

57. In Cambodia, 'No proposals were made by [Production Start-up Programme] PSP<sup>3</sup> beneficiaries, which involved the use of local knowledge and innovation with a view to increasing project impact. Rather, proposals took the form of requests for greater assistance...It was [Agricultural Improvement Programme] AIP beneficiaries who provided the only two examples of modifications/suggestions to project initiatives, which could be said, at a stretch, to be based on local knowledge. The first was downscaling of recommended chicken and pig housing to reduce costs and the second was a fruit tree demonstrator, who gave a detailed analysis of why some of his seedlings had failed and cogent arguments for the use of different species and varieties in his locality.'

58. In China, 'With regard to 'technical'<sup>4</sup> crops, the mission came across three instances of the use of local knowledge and innovation. On a coffee plantation, local farmers had been able to identify the relative suitability of soils in the area for coffee production and accurately predict which sites would support one-branch stands and which were rich enough to support two-branch bushes. Secondly, workers on a tea estate showed that productivity in a particular area could be improved through irrigation even after technical advisors had discounted this possibility. Thirdly, a woman mulberry producer had found that if she cleaned her silkworm trays more frequently than recommended by the silk company technician the resultant cocoons would be a better grade. When asked whether she has passed on this finding to the technician she replied negatively, pointing out that he was after all the expert. If indeed, she was correct about more frequent tray cleaning leading to higher quality cocoons then the failure to disseminate this knowledge to other out-growers presumably represented a significant overall cost to the company.

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<sup>3</sup> The PSP is group-based and has three elements: (i) agricultural 'start-up' packages including items such as improved seed, fertiliser, chicks, etc; (ii) provision of revolving funds for household income-generating and group activities; and (iii) training, extension and group and financial management support. PSP group members are expected to repay the value of most of the inputs at the end of the season in order that they can acquire further inputs needed for the next season. The PSP is directed to the very poor, including those with little or even no land. The AIP, in contrast, is directed to assisting those with up to 2 hectares of land through demonstrations of improved technologies, veterinary support from Village Livestock Assistants (VLAs) on a 'user-pays' basis and group extension activities.

<sup>4</sup> Commercial cash crops produced on estates or out-grower plantations, including tea, coffee, mulberry and rubber.

59. By contrast, individual enterprises had limited, if any, outside technical support. For example, activities such as livestock rearing might have some veterinary and general husbandry services whereas bamboo and food businesses relied entirely on the traditional knowledge of the producers and how proactive they were in learning new technical and entrepreneurial skills. Thus bamboo basket makers reported that "everyone in the village knows how to do this." A woman tofu-maker had taught herself the necessary skills by buying a book and going and looking at other tofu-makers.

60. No innovation was reported by operators of individual businesses visited by the mission, with the exception of one tofu-maker, who attributed his striking success to his particular recipe. However, the recipe was a secret.'

61. In Nepal, 'The Mission's interviews with foresters from all levels of the Department of Forests confirmed the view that there exists a considerable awareness of the importance of indigenous knowledge and longstanding systems of forest protection. This was summed up in a remark of the Acting Project Director, and Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation, who said simply: 'They [the villagers] know better than us.' All foresters interviewed by the Mission freely acknowledged the importance of local farming systems and practices, most of them emphasising in this context the methods of propagation, the timing and nature of pruning and the suitability of trees and grasses for particular soils and micro-climates. Livestock Development Officers in both Kavre and Makwanpur districts admitted that local farmers knew better than they did about the timing of pruning for specific trees in specific localities. Local farmers interviewed in Kahvre district confirmed that some of the pruning models provided to them were inappropriate to local conditions, with which criticism the Livestock Officers accompanying the Mission readily agreed. The cultivation of locally known and appropriate grass species was encouraged by the project, for example Babio grass (*eulaliopsis binata*), Banso grass (*eragrostis tenelia*) and thatching grass. The project also supported the propagation of the Badahar tree (*artocarpus lackoocha*) for fodder. Farmers have long been aware of the value of this tree in increasing the quantity and fat content of milk. A Livestock Development Officer in Makwanpur district provided an interesting example of the importance of indigenous knowledge regarding the division of replanting of the rootstock of broom grass. During the replanting, careful attention needs to be given to the orientation of the leaves. If not, the plant will die. The officer concerned claimed that he had learned the technique from one farmer and had then afterwards been able to teach others in different villages. In another case, the success in the Mustang region of two local varieties of fodder grass – Kote (*medicago felcata*) and Dhimchi (*peseum flaccidum*) – was identified by the Livestock Department, which was then able to introduce these local varieties into other areas.

62. The Sri Lanka study reports that some farmers are practising organic farming, though 'the project does not support these activities', that 'Farmers have adopted several innovative measures for storage of agricultural produce' and 'Interaction with project beneficiaries revealed that there is a huge potential of cultivating medicinal plants...an aspect which was not included in the project income generation programmes.'

63. In Vietnam 'The Project Director said that the Mission's visit had alerted the Project Management to the significance of local knowledge and had started them thinking about where it might be sought and how it might be utilised more effectively. He also suggested that someone at provincial level should be assigned the job of collating examples of [Indigenous Knowledge] IK, which would be the most certain way of ensuring some continuity in this respect. The [Project Co-ordinating Unit] PCU had prepared a list of thirteen cases where they felt such knowledge had been or might be utilised in the operation of the project, including: local dry stone walling techniques in upland areas utilised by the project for retaining walls and revetments in road construction; techniques of domestic water supply; design and construction of local irrigation schemes; indigenous farming systems and patterns of inter-cropping; local bee keeping initiatives; stall-feeding and forage provision for livestock; traditional herbs, handcrafts and farming tools.'

64. Ongoing activities identified by the Mission as based on local knowledge and initiatives included: drystone walling, forestry protection, and cultivation of true bamboo and the medicinal herb *thao qua*. Activities based on local knowledge where the Mission appears to feel that project management could be more supportive include: local building craftsmanship, traditional medicine, indigenous as opposed to hybrid maize production and tea cultivation.

65. The missions responsible for the case studies were asked to assess whether the policy and legal environments of the reviewed projects had implications for the incidence of local knowledge and innovation in them. The following paragraphs cite their observations in this regard.

66. The Cambodia study reports that 'The project's close policy and institutional linkage with the *Seila* programme and the specifics of its design and implementation reflect Government and IFAD concerns to take a highly participatory approach. At the same time, the very newness of the peace-oriented political, legal and institutional environments means that everybody is obliged to 'learn on the job' and, moreover, keep adapting to a rapidly changing situation as new pieces of the governance, financial and technical structures are put in place and fine-tuned in the light of experience.'

67. The China study notes: 'A significant factor in the emergence of these institutional innovations<sup>5</sup> was the ongoing programme of economic reforms occurring in the People's Republic as a whole during the project period. Perhaps the most significant aspects of these reforms for the project were increasingly market-oriented public investment, the acceptability of small-scale individual and family enterprises and greater possibility of residential relocation in the interests of economic improvement.'

68. The Nepal mission remarks that 'The emergence of Community Forestry programmes in Nepal during the mid-1970s was the outcome of the widely recognised failure of the nationalisation of the forests in 1956. The nationalisation had in fact resulted in widespread depredation of the forests by communities who felt that they no longer had a stake in forests, which they had previously owned and managed. Indigenous systems of community forestry had existed in most areas. They differed in details – and also over time – but were characterised by the regulation of felling, grazing and collection rights and the institution of some form of locally-organised protection service. Thus the introduction of community forestry during the 1970s and 1980s was effectively rooted in indigenous systems and could certainly not have been put in place without them.'

69. In its Annex, the study points out: 'By law, leasehold forestry is not treated on par as community forestry; this inevitably creates problems for the HLFFDP [the project] and for future leasehold forestry projects. Legal requirements make the administration very hierarchical and top-heavy. Changes in legislation, recommended by previous Mission, will have to be affected for the project to gain momentum. Beneficiaries have demanded further legal training. It has been recommended that especially women be given such training and legal aid as they are particularly vulnerable. Concerns, that have been detailed include:

70. (a) Lack of Legal Recognition: In the most recent organisational set-up of the DF, which became effective in FY 2057/58 (2000/01) the Leasehold Forestry Section has been removed from the National Forestry Division, without reappearing elsewhere<sup>6</sup>. Chapter 6 of the Forest Act, 2049 (1993) deals with 'Provisions Relating to the Leasehold Forests'. However, while it covers lease of forest for commercial purposes under leasehold forestry, it does not mention lease to the poorest. This lack of legal recognition to the HLFFDP beneficiaries excludes them from inheritance rights. Credit taken in the name of leasehold groups or co-operatives is also problematic, as these do not have a legal personality to be recognised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. Similarly, a financial feasibility report required of leaseholders for commercial purposes is to be filled by the project beneficiaries also. This formality is difficult to carry out without help from the DFO [District Forestry Officer] and, is unnecessary, as the OP [Operational Plan] serves the same purpose.

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<sup>5</sup> Project Management Offices and credit institutions.

<sup>6</sup> Project Findings and Recommendation, 2001, FAO, Rome.

71. (b) Cumbersome procedures for leaseholders. Unlike in the case of community forestry, the procedures for initiation of leasehold forestry are cumbersome. While community forestry user groups need a one-step recognition from the DFO, the application for leasehold forestry passes from the DFO, up three-tiers, to the Regional Director of Forest, the Director General of the Forest Department and the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC). This is a time-consuming chain –up to a year- and rejection of the application often comes with no explanation. Prior to the allotment, the leasehold group also gives a 35-day notice to the community, which can be vetoed by opposition from a few farmers. Similarly even the OP, which has to be renewed every 5 years, and is approved by the DFO for community forestry, has to be approved by the MFSC for the leaseholders.

72. In view of the small acreage of leasehold forestry and the especially limited resources of the users, access to the leasehold option becomes difficult and, is difficult to extend to remote regions.'

73. A lengthy section of the Philippines study considers that 'Due to the changes in people's participation in power since the late 1980s, government agencies have the mandate to promote participation and to include local knowledge of the communities in project development, as stated by DA's Central Office – SPCMAD, a special office to co-ordinate projects and assistance.

74. However, there is a long way to go still from theory to practice. Some agencies still have difficulties to really incorporate the mandate at the most basic level when interacting with communities and tend to develop activities without promoting sufficient participation. Projects such as CHARM are learning platforms for putting into practice the principle of participation by government officials, and improvement is expected after a series of such experiences and replication opportunities. These merit being encouraged.'

75. The study further judges that 'The legal framework is also positive when compared with other countries in many developing countries, including the Asia and Pacific region. A law was passed to provide more power at the local government level. President Aquino in 1986 declared the role of NGOs and social society in the development of the country was to be enhanced...In 1997 the Indigenous Rights Act was created, a major accomplishment and recognition of traditional communities in the Philippines. As stated in the Act the purpose is to recognise, protect and promote the rights of indigenous cultural communities in the country. It is inferred that local participation will be enhanced and therefore the knowledge of these communities promoted, shared and used.'

76. One specific and potentially very important legal issue raised by the Andhra Pradesh and North-East Region studies is that of intellectual property rights of beneficiaries. In both cases this issue was noted particularly in relation to local knowledge about traditional medicinal herbs. Apparently the North-East Region project 'mentioned that they were working on a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by every staff stating that peoples' knowledge will not be used without their permission.'

77. The studies are quite variable with respect to their findings on gender mainstreaming.

78. The Andhra Pradesh study reports that 'Out of 1000 Village Tribal Development Agencies, six were chaired by women and 35 per cent villages had women Sarpanch by rotation. Most of the women leaders had come up after gaining experience in self-help groups.' The study notes that 'One of the most significant step toward gender mainstreaming has been an order issued by the state government in March 1999 implying that secretary of the village tribal development agency would be elected by the self-help group comprising women.'

79. The Cambodia study observes that 'a striking feature of the PSP groups met by the Mission was the very high preponderance of women in attendance. The pattern appears to be that although PSP membership is registered in the names of male heads of household, it is their wives that attend

meetings and appear to be the principal actors and possibly activists. Women often joked, albeit respectfully, that the project trained them and then they went home and trained their husbands.'

80. In the China project there has been a women-specific line of credit and a high proportion of individual enterprises supported by the project are operated by women. In addition there are women's representatives on the Village Implementation Groups and linkage with State women's organisations.

81. The Nepal study notes that: 'The Loan Document proposes that women would 'automatically' be given a central role in project activities, since these activities focus on areas in which women traditionally play the dominant part. It adds, however, that 'the formation of exclusively women's groups, or leasing the land exclusively to them, would not be emphasised. Instead, the focus would be on integrating women into the mainstream of activities in a joint husband-wife partnership' (p.17). This focus implies a gradualist approach to the issue of gender relations and shows sensitivity to the prevailing local customs. As the CPE points out: 'cultural values do not favour participation of females over males. It is not surprising if the participation of women remains less substantive in nature' (p 57).' During the field visit, 'Some villagers complained to the Mission that a woman's work has increased with the need to carry fodder from the forestry plot.' The study goes on to assert that 'With a focus exclusively on the poorer households and an emphasis on the participation of women, the Leasehold Groups are a totally new phenomenon, with no precedent in traditional society.' Thereafter, it expresses some general rather than project-specific views on the conundrum for development agencies of respecting indigenous knowledge while pushing for gender equality to which beneficiaries might well not traditionally subscribe.

82. The North-East Region study notes that in project design 'The role of tribal women was recognised and their indigenous knowledge for food, medicine, and other rituals was supposed to be built upon.' However, according to the study 'The participation of women has been found to be inadequate in many villages.' Nevertheless it acknowledges 'The Thangkul village council, for the first time in the history of that society, has allowed women to participate in the discussion relating to village development. This has empowered women.'

83. Perhaps rather surprisingly, the Philippines study does not appear to mention gender/women's issues at all.

84. The Sri Lanka study offers a particularly strong accolade on the Badulla project's impact on women, stating: 'More than 90 percent of the project participation in the project is from women and for the first time in many cases women had direct access to resources such as credit for cultivation and micro-enterprises. This enabled the women to have a higher bargaining power at home and change their gender relations with their men. Empowering women by providing them with opportunities to access to, control over and benefit from resources, particularly to credit and to hold dominating positions in [Integrated Community Organisations] ICOs and effectively manage and implement poverty alleviation projects is a remarkable achievement. According to a survey conducted in 2001, about 85% of women felt that their access to health, nutrition and credit has improved due to the project and the biggest benefit to women is their acceptance of the rightful place in the society...The project has generated new skills, knowledge, and competencies amongst the poor, especially women.'

85. The Vietnam study quotes the 1996 Ha Giang Socio-Economic Assessment as follows: 'Referring to gender disparities the document highlights the specificity of male/female relations among the highlands' minorities, and suggests 'it would be more useful to look at the complementarity between male and female rather than to their presumed inequality'. It cautions that with the expanding market economy and the consequent devaluation of their current activities the status of indigenous women may actually deteriorate (p.61).' However, the study does not appear to follow up on this quotation in its findings.

86. The case studies come to interesting although rather disparate conclusions.

87. The Andhra Pradesh study asserts: '... that had the project designers and reviewers focused on...[local]...knowledge systems in time and adequately, a great deal more could have been learned about the creative ways used by people for coping with local stresses and evolving some time innovative solutions for the same...local knowledge... becomes a means of survival and thus documentation of these solutions for their dissemination after validation among other communities might improve the livelihood options right away at very low cost. Further, when a local solution is taken note of and recognition ensues through public appreciation, visit of others to this innovator's place, or through other means, the self-esteem of such knowledge providers and generators also goes up...much more could be done if local creativity, innovative potential and traditional knowledge were harnessed systematically '

88. The Cambodia study recognises the enormous advances made by the Kingdom in setting up decentralised State institutions which have achieved a significant, reconciliatory and collaborative rapport between Government and people and also recognises that the project was designed to promote and build upon these developments. At the same time it concludes that although 'In principle, these arrangements offer[ed] considerable opportunity for the elicitation and incorporation of local knowledge and innovations into project activities...As yet, this does not appear to have happened.

89. The India North-East Region study considers that 'The indigenous knowledge of local communities has not been specifically focussed or emphasised in project objectives but during the implementation it has received some attention.' Overall, however, 'local knowledge and traditional institutions have not received adequate attention.' Moreover, initial focus in the grounding of the project has been on building capacity, introducing new technologies and improving productivity. The processes relating to local knowledge documentation and valorisation were still picking up... project authorities spent far more time in delivering results through the use of so-called modern science and technology and other institutional support for initiative like micro-finance.'

90. The Nepal study points out that 'To suggest that an agent of social and economic change, such as an international funding agency or a poverty alleviation project, should be cognisant of, and respectful of, all the archives of knowledge pre-existing in a given location, is to ask the practically impossible. Not only would the work and expertise involved in collecting and collating these archives be tantamount to several projects in itself, but to respect them all in every detail would actually make change impossible.... All poverty alleviation projects entail elements of social and political engineering... One example is... progress towards gender equality, which in most cases goes against the grain of existing values and customs...the Fund's essential brief – to target the poorest of the poor – itself entails a measure of social engineering, simply because to raise the economic and social status of a disadvantaged group will correspondingly affect the status of other groups. The experience of the HLFFDP, and the incidents of actual conflict, provides a significant illustration of this. The potential for conflict resulting from the redistribution of common assets is likely to be intensified by considerations of caste, an aspect that is not discussed in project documents... it begs the interesting question as to whether caste discrimination is to be thought of as 'indigenous' or merely unnatural, intrusive and distorting... it cannot be pretended that the HLFFDP aims to preserve – or even to respect the existing social or agricultural norms. It aims, quite justifiably, at change.'

91. The Philippines study concludes that 'The use and promotion of local knowledge in the development and delivery of projects, such as CHARM, can be a critical factor in order to enhance ownership of project activities and their results by the communities involved. Humans tend to care more about what they own; as such, medium and long-term success in catalysing sustainable community development can be guaranteed only if real ownership is ensured through the course of project design and implementation. The availability and application of local knowledge resources and appropriate provision for facilitating and sharing innovations at the grassroots level will contribute significantly towards attaining project goals and objectives.

92. The Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Development Project (CHARM) provided many elements for local knowledge and innovations to be promoted... '

93. In addition the study also concludes that '...there is an intricate interagency implementation arrangement to carry out the activities of the project.

94. The first reporting, that documents the work carried out with the communities, is carried out by the NGO. They document in detail the activities carried out on a daily basis. However, their reports to the PSO of CHARM are tailored to tables and a quantification of activities carried out. There is therefore a loss of primary information, which holds a substantial amount of value in the promotion of local practices, sharing of knowledge among organised community groups and dissemination through workshops and the Farmers Field Schools.

95. The CHARM PSO provides quarterly reports and an annual summary to the ADB and DA's central Office in Manila. These reports concentrate more on the documentation of activities accomplished and financial expenditure, not providing expanded and sufficient information on the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations by CHARM.

96. The Missions carried out by ADB are basically directed to evaluate the project, propose recommendations and organise corrective actions in a specified timeframe. There are several important pieces of information on the use of local knowledge and recommendations to improve the documentation of the use of local practices during project activities. But as a whole there is no specific arrangement to evaluate and report on the use and promotion of local knowledge.'

97. The Sri Lanka study ends with the following remarks. 'Project has changed the lives of many poor in remote project areas by salvaging the poor from the vicious cycle of indebtedness created by money lenders and middlemen by ICOs establishing internal credit system.

98. Community mobilisation programme of the project has created awareness among the poor, made them self-reliant and more articulate, trained them to analyse their problems and come up with solutions, increased ability among the poor to plan and make proposals, inculcated the habit of saving among members, and developed credit discipline. The community has developed the skill of co-operation and understanding in working with Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies.

99. The project management has developed strong partnership with the NGOs and other stakeholders. There is, however, lack of linkages with existing institutions... At the grassroots level there is a tendency to have multiple institutions and all projects and programmes are seemingly working with their own groups and with little or no linkages. There is a need to ensure that this duplication is avoided, existing institutions are strengthened, maturity indices are set up for their graduation and support based on their maturity and core strengths are provided.

100. Indigenous Knowledge and Innovations are the result of a continuous process of experimentation, innovation, and adaptation. It can blend with knowledge based on science and technology, and thus could be considered complementary to scientific and technological efforts to solve problems in social and economic development.

101. The disadvantage of indigenous knowledge, however, is that it could not be captured and stored in a systematic manner. It is primarily because it is handed down orally from generation to generation. Under the circumstance it is likely that indigenous knowledge systems and practices may become extinct. It is, however, encouraging that over the last one decade or so there has been increasing realisation that indigenous knowledge can play an important role in participatory approaches to sustainable development.'

102. The Vietnam study concludes that '..it should be emphasised – and this is perhaps the single most encouraging finding to arise from the current study – that attitudes to the H'mong culture among government officials and elected representatives are by no means negative. There is in fact a widespread admiration for what the H'mong have achieved in terms of subsistence agriculture in

terrain of the most difficult kind... the poverty of remote H'mong villages has to do with water shortage, the harsh and rugged environment, population increase and the remoteness of markets, and not at all with an inherent lack of expertise or knowledge.

103. Secondly, it points out that 'The preference under Project activities for large-scale interventions, and the provision that the 'investors' in schemes over VND 10 million should be the provincial and district authorities, serve to restrict the effective scope of commune-level and village-level competence.'

104. As a third conclusion, the study states: 'In the capture and utilisation of such [local] knowledge, the nature and extent of the links between the farmers and householders at village level with the commune and district officials is clearly crucial. In the HPM, this in turn depends largely on the effectiveness of the Commune Development Boards as the effective interface between district/commune and the villages. UNOPS supervision reports and the Mid-Term Review both stress that the Village Co-ordination Units exist in name only, and that village representation on the CDBs has been ineffective. Various reasons are suggested for this, among them the geographical distances involved, the remoteness of many of the villages and, in certain areas, the scattered patterns of settlements within so-called villages. Another problem has been the lack of uniformity in the operation of the various project components, so that in many communes only one or two activities have been undertaken. In these cases, the CDB has met infrequently and only for specific interventions, thus having no permanent or sustainable existence in fact. Two villagers (normally the Village Leader and the Leader of the Women's Union) have attended these meetings, but it was admitted to the MTR mission by the project SMA that the village representatives were often reluctant to speak up at these meetings. Certainly, the extended VCUs envisaged in the Appraisal Document and consisting also of representatives of Water Users Groups and Farmers Associations did not materialise...the Mission's opinion is that village representation at commune level is still more or less a formality, with village representatives too timid (and in some cases handicapped by linguistic problems) to partake in any decision-making process.'

105. Given the lack of experience of decentralisation within the province prior to the operation of the HPM, given the uneven distribution of project interventions and given the nature of the terrain itself, it is hardly surprising that the 'key organisational structure' (the VCU) has failed to materialise and that village priorities have not been effectively consulted. However, important issues have thereby been raised and these may be addressed in the design of future IFAD projects in Vietnam and elsewhere.'

106. The studies make a number of recommendations.

107. The Andhra Pradesh study considers: 'Several follow up steps can be taken up: (a) the data on the biodiversity and medicinal plants and their uses should be re-compiled giving the name and addresses of the key custodian of traditional knowledge. This will ensure that if any benefits accrued by value addition in this knowledge than these could be shared with the local communities and individual knowledge experts. (b) a survey of local best practices be taken up in different villages to find out the innovations and traditional technologies, (c) research contracts should be developed with the formal institutes of research on behalf of the local communities to add value to local resources and knowledge...(d) local language literature should be prepared so that this will inspire other people to innovate and develop even better innovations...(e) Observation trials should be taken up to find out which of these [local variations in cropping] patterns are more efficient than others in the given soil type and agro-climatic conditions. Technologies so produced by the people themselves can thus be replicated first on the trial basis and then on demonstration basis if found efficient and useful and (f) the project management system should involve monitoring innovations and traditional knowledge which can improve productivity and generate livelihood choices with or without value addition.'

108. The North-East Region study proposes that 'There are several actions that the project could take up in future: (a) Wherever people have deviated from the recommended package and have tried to do

something on their own, should be given a special attention. Generally in the projects, the conformity and compliance with the project norms is considered an indicator of project success. In my opinion, the exceptions should be recorded, studied, and used as basis for identifying the potential for change among the odd balls, (b) the local knowledge documentation should be followed up by on-farm research and experimentation. There weren't many examples available in which peoples' knowledge had become the basis for on-farm or on-station trials, (c) the role of traditional institutions is well appreciated in the project documents. However, analytical framework needs to be developed to facilitate further strengthening of these institutions and better analysis of their working, (d) the unique knowledge such as the extraction of black dye from black ginger and its use in currency industry shows how strategic the peoples' knowledge can be in certain cases... a cell needs to be created with the purpose of identifying peoples' knowledge and creativity efficiently and linking it up with formal science and technology, on-farm and on-station testing and building a whole value chain around global knowledge.'

109. The Philippines study states: 'The current monitoring and reporting practices of the project are essentially geared to assessing and recording physical achievements and financial delivery. These need to be complemented by observing and noting the immense value and role of traditional knowledge and the need for fostering its application and improvement in local communities. That shall contribute to the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and ownership of the project by its most crucial stakeholders and to the lasting success of the project.'

110. Mission reports tend to be of wide use at higher levels. It would be advisable to have a specific section to evaluate the use and promotion of local knowledge by the projects reviewed.'

111. In addition, 'CHARM has identified some important cases of local knowledge that are being documented, but a more comprehensive study could be carried out in such an environment rich in the use and promotion of local knowledge.'

112. In the future, projects specifically designed to use and promote local knowledge and innovations should avoid complex inter-institutional arrangements for their implementation, such as the implementation by many different governmental organisations. These arrangements can be interesting in the long term, but offer an operational and administrative challenge during the project's implementation phase, with the possibility of compromising the activities with the most important component of the project, local communities.'

113. The Sri Lanka study points out that 'Since community mobilisation is the thrust area of the project, the sustainability of the project would largely depend on the institutional maturity of ICOs... It would be much better to have a strong Federation of 286 ICOs rather than 286 scattered small organisations with no organisational unity among them. The Federation will eliminate the social isolation of the poor, make them more powerful in confronting the forces which go against their organisations, increase their bargaining power, share experiences and resources with each other, and attract donor funding even after the closure of the project.'

114. The Vietnam study concurs that 'The suggestion of the Project Director that future projects of this kind attempt to institutionalise the process of identifying and 'capturing' examples of local knowledge by allocating specific responsibility at provincial level seems a sound proposal. Again, what is needed is not instruction in the significance of local initiatives but simply the formal establishing of appropriate fora and channels whereby such knowledge may be communicated and disseminated.'

115. It also asserts that 'Most examples of local knowledge are well-known either within the particular district or within the province and are treated as a matter of common knowledge. The point is to instil from the beginning of a project the idea that such things should be positively pursued, recorded and utilised where appropriate.'

### III. INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

116. Perhaps the core insight of the case studies is its demonstration, throughout its various findings, of the relationship between knowledge and power. In short, it suggests that there is a political economy of knowledge and innovation.

117. Any given person's knowledge is a function of their experience and that in turn is a function of their physical and historical location, i.e. in time and space, plus the freedom they have to explore, communicate and act. Consequently, with one arguably important caveat (see below), all knowledge is necessarily both local and shaped by degrees of freedom. This Thematic Study is therefore perhaps more properly to be recognised as not so much about 'local' knowledge and innovation but rather about beneficiary knowledge and innovation and the factors that govern its exchange rate value with respect to other project stakeholders' knowledge and innovation in the marketplace of Official Development Assistance.

118. A second insight offered by the case studies, in effect by default, is the need to differentiate between different types of knowledge and innovation. The studies do not make such a distinction explicitly but their findings and analyses move between at least three categories: technical, political and procedural. 'Political' here is used in the original sense of knowledge about personalities, attitudes and attitude change, negotiation and conflict resolution, and policy-making, i.e. knowledge related to the mediation of interests. 'Procedural' refers to knowledge of how management and administrative institutions operate, accountability systems, and legal environments. The distinction is crucial in relation to the question of beneficiary empowerment. The use of beneficiary technical knowledge and innovation and its strengthening through exogenous technical education and technology transfer has no necessary link with beneficiary empowerment. On the contrary, the actual accrual of benefits to nominal project beneficiaries from technical knowledge, theirs or others, depends critically on political and institutional knowledge.

119. Before illustrating how the case study projects are differentiated in terms of their mix of the three types of knowledge and the degree to which beneficiary knowledge and innovation figure in each type, it is necessary to deal with the caveat mentioned above in connection with the claim that all knowledge is 'local'. It might be argued that technical knowledge and to a much lesser degree institutional knowledge can and is 'decontextualised' and as such not local at all. To put it baldly, natural scientific knowledge is the same everywhere and similarly one bureaucrat looks and sounds much like another. The problem is that this holds true only to the extent that local factors are eliminated through abstraction and formalisation. The strength of technical or institutional knowledge lies in the degree to which they are generally applicable, i.e. their universality. The weakness is that application is always in local circumstances and consequently sub-optimal.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the danger is that formalised knowledge is perceived, by virtue of its generality, as superior to informal, locale-specific knowledge. Its application is at the expense of sensitivity to local contexts risking the preclusion of important feedback. Significantly, political knowledge (see above) is resistant to decontextualisation because of its essential, and often intense, personal and affective character. Thus the history of development assistance started with an assumption that solutions lay with objective, value-free technology transfer, then moved on to a recognition that (a) technology needed to be 'appropriate' and (b) that management and administrative institutions needed to be built to accompany technical change, and most recently (c) has begun to tackle the difficulties of mediating political knowledge, e.g. by supporting participation, decentralisation and (arguably) economic liberalisation. Given the thorny nature of issues in the political knowledge domain, there is still often a tendency to re-present them in terms of the technical and procedural domains in order to avoid contention.

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<sup>7</sup> As the Andhra Pradesh study puts it: 'what is the guarantee that once identified, the local problems would lend themselves to solution using standard methods in the labs without consultation with local people or understanding their local socio-ecological context.'

120. In the case studies, the relative incidence and importance of the three types of knowledge and the ratio of beneficiary/non-beneficiary contributions in each category to project knowledge systems, depends upon the timing of the project's design in the evolution of IFAD's thinking and practice, the project objectives and, of course, the context of the projects, whether it be social, political, institutional, economic, etc.

121. In Cambodia's 'Agriculture Development Support Project to Seila', the emphasis has been on technical and institutional knowledge domains. The technical dimension has been focussed on the provision of start-up packages and demonstrations, while the institutional dimension has been concerned with the setting up of decentralised development support services, including credit. To date, however, the articulation between the farmers and the project activities remains relatively narrowly based and informal. This may well be, as the study observes, because although much has been achieved in Cambodia it is still a little too early in the country's overall post-conflict development process to expect such articulation. Thus, at present, the key formal connections between beneficiaries and project have been the initial problem census and the attendance of beneficiary representatives at monitoring and evaluation workshops. The linkage of beneficiaries to the development planning and budgeting process under Seila remains unclear partly because the institutional arrangements for Seila are rapidly evolving and partly because this political area is outside the formal project provision. What does seem clear is that, so far, beneficiaries are not being systematically invited to provide their own technical knowledge and innovation as feedback into the project and the situation is some way from the strategic aspirations quoted above of 'promotion of a consultative forum and development of a feedback mechanism so that development lessons learned and best practices emerged from local initiatives would be an important agenda at the provincial and national policy formulation level'. This may well change with the introduction of intended changes mentioned to the Mission such as participatory Agro-ecological Assessments and Participatory Impact Monitoring.

122. In China's 'Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Agricultural Development Project', emphasis has also been upon technical (commercial crops) and to an extent institutional (Project Management Offices, credit) domains. Interestingly, reliance upon beneficiary technical knowledge and innovation is almost total in the case of individual enterprises and negligible in the case of 'technical' crops under the farmer-company model. In neither case however is there a system for capturing and disseminating beneficiary technical knowledge. The use of beneficiary knowledge in the institutional domain also appears to be minimal, e.g. representation on Village Implementation Groups which pre-screen credit applications. While the economic reform programme in China appears to have been critical to the possibility and the success of the individual enterprise activities of the project, the processes leading to these reforms appear to have been entirely disjunct from the project with no inputs from beneficiaries qua beneficiaries.

123. As for India's 'Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project', the case study as quoted earlier states baldly that 'The IFAD project never envisaged a focus on the incorporation of people's knowledge in the design of various strategies.' The study goes on to acknowledge the project's emphasis on community participation. Indeed, as can be seen from the project brief above, the objectives and components indicate a strong concern with 'the context of the traditional tribal environment, culture and values', 'self-reliance', and 'village institution-building'. The technical knowledge domain of the project relates to 'reduc[ing] and revers[ing] environmental degradation through its natural resource development component comprising irrigation, soil and water conservation, arable crop development, horticulture, livestock development and off-farm activities. All the indications are that in terms of knowledge and innovation domains, this project's centre of gravity, as compared to China or even Cambodia, is heavily in the political and institutional rather than the technical. In the technical domain the study considers that 'efforts to document peoples' knowledge with regard to medicinal plants and minor forest products, while are appreciable, these have not made much impact so far.' According to the study the 'Project Director...shared several valuable insights but acknowledged that specific interventions on peoples' knowledge *per se* were not expected in the project. However, the focus on participation in local institutions was supposed to solve

this problem.' The study's observation that 'Utilisation of village development fund has been hardly 15 percent', suggests that elicitation and application of beneficiary knowledge and innovation in the institutional domain is also rather limited.

124. The other reviewed India project, the 'North-East Region Community Resource Management Project', begun some three years after Andhra Pradesh, would seem to share some generic characteristics with that earlier project and extend some of its thinking. Thus, its objectives and components reflect similar concerns with environmental sustainability issues (in this case particularly the conservation of bio-diversity) and the project's overall approach similarly emphasises participation, a sense of ownership by beneficiary communities, building on the existing traditional institutions and assisting communities to draw up and implement their own community resource management plans. This approach is perhaps most strongly indicated in project documentation stating that 'All project activities are to be demand driven'<sup>8</sup> and indeed the very name itself of the project. It would seem reasonable to expect therefore that beneficiary knowledge and innovation in all three domains (technical, political and institutional) would have had a central role in project design and implementation. Yet the case study finds that it has not. The study acknowledges that the Mid-Term Review mentions that a special effort has been made to document traditional uses of non-timber forest products but also notes that none of the Terms of Reference for recruiting an International Research Advisor, a Non-timber Forestry and Forest Product Specialist and a Community Bio-diversity Conservation and Management Specialist 'also did not emphasise the importance of local knowledge and innovations.' In the institutional domain, the study reports that: 'There is a special focus on community institution building in the project. However, the background document (Annex 2) has stated that no traditional institutions met the criteria of open membership, equal participation of women and youth in decision-making, and willingness to incorporate the feedback from various members of the community without any indiscrimination. While it is true that traditional institutions may not put the same emphasis on justice and gender equality, it may still be relevant to build upon them and 'graft' new institutions on the old ones rather than 'grafting' new institutions, disregarding the strength of the traditional institutions.' Notwithstanding the project's design orientation it would appear overall that there is effectively very little or no formal use and tracking of local knowledge and innovation, technically, politically or procedurally/institutionally.

125. Nepal's 'Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development Project' appears to show a particularly idiosyncratic character with respect to the roles of technical, political and procedural/institutional knowledge and beneficiaries' contribution to these. The centrepiece of the project, the leasing of forest to particularly poor people, is a highly innovative and sufficiently successful initiative for Government to extend the programme to other districts. The study makes it clear that beneficiary technical knowledge is, for the most part, superior to that of formally trained foresters, a fact acknowledged by the foresters and project management themselves (see above). Nevertheless, there does not appear to be any system in place for capturing and disseminating this knowledge. Secondly, the ironic impression from the study is that the opportunity for application of this beneficiary technical knowledge was created primarily not as a result of recognition of its superiority but because of the failure of the earlier nationalisation of forests. In the procedural domain, it appears that the legal framework is mostly in place but its administration cumbersome and exclusive of beneficiary participation. There is also some weakness in following up beneficiary initiatives in the area of income diversification. The principal difficulties reported by the study are in the political domain in the sense that the project has not apparently devised a coherent approach based on beneficiaries' and other stakeholders' knowledge for mediating and resolving conflict and attitude change.

126. The study of the Philippines' 'Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project' evinces yet another pattern. In the technical domain there appears to have been considerably more documentation of beneficiary knowledge than in any of the other case studies. The documentation of the LAPAT system indicates a beneficiary contribution in the procedural/institutional domain. The

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<sup>8</sup> Report and Recommendation of the President, page 5, paragraph 20, IFAD 1997.

Asian Development Bank (the project's appraising and co-operating institution) is cited as being specifically interested in the role of local knowledge and innovation. The study reports that significant policy and legal instruments are in place to support participatory development. And yet the study still observes 'as a whole there is no specific arrangement to evaluate and report on the use and promotion of local knowledge'. What appears to be happening is that the project management is commissioning studies of beneficiary knowledge in those areas where management perceives it necessary as an aid to resolving management's implementation concerns. In other words the motivation is management-centred rather than beneficiary-centred. This hypothesis appears to be supported by the study's observations in the institutional domain, namely: 'there have been problems due to lack of participation by some community organisations and the lack of experience by the NGO community mobilisers in actually providing an enabling environment for the development of barangay resource management plans', and 'Some agencies...tend to develop activities without promoting sufficient participation.' These assertions are complemented by the study's comments about project co-ordination and monitoring and evaluation cited above where on the one hand project reports reflect concerns with physical and financial progress and on the other hand project decision-making is dominated by the agendas and procedural issues of collaborating agencies rather than the elaboration of roles and responsibilities of beneficiaries and elicitation of their knowledge and innovation in these regards. As the study puts it: 'non-availability of resources for organised people's organisations at the barangay level to develop experiences and activities of their own has perhaps made it in some occasions difficult for local communities to better develop and test their own practices.'

127. The design of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project in Sri Lanka envisaged achieving the objectives of alleviating poverty and improving the food security and nutritional status of its target population by developing 'a fully participatory approach to planning and resource allocation through a process of community mobilisation.' As quoted earlier, the study found that the community mobilisation approach has been successful and the project has led to real benefits among its target group. At the same time the study does not find that there is any system in place for capturing, documenting and disseminating beneficiary knowledge and innovation and points out some beneficiary activities (organic farming, cultivating medicinal plants) which have not been picked up by the project. Rather like the Philippines study it observes that monitoring and evaluation is restricted to 'input functions' and not participatory as stipulated in the project design documents and also there is a need for rationalisation of grass-roots institution-building with respect to Integrated Community Organisations. Nevertheless the study concludes, rather confusingly that 'The disadvantage of indigenous knowledge, however, is that it could not be captured and stored in a systematic manner. It is primarily because it is handed down orally from generation to generation. Under the circumstance it is likely that indigenous knowledge systems and practices may become extinct. It is, however, encouraging that over the last one decade or so there has been increasing realisation that indigenous knowledge can play an important role in participatory approaches to sustainable development. It is evident from the fact that a large number of activities based on local knowledge and innovations have been started.' Unfortunately, the study fails to identify them.

128. The study of Vietnam's 'Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities' found that poverty among the H'mong was certainly not a question of their lack of technical expertise and knowledge and moreover 'the Mission was generally impressed by the sympathetic and sensitive approach of officials toward indigenous knowledge.' And yet the study also reports that it was the Mission's visit which prompted the Project Co-ordination Unit to compile a list of examples where indigenous technical knowledge might be used more effectively. The study puts forward a modest proposal that 'what is needed is not instruction in the significance of local initiatives but simply the formal establishing of appropriate fora and channels whereby such [local] knowledge may be communicated and disseminated.' It notes that 'In the capture and utilisation of such knowledge, the nature and extent of the links between the farmers and householders at village level with the commune and district officials is clearly crucial.' Project organisational provision for Community Development Boards (CDBs) and Village Co-ordination Units (VCUs) might arguably be such fora and links. However, the study reports that 'village representation on the CDBs has been ineffective' and 'village representatives were often reluctant to speak up at these meetings.' Furthermore, 'the "key

organisational structure" (the VCU) has failed to materialise and...village priorities have not been effectively consulted.' Thus information flows in the technical domain may be seen to be dependent upon the political and procedural domains and supports the point made earlier that technical knowledge and innovation is no necessary assurance of empowerment and accrual of benefits. Finally, in an echo of the Andhra Pradesh comment on the minimal utilisation of village development funds, the Vietnam study observes: 'The preference under Project activities for large-scale interventions, and the provision that the 'investors' in schemes over VND 10 million should be the provincial and district authorities, serve to restrict the effective scope of commune-level and village-level competence.'

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

129. Not one of the reviewed projects is reported by the eight case studies to have an explicit, formal and comprehensive process of capturing and disseminating beneficiary (local) knowledge and innovation. It appears a harsh conclusion perhaps, but a core message that seems to come across prima facie is that the Official Development Assistance hierarchy does not recognise and care sufficiently about beneficiaries' knowledge and capacity for innovation to the extent that they are prepared to incorporate it systematically into their official technical, political and administrative structures. At the same time, the studies do report some instances of beneficiary knowledge and innovation. It is perhaps worthwhile to explore why there is formal systemic indifference and under what circumstances exceptions occur.

130. The preponderant evidence is that it is quite difficult for beneficiary knowledge and innovation to have a role in the design and implementation of IFAD-financed projects. This difficulty reflects a structure of accountability. In practice this means that the kinds of strategies, objectives, and activities which predominate at any stage of the project cycle tend to reflect the understanding and predilections of those with responsibility for clearing investment decisions. It seems that those who control the finance arrogate to themselves the prerogative of controlling knowledge in the development process. In other words it is articulation of the project in terms of their knowledge rather than that of the beneficiaries. Basically, the types and directions of problem definition, identification of solutions and information flow follow the money. While 'grass-roots' field experience does inform the design of projects and the Philippines and Sri Lanka studies, for example, stress the importance of earlier initiatives in shaping the reviewed projects, its contribution has to be set in the context of that from implementing and financing institutions. Design tends to be dominated by considerations of financing institutions and Governmental strategy and the capacity and modus operandi of delivery systems. Quite simply, the arrangement of Governments taking loans from IFAD means that design documents primarily have to be couched in terms intelligible and acceptable to Government, IFAD senior management and the IFAD Executive Board. Any beneficiary perspective is necessarily secondary to this priority. While it may be possible to read too much into the case study findings, it is noticeable for example that the strong emphasis on beneficiary knowledge to be found in the quotes of the Ha Giang Socio-Economic Assessment seems to have been considerably diluted in the quotes from the subsequent Appraisal document.

131. A familiar consequence of beneficiary perspectives taking second place in design documents is the tensions that can arise during implementation between the approved 'blueprint', e.g. the Implementation Version of Appraisal Reports, and the actual field conditions in which the provisions have to be realised in the context of beneficiary knowledge systems. These tensions can be minimised at the two extremes of the articulation of beneficiaries with project management in that either beneficiaries 'surrender' their views and simply do what the project management requires or the project takes an essentially laissez-faire attitude. For example, in the China case study beneficiaries were either paid to follow management instructions as in the case of the farmer-company model or essentially left to pursue their own business provided only that they qualified and paid back their loans as in the individual enterprise model. However, in most projects both management and

beneficiaries find themselves struggling to bridge the gap between a priori commitments to project activities and targets and local knowledge systems in situations where management can neither enforce its will nor beneficiaries just get on without management intervention.

132. Other instances, besides the design process, of marginalisation of beneficiary [local] knowledge can be found in the rest of the project cycle. The tendency, as reported in the case studies, for monitoring to focus on physical and financial progress is not simply a matter of methodological difficulty, it is rather that management recognises that the minimum requirement of satisfying the accountability structure and its associated financial regulation powers requires records in these two respects.

133. Finally, the Philippines and Sri Lanka case studies highlight the perils of partnership in so far as beneficiary knowledge can be excluded and grass-roots institutional coherence fragmented by the preoccupation of different implementing partners with their own perspectives and procedures.

134. It might be argued that the above problems are soluble through participation. Indeed they might be in principle, but as the Philippines study points out, there seems to be some distance between theory and practice even when appropriate policy and legal environments obtain. A striking feature of many of the case studies is that although most projects have made a nominal commitment to participation, its realisation has often been in a rather restricted manner. On the one hand there has been beneficiary consultation in the form, for example, of problem censuses. On the other, there appears to be a quite widespread problem, as noted above, with beneficiary representation in policy and management bodies associated with the projects, sometimes complemented by minimal expenditure on small-scale investments under beneficiary control.

135. This restricted realisation of participation can perpetuate dependency and exclude incorporation of beneficiary knowledge and innovation in quite subtle ways. As AusAid pointed out in the Cambodia study, problem censuses might be well-intentioned but they tend to generate standardised 'wish-lists' because they put the beneficiaries into the position of supplicants. Even the notion of 'demand-driven' has to be treated with caution because it directs attention to exogenous rather than indigenous development solutions. This is potentially disempowering to beneficiaries. The purpose of participation is not that beneficiaries have 'a sense of ownership', it is for them to have actual ownership.

136. Those instances in the studies where there has been use of beneficiaries' knowledge (forestry, medicinal plants) appear to have been motivated by as much by the need to solve development agents' rather than beneficiaries' problems instead of a recognition that the essence of development is the freedom of beneficiaries to build upon their knowledge in the technical, political and procedural domains in order to pursue their social and economic interests and a better livelihood.

137. The case studies started out with a focus on beneficiaries' knowledge in the technical domain. The overall finding is that such technical knowledge and innovation is not usually elicited and incorporated into project design and implementation. The reason seems not to be primarily a matter of the inferiority/superiority of their technical knowledge at all. Indeed the irony is that most development experts would probably starve quite quickly if they had to make their livelihoods in the circumstances with which beneficiaries have typically to cope. The problem would seem to lie with beneficiaries' continuing exclusion from the political and procedural knowledge domains associated with project design and implementation. Remedial action for the future should perhaps focus on this. Meanwhile, it is useful to remember that to assist is not necessarily to facilitate and to teach is not necessarily to educate.



**Thematic Study  
Local Knowledge and Innovations in the Asia and Pacific Region**

**Case Study Consultants**

**Terms of Reference**

**A. Background**

1. The overall objectives of the study are:
  - (a) to analyse the current practices and experiences of the Asia and Pacific Division with regard to scouting, utilising and promoting local knowledge and innovations. The study will also document selected good practices and assess how the rural people have used local knowledge and innovations to improve their livelihoods and whether this has led to their empowerment; and
  - (b) to provide building blocks to ensure gender mainstreaming of local knowledge and innovations into the regional strategy so that all activities in the region will incorporate them. In particular, a series of insights and recommendations will be developed that would contribute to improving the design and implementation of IFAD-supported projects and programmes through enhanced use of local innovations, knowledge systems and partnerships. Important attention will be devoted to the empowerment of local communities to become more active partners in project design and implementation, and the blending of 'modern' technology and local knowledge to capitalise on the best in local and external expertise.
  
2. The study will be guided, *inter alia*, by reflections on:
  - Local innovations and knowledge systems;
  - Supporting networks;
  - Building partnerships for change;
  - Policy and institutional environment;
  - Adapting the IFAD project cycle to ensure greater participation by local institutions and rural people; and
  - Improving IFAD's ability to support local innovation and knowledge systems.
  
3. In addition the study will focus on the following four central questions:
  - How effective have IFAD programmes been in developing, encouraging, and sustaining inputs from a partner country's mix of institutions and, in particular, from the poor and excluded?
  - How actively and effectively is IFAD encouraging the use of local innovations and knowledge systems at the country level to the benefit of local communities? In this regard what is the incentive structure required at both the country level and at IFAD?
  - What does IFAD need to do to become a true facilitator, particularly as far as identifying, integrating and mainstreaming local innovations and knowledge into programme design and implementation that would lead to greater impact and the empowerment of rural people and their organisations?
  - What is (a) the policy environment required; and (b) the roles and responsibilities of IFAD and its partner institutions (such as Government, implementing agencies, project authorities, co-operating institutions, civil society organisations and

NGOs, sub-regional/regional institutions) to unleash a movement within IFAD, but also beyond, for considering local knowledge and innovations as an integral aspect of rural poverty alleviation?

4. One of the activities subsumed under the study is the preparation of detailed case studies of the following eight IFAD-supported projects:

Cambodia:	Agriculture Development Support Project to Seila
China:	Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Project
India:	Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development North-East Resources Upland Areas
Nepal:	Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development
Philippines:	Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management
Sri Lanka:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Badulla Integrated Rural Development
Vietnam:	Ha Gian Project for Ethnic Minorities

5. The overall objectives of the case studies are: (a) to assess the opportunities and challenges offered by project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation in internalising local knowledge and innovations, and (b) suggest adjustments (e.g. to key procedures, guidelines and policies within the Asia and Pacific division) that may contribute to better institutionalising the learning from people at the grassroots level, leading to a broader application of local-level knowledge and innovation in IFAD-supported activities.

## **B. Tasks**

The consultant(s) responsible for writing case study reports as inputs to the Thematic Study on Local Knowledge and Innovations in the Asia and Pacific Region will:

- carry out a document review and field interviews with respect to the project(s), assigned to him/her/them by IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE), using Attachment 1 as a template; and
- write case study report(s), of approximately 6-8 pages length, structured in accordance with the model Table of Contents provided in Attachment 2.

## **C. Schedule**

The consultant(s) will provide OE with draft versions of the case study report(s) before the last day of their contract.

**Thematic Evaluation  
Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations in Asia and the Pacific Region**

**Methodological Guidelines and Notes for the Case Studies**

**Introduction**

Time constraints do not allow for formal surveying and therefore the case studies will be prepared on the basis of: (a) document review; and (b) field interviews. The questions suggested in these notes are intended as guidelines and are not exhaustive. Each case study, when written up, is expected to be between 6-8 pages.

**Document Review**

The **purpose** of the document review is to see whether or not, as a matter of record at each stage of the project cycle, there has been:

- (a) a **commitment** to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations;
- (b) **actual use and promotion** of local knowledge and innovation; and
- (c) **capture and dissemination** of local knowledge and innovation.

Ideally, the **documents to be reviewed** for each case study project should include:

- the Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP) for the country in which the case study project is located;
- key project design documents, notably the Appraisal Report
- project Supervision Reports
- project monitoring and evaluation reports, and
- any supplementary 'special' studies or reports related to the project and concerned with the theme of use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation.

The **questions to be asked** in the document review should include:

- (i) COSOP: Does the COSOP specifically mention a commitment to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation as part of IFAD's strategic approach in the country?
- (ii) Design documents: Do the design documents make management, technical and financial provision for the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation? Is there any evidence that local knowledge and innovation shaped the design? If so, cite the examples. Is provision made in the design documents for the capturing and dissemination of local knowledge and innovation?
- (iii) Supervision Reports: Do the project's Supervision Reports comment on the use and promotion of local knowledge in principle and practice? Do they mention any specific examples of the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation during implementation? If so, cite them. Do they make any recommendations about the use, promotion, capturing and dissemination of local knowledge and innovation during project implementation? Have the recommendations been followed up and implemented?

- (iv) **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Are any references made in the project's monitoring and evaluation reports to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations? If so, summarise what local knowledge and what innovation is being monitored, the indicators used and any associated findings and recommendations. Similarly, if there are any evaluations of project-related use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation, cite the knowledge, the innovation and summarise the evaluations' findings, conclusions, insights and recommendations.

## Field Interviews

The **purposes** of the field interviews are:

- (a) to **verify and supplement** the information (if any) derived from the document review with respect to the project's use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation;
- (b) to **discover** if in fact the project is using and promoting local knowledge and innovation, which is going unrecorded in project-related documentation;
- (c) to **develop recommendations** with regard to capturing/recording and disseminating the project's experience with the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation; and
- (d) to **assess the opportunities and constraints** for project use of local knowledge and innovations with regard to:
  - the project's organisation and management culture;
  - technical provision under the project;
  - financial allocation under the project; and
  - the project's policy and legal environment.

The **people to be interviewed** during field visits are, in order of priority:

- ordinary beneficiaries;
- informal beneficiary champions;
- formal beneficiary representatives and leaders;
- project technical and financial staff;
- project management staff;
- project area and, if appropriate, provincial/national representatives/officials of relevant local and central Government;
- representatives of other stakeholders/partners in the project, e.g. co-financiers, co-operating institutions, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc.

The **questions to be asked** in the field interviews should include:

With regard to (a) verification and supplementation: Is it the case, as reported, that local knowledge and innovation (cite examples given in the documents) is being used and promoted? Are there any other, undocumented examples of the project's use of local knowledge and innovation?

With regard to (b) discovery - quite simply ask respondents: Do you know of any examples of local knowledge and innovation being used and promoted by the project?

With regard to (c) developing recommendations on capture and dissemination, take the information gathered under (a) and (b). In the case of (a) check whether the information is fully captured in the project's supervision, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination procedures and documents and, if not, identify with relevant project stakeholders how the situation might be improved. Similarly, in the case

of (b), namely a situation in which there is use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation but none of it is reflected in project supervision, M&E and dissemination procedures and documents, develop indicative remedial recommendations in consultation with relevant project stakeholders.

Item (d) above, assessing the opportunities and constraints under the project for the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation, is the most critical and sensitive aspect of the case study. Each case study project is likely to conform to **one** of the following three basic scenarios.

1. There is use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation under the project, either fully or partly captured in the project procedures and documents, with possible scope for further improvement.
2. There is use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation under the project, not captured in the project procedures and documents, with possible scope for further improvement.
3. There is no use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation under the project.

The principal factors determining the extent to which local knowledge and innovation is or is not used and promoted under a project are, in order of importance: the project's organisation and management culture; the compatibility of traditional technologies with those being developed under the project; the availability of finance in the project's budget for technical and organisational development and the compatibility of traditional norms and rights with the project's policy and legal environment as defined and enforced by local and national government.

The questions to be asked in these regards are as follows: if the questions are answered in the affirmative then cite examples; if they are answered in the negative then follow up with the question 'Why not?' and record the subsequent response.

### **Project management culture**

#### **(i) Communication and confidence**

Can everyone, especially the rural poor, talk to everyone else related to the project e.g. staff, officials, mission members?

Are ordinary beneficiaries and their representatives expected to propose and develop new ideas based on their local knowledge? Are individuals encouraged to take initiatives?

If a person has specialist knowledge then can others access it quickly?

Are mistakes or failures always acknowledged and discussed in order to learn from them?

Are people at all levels encouraged to develop self-confidence?

#### **(ii) Project commitment to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation**

Does project management support new ideas based on local knowledge?

Has the project adopted the principle that implementing many small ideas is a good way to develop?

Do project staff actively study local knowledge to see whether it offers new ways to attain project objectives?

Is a conscious effort made by project management to get all stakeholders to have an understanding of local knowledge, values, goals and work methods?

Are project staff evaluated on whether they assist beneficiaries to innovate using local knowledge?

Does the project have a record of experimentation with innovations using local knowledge?

Are initiatives based on local ideas rapidly implemented?

### **(iii) Project organisation and management structure**

Does the structure of the project organisation and management help or hinder new ideas based on local knowledge to be implemented?

Is there a comprehensive system in regular use for meeting beneficiaries and their representatives, soliciting their knowledge and initiatives, and involving them in project decision-making about initiatives based on local knowledge?

Is the project's organisation and management structure based on local social and economic groups and institutions?

Has the project organisation and management structure ever been modified as a result of local knowledge and beneficiary proposals?

### **Technologies**

Are the technologies promoted by the project based on local technologies?

Have the technologies promoted by the project ever been modified as a result of local knowledge and other feedback from beneficiaries?

### **Resources**

Do people with good ideas based on local knowledge get the human, technical and financial resources to try them out?

### **Replication**

Is there an assessment of the replication potential of any innovations under the project based on local knowledge?

Is there a quick, extensive and effective transfer of field experience?

Are the ideas selected for dissemination - within the project and with other potentially interested people - those that will bring most benefit to the poor?

### **Policy**

Has the project experienced difficulties in taking up innovations based on local knowledge, especially those emanating from beneficiaries, because of the policy context of the project, e.g. with respect to cropping preferences, husbandry practices, micro-finance, marketing, etc.?

### **Legal**

Has the project experienced difficulties in taking up innovations based on local knowledge, especially those emanating from beneficiaries, because of the legal context of the project, e.g. land tenure, environmental regulations, formal organisation and registration of beneficiaries, etc.?

**Thematic Evaluation  
Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations in Asia and the Pacific Region**

**Case Studies: Indicative Table of Contents**  
(document to be approximately 6-8 pages)

**I. Project Brief**

Describe the project briefly in terms of:

- its name
- date of effectiveness
- period of extension if any
- date of closure
- amount of IFAD loan expressed in special Drawing Rights (SDRs)
- name(s) of co-financier(s) if any
- amount of co-financing by each co-financier
- overall goal
- specific objectives, and
- components' titles.

**II. Document Review**

Cite references to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation in the project-related documentation or note the absence of such references at the following stages:

- strategy (COSOP)
- design (Appraisal)
- supervision ( Co-operating Institution's Reports)
- monitoring
- evaluation, and
- special studies, if any.

**III. Field Interviews: Findings and Recommendations**

Write sections giving findings and recommendations for the following headings:

- arrangements for capture in project documentation of information on the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation (potentially needed later for up-scaling and replication) during monitoring, supervision and evaluation or through special studies
- project management culture
  - (i) communication and confidence
  - (ii) project commitment to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation
  - (iii) project organisation and management structure
- technologies
- resources
- replication

- policy environment; and
- legal environment

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND INSIGHTS**

Write conclusions based on answering the question in the light of your findings: 'Is the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation advantageous to the sustainable attainment of project goals and objectives?'

Articulate insights by attempting to answer the question: 'Which findings and recommendations of the case study do you consider to be particularly important and why?'

**CASE STUDY - ONE  
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA  
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROJECT TO SEILA<sup>9</sup>  
IFAD LOAN NO. 513-KH**

### **Introduction**

1. The material for this case study was collected in the course of a field mission to the Kingdom of Cambodia between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2002.

2. The Agricultural Development Support Project to Seila was approved by IFAD's Executive Board in September 1999 and the loan became effective on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2000. The total project costs are about USD 11.55 million. The IFAD loan, equivalent to about USD 8.60 million, was to finance 75% of the total costs. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) and AusAid were to provide grants of USD 1.78 million (15%) to finance the required national and international Technical Assistance (TA). The Government was to contribute USD 1.6 million (10%), as counterpart funding, to finance duties, taxes, staff salaries and building maintenance. The project beneficiaries were to contribute the equivalent of USD 16 200 (0.1%) in the form of labour towards the cost of construction of the proposed farmer training centres. The expected project implementation period is six years with a Project Completion date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 and a Loan Closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> September. The project was subject to a Mid-Term Review (MTR) between 11-28 August 2002, just before the case study mission, which benefited consequently from the availability of the MTR's Aide-Memoire.

3. The strategic goal of the project is increased food and income security for targeted households. The project objective is for 64 500 households in the project area to have a sustained increase in farm incomes and a more diversified pattern of crop and livestock production. The project area covers the provinces of Pursat, Battambang, Bantay Meanchey and Siem Reap, the first two of which were visited by the case study mission.

4. The expected outputs of the project are: (i) implementation of the Production Start-up Programme (PSP) and the Agricultural Improvement programme (AIP); (ii) empowerment of local communities and beneficiaries to manage their productive resources efficiently and sustainably; (iii) strengthened capacity of local institutions, particularly the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFFs) to target and manage investment programmes in a participatory manner; (iv) an ability of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Micro-finance Institutions (MFIs) to retail savings and credit services for the benefit of the target group leading to capital formation at the local level; and (v) strengthened capacity of the Rural Development Bank (RDB) to be an effective wholesaler of credit.

5. The project has three components: (a) Agricultural Development which comprises the PSP and AIP and the provision of technical support and capacity building to the provincial and district staffs of the PDAFFs; (b) Rural Micro-Finance Services with funds channelled to MFIs through the RDB; and (c) Project Support and Co-ordination provided by the Project Support Unit (PSU) and the *Seila* Task Force (STF). The project is implemented within the *Seila* framework for decentralised planning, financing and implementation.

6. The PSP is group-based and has three elements: (i) agricultural 'start-up' packages including items such as improved seed, fertiliser, chicks, etc; (ii) provision of revolving funds for household income-generating and group activities; and (iii) training, extension and group and financial management support. PSP group members are expected to repay the value of most of the inputs at the

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<sup>9</sup> Seila is a Khmer word meaning 'foundation stone' and the name given to the Government's approach to decentralised planning and development.

end of the season in order that they can acquire further inputs needed for the next season. The PSP is directed to the very poor, including those with little or even no land.

7. The AIP, in contrast, is directed to assisting those with up to 2 hectares of land through demonstrations of improved technologies, veterinary support from Village Livestock Assistants (VLAs) on a 'user-pays' basis and group extension activities.

8. The Mission held meetings with nine PSP groups and also visited and held discussions on twenty-two AIP demonstration sites. The AIP demonstrations included integrated rice/fish culture, pig rearing, fruit trees, chickens, small-scale water control, rice variety/fertiliser regime trials, soil and water conservation, integrated farming systems and VLA activities. In addition, the Mission visited two community forestry schemes.

9. The PSP groups all reported a highly beneficial impact of the project upon their production, productivity, food security and incomes. Typical benefits cited by PSP groups included: provision of seed, seedling, fertiliser; livestock support; training in crop and livestock production; and credit. In addition they welcomed the training they had received in financial management and book-keeping and a consistent observation by PSP members was that they had 'learned to work together'.

10. Typical problems cited by PSP groups included, in order of frequency: water control; inadequate credit in terms of coverage of all members, complicated procedures and low ceilings; and timely input supply.

11. There are a number of observations to be made with respect to what might broadly be termed the management culture of the project, specifically gender issues, group dynamics and the relations between PSP members and field staff. With regard to gender, a striking feature of the PSP groups met by the Mission was the very high preponderance of women in attendance. The pattern appears to be that although PSP membership is registered in the names of male heads of household, it is their wives that attend meetings and appear to be the principal actors and possibly activists. Women often joked, albeit respectfully, that the project trained them and then they went home and trained their husbands. With regard to group dynamics, there was, perhaps unsurprisingly, a considerable range from reticent formality through to energetic discussion. So while it might be true that groups have learned to work together, there would seem to be variable levels of co-operation, information flow and creativity. This spectrum of trust and co-operation among members is presumably a function mainly of specific local circumstances and history. With regard to beneficiary/field staff relations it was clear in all groups met that a striking rapport had been achieved, although again with greater or lesser formality, principally as a function of individual personalities. Consistent features of the relationship were that beneficiaries treated staff with respect and often used the word 'teacher' to describe them and, when asked how they had determined their group activities and revolving fund management, replied that the staff had advised them. When asked follow-up questions as to whether the group had been asked to put forward their own suggestions or had adapted the staff's suggestions on the basis of their local experience, they always replied in the negative. Indeed, they usually said that the Mission's visit was the first occasion on which their knowledge, views and suggestions had been sought out in a systematic way.

12. The most frequent proposals put forward by PSP members for future development concerned water control, livestock and credit. Indeed, the three elements were clearly seen by respondents as interdependent. Problems with water control (flooding and/or drought) leading to crop vulnerability<sup>10</sup>, were seen as being offset by livestock, both as an alternative source of food and income and as draft power, which could help with water control measures such as levelling, irrigation channelling, dyke building, etc. and speeding up land preparation in the context of erratic weather patterns and early maturing rice varieties. However, a major constraint to acquiring large livestock was the lack of

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<sup>10</sup> Cropping patterns among beneficiaries demonstrate a virtual rice monoculture.

adequate credit<sup>11</sup>. No proposals were made by PSP beneficiaries, which involved the use of local knowledge and innovation with a view to increasing project impact. Rather, proposals took the form of requests for greater assistance.

13. The AIP has taken the form to date of scattered demonstrations of predominantly single-aspect technologies. There appears to have been no systematic tracking as yet of levels of interest among farmers in the different technologies, subsequent levels of take up and factors affecting levels of adoption. The Mission's informal assessment was that interest was highest in livestock activities, then in descending order, rice, vegetables, fruit trees, soil and water conservation, small-scale water control and rice/fish culture. It was not possible to ascertain levels of adoption. Interest in small-scale water control appeared constrained by the extent to which it involved collaboration and capital and in rice/fish culture by capital, fingerling supply and marketing. Project management is alert to the disadvantages of the individual basis of the AIP in terms of information flows, co-operation and access to credit.

14. The integrated farming systems (IFS) demonstrations are an especially interesting case. There are at present very few. Project management proposes to develop them as the principal type of demonstration on the grounds that: (a) the scattered single-aspect demonstrations make it difficult for an individual farmer to see more than one or two and (b) the perception that integrated farming based on diversified production is the best way of reducing vulnerability and improving livelihoods among the target group. With respect to complementary organisation, recommendations by the Co-operating Institution that the AIP become group-based in the interests of improving programme focus and AIP beneficiary training, collaboration and access to credit seem likely to be implemented. The intriguing point is that it would appear that most farmers have traditionally operated a diversified farm, provided they have the resource base to do, because they recognise the advantages of spreading risk between different elements of production. In the first instance, therefore, it is not clear why a single-aspect demonstration approach was initially taken, other than it reflected the administrative separation of different technical support systems rather than the beneficiaries' situation. Secondly, it is not clear at present to what extent beneficiaries will be involved in the design of the proposed expansion of IFS demonstrations.

15. It was AIP beneficiaries who provided the only two examples of modifications/suggestions to project initiatives, which could be said, at a stretch, to be based on local knowledge. The first was downscaling of recommended chicken and pig housing to reduce costs and the second was a fruit tree demonstrator, who gave a detailed analysis of why some of his seedlings had failed and cogent arguments for the use of different species and varieties in his locality.

16. The principal proposals for future development made by AIP-type farmers met by the Mission centred upon soil fertility, wildlife conservation and diversification into livestock and vegetable production.

17. Project design envisaged wide beneficiary participation. The Report and Recommendation of the President (of IFAD) notes that: "The beneficiaries will participate in the participatory development and planning process and in the wealth-ranking exercise that will define the poor and very poor on the basis of their own criteria for targeting assistance. In co-operation with the local community, the beneficiaries will select technically-feasible and financially-attractive activities that are best suited to tackling their constraints; participate in field demonstrations, farmer training sessions, extension, Water User Groups (WUGs), savings and credit associations, field schools and in rice seed production; contribute labour and local material for the construction of community facilities; and participate in training programmes for village extension workers and livestock assistants. One male and one female beneficiary representative from each targeted village will participate in yearly

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<sup>11</sup> This paragraph is intended merely to report beneficiaries' views and not necessarily an implicit endorsement of them. There are, of course, a number of issues centred on the cost-effectiveness of water control measures in the project area as compared to alternative uses of investment resources.

beneficiary monitoring and assessment workshops to discuss their experience with the project and its impact on household food and income security, to report on performance of project staff, and make recommendations for improvement.<sup>12</sup> In principle, these arrangements offered considerable opportunity for the elicitation and incorporation of local knowledge and innovations into project activities. As yet, this does not appear to have happened.

18. The content of the PSP and AIP is reported to have been based on a 'problem census' of farmers, representative of the two target groups, i.e. the very poor and the poor. AusAid, which has a lead role in providing agricultural extension technical assistance to ADESS and indeed to the national agricultural extension system as a whole reports that a difficulty with such a type of census is that it tends to generate rather standardised 'wish-lists' from respondents. This phenomenon raises a number of interesting issues. In the first place, although problem censuses may be entirely well intentioned, there is a risk that at the outset they define the relationship between farmer and technical support staff as one of exogenous assistance as contrasted with joint problem definition and solution. Consequently, problem solution is likely to be seen as a matter of resource transfer from outside in terms of more material inputs, more credit, more technical support etc. etc. and attention can be directed away from local solutions and realisation of local development potential. The second issue is that while farmers may be quite clear about their problems, they might not be so clear about the underlying reasons for them and therefore the most efficient and effective way of solving them. It would seem that the definition of the content and extension of an efficient and effective agricultural development programme requires a balanced and ongoing dialogue between 'outside' service providers and local beneficiaries. The critical contribution of service providers in the first instance is that by virtue of their training and experience they can in discussion with beneficiaries ventilate local problems and possibly better illuminate their causes by bringing a fresh and informed perspective. Following consensus on problems, their causes and their prioritisation, the next step however is to consider the degree to which preferred solutions minimise dependence on extra-local supplementary resources and optimise - in the interests of sustainability - local human, material and financial capacity and potential.

19. If care is not taken to maintain a balanced dialogue in which beneficiaries and service providers look for joint identification and solution of development issues, further loss of focus on the scope for local knowledge and innovation can occur from the tendency for both parties to collude implicitly with the assumption that formal extra-local knowledge and expertise is always better than informal local understanding and experience. Farmers may genuinely subscribe to the notion that service providers offer better answers to development problems but are also likely to factor in consideration that they may lose out on project benefits if they query or adapt recommended practices on the basis of their own information and skills.

20. Another constraint to the surfacing and use of local knowledge and innovation is project stakeholders' perceived role of the State. If the State is seen primarily as a provider of goods and services rather than of leadership and facilitation, the development of local capabilities and opportunities may be sidelined and replaced by expectant dependency.

21. The Royal Government's national agricultural extension service with support from AusAid is gradually introducing an extension programme based upon participatory Agro-ecological Assessment (AEA). AEA's will begin to cover ADESS areas in the coming year and are expected inter alia to provide a more sound basis for determining needed and effective extension content.

22. With regard to wealth ranking with the objective of defining PSP and AIP target populations, the PSU reports: (i) that distinguishing between the poor and very poor has proved difficult in practice and (b) the individual as opposed to group basis of the AIP has been to some extent unsatisfactory as there may not be sufficient numbers of AIP-type farmers in a particular locality to permit an optimally

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<sup>12</sup> Report and Recommendation of the President to the Executive Board on a Proposed Loan to the Kingdom of Cambodia for the Agricultural Development Support Project to Seila, para. 40, p. 9-10, September 1999.

effective resource ratio between beneficiaries and service provision. With regard to (i), it is highly improbable that distinctions between the poor and very poor are difficult in principle, especially if local knowledge is used. It is a universal truth that members of rural communities are usually aware of the finest gradations of wealth among their members. However, what is likely is that members are not prepared to make their knowledge available in the context of targeting of development benefits for fear of tearing the moral, political and social fabric.

23. The key point about the progress and current status of the Kingdom of Cambodia's agricultural and rural development is that the country has effectively been entirely at peace for little more than two years after over thirty years of traumatic political and civil turbulence. A central element of the kingdom's strategy for consolidating and building upon this new-found peace with the objective of assuring long term stability is the ongoing legislation, institution-building and procedural development under the Seila programme for a highly decentralised, locally responsive system of governance. The Agricultural Development Support Project to Seila (ADESS) is the pre-eminent sectoral initiative for agricultural and rural development within the Seila framework. The project's close policy and institutional linkage with the Seila programme and the specifics of its design and implementation reflect Government and IFAD concerns to take a highly participatory approach. At the same time, the very newness of the peace-oriented political, legal and institutional environments means that everybody is obliged to 'learn on the job' and, moreover, keep adapting to a rapidly changing situation as new pieces of the governance, financial and technical structures are put in place and fine-tuned in the light of experience.



**CASE STUDY - TWO**  
**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**  
**YUNNAN-SIMAO MINORITIES AREA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**  
**IFAD LOAN NO. 335-CN**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The material for this case study was collected in the course of a field mission to the People's Republic of China between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2002.

2. The Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Agricultural Development Project was approved by IFAD's Executive Board in September 1993 and the loan became effective on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1993. There was a Mid-Term Review in December 1996 and the project closed in December 2000. The total project costs were USD 50.66 million. The IFAD loan was equivalent to about USD 25.79 million, with a further USD 24.37 from domestic sources and USD 0.50 million from the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).<sup>13</sup> The project area covers the counties of Mojiang, Jiangchen, Pu'er and Zhenyuan in Simao Prefecture of Yunnan Province.

3. The overall goal of the project was to enable an estimated 100 000 households to improve their standard of living by: (i) assisting all households to improve their food production so as to eliminate their grain deficit; (ii) providing cash-generating opportunities through the promotion of perennial crop production and animal husbandry; (iii) providing special credit facilities to disadvantaged families; (iv) contributing to the expansion of the rural roads network so as to facilitate the supply of inputs and the marketing of existing and incremental production; and (v) establishing permanent Project Management Offices (PMOs) and the development of a self-sustaining credit system. The project aimed to target directly 70 000 households or 280 000 beneficiaries with a Special Credit Facility.

4. The project had seven components: Food Crop Development; Permanent Crop Development; Livestock Development; Credit; Rural Roads; Project Management and Institutional Support; and Applied Research.

5. The food crop component encompassed irrigation, terracing and seed production directed to incremental production of paddy, maize, wheat and beans. Following the Mid-Term Review the construction of individual water tanks as supplementary irrigation was introduced as a result of local demand. The permanent crop component covered tea, coffee, tree crops and bamboo. Livestock enterprises included pigs, cattle, goats and bee keeping. Credit was made available to individual households for fertiliser, rural enterprises, women's activities and veterinary drugs. In addition a 'Special' credit programme was directed to especially vulnerable beneficiaries. The project has been distinguished by appraisal crop production targets all being exceeded, except in the case of bamboo. Seed production was double the target. Similarly, appraisal livestock production targets were all exceeded except in the case of bees. Twice as many pigs and six times as many goats were reared than anticipated. The credit was administered and disbursed through Township Project Management Offices (PMOs). Loan recovery has been good, generally exceeding 90%. The PMO structure was modified and further developed by Government during the course of project implementation. There are PMOs at township, county, prefecture and provincial levels, linked thereafter to the central national administration. PMOs typically comprise four sections: administration; monitoring and evaluation; engineering and technical; and finance, including credit operations. PMOs service local government and planning institutions. Below the township level, in the project implementation arrangements, were Village Implementation Groups (VIGs), comprising the village head, a secretary, a technician and a women/poor farmer representative.

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<sup>13</sup> According to the project completion report the UNDCP funds were never actually provided.

6. In the course of its stay in Simao Prefecture the mission went to Jiangchen and Mojiang counties and visited tea and coffee estates, mulberry plantations and a number of individual enterprises including inter alia shopkeepers, blacksmiths, tofu makers, noodle makers, piggeries, and bamboo products.

7. It seems that in institutional terms the project has been highly innovative. In particular, the credit component was a pioneering development both in terms of its general availability and its sub-categories and also in its linkage to the PMOs. The close connection between the management and financial services aspects of the project permitted a high degree of responsiveness to beneficiaries. At the same time, a significant factor in the emergence of these institutional innovations was the ongoing programme of economic reforms occurring in the People's Republic as a whole during the project period. Perhaps the most significant aspects of these reforms for the project were increasingly market-oriented public investment, the acceptability of small-scale individual and family enterprises and greater possibility of residential relocation in the interests of economic improvement. For example, many project beneficiaries were originally living in remote, mountainous areas and have been able to move to cash crop estates as labour or to roadsides where they have set up their own businesses. A little ironically, changes during implementation in the policy, legal and institutional environments combined with greater sensitivity to market prices, meant that the highly detailed provisions of the project's appraisal documents became quite rapidly outdated and posed a threat as a source of inflexibility. However, project-related officials report that supervision missions and the Mid-Term Review were helpful in securing needed adjustments. Key issues were the range of activities for which credit could be made available and the loan ceilings.

8. The project has been characterised by three enterprise models: company-farmer, plantation-farmer and individual farm/non-farm business. Respective examples are tea; coffee and mulberry; and rearing pigs and making noodles. Thus tea estates are divided into farmer-specific areas with supervision provided by an on-site company representative. Similarly, coffee plantations are divided with each farmer taking responsibility for an area but technicians may also be local with the company relationship confined to a sales contract. By contrast, mulberry plantations are based on individual out-growers with visiting technical support from a State silk company. These models reflect both the credit arrangements and the articulation of the enterprises with the area economic planning process. Thus, individual small-scale enterprise applications for credit are pre-approved by VIGs and thereafter secondarily screened by township PMOs. Approvals for permanent cash crop investments relate to township, county and prefecture development plans. These models impact in a rather sharply differentiated manner on the scope, in principle and practice, for the use of local knowledge and innovations. In effect, tea, coffee, and mulberry are seen as 'technical' crops reliant upon formal, exogenous expertise, whereas individual enterprises appear to be almost wholly independent of supplementary extension and can therefore be regarded in a sense as entirely in the domain of local knowledge and innovation.

9. With regard to 'technical' crops, the mission came across three instances of the use of local knowledge and innovation. On a coffee plantation, local farmers had been able to identify the relative suitability of soils in the area for coffee production and accurately predict which sites would support one-branch stands and which were rich enough to support two-branch bushes. Secondly, workers on a tea estate showed that productivity in a particular area could be improved through irrigation even after technical advisors had discounted this possibility. Thirdly, a woman mulberry producer had found that if she cleaned her silkworm trays more frequently than recommended by the silk company technician the resultant cocoons would be a better grade. When asked whether she has passed on this finding to the technician she replied negatively, pointing out that he was after all the expert. If indeed, she was correct about more frequent tray cleaning leading to higher quality cocoons then the failure to disseminate this knowledge to other out-growers presumably represented a significant overall cost to the company.

10. By contrast, individual enterprises had limited, if any, outside technical support. For example, activities such as livestock rearing might have some veterinary and general husbandry services

whereas bamboo and food businesses relied entirely on the traditional knowledge of the producers and how proactive they were in learning new technical and entrepreneurial skills. Thus bamboo basket makers reported that 'everyone in the village knows how to do this.' A woman tofu-maker had taught herself the necessary skills by buying a book and going and looking at other tofu-makers. This particular person had also moved house to a roadside to improve her trading prospects, reared pigs, grew bean-sprouts, and was in the process of opening a hairdressing business, perhaps drawing attention to the importance of personality in the profitable application of local knowledge. In this regard, a blacksmith reported that he happened, as a boy, to like this activity but under the collective system had not had the opportunity to practice it. With the reforms he now had the opportunity to take up a livelihood which suited his predisposition. No innovation was reported by operators of individual businesses visited by the mission, with the exception of one tofu-maker, who attributed his striking success to his particular recipe. However, the recipe was a secret.

11. The experience of the Yunnan-Simao project suggests a number of straightforward lessons with respect to the use and value of local knowledge and innovation. In overall terms, there would appear to be greater scope for local knowledge and innovation in the context of small-scale local businesses rather than larger enterprises. In larger-scale production, there is a tendency for imported management and technical hierarchies to restrict information flows from local sources as a result of relative status, quality control structures, new crops or varieties, scale and capital costs of infrastructure and processing equipment, length of investment cycle and orientation to remote markets. There is greater scope in enterprises characterised by small numbers of people involved, traditional experience and products, simple technologies, familiarity with local markets, and a short turnover cycle. There are also links with adaptability and diversification.

12. In general terms, this dichotomy of scope makes sense. By definition, 'local' is a matter of specification in terms of time and space. Local knowledge and innovation reflect, on the whole, these specifications. In the case of [poor], rural people related principally to an agricultural pattern of production and with little or no mobility, *locality* is characterised by small area coverage and long time periods. Correspondingly, rural local knowledge tends to be detailed, narrow in range and limited in its application, expressed in concrete, practical ways, often in dialect, largely common to all people in the area, and relatively unchanging over time. 'Urban' knowledge, on the other hand, is less local, more abstract, more highly differentiated and specialised with less commonality among people and relatively rapidly changing. The acquisition of knowledge, including inherently the type of knowledge acquired, and its subsequent use are primarily a function of social norms, economic opportunity, personality and, by formal extension, policy and legal environments.

13. The character of rural knowledge makes it best suited to small-scale artisanal enterprises, based on traditional practices and requiring only relatively simple technical and managerial skills. The Yunnan-Simao experience supports this assertion. At the same time, the main constraint faced by rural people is their material poverty, reflected in their knowledge limitations. It is not surprising therefore that the repeated request from both beneficiaries and officials involved in the project has been for higher credit ceilings. However, the overall parameters of poverty require a number of factors to be taken into consideration. First, returns to activities are almost always quite small and therefore the credit burden needs to be moderated in the interests of minimising the likelihood of default. For similar reasons, the most appropriate activities for small-scale, incremental but important sustainable growth are those with a quick return. Thirdly, structural poverty entails a premium on risk-minimisation, placing a premium on diversification and flexibility of investment options. Despite these issues, repayment patterns under the project show a better record from multiple, small, individually operated, locally oriented enterprises as compared to the permanent crop investments which have been vulnerable to the longer-term wait for returns and international price movements. In summary, small businesses based on local traditional knowledge can be profitable provided their operators have conditions, which maximise adaptability.

14. The abstraction, formalisation and differentiation of non-local knowledge-creation and use systems tend to bring, indeed may arguably require, hierarchical management structures. These

structures lend substance and weight to the old adage that 'Knowledge is power' and result in top-down rather than bottom-up information flows. Policy and legal environments, which encourage bottom-up flows of local knowledge and innovation, may thus be seen to be actually liberating. It is arguable that such encouragement in the context, for example, of the company-farmer model, might well improve performance.

15. Finally, while it is possible to create the space for the surfacing of local knowledge and innovation, it would seem that there is still an essentially personal factor involved in whether such opportunities are taken up. Some people are by their nature more communicative, exploratory and entrepreneurial than others.

## SUMMARY OF INDIA CASE STUDIES

1. The quick review of north-east and Andhra Pradesh projects shows that there is sensitivity among the senior professionals about the need for incorporating local knowledge, innovation and practices in the design and implementation of developmental projects. However, given the pressure of implementation sufficient emphasis sometimes is not given to the local institutions and knowledge systems. The incorporation of peoples' knowledge in a systematic manner was much more pronounced in the north-east project than was the case in Andhra Pradesh. On the other hand, tribal commissioner in Andhra Pradesh narrated many examples of local knowledge showing thereby the possibility of bringing about better incorporation if the project framework had so desired. The mid-term review and the supervision report written as recently as 2002 did not put any emphasis on the need for incorporating local knowledge innovation practices in the design of the project. Obviously, 'a change not monitored' is a change not desired (Gupta, 1984). Similarly, in the north-east project, the young professionals as well as some of the senior programme officials were quite sensitive to this goal. In fact the December 2001 issue had two interesting practices of livestock healing from Honey Bee Volume 10, Number 3 published in the NE Highlander, newsletter of North-Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas. It was quite interesting for the editor of the newsletter to re-establish the link with the Honey Bee network. A training programme could be designed for senior officials as well as young professionals to sensitise them about the systematic ways of incorporating knowledge innovation practices local communities and individuals in the design and implementation process of the projects.

2. The central thesis is that in highly ecologically heterogeneous regions such as the drought-prone areas of Adilabad or mountainous region of North-East, the technologies which can diffuse widely are unlikely to be developed or diffused. Therefore, it is necessary, as I argued to, (a) 'transferring science for development and diffusion of technologies (Gupta, 1988) and (b) build upon local best practices, blended with modern science and technology through on-farm trials and later if proven, demonstrations for improving livelihood and widening decision-making choices. In addition, one would have to benchmark technology used by women since many of these remain unchanged for a very long period of time. Studies have shown that women tend to be very creative in coping rather than in transcending the technological boundaries of constraints. In the absence of access to the tools, many of their technologies could not be improved by themselves. The male innovators somehow also ignored the problem of women. It is necessary to build upon their knowledge and pose some of these technologies as challenges to the innovators so as to get time bound solution to these problems.

3. Improving livelihood and generating jobs can be achieved more efficiently if the developmental paradigm builds upon resource in which poor people are rich i.e. their knowledge.



**CASE STUDY – THREE**  
**ANDHRA PRADESH PARTICIPATORY TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**  
**IFAD LOAN NO. 282-IN**

1. The IFAD project never envisaged a focus on incorporation of people's knowledge and innovations in the design of various strategies. The community participation was indeed emphasised very much. But then it was seen from the point of view of ascertaining their expectations, and aspirations about various livelihood needs. The issue of documenting and disseminating local knowledge, innovations, and practices, and adding value to the same for generating enterprises or improving livelihood options did not arise in the project discussions. So much so that a project review as late as January 2002, did not mention this issue at all. Thus neither IFAD expected this aspect of knowledge based approach to development incorporated into the project philosophy nor did project management team make any explicit effort to pursue this goal.

2. This doesn't mean however, that people's knowledge was not taken note of at all. Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute made a compilation of about 150 medicinal plants. The plants were identified along with their scientific names; uses and method of use were recorded. The names of the local knowledge experts, tribal healers and informants and the scouts through whom this knowledge base was generated are also being incorporated in the data base. Shri Vinod Agarwal, Tribal Commissioner and project in charge, narrated an interesting anecdote about how similar knowledge was produced by communities located far and wide. Long time ago, while visiting Gujarat, he observed that local people used a plant called as Ghav Ghaburi for wound healing. He discovered that scientists at National Institute of Nutrition had also found this plant to be used for healing cut wound. Later while visiting Srikalaum district in Andhra Pradesh, he chanced upon the same plant (ridex) growing in a farm. When he inquired about that from the local farmers, he was told that it was a kind of weed, good for nothing. But he persisted and inquired whether there was any use of this plant at all. And then to his surprise, he learned that this plant was used exactly for the same purpose as was done in Gujarat. Obviously, this might not have been a case of development of a technological knowledge in one place and its diffusion elsewhere. On the contrary, given the similar challenges, as Toynabee had postulated while reviewing the history of world civilisations, similar response might become natural for a society. This could happen at civilisational level and also at community level. This need not always happen though.

3. We have come across large number of examples in which at short distance, the knowledge base of plants and their uses may change. Some times within a village, different communities might express considerable variations in the ways in which the plants are used.

4. Mr Agrawal narrated several other examples of local knowledge which only showed that had the project designers and reviewers focused on this aspect of knowledge systems in time and adequately, a great deal more could have been learned about the creative ways used by people for coping with local stresses and evolving some time innovative solutions for the same. Long time ago, he was told that when there was a boil in the eye lid, the clay used by a local insect to make its cocoon like house (locally called ghar ghuli) could be used to cure it. The local knowledge plays part in survival not just in rural areas or among the poor people. It exists in every society and economises search for solutions to local problems, at least for some perceptive community members. For the disadvantaged people, it also becomes a man's of survival and thus documentation of these solutions for their dissemination after validation among other communities might improve the livelihood options right away at very low cost. Further, when a local solution is taken note of and recognition ensues through public appreciation, visit of others to this innovator's place, or through other means, the self-esteem of such knowledge providers and generators also goes up. Once the experimental ethic gets reinforced, new problems may be subjected to the same spirit of trial and error and local solutions may become more probable.

5. A question may arise as to why should disadvantaged local communities and individuals be expected to generate their own solutions when for the rest of the society, the private and public corporate and other research and development institutions were generating these solutions. The answer is simple. Organisational incentives for public and private R and D firms/institutions to generate solutions with limited potential for diffusion were very low. Who would be recognised by peers for solving a problem of a small community? In any case the transaction costs of even finding out these problems would be quite high. And what is the guarantee that once identified, the local problems would lend themselves to solution using standard methods in the labs without consultation with local people or understanding their local socio-ecological context. Private market forces would also not find these solutions paying enough. If the transaction costs of demand and as well supply side are high, the twain shall never meet.

## **B. Perception across personal and professional space**

6. In project management literature there is very little discussion about how perceptions of professionals are shaped by or shape personal perceptions and attitudes, and vice versa. Detailed discussion on this issue might be out of place. It will help to reflect on it a bit in the context of IFAD's intention to generate space within existing project protocols for voices, wisdom and innovation of local communities and individuals. When Project director narrated the example of tridex and its similar uses across vast space and time boundaries, the potential became apparent of what could have happened if such observations were expected from every project staff. Issue arises whether a professional who is alienated from people in general will be able to carve out very intimate spaces within his own family. Or if some one was not very attentive to suggestions or feedback from subordinates, would s/he be very participative in personal space and vice versa. The reason I mention this is to explore the possibility of exploiting energy that might be generated by helping project people in future reflect on harmony or dissonance between their values in personal or professional space. To illustrate, I mention here some examples which Project Director, Mr Agrawal narrated from his experiences in his personal space.

7. Recently, while constructing his house, Mr Agrawal observed that the Mason had cast a slab at only six feet height in a store. That would have hit the head and would have been a nuisance. How would one deal with this problem? Under normal circumstance, the slab would have to be dismantled and reconstructed. But in this case after discussing the matter with mason, a creative solution emerged that a jack be used to lift this one and a half tonne slab further up by a foot or two. Surely, this creative response might remain as a local practice without being incorporated in the local construction repertoire.

8. Those who have presented a rose to their loved ones might have noticed that the stick or stem of the rose is devoid of leaves and also thorns to make it easier to hold and also package in bouquets. One of the friends of Mr Vinod Agrawal, viz., Mr D P Agrawal has been in this business for last five or six years. He used a device costing about RS 600 and lasting only about a week or two to de-spike and de-leave the cut roses. The mechanism is to use two soft rubber bushes through which the cut rose stem is pulled in a way that the stem is not damaged, nor are any impressions left while removing leaves and spikes. He went to a cobbler one day and asked him to make spiked cuts as shown in adjoining figures from old tyres, have a hole in the centre put these gears like cuts across a rod. Now the indigenous bushes were ready at a very low cost and much longer life (more than few months) and efficiency got increased. Imagine how much saving could be made by a large number of nurseries involved in this business. If payment was to be made to workers on the basis of number of cut roses processed per hour, may be the wages might also go up.

## **C. Review of the project**

9. The project aimed (a) to raise income, ensure food security and improve the quality of life of the tribals within the context of the traditional tribal environment; (b) promote greater self-reliance among communities on sustainable basis, and to prevent degradation of the environment. The tribals

have suffered a great deal in the past. However, in the earlier phase of IFAD support, several innovative steps had been taken in terms of documenting peoples' knowledge and adding value to the same. It was expected that in the second project these lessons would be drawn upon. The project was to be implemented over a seven-year period beginning from May 1994. The mid-term review (1999) noted that multiplicity of project committees and implementation methodology at village level has continued to make the project suffer. The absorptive capacity of the regions was ignored. Sequencing of interventions was improper and conflicting goals of bodies like Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC) in terms of making profit and pursuing social welfare remained unresolved. During the discussion with the Chief Minister, the mid-term review team was assured of the remedial action. Accordingly, the project director of the ITDA is supposed to be the implementation official for the project activities at the district level.

10. The project is expected to complete in 2003 and close in 2004. There was no special mention in the mid-term review about the attention paid to the local institutions, knowledge or technologies. The supervision report (January 15-27, 2002) for IFAD loan No.349- IN noted the coverage of the project over 1016 villages in seven districts through five Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) to assist 76810 households. One of the most significant step toward gender mainstreaming has been an order issued by the state government in March 1999 implying that secretary of the village tribal development agency would be elected by the self-help group comprising women. Till December, 2001, the project had incurred an expenditure of Rs.246.11 million. Utilisation of village development fund has been hardly 15 per cent. The supervision report made many suggestions but none dealing with peoples' knowledge systems or their institutions.

11. The discussions with the tribal commissioner and other officials made it obvious that their efforts to document peoples' knowledge with regard to medicinal plants and minor forest products, while are appreciable, these have not made much impact so far. In the last 36 years in the tribal commissioner office, there have been 26 incumbents, implying a very short tenure of less than one and half year for each tribal commissioner. I met Mr. Agarwal, Tribal Commissioner, Dr. Prashant Mahapatra, Mr. Prasad, Joint Director and Mr. Bhadraru, Joint Director among others at the headquarters. I also had discussion with Mr. Vijaykumar who had earlier done excellent work in adding value to minor forest products. A field visit was made to some of the villages of Adilabad district.

#### **D. Field visit**

12. Adilabad is a drought-prone region with hardly 40 to 50 rainy days that too unevenly distributed. The forest is dried deciduous having teak and bamboo as main species. During the visit to village Pavarguda, the extent to which empowerment of the tribal has taken place was very evident. Mr. Navin Mittal, Project Director at Adilabad shared several valuable insights but acknowledged that specific interventions on peoples' knowledge per se were not expected in the project. However, the focus on participation in local institutions was supposed to solve this problem. In an interesting example of Behramguda, project director explained how people started protecting 50 hectares of reserved forest. The community took a decision to protect the forest. Gondwana Sangarsh Samiti also contributed its might towards making institutions accountable. In one particular case the people from non-tribal villages, situated on the upper stream of a canal, tried to cut the trees in the protected area in the downstream. The conflict became intense. Former tribal commissioner, Mr. B.D. Sharma came to the village and advised them to catch hold of the poachers. People were afraid because they were not sure whether police would help if they caught hold of a poacher. In the conflict that followed the tribal Bheem lost his life. The camel bones were used to beat the poachers. This bone was kept in the place where meetings were held. Such conflicts demonstrate how empowerment can proceed. Fifty per cent of the income from the sale of the wood from the protected forest was shared with the people and 100 per cent of the usufruct. Even after the project concluded the people continued their effort to conserve and augment the forest.

13. Out of 1000 Village Tribal Development Agencies, six were chaired by women and 35 per cent villages had women Sarpanch by rotation. Most of the women leaders had come up after gaining experience in self-help groups.

14. While searching for the examples of indigenous knowledge/ innovations, a reference was made to a person who had developed a cycle based pump costing about Rs 6000. When I visited the village Jaitram Tanda, the hamlet of Narsapur. We met Rathore Vikram, belonging to Banjara community. He had developed a cycle based water pump and he managed his livelihood by repairing cycle and other small machinery. Some years ago he had grown paddy in one acre which started wilting because of lack of rain.

15. He had a fan used in the flour mill. He made adjustments in his cycle to run the fan and essentially pump the water from a stream to irrigate the paddy. He made a cheap pump which attracted lot of attention from people. Some years ago, a few people came from Hyderabad promising him lot of reward, kept him in a house for six seven days and did not even feed him properly. He somehow escaped and came back to his village. In the meanwhile, somebody told him to file a patent of his pump before doing anything further. He went to the collector Mr. Sukumar who wrote to the higher authorities in Hyderabad to help him with patents. Nothing of course happened. The innovations that he has made somehow remain localised and did not diffuse despite tremendous interest among the people because he was not sure whether he would get credit unless he got the patenting done. He is a man of great imagination, and determination.

16. He had no child from his first wife, married again and has five children. When asked how he made cycle pump, he recalled that he had seen some old gears lying in the compound of an oil mill. He requested the owner to give him these gears and bought some other parts from a waste shop. He bought 1 HP motor and then started working on his pump. The village had a flour-mill but no electricity for the last one month. People had been grinding the flour through hand mills. Vikram said that he could make a cycle operated flour-mill. Since childhood, he has been repairing punctures and dreaming about different products. This example shows that even in the tribal region one could find creative people whose innovations can become the basis for improving livelihood and generating jobs. In another village, I observed a very primitive technology being used to extract oil from the oil seeds.

## **E. Summing up**

17. During the earlier project supported by IFAD, value addition in Gum karaya had generated tremendous opportunities for the local tribal people and improved their income. In the second phase of the project considerable empowerment has been achieved through the self-help groups and village level committees. But much more could be done if local creativity, innovative potential and traditional knowledge were harnessed systematically. Out of the overall project outlay of 1587.58 million rupees, 1209.67 million had been disbursed. Among various activities, half the budget had been utilised for small scale irrigation followed by soil and water conservation, horticultural development, community participation, crop improvement, etc. The financial and developmental targets have been met reasonably well leaving tremendous scope for improvement through systematic incorporation of local knowledge innovation practices in the project. Several follow-up steps can be taken up: (a) the data on the bio-diversity and medicinal plants and their uses should be re-compiled giving the name and addresses of the key custodian of traditional knowledge. This will ensure that if any benefits accrued by value addition in this knowledge than these could be shared with the local communities and individual knowledge experts. (b) a survey of local best practices be taken up in different villages to find out the innovations and traditional technologies, (c) research contracts should be developed with the formal institutes of research on behalf of the local communities to add value to local resources and knowledge. In one of the villages a power generation plant had been set up through the help of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. This pump used oil of the non-edible oil seeds as the fuel. This oil seed had traditionally been used for lighting. The research contracts in the case of Gum karaya had improved the method of collection, yield of gum and ease and quality of

harvesting. Similar research contracts can be taken up for a large number of other non-timber forest products, (d) local language literature should be prepared narrating these stories of tribals like Vikram Rathore so that this will inspire other people to innovate and develop even better innovations, (e) in Adilabad, several interesting variations were noticed in the inter-cropping and mix cropping patterns. Observation trials should be taken up to find out which of these patterns are more efficient than others in the given soil type and agro-climatic conditions. Technologies so produced by the people themselves can thus be replicated first on the trial basis and then on demonstration basis if found efficient and useful and, (e) the project management system should involve monitoring innovations and traditional knowledge which can improve productivity and generate livelihood choices with or without value addition. The fact that Vikram Rathore's example could be generated from within the team when we insisted, proves that such knowledge might indeed exist among the people.



**CASE STUDY – FOUR (INDIA)**  
**NORTHEASTERN REGION COMMUNITY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
**FOR UPLAND AREAS**  
**IFAD LOAN NO. 444-IN**

1. Government of India secured a loan equivalent of SDR 22.90 million from International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) to assist in the implementation of the NER Community Resource Management Project for upland areas with effect from May 20, 1997. The Government of India has also agreed to provide the counterpart funds through the north-eastern council under the budget of Ministry of Home Affairs. The State Governments of Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya have agreed to carry out their part of the project. The basic approach of the project is to assist shifting cultivators to 'gradually adopt more sustainable upland farming systems with priority given to those villages where the shortening of the fellow cycle has threatened a breakdown of the complex jhum system' (Appendix VII TOR for Design of Monitoring and Evaluation System and Concurrent Evaluation).
2. A North-eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS) has been set up in Shillong to establish and carry out the management programme support unit for the execution of the NER community resource management for upland areas. The objective of the society aim at developing a participatory approach, enhancing the capability of the people to manage the new technology and institution at the village level, increase productivity in farm and non-farm sector, conserve biodiversity through involvement of women and other stakeholders. The indigenous knowledge of local communities has not been specifically focussed or emphasised in project objectives but during the implementation it has received some attention.
3. The MOU developed by the society to work the NGOs aims at utilising the services of NGOs in drawing up community resources management plan in institution building so that local resources can be used by utilising village development fund through village development committees. In the training programme proposed for the purpose while participatory processes have been given lot of importance, the local knowledge and traditional institutions have not received adequate attention. Among the indicators identified (Appendix VI), there is no reference to the extent to which local innovative practices have been identified or analysis of traditional practices has been done. The only reference to local institution is to the number of the sacred groves protected. Several indicators could be identified which could emphasise how local innovations and knowledge systems could be built upon for bringing about more enduring changes at the grassroots level. The terms of reference for recruiting International Research Advisor, Non-Timber Forestry and Forest Product Specialist and Community Biodiversity Conservation and Management Specialist, also did not emphasise the importance of local knowledge and innovations. Various NGOs identified in different regions had strong graphic orientation (Annex II, Appendix II), but had not developed capacity to document, disseminate, add value and generate enterprises based on local innovations and knowledge systems. It is natural therefore, to find a very weak emphasis on the knowledge system of people in the entire frame of reference. This is not an implementation problem. Instead, the very design of the project did not stress learning from people explicitly. The fact that some learning still to take place goes to the credit of the team leader and team members who have looked for creative examples of natural resource management.
4. The community based biodiversity conservation (Annex IX) was one programme, which explicitly focused on protecting 'sacred groves', traditional climax vegetation areas. It was realised that religious beliefs alone might not be sufficient to achieve the conservation goals. It is for this reason that the project aimed at achieving the long-term goal of protecting biodiversity and rehabilitating threatened wild habitats by supporting the livelihood need of the concerned communities and boosting the economic growth of the region. It was hoped that both in-situ and ex-situ biodiversity conservation would be achieved through local participation in various social and technical programmes. The survey of medicinal plants and cane was proposed to develop value added

products. The conservation of sacred groves and management of buffer zone were supposed to help fulfil the goal of biodiversity conservation component of the project. The role of tribal women was recognised and their indigenous knowledge for food, medicine, and other rituals was supposed to be built upon.

5. The status report prepared at the time of mid-term review for 2001 to 2002 recorded various activities that have been done so far. The on-farm demonstrations in home gardens, wet terraces, and permanent plantations/orchards have been organised. Similarly, simple technological interventions for soil fertility enhancement and water management have also been taken up. The involvement of the whole village community for management of jhum and fallow was yet to be started since it required lot of preparatory work. The community-driven extension system was being developed with the involvement of central and state government research scientists and professionals. One of the agri-business interventions has been to get some of the products cultivated in jhum fields certified as organic in collaboration with APEDA and Spices Board of India.

6. In all, 332 villages have been selected with 418 natural resource management groups and 1045 self-help group already organised. So far as the biodiversity conservation is concerned, 440 medicinal gardens and 130 community forestry projects have been taken up. One of the interesting pay-offs of the technology transfer programme has been the modification of the household decision to grow cannabis in the jhum fields. The cultivation of this crop created lot of tension because of the fear of conviction by the law enforcement agencies. The introduction of the off-season vegetable cultivation has provided an alternative crop without any associated social tensions. The communication materials have been developed apart from organising workshops to highlight the importance of diversified sustainable land-use.

7. So far as capacity building efforts are concerned, the natural resource management groups have been encouraged to develop rules to regulate grazing in the open access private and community fields and thereby reduce the disincentives for off-season vegetable growing. The long-term issues about the sustainability of natural resource management groups are yet to be resolved. In some of the villages, communities have also innovated a local veterinary fund, which extend loan to veterinary volunteer to buy and stock the necessary medicines for local use. Likewise, local livestock insurance fund has been created. The internal risk assurance fund provides compensation to those whose livestock may die because of some disease. The non-farm enterprises have also been organised in large number of villages and the expenditure in non-farm sector has been 40 per cent higher than on forestry and biodiversity. This signifies one of the strategies to reduce pressure on wild biodiversity for meeting livelihood needs. Medicinal gardens are slowly playing an important role in local preventive health care and also conserving knowledge of local biodiversity.

8. One of the important aspects of the project in connection with peoples' knowledge systems is the recognition of rich traditional institutions for managing biodiversity. Sacred groves, 'contribute in a very significant manner towards the conservation of climax vegetation through socio-cultural and religious sanctions. Studies have shown that out of 70 documented sacred groves in Meghalaya, only seven were found to have optimum crown cover of about 100 per cent (Tewari et. al. 1995, annex 9 p2). It was also recognised that religious beliefs alone might not be able to help in conserving sacred groves in future. There is a very rich biodiversity in the region, so much so that out of 130 species of bamboo in India, 60 species are found in the north-eastern region. During the implementation of the project, a special attention is being paid to many of the traditional common property institutions such as *law lyngdoh*, *law niam*, *law kyntng*, etc. (religious forest) and *law adong*, *law shnong* (village use forests). The traditional institutions such as *nokmas*, *syams*, *gaon budha/mauzdar*.

9. About 44 per cent of the sacred groves (24 are highly disturbed or open access in nature) only seven per cent are undisturbed or highly dense. The rest of the 56 sacred groves in Meghalay are in between. Another study (Tewari, et. al. 1996) has brought out that more than 46 rare and endangered species are found in sacred groves. Since most of these are endemic, one has to develop long-term

conservation plans. There is a need to develop monetary and non-monetary incentives to conserve these institutions and augment their capacity to manage resources in and around these sacred groves.

#### **A. Mid-term review**

10. The NER is known to be one of the most biologically diverse areas of the world. The diversity of the forest types and within them of the plant and animal species is extremely high. More than 51 different types of forest have been recorded in NER including tropical rain forest, deciduous forest, snow clad alpine and some alpine forest, etc. Thirty-five plant genera are endemic to NER. Out of 500 different species of mammals known in India, at least one-sixty are reported from NER. The strategic interventions, mid-term review notes includes areas such as agricultural transformation and intensification, effective forest management through consolidated non-forest land use, capacity building for adaptive research and initiating research for potential new products based on traditional practices and indigenous technology systems. A special effort has been made to document the traditional practices for using non-timber forest products. Other efforts to build upon peoples' knowledge and institutions noted in the mid-term review are: (a) the natural resource management group has decided in some village to regulate grazing by animals so that cultivation of off-season vegetables can be taken up, (b) medicinal plant gardens have been set up in many villages (c) the role of traditional village head is being recognised so that water sources, duration of jhum cycle, allocation of land for cultivation, etc. can take place through the sanction of village headmen. The plan at the moment is only for one year and thus long-term action has not been envisaged. The participation of women has been found to be inadequate in many villages. The rules and regulations in different villages for managing natural resources have not been properly documented. About 5079 kitchen gardens have been set up with the help of the project to contribute towards improvement of the health of the children and elders. The social sanctions by the community for protecting catchment areas have been facilitated by the project in many areas. 440 medicinal gardens have been set up so that herbal medicines are available nearby the place of residence. The knowledge about medicinal plants and their uses is being exchanged among different communities. It is reported to have helped in slowing down if not total stoppage of the erosion of biodiversity related knowledge. The Thangkul village council, for the first time in the history of that society, has allowed women to participate in the discussion relating to village development. This has empowered women.

11. There is a special focus on community institution building in the project. However, the background document (Annex 2) has stated that no traditional institutions met the criteria of open membership, equal participation of women and youth in decision-making, and willingness to incorporate the feedback from various members of the community without any indiscrimination. While it is true that traditional institutions may not put the same emphasis on justice and gender equality, it may still be relevant to build upon them and 'graft' new institutions on the old ones rather than 'grafting' new institutions, disregarding the strength of the traditional institutions.

12. During the interaction with the project staff, it was apparent that initial focus in the grounding of the project has been on building capacity, introducing new technologies and improving productivity. The processes relating to local knowledge documentation and valorisation were still picking up. The interaction with the young professionals showed that many of them had been sensitive to learn from the people. For instance, Dhruvajit Sharma mentioned about use of citrus peel as pest repellent, and fruit as pest trap. He gave example of how in Barpeta, a farmer's duck died. He observed that all the insects came to attack the duck. He got an idea of using dead frogs or dead ducks as a mean to control pests by trapping them. He shared the knowledge with others. Similarly, seedling of *e.odoratum* was used in paddy nursery to repel the pest. Extract of *solanum negrum* was also used for the purpose. Similarly, fecal material of eri silk worm is used as insect repellent in western khasi region in paddy fields. Digant mentioned that they were working on a MoU to be signed by every staff stating that peoples' knowledge will not be used without their permission. Mr. Choudhary, a senior professional in the project, stressed that documentation of traditional knowledge has been emphasised in some of the project areas more than others. Alder leaves helped in retaining

dew and thus conserving moisture in the winter when lot of tree leaves were shed. The knowledge of vegetable dyes was also reported to be very rich in these communities.

### **Summing Up**

13. The north-east region upland project has focussed on local traditional institutions, local knowledge documentation and participation of local communities in resource conservation, as a means of building upon peoples' knowledge. However, as is natural, the project authorities spent far more time in delivering results through the use of so-called modern science and technology and other institutional support for initiative like micro-finance. There are several actions that the project could take up in future: (a) Wherever people have deviated from the recommended package and have tried to do something on their own, should be given a special attention. Generally in the projects, the conformity and compliance with the project norms is considered an indicator of project success. In my opinion, the exceptions should be recorded, studied, and used as basis for identifying the potential for change among the odd balls; (b) the local knowledge documentation should be followed up by on-farm research and experimentation. There weren't many examples available in which peoples' knowledge had become the basis for on-farm or on-station trials, (c) the role of traditional institutions is well appreciated in the project documents. However, analytical framework needs to be developed to facilitate further strengthening of these institutions and better analysis of their working, (d) the unique knowledge such as the extraction of black dye from black ginger and its use in currency industry shows how strategic the peoples' knowledge can be in certain cases.

14. National Innovation Foundation is building a national register of inventions, innovations, and outstanding traditional knowledge. It has honoured this year a scientist from Meghalay who added value to a traditional knowledge. More such contributions could be recognised, respected and rewarded, if the project would scout and contribute the leads to NIF for further action. Within the project, a cell needs to be created with the purpose of identifying peoples' knowledge and creativity efficiently and linking it up with formal science and technology, on-farm and on-station testing and building a whole value chain around global knowledge.

15. The project has a good potential of developing many more interventions inspired or triggered by local knowledge. However, much will depend upon the extent to which the formal project reviews demonstrate the validity or otherwise of local knowledge. The mid-term reviews and other kind of appraisals should emphasise the role of peoples' own learning in building upon various initiatives reported in the region.

**CASE STUDY - FIVE  
THE HILLS LEASEHOLD FORESTRY  
AND FORAGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
IFAD LOAN NO. 250-NE**

**A. The Project**

1. The Loan Agreement for the HLFFDP was signed in January 1991 and the project became effective during the 1992/3 fiscal year. The project has been funded through an IFAD loan of USD 12.8 million, an FAO Trust Fund (Government of Netherlands) grant of USD 3.3 million for the purposes of technical assistance, and an HMG/ADB contribution of USD 2.7 million. During the three-year exploratory phase, the project was implemented in four districts, Kavre, Makwanpur, Sindhupalchok, and Ramechhap. Following the Mid-Term Review Mission of September 1995, the operation of the project was progressively extended to cover a further six districts: Dhading and Dolakha (1995/6), Sindhuli, Chitwan and Tanahu (1996/7) and Gorkha (1997/8). The project completion date has twice been extended, most recently to December 2003.

2. The objectives of the HLFFDP are to improve the living conditions and raise the incomes of families below the poverty line, as well as to improve the ecological conditions in the project area, by leasing blocks of degraded and barren forest land to small groups of farmers for rehabilitation. The responsibility for project implementation has been shared by the Department of Forests, the Department of Livestock Services, the Nepal Agricultural Research Council and the Agricultural Development Bank. By the end of the fiscal year 2000/2001, 1,655 leasehold groups had been formed and a little over 7,000 hectares of degraded forest land had been allocated to a total of 11,253 families.

3. The overall verdict of the MTR Mission and successive Supervision Missions has been that the system of leasehold forestry in the mid-hills region has been successful both in the regreening of denuded areas and in improving the economic prospects of the households involved, primarily by increasing the supply of fodder and thus enabling increases in numbers of domestic livestock. This success has been formally recognised in HMG's decision to continue the programme in the ten project districts and to extend it to a further sixteen districts in the mid-hills zone.

**B. Document Review**

4. The following documents were studied: the Loan Document (1989), the Appraisal Report (1992), the Mid-Term Review (1995), the Nepal Country Portfolio Evaluation (1999), the Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (2000), the NARC Termination Report (2001), the Project Completion Report prepared by the Department of Forests (2001), the Report on Leasehold Forestry compiled by the former project STA (2002), as well as numerous other related papers and essays.

**Community Acceptance**

5. The project, according to the Loan Document, should follow the options that best suit the targeted households. 'Their acceptance and whole-hearted participation in the project would be the first and necessary step to start anything in any direction' (Loan Document, p.2). Elsewhere, provision is made for a participatory element in regular evaluation workshops, 'especially with regard to concerns such as community acceptance of the transfer of land to the weakest sections' (p.21). The Appraisal Report, similarly, declared: 'Obtaining community consensus is considered essential since it is the only way of affording any protection to the poor families who take up the leasing of the blocks of degraded land from potential encroachment by other members of the community' (pp. 13/14). This concern was subsequently repeated in numerous documents, for example in the CPE which stressed 'the need to ensure acceptance of the community at large' (p. 56). As the Loan

Document pointed out: 'the extent to which communities will agree to the leasing of areas of degraded forest to the poorest sections of the community is largely unknown' (p.24).

6. The CPE reminds us that the HLFFDP 'was introduced as an innovative and high-risk project' (CPE p. 53). This was echoed in the Supervision Report of December 2001, which stated: 'It needs to be noted that the new leasehold forestry concept challenges the status quo in rural communities by attempting a redistribution of common assets' (SR, 2001, p.3). The targeting criteria were fairly strict (although unevenly applied): to qualify for the grant of a leasehold plot (or to join a group which so qualified), a household should possess less than 0.5 ha. of land and an annual income below the official (1989) poverty line of USD 110 p.a. 'Conflict is to be expected,' the 2001 Supervision Report report declares, 'when community assets are privatised and especially when the process empowers the poor' (p.15). Although an internal project survey showed that only 8% of groups were 'seriously affected' by conflict, the Supervision Mission felt on the basis of field visits and discussions with field staff, that the extent of conflict was much larger. The SR detailed one case, with respect to six groups of Baldara Bagar in Makwanpur district, where 'about 300 – 400 people from ward no. 6 descended upon the LHF plots of Beldara Bagar and, as if in a planned move, uprooted the fencing, plantations and other valuable vegetation' (ibid). The belief of the Mission was that the destruction was provoked and encouraged by local politicians, but of course such politically motivated protests depend on the existence of local disaffection.

## **Gender**

7. The Loan Document proposes that women would 'automatically' be given a central role in project activities, since these activities focus on areas in which women traditionally play the dominant part. It adds, however, that 'the formation of exclusively women's groups, or leasing the land exclusively to them, would not be emphasised. Instead, the focus would be on integrating women into the mainstream of activities in a joint husband-wife partnership' (p.17). This focus implies a gradualist approach to the issue of gender relations and shows sensitivity to the prevailing local customs. As the CPE points out: 'cultural values do not favour participation of females over males. It is not surprising if the participation of women remains less substantive in nature' (p 57).

## **Farmer Preferences**

8. The Loan Document states clearly that 'the choice as to species and techniques [of regeneration] would lie with the farmers themselves' but somewhat dilutes this statement by adding 'within the management plans prepared, in advance, with technical advice from project staff' (p.11) The Appraisal Report several times refers to the importance of consulting and respecting farmers' preferences regarding the choice of forage crops, fodder trees and fruit trees, and also the use of local materials and practices in terms of off-farm income generation. Annex III of the MTR has a section on 'cultural suitability' in which it compares the 'familiar visual impression' of such forage crops as *stylosanthes* spp.(stylo) and *melinis minutiflora* (molasses grass) with line plantings of *trifolium repens*, *lolium perenne* and *dactylis glomerata*. It points out that farmers recognised the potential of stylo grass and molasses grass 'from the viewpoint of their experience and within the framework of their traditional farming systems' and that imported forage crops 'may not be culturally appropriate over the short term'. Despite the awareness of the issue demonstrated in project documents, however, the CPE claims that 'the limited relevance and suitability of available exotic or improved fodder trees and grasses had not been fully explored or understood' (p.64). No evidence was adduced to support this criticism.

9. The documents also pay some attention to the issue of the natural regeneration of degraded forest. Natural regeneration, obviously, takes place in the absence of any intervention, whether local or 'external', but in some sense the process can be regarded as 'indigenous', at least insofar as it contrasts with the importation of exotic species. The MTR calls for more research into 'natural regeneration versus plantation of tree species on leasehold land' (Appendix 1, p. 43) and the 2001 Supervision Report claims that the importance of natural regeneration has not been recognised in the operational plans of leasehold groups (p.8). Compared to artificial regeneration, the report suggests,

'natural regeneration of an area is preferable because the regenerated plants are sturdier, the biotic diversity of the area gets addressed automatically and the intervention costs are substantially lower.' (p.81) The justification for repeating this here is simply that natural regeneration is a process initially requiring a single measure: the closing of an area to grazing animals. At a later date, the naturally regenerated vegetation will require thinning, with the removal of unwanted species. All of this can take place virtually without technical inputs, relying on the customary knowledge and practices of the villagers concerned.

### **Stall Feeding**

10. There are differences of opinion as to how far stall-feeding of livestock is an imported practice. The Loan Document declares that improved breeds were customarily stall-fed before project intervention (p.9) but that poorer quality animals were 'left to browse and starve'. Most other documents treat stall-feeding as a new (but essential) innovation which would entail considerable reduction in women's, and especially children's, labour, as well as improved collection of farmyard manure. (See also below).

### **Cooking Stoves**

11. The Loan Document makes provision for the free distribution of improved stoves using up to 30% less fuel than traditional Nepalese stoves, but stipulates that these new stoves would be made by local potters.

### **C. Field Interviews**

12. Individuals and groups interviewed by the Mission included: Group leaders and group members of LHF groups in Bahgawatisthan (Kavre district), in Buldi (Tanahu district) and in Padam Pokhari (Makwanpur district); DFOs, DLOs, forest rangers and livestock development field officers in these three districts; the Acting Project Director and Acting Secretary of the Foreign Aid Division of the Ministry of Forests, Dr. Damoder Parajuli; the FAO Representative, Mr. Winston Rudder; the Chief of the NARC Pasture and Fodder Division, Mr. Dinesh Pariyar; Ms. Atsuko Toda, Assistant Coordinator for the joint ICIMOD/IFAD programme; Mr. Tej Mahat, Dean of the Forestry Research Institute at Tribhuvan University; Mr. Bijay Kumar Singh, former STA of the HLFFDP; Mr. Arup Rajauri, Member Secretary of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC); and Mr. Narayan Dhakal of the KMTNC Biodiversity Conservation Centre at Chitwan National Park.

13. The Mission was also fortunate enough to be granted a private audience with His Majesty King Gyanendra, at which matters pertaining to genetic diversity and the exploitation of medicinal herbs were discussed, as well as more general conservation issues.

14. The extent of the Mission's field trips – more accurately, the degree to which it was possible to penetrate remote areas – was somewhat restricted by the movements of Maoist insurgents. However, the Mission facilitator, Mr. Prayag Tewari, insisted that the field trips should proceed as planned and in each case accepted the counsel of the villagers themselves as to which routes could safely be attempted. Although this meant walking through areas where Maoist activities were indeed in evidence, and at a time when these activities abruptly intensified, the field trips passed off without incident, which Mr. Tewari put down to the skill and discretion of the villagers, to their 'local knowledge' in effect – an observation not without its political implications.

### **Management Culture**

15. The emergence of Community Forestry programmes in Nepal during the mid-1970s was the outcome of the widely recognised failure of the nationalisation of the forests in 1956. The nationalisation had in fact resulted in widespread depredation of the forests by communities who felt that they no longer had a stake in forests which they had previously owned and managed. Indigenous

systems of community forestry had existed in most areas. They differed in details – and also over time – but were characterised by the regulation of felling, grazing and collection rights and the institution of some form of locally-organised protection service. Thus the introduction of community forestry during the 1970s and 1980s was effectively rooted in indigenous systems and could certainly not have been put in place without them.

16. What was more surprising in this policy reversal was the part played by individual foresters, who themselves were disenchanted with their role as law-enforcers and recognised that the regeneration of the forests could only take place with genuine community involvement. The fact that this initiative emerged from within a department whose main task was perceived as being the protection of national forests against the communities is very significant, indicating an awareness in an unlikely area of working with the communities and trusting them. The Mission's interviews with foresters from all levels of the Department of Forests confirmed the view that there exists a considerable awareness of the importance of indigenous knowledge and longstanding systems of forest protection. This was summed up in a remark of the Acting Project Director, and Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation, who said simply: 'They [the villagers] know better than us.' A former DFO in two districts and one of the founders of the community forestry concept – now Dean of the the Institute of Forestry at Tribhuvan University – explained how the introduction of community forestry in Nepal resulted from the acknowledgement that the privatisation of the forests had been mistaken, just because the villagers during that period no longer felt that they were responsible for the protection and conservation of what had been 'their' forests.

17. Underlying the Forestry Master Plan prepared by HMG in 1988 was the notion that the main strategy had to be the promotion of people's participation in forestry resource development, management and conservation. In the words of the Loan Document: 'It is increasingly realised that the introduction of community and user-group responsibility is essential to prevent the continued destruction of the forests' (Appendix II, p.3).

### **Stall-feeding**

18. A complete ban on grazing in LHF zones (along with the cultivation of forage grasses and fodder trees) is the key measure in the re-greening of degraded areas in the Leasehold Forestry plots. Thus stall-feeding of animals is an essential part of the system. This method of feeding has the primary effect of allowing barren or overgrazed areas to regenerate, but it is also widely held to be labour-saving – particularly it is said to release schoolchildren from the work of herding the animals. Some villagers complained to the Mission that a woman's work has increased with the need to carry fodder from the forestry plot, and Dr. Harka Gurung, former government minister and well-known geographer, also gave it as his opinion that stall-feeding is in fact more labour intensive. The same view was held by the CPE which alluded to the 'additional demands on women's labour' resulting from the adoption of stall-feeding (p.59). These conclusions run counter to the prevailing assumption among the project staff, foresters and livestock officers interviewed by the Mission, who generally held that stall-feeding saved time and labour.

19. The fact is that the need to regenerate the forests is the most urgent requirement and that stall-feeding is therefore essential at least for a number of years. Groups working with leasehold forest appear to have been able to increase their livestock holding at the same time as encouraging the re-greening of the forest, and this really is the first achievement of the project. In all areas visited by the mission, the numbers of domestic animals had undergone a substantial increase. However, it is not true to describe stall-feeding as either based on or grafted on to indigenous systems, most of which were based on daily grazing in most seasons of the year. Nor is it necessarily true that household labour is saved. It would probably be more accurate to say that the task of feeding the animals is partly shifted from children to women.

## **Indigenous Farming Practices**

20. All foresters interviewed by the Mission freely acknowledged the importance of local farming systems and practices, most of them emphasising in this context the methods of propagation, the timing and nature of pruning and the suitability of trees and grasses for particular soils and micro-climates. Livestock Development Officers in both Kavre and Makwanpur districts admitted that local farmers knew better than they did about the timing of pruning for specific trees in specific localities. Local farmers interviewed in Kahvre district confirmed that some of the pruning models provided to them was inappropriate to local conditions, with which criticism the Livestock Officers accompanying the Mission readily agreed.

21. The cultivation of locally known and appropriate grass species was encouraged by the project, for example Babio grass (*eulaliopsis binata*), Banso grass (*eragrostis tenelia*) and thatching grass. The project also supported the propagation of the Badahar tree (*artocarpus lackoocha*) for fodder. Farmers have long been aware of the value of this tree in increasing the quantity and fat content of milk. It might also be pointed out that the properties of stylo grass as fodder are similar to that of the Badahar tree, and that stylo grass – which was the major exotic input of project interventions – was therefore readily adopted by farmers as a suitable fodder for their milking animals.

22. A Livestock Development Officer in Makwanpur district provided an interesting example of the importance of indigenous knowledge regarding the division of replanting of the rootstock of broom grass. During the re-planting, careful attention needs to be given to the orientation of the leaves. If not, the plant will die. The officer concerned claimed that he had learned the technique from one farmer and had then afterwards been able to teach others in different villages. In another case, the success in the Mustang region of two local varieties of fodder grass – Kote (*medicago felcata*) and Dhimchi (*peseum flaccidum*) – was identified by the Livestock Department, which was then able to introduce these local varieties into other areas.

23. The promotion by the project of rotational cultivation for the protection of soils merely continued what was already a common local practice. Equally, the making of hay from forage grasses was well-established in all localities. The innovation of the project was to instruct farmers to make hay at the earlier (pre-flowering) stage of grass cultivation.

## **Income-Generating Activities**

24. Income generating activities promoted by the project were largely based on indigenous systems. Examples include the cultivation of broom grass (*thysanolaena maxima*) for the purposes of broom-making, forage and soil conservation; the cultivation of the lapsi or candi tree for pickles; the cultivation of the alder (*alnus nepalensis*) for timber and fuelwood; the harvesting of bamboo species such as the thin bamboo (*arundonaria*) for many different purposes; the collection of NTFPs such as medicinal and aromatic plants; and bee-keeping. Regarding the last item, the importance in beekeeping of the Chiuri or butter tree (*bassia butyracea*) is well-known to the Chepang group in Chitwan, Makwanpur and Dhading districts and was adopted by the project for wider dissemination.

25. Goats are the most common domestic animals in most regions, and the khari goat is the most popular breed. This is a local breed (khari means local) and also the breed usually disseminated by the Livestock department. The raising and keeping of goats by women as their own customary right (pewa) is widely known in rural areas, and thus the promotion of goat-keeping in leasehold forestry – and the emphasis on women in this respect – matches the existing practice.

## **Groups, Training and Cooperatives**

26. With a focus exclusively on the poorer households and an emphasis on the participation of women, the Leasehold Groups are a totally new phenomenon, with no precedent in traditional society. A central issue is therefore one of sustainability. The key initiative in terms of group formation,

according to the former project STA, was the recruitment of 100 group promoters / social mobilisers by the project TA. How the government will finance or organise a similar initiative for its leasehold programme in the 16 new districts is not clear. The principal line departments – Forestry and Livestock Development – do not have the personnel or the resources for the intensive supervision and training needed in the early stages.

27. The survival of dynamic LHF groups cannot be assumed in the absence of ongoing training. Partly this is a question of the transmission of skills, but if we are to believe that much of the LHF activity is anyway founded on existing local practice, it is even more a question of maintaining links between the groups and the officials which serve to instil the necessary confidence. The key technical intervention has been the provision to LHF groups of the seeds of the stylo grass, and instructions for care and harvesting. But in the current situation of political uncertainty and security problems, even the basic training packages are not being delivered. Members of the Bagey Chaur leasehold group in Makwanpur urgently pressed the Mission to request the resumption of training programmes.

28. The leader of the Padam Pokhari LHF group, Ms. Phul Maya, requested the extension of training to include other opportunities for income diversification. She and the other members of the group were very pleased with the additional income provided by the sale of stylo seed, but she was concerned that the diffusion of this agricultural activity would ultimately lead to a fall in price for the stylo seed, and it was therefore important that alternative sources of income be explored by the group. She mentioned in particular the collection and/or cultivation of medicinal herbs. Such training was not available through the extension services in Makwanpur, but the Mission discovered that it was provided through an initiative of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation based in Chitwan, not far away. The Mission recommended that an approach be made by the project to the KMTNC, which said that it would be able to provide bussing. The fact that Ms. Maya had herself identified the potential risks of an over-production of stylo seed and had proposed an area for diversification constitutes an impressive case of local initiative.

29. To date, eighteen multi-purpose cooperatives have been formed in four districts through the consolidation of local LHF groups. The record of farmers' cooperatives in Nepal has been mixed, but project and line department officials saw the emergence of cooperatives as a very positive move, a viewpoint with which the Mission strongly concurs. The Padam Pokhari cooperative had raised money for the construction of a building for the cooperative after an undertaking from the project that this money would be refunded from project funds. The funds had not yet been forthcoming.

30. The significant lesson in this respect is that just because the groups, inter-groups and cooperatives promoted by the project are not founded in traditional and well-established institutional arrangements, they require continuing and regular support and guidance from the authorities.

#### **D. Conclusions**

31. Even the least accomplished, least remarkable, least enduring culture possesses and exercises knowledge of climate, water, forests, plants, soils, rocks, wildlife, seasons, building materials, herbs. This body of knowledge is the unwritten archive of all the wisdom and experience gathered by the members of a society or clan or tribe over generations. To suggest that an agent of social and economic change, such as an international funding agency or a poverty alleviation project, should be cognisant of, and respectful of, all the archives of knowledge pre-existing in a given location, is to ask the practically impossible. Not only would the work and expertise involved in collecting and collating these archives be tantamount to several projects in itself, but to respect them all in every detail would actually make change impossible.

32. The contemporary attitude in development agencies towards indigenous knowledge implies a desire to reconcile mutually exclusive tendencies. All poverty alleviation projects entail elements of social and political engineering which will eventually result in radical change. One example is the almost universal insistence in internationally-funded projects on progress towards gender equality,

which in most cases goes against the grain of existing values and customs. In the case of IFAD, the Fund's essential brief – to target the poorest of the poor – itself entails a measure of social engineering, simply because to raise the economic and social status of a disadvantaged group will correspondingly affect the status of other groups. The experiences of the HLFFDP, and the incidents of actual conflict, provide a significant illustration of this. The potential for conflict resulting from the redistribution of common assets is likely to be intensified by considerations of caste, an aspect that is not discussed in project documents, presumably on the grounds that it is inappropriate to raise an issue on which the principal project partners (IFAD, the Government of Nepal, and the line departments) are in tacit agreement. This strategy seems sensible, and even inevitable, in the circumstances, but it begs the interesting question as to whether caste discrimination is to be thought of as 'indigenous' or merely unnatural, intrusive and distorting.

33. Leasehold forestry itself has direct antecedents in certain types of indigenous schemes by which forest land was held in common by the community but was divided for the purposes of usufruct rights, fuelwood gathering and grazing. Yet there have been two important – indeed fundamental – innovations by the project. The first comprises the strict targeting criteria which (at least theoretically) exclude all but the very poor, and the second is the insistence on stall-feeding. The latter, as argued above, seems essential at least until such time as the forest is restored and the former constitutes part of the basic rationale and purpose of IFAD schemes. Thus it cannot be pretended that the HLFFDP aims to preserve – or even to respect the existing social or agricultural norms. It aims, quite justifiably, at change.

34. Although the Project Supervision documents contain various comparisons between Community Forestry and Leasehold Forestry – and argue for the superiority of the latter over the former – most people interviewed by the Mission felt that the two schemes can exist side-by-side. Some areas of the country, particularly in the Terai, and in Chitwan, simply do not contain suitable areas of degraded forest for leasehold plots. The high hills are also excluded, and no leasehold groups are to be found at altitudes over 1,700 m. Thus leasehold forestry is only appropriate in certain regions of the mid-hills. Yet a recent survey<sup>14</sup> suggests that there are nearly one million hectares of degraded forest in the mid-hill regions which might be distributed at the rate of one hectare per family. As the study indicates, this would constitute a very radical and far-reaching measure of land reform. It should also be pointed out that some of the abuses apparent in Community Forestry schemes, in particular the tendency for privileged groups to commandeer such schemes for their own purposes, do not arise in leasehold-based programmes.

35. Local techniques and preferences in terms of choice of forage crops and fodder trees and of important details of their cultivation and care seem to command respect in the attitudes of the line departments. Yet the fact is that the farmers of the mid-hills have a uniquely rich knowledge of fodder trees and their nutritional significance at various stages in livestock husbandry, particularly for lactating animals and young heifers. In general, the project might have played a much more active role in disseminating the available local knowledge in these respects. Much appears to have depended on the sensitivity and energy of the field officers of the forest and livestock sectors, especially the forest rangers, whose responsibilities require them to cover more ground than any other officials and who thus, constitute the chief point of contact between project and villagers in remote areas. More might be done in project design to ensure that the local officials' record and report examples of indigenous knowledge and that the project acts as a channel for these examples to be published and disseminated. It is essential that bodies such as NARC, while keeping up to date with academic and scientific research in relevant fields, also learn of useful and important findings of field officers.

36. Community development issues such as the supply of drinking water and health services were raised with the Mission by various LHF groups. In Padam Pokhari VDC, for example, group members expressed their willingness to make a financial contribution to the provision of piped water within the

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<sup>14</sup> Ram Yadav and Ambika Dhakal, *Leasehold Forestry for the Poor*, in Policy Outlook no. 6, HMG Ministry of Agriculture/Winrock International, June 2000

village. The project needs to identify and support such local initiatives to provide basic amenities which are still lacking in many areas. As far as income generating activities are concerned, the practical training on the use of medicinal plants conducted by the KMTNC provides a specific illustration of what can be done to build on existing local knowledge in this very important sphere.

37. The Mission believes that there is room for further research on the topic of Leasehold Forestry, particularly in identifying suitable areas for its application, in evaluating the possibilities for natural regeneration without expensive and laborious inputs and in investigating the properties of local grasses and fodder trees. IFAD may wish to consider a grant to the Institute of Forestry at Tribhuvan University under the Extended Cooperation Programme.

#### **E. The Mission**

38. The Mission for the HLFFDP case-study consisted of Mr. Roger Norman, Ms. Divya Nair and Mr. Prayag Tewari. Interviews and field visits were conducted in Kathmandu, Kavre, Tanahu, Makwanpur and Chitwan districts between August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup> 2002. The Mission greatly benefited from the energetic and informative guidance of Mr. Shree Prasad Baral, who accompanied the mission throughout its visit.

**CASE STUDY – SIX**  
**CORDILLERA HIGHLAND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT**  
**IFAD LOAN NO. 397-PH**

**I. PROJECT BRIEF**

Date of effectiveness:	June 03, 1997 (Approval date of IFAD loan: March 06, 1996)
Period of extension:	n.a. (Project may need half year extension by 2003, according to the Department of Agriculture – SPCMAD).
Date of closure:	March 31, 2003 (original completion date) September 30, 2003 (original closing date)
Amount of IFAD loan:	SDR 6.15 million (equivalent approximately USD 9.24 million)
Co-financer:	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Amount of Co-financing:	USD 19.06 million
Overall Goal:	To reduce poverty in the Cordillera Administrative Region by increasing the disposable incomes of small-holder farm families in the target areas.

Specific Objectives (rationale):

- Improve efficiency of agricultural resource management utilisation
- Promote development practices consistent with sustainability
- Exploit comparative advantages despite rugged topography
- Strengthen LGU capacity and expansion of internal revenue generation

Component Titles:

1. Community Mobilisation and Resource Management
  - a. Community Mobilisation and Participatory Planning
  - b. Natural Resource Management
2. Rural Infrastructure Development
  - a. Farm-to-Market Access
  - b. Community irrigation
  - c. Domestic Water Supply
3. Agricultural Support Services
  - a. Agribusiness Services
  - b. Adaptive Research Services
  - c. Rural Financial Services
4. Project Management and Coordination

**II. DOCUMENT REVIEW**

**A. Strategy**

1. IFAD has not yet produced a Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP) for the Philippines, but conducted a Special Programming Mission (SPM) during 1987 and a Country

Strategy Mission (CSM) in November 1991 (16)<sup>15</sup>. The recommendations of the CSM do not cite directly the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations as key objectives of a strategy for sustainable development in the Philippines, but state the basic elements for it to occur. As an example one of the recommendations of the CSM is to “empower the rural poor through proper organisation”.

2. A reflection of the empowerment of local people is the capacity for them to use, promote and investigate further their local knowledge. For this to occur grassroots institutions must be strengthened, which is a crucial element of the strategy proposed by the CSM. Also the CSM mentions the devolution of power in the Philippines through the implementation of the 1991 Local Government Code, which provides for strengthening local administrations, local service institutions and People’s Organisations. One important principle of the Law is to enable the development of mutual confidence between Local Government Units (LGUs) and communities (including the rural poor) through a continuous feedback of ideas.

## **B. Design**

3. The design of the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) Project took advantage of the fact that it was conceived as a second or successor phase of the 1987-1993 Highland Agriculture Development Project (HADP) which was implemented in 13 municipalities within the region of CHARM, the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). Two documents summarise critical recommendations for the design of CHARM, the ADB’s Project Performance Audit report (1) and the CHARM feasibility study Final report (20). The experiences and lessons learned during the implementation of the HADP provided an extensive background for important recommendations towards the improvement of beneficiary participation in the planning and design of CHARM.

4. The inclusion of beneficiary participation during the design of CHARM was the starting point to promote local knowledge and innovations. According to the project design, local communities took part in the decision about elements that CHARM would consider (4,9,13) to implement in areas which were identified by the feasibility study (20), also giving due consideration to local contributions in the proposed project formulation.

5. Thus, even though the use and promotion of local knowledge is not directly mentioned in the design documents of CHARM, the process of participatory planning by the communities involved indicates that local knowledge was to be used to be able to pursue the strategy and objectives of CHARM.

## **C. Supervision**

6. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is the co-operating institution of IFAD for CHARM. The ADB has carried out the majority of missions to the project site. IFAD’s most recent participation in the supervision of CHARM was during the midterm review mission carried out in July-August 2000, with one consultant in a 5 persons team.

7. The ADB has played an important role in supervising and recommending critical actions towards the improved participation of local communities targeted with CHARM. For instance, the last Mission, 8<sup>th</sup> ADB Loan Review Mission (12), recommends the proper documentation and an improvement of the incorporation of indigenous management practices in the natural resources management plan at the barangay<sup>16</sup> level. The 7<sup>th</sup> Mission recommends a greater level of participation through regular meetings of POs and better site selection for these to occur at the barangay level.

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<sup>15</sup> Reference to ‘list of reviewed documents’ on separate file.

<sup>16</sup> Smallest local government unit, with population generally in the range of 100 to 350 households

8. It was observed during meetings held with the ADB representative in Manila that special emphasis was given to this thematic study conducted by IFAD and useful discussions were held before and after the field visits that were carried out. For instance the development of a framework for the declaration of ancestral domain titles based on the active participation of communities in demarcation activities, agricultural trials conducted by farmers and the development of participatory plans at the barangay level were highlighted during the discussions.

9. The ADB representative suggested that future projects developed by IFAD and/or ADB should explicitly consider the promotion of local knowledge and innovations as a basic aspect during implementation.

#### **D. Monitoring**

10. The CHARM project established a Project Support Office (PSO) in Baguio City with a team that covers the wide range of themes implemented by the project. Thus, coordination and monitoring are parts of the responsibility of the PSO.

11. The reports produced by the PSO tend to be succinct in the thematic component and more elaborate in the financial component. What can be highlighted is the interest that was shown in this study, particularly the reporting of the involvement of a NGO Consortia, which was integrated into the project to mobilise the community, the development of participatory planning events (trainings, workshops and meetings) and the implementation of the interagency work for the declaration of ancestral domain titles.

12. Most interestingly CHARM's PSO reports on the adoption and promotion of local forest management systems in one of the 3 provinces where the project is being implemented. The agricultural support services portion of the project, where substantial input from the farmers is expected, tends to be too succinct to extract how local knowledge and innovations have been promoted during the project implementation.

#### **E. Evaluation**

13. CHARM's PSO carried out the evaluation of the project's accomplishments, which are also evaluated during the Missions carried out by ADB. As per the previous section, the reports produced by the PSO are too succinct and in a format that makes it difficult to gather enough evidence of the promotion of local knowledge and innovations by the project. Nonetheless, during the meetings held with project staff and director, as well as during field visits, it was evident that local knowledge and innovations are being promoted in various aspects of the project.

14. Documents produced by ADB's Missions to the project (10, 11, 12) reveal the promotion of local knowledge and innovations in a more elaborate manner, but do not consider these as a special element during the evaluation process of the Mission.

15. As an example is the recommendation to better document the promotion of local practices in the areas of agricultural and forest management recorded in the report of the latest ADB Mission to CHARM (12).

#### **F. Special studies**

16. There are some special studies that were produced reflecting the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations. One of the most important is the Field Guide for Discovery-based Exercises for vegetable IPM (5), which is a book that includes a series of agricultural field exercises documented in a form which would enable their replication in other countries of the region. This book includes experiences developed at the Farmers Field Schools and the field trails carried out with farmers in the CHARM area.

17. The local University in Baguio produced a document requested by CHARM that documents local practices. This study compiled local technology on agroforestry and major vegetable systems through workshops and reviews with local people. This study was used to produce a series of technological guides for technicians to carry out agricultural services. Since the basic study also reflects the use of local knowledge compiled through workshops, meetings and visits to farming systems, the techno-guides are believed to promote the use of local knowledge and to improve existing technologies.

18. Local knowledge documentation in the forest management area is being carried out through the implementation of CHARM. DENR and CHARM personnel are involved in the documentation of the LAPAT system, which is a traditional system of permits and penalties for resource use at the watershed level. Rules are executed by the Council of Elders of the barangays. The document was in development during the field visit, thus it could not be reviewed, but extensive discussions were held regarding the system with government officials and CHARM personnel, revealing keen interest in the subject matter on part of all the concerned stakeholders.

### **III. FIELD INTERVIEWS: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **A. Arrangements**

19. The CHARM project is based on the implementation of activities by a series of national government institutions at various levels (municipal, provincial, regional and central) as well as on the community participatory work developed by the NGO Consortia SUCCORED and various People's Organisations (PO). Thus, there is an intricate interagency implementation arrangement to carry out the activities of the project.

20. The first reporting, that documents the work carried out with the communities, is carried out by the NGO. They document in detail the activities carried out on a daily basis. However, their reports to the PSO of CHARM are tailored to tables and a quantification of activities carried out. There is therefore a loss of primary information, which holds a substantial amount of value in the promotion of local practices, sharing of knowledge among organised community groups and dissemination through workshops and the Farmers Field Schools.

21. The CHARM PSO provides quarterly reports and an annual summary to the ADB and DA's central Office in Manila. These reports concentrate more on the documentation of activities accomplished and financial expenditure, not providing expanded and sufficient information on the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations by CHARM.

22. The Missions carried out by ADB are basically directed to evaluate the project, propose recommendations and organise corrective actions in a specified timeframe. There are several important pieces of information on the use of local knowledge and recommendations to improve the documentation of the use of local practices during project activities (11, 12). But as a whole there is no specific arrangement to evaluate and report on the use and promotion of local knowledge. Mission reports tend to be of wide use at higher levels. It would be advisable to have a specific section to evaluate the use and promotion of local knowledge by the projects reviewed.

23. CHARM has organised some significant publications that document the use of local knowledge and are a source of information for a wide variety of stakeholders (local technicians, support personnel, universities, consultants). As an example there is a local practices document, based on agricultural support services experiences developed in the region by CHARM and others. An agroforestry manual is being produced to document the experiences of reviving and making trials with the use of a diversity of plants, from medicinal herbs and mushrooms to agricultural plants such as camote and cassava and nitrogen-fixing trees.

24. In the reforestation component there are also examples of special publications referring to the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovations such as the LAPAT system. This system is ruled by the Council of Elders at the barangay level and not by the political organisation (barangay council). It is a system organised to provide not only permissions for the use of resources in forested areas at the watershed level, but also punishment for the misuse of these resources. Thus, CHARM has identified some important cases of local knowledge that are being documented, but a more comprehensive study could be carried out in such an environment rich in the use and promotion of local knowledge.

## **B. Project Management Culture**

### **Communication and Confidence**

25. Communication through the project chain of organised groups (from farmers groups to municipal, provincial and regional steering committees) seems to be more positive than an impeding factor of information flow and discussion. Nonetheless there are cases of lack of communication and consultation by government units when implementing activities in some barangays.

26. In general, there is an integration of a chain of instances where issues such as innovations, local practices and knowledge can be openly discussed. At the farmer's organised groups in their regular meetings, the Farmers Field Schools and with NGO representatives the first level of communication with and among the beneficiaries takes place. Up the chain there seems to be a difficulty of communication at some stage between the NGO and the PSO that has perhaps been improved lately. During formal steering committees meetings that are regularly held at various levels (municipal, provincial and regional) there is perhaps more opportunity to communicate on issues of promotion of local knowledge and innovation in the array of sites covered by CHARM.

27. CHARM also communicates with other regional projects that are similar, such as the EU funded Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development (CASCADE) and the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program (CCAP) projects. In these instances there is a platform to share interregional experiences in the work developed with local communities.

### **Project commitment to use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation**

28. The project has an inherent commitment to promote local knowledge due to the fact of it being based on community mobilisation and participation. The planning of activities starts at the barangay level with participation of the community. In practice, there have been problems due to the lack of participation by some community organisations and the lack of experience by the NGO community mobilisers in actually providing an enabling environment for the development of barangay resource management plans.

29. CHARM has played an important role in the development of the titling of ancestral lands by providing a conducive basis for the respective government institutions to meet and support the recently authorised agency to issue the certificates, the National Commission on indigenous People (NCIP). The process has involved communities in providing their knowledge on their own lands and respecting and encouraging their system of conflict resolution by meetings of neighboring Councils of Elders. CHARM has also provided substantial material support for the declaration of the first certificate of ancestral domain title (CADT), issued on July 20 of the present year.

30. Forest management practices based on traditional beliefs and practices have been incorporated in the Reforestation Component and are being respected by government agencies, as per reports during meetings with DENR officials. There is also a plan to further document these practices and improve the selection of species with major input from local farmers involve din the project.

## **Project organisation and management structure**

31. The project has a formal organisation and structure that integrates the implementing agencies at various levels as mentioned previously. This is needed to be capable of orchestrating and coordinating various activities among all the actors and stakeholders. But this structure makes it on occasions difficult to address such issues as the basic level of reporting by the NGOS of local practices to flow in the chain and to be incorporated by others. This has been identified as per communication from the project director and a special report will be requested from the NGO.

32. Training must be provided for non-formal organisations to better participate and be able to pass on experiences and information to others involved in the project. For instance the NGO Consortia members had difficulties in integrating into this structure, accomplishing all formal requirements (financial and other report formats) and interacting with other NGOs, which perhaps diverted part of their attention from properly coordinating the field activities.

33. CHARM's PSO has played a vital role together with the supervision of ADB in identifying problematic issues and establishing corrective actions. As an example of that are the recommendations on documenting local practices at the field level and requesting a final detailed report on community activities, which will include local knowledge and innovations, by the NGO Consortia.

## **C. Technologies**

34. Local management practices of agricultural and forest systems have been scouted, promoted and disseminated at certain important levels. For instance the use of mix groups of species in agroforestry systems are a revival of traditional knowledge that has had been partially lost due to the establishment of intensive agricultural systems. Simple technological practices are being shared at one FFS close to the PSO site.

35. Trials of agricultural practices in fertilisation and pest control are also an important platform for the use, promotion and also improvement of local knowledge. Farmers Schools are an important platform for farmers to join, test, discuss, interact, learn and promote their practices. As a tool incorporated by CHARM this is one example of a good way to enable the flow of knowledge into, in between and out of the communities, where technological input is an important factor.

## **D. Resources**

36. Thanks to the CHARM project, resources have been available to the agencies involved (DA, DENR, LGUs, NGO Consortia). Nonetheless, it has not reached the communities themselves, which only received funds as organised groups contracted by DENR to carry out reforestation activities, for example. Materials and facilities are provided by the agencies and LGUs involved in the project. This non-availability of resources for organised people's organisations at the barangay level to develop experiences and activities of their own has perhaps made it in some occasions difficult for local communities to better develop and test their own practices. It was reported that other regional projects, such as the CASCADE and CCAP, do provide grants to organised community groups. This can be a tool to enhance community participation, and over all to promote ownership of the implemented activities. Real sense of ownership by the community has proven to be a critical element to guarantee long term commitment and support change within communities.

## **E. Replication**

37. Replication mechanisms exist due to two main factors: the organisation of meetings and workshops from the barangay level to the regional level and the documentation of manuals, technological guides, documents on local practices and studies.

38. However, replication effectiveness was not evaluated since many of the documents and findings have been recently published or are to be published. A major challenge will be to disseminate the information gathered and documents produced at various levels, within the community and within the government establishments. This will facilitate the promotion and dissemination of locally generated knowledge to the region and similar areas elsewhere.

#### **F. Policy Environment**

39. It can be stated that projects such as CHARM in the Philippines are benefiting from a policy status that facilitates the use and promotion of local knowledge and innovation. Due to the changes in people's participation in power since the late 1980s, government agencies have the mandate to promote participation and to include local knowledge of the communities in project development, as stated by DA's Central Office – SPCMAD, a special office to co-ordinate projects and assistance.

40. However, there is a long way to go still from theory to practice. Some agencies still have difficulties to really incorporate the mandate at the most basic level when interacting with communities and tend to develop activities without promoting sufficient participation. Projects such as CHARM are learning platforms for putting into practice the principle of participation by government officials, and improvement is expected after a series of such experiences and replication opportunities. These merit being encouraged.

#### **G. Legal Environment**

41. The legal framework is also positive when compared with other countries in many developing countries, including the Asia and Pacific region. A law was passed to provide more power at the local government level. President Aquino in 1986 declared the role of NGOs and social society in the development of the country was to be enhanced.

42. In 1997 the Indigenous Rights Act was created, a major accomplishment and recognition of traditional communities in the Philippines (21). As stated in the Act the purpose is to recognise, protect and promote the rights of indigenous cultural communities in the country. It is inferred that local participation will be enhanced and therefore the knowledge of these communities promoted, shared and used.

### **IV. FIELD WORK PROFILE (July 20 to 31, 2002)**

#### **A. Scope**

43. The scope of the knowledge related to the area of the project can be divided into different levels of knowledge. This study's main task was to concentrate on the issues regarding the first level of knowledge, also known as traditional or indigenous knowledge. Nonetheless the use of other levels of knowledge localised in the project's area are also taken into consideration in some occasions during the report of the field study conducted.

#### **B. Approach**

44. The field interviews and site visits were organised in a manner to be able to see and hear from the whole range of stakeholders involved in the project, particularly farmers. Therefore extensive visits to all project sites were not carried out, but rather visits to different sites in the Benguet province (close to the Project Office), to be able to address the widest range of stakeholders possible during the field visit. The project area is large, covering over 150,000 ha and more than 23,000 beneficiaries in 82 barangays in 16 municipalities.

## C. Schedule

Saturday, July 20:

- Arrival in the Philippines

Sunday, July 21:

- Contact with project director of CHARM and organisation of agenda
- Review of basic country information
- Document review

Monday, July 22:

- Meeting with ADB Specialist, Dr. Sivaguru Sahajananthan
- Meeting with 4 DENR officials
- Field work organisation with liaison officer of DA

Tuesday, July 23:

- Travel to field site, Baguio City
- Interview with M&E officer of the project
- Meeting Dr. Cameron Odsey, Project Director
- Document selection for further review

Wednesday, July 24:

- Meeting and discussions with project director and 5 staff members, as well as consultants
- Review of facilities, including GIS unit
- Meeting with Forestry SFF (PO) in the barangay Taloi Sur
- Document review

Thursday, July 25:

- Visit to Municipality of Sablan: meetings with LGU representatives.
- Visit to the Bayabas barangay
- Meeting with barangay Captain, community representatives and infrastructure provincial implementers
- Meetings with SUCCORED representatives in Baguio City
- Meeting with NCIP representatives in Baguio City

Friday, July 26:

- Visit to Agroforestry Farmers Field School, Taloi Sur barangay, Tuba.
- Field notes review for follow up issues
- Meeting with regional DENR representatives
- Meeting Project Support Office representatives and Project Director

Saturday, July 27:

- Travel back to Manila

Sunday, July 28:

- Review of general notes for further interviews in Manila
- Organisation of information

Monday, July 29:

- Telephone conversation with Ms. Evelin Valeriano, liaisons officer, DA Central Office.
- CHARM reports review

Tuesday, July 30:

- Wrap up meeting with Dr. Sahajananthan, ADB
- Conversation with Mr. Jatta, IFAD country portfolio manager.

Wednesday, July 31:

- Meeting with Head of Unit, Mr. Abaya and staff of Central Office of DA, Office of Secretary.

Thursday, August 1:

- Meeting with Mark Sandiford, Regional Program Coordinator, Small Grants Program for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests – South East Asia.
- Preparation of report documentation

Friday, August 2:

- Basic preparation of report structure and information

Saturday, August 3:

- Meeting with Ashwani Muthoo, Evaluation Officer, IFAD

Sunday, August 4:

- Meeting with Napoleon T. Vergara, regional expert and consultant, University of the Philippines, Los Baños (ret. Professor)

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND INSIGHTS**

45. The use and promotion of local knowledge in the development and delivery of projects, such as CHARM, can be a critical factor in order to enhance ownership of project activities and their results by the communities involved. Humans tend to care more about what they own; as such, medium and long-term success in catalyzing sustainable community development can be guaranteed only if real ownership is ensured through the course of project design and implementation. The availability and application of local knowledge resources and appropriate provision for facilitating and sharing innovations at the grassroots level will contribute significantly towards attaining project goals and objectives.

46. The Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Development Project (CHARM) provided many elements for local knowledge and innovations to be promoted. One of the highlights is the creation and promotion of Farmers' Field Schools, learning and sharing platform for local communities with regular space and scope for interaction. Also the trials development and agricultural systems test sites are interesting environments to set free the spirit of innovation and to share what people know because of the experiences of their ancestors, their families and their own.

47. As an innovative major output, the declaration of the first ancestral domain title in the Philippines by the Bakun people in the Cordillera Region, a process facilitated by CHARM, was a testing site for communities to interact and execute their local wisdom in resolving conflicts, as well as an initial experience for government officials and NGOs to assist in the establishment of such rights. Communities will still need further assistance and support to manage their titled domains in the best manner possible, an area that shall be explored in the future with the lessons learned from this project. This merits to be closely followed up and ensured for the benefit of all the stakeholders and for the sustainability and replicability of the project goals and outputs.

48. The current monitoring and reporting practices of the project are essentially geared to assessing and recording physical achievements and financial delivery. These need to be complemented by observing and noting the immense value and role of traditional knowledge and the need for fostering its application and improvement in local communities. That shall contribute to the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and ownership of the project by its most crucial stakeholders and to the lasting success of the project.

49. In the future, projects specifically designed to use and promote local knowledge and innovations should avoid complex inter-institutional arrangements for their implementation, such as the implementation by many different governmental organisations. These arrangements can be interesting in the long term, but offer an operational and administrative challenge during the project's implementation phase, with the possibility of compromising the activities with the most important component of the project, local communities.

## VI. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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- (3) Baqir, F. nd. A module on 'participatory development'. Islamabad. 52 p.
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- (5) Callo Jr., D, Teofilo, L. & Tauli, H. 2002. Field Guide of Discoveries based on exercises for vegetable IPM. Volume II. Laguna. 366 p.
- (6) CHARM. 2002. Barangay Natural Resource Management Plan (BNRMP). 90 p.
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. DA-CHARM Bulletin January-March 2002. Baguio City. 12 p.
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. Festival of the Mountains: program, invitation and introduction. Baguio City. 4 p.
- (9) Department of Agriculture-CAR/CHARM. 1999. Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) Project Annual Report. 24 p.
- (10) Department of Agriculture, CHARM, ADB. 2000. Memorandum of Understanding. 6<sup>th</sup> ADB Loan Review Mission. 19 p.
- (11) \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. Memorandum of Understanding. 7<sup>th</sup> ADB Loan Review Mission. 13 p.
- (12) \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. Memorandum of Understanding. 8<sup>th</sup> ADB Loan Review Mission. 11 p.
- (13) Department of Agriculture/CHARM. 2002. Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management. First Quarter report 2002. 28 p.
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- (15) ESSC (Environmental Science for Social Change). 1999. Decline of the Philippine Forest: map and descriptive booklet. Quezon City. 45 p.
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(20) Prince Edward International Ltd, Agrodev and SEA Consultants. 1994. Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project, Philippines. Volume One: Final Report. 292 p.

(21) Republic of the Philippines, Congress of the Philippines, Metro Manila. Tenth Congress, Third Regular Session. 1997. Indigenous People Rights Act of 1997. 44 p.

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**CASE STUDY - SEVEN**  
**SECOND BADULLA INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**  
**IFAD LOAN NO. 283-LK**

**I. PROJECT BRIEF**

1. The Second Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project (SBIRD) became effective in August 1992 following an agreement between IFAD and the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) in July 1991 and project operations commenced in mid- 1993. The project, which was scheduled for closure on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1999 was first extended till December 2000. Subsequently, as per agreement between IFAD and Govt. of Sri Lanka the project completion date was extended to September 2002 with loan closing in March 2003.

2. The project is financed with an IFAD loan of SDR 9.90 million which is equivalent to approximately US \$14 million (70% of the total cost). The cofinancier is United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The amount of cofinancing which is in the form of grant is US \$1.4 million (7%). There is a contribution of US \$4.7 million (23%) by the Government of Sri Lanka and participating house holds.

3. The main objectives of the project are to alleviate poverty and improve food security and nutritional status of poor inhabitants of the most disadvantaged parts of Badulla district; and develop a fully participatory approach to planning and resource allocation through a process of community mobilisation.

4. The SBIRD envisages achieving the above objectives through the implementation of the components including Community Mobilisation and Institutional Strengthening, Agricultural and Non-farm production, Physical Infrastructure Development, Savings and Credit, NGO Programme and Project Management.

5. The project is executed by the Regional Development Division of Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation (MPPI) in association with Uva Provincial Council (UPC) through the Project Management Office (PMO). The role of PMO is largely of planning, monitoring and coordinating the activities of line agencies. It also directly implements the community mobilisation programme through Assistant Government Agent (AGA) divisional secretariats and with the active assistance of NGOs. Implementation of technical components is the responsibility of the appropriate line agencies.

**II. DOCUMENT REVIEW**

6. Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDPs) have been an important instrument of national development policy in Sri Lanka since 1979. Their overall objective has been to increase income levels and employment opportunities for rural families. These projects allowed greater scope for the introduction of innovations and focused on institutional developments and community based actions. Government has achieved considerable experience in the management of IRDPs. Several lessons learnt from these projects have been taken into account in the design of the SBIRD. In earlier projects insufficient attention was paid to the participation of prospective beneficiaries in project design and implementation. SBIRD stresses on innovative approaches to project design and execution.

7. In view of the fact that community Mobilisation has been demonstrated in Sri Lanka as the most successful way to initiate sustainable development in rural areas, the project envisaged the use of the system of social mobilisers or village change agents, as the key means of affecting development in the project area and of ensuring that poor households are involved in the development initiatives. The project made provisions for assistance to the line ministries for the implementation of ongoing interventions so that development momentum is maintained with adjustments in line with the

emerging priorities of target beneficiaries. The project document provided that communities would select the activities most suited to their particular circumstances and needs. The project envisaged support for both farm and non-farm production – small holder tea development, minor export crops, live stock and small scale rural industries – with special emphasis on technical support for better management of land and water resources, through conservation measures and rehabilitation of minor irrigation schemes. It further provided that all activities would be supported by strengthened institutions, including NGOs and by a savings and credit programme.

8. IFAD's strategy for Sri Lanka include a participatory approach to project planning and implementation; emphasis on the improved use of existing infrastructure, specially irrigation; close liaison with bilateral agencies and NGOs for both project preparation and funding/implementation; and stress on innovative approaches to project design and execution.

9. Experience has well established that one single input that could heavily contribute to both poverty alleviation as well as achieving financial sustainability of organisations of the poor at the same time is micro-finance. In SBIRDP micro-finance has clearly taken many out of the poverty trap. With regard to sector wise disbursements made by participating credit institutions agriculture activities contribute to 8% of the disbursements, trade and industry about 49% and 30% respectively, and livestock activities about 13%.

10. More than 90 percent of the project participation in the project is from women and for the first time in many cases women had direct access to resources such as credit for cultivation and micro-enterprises. This enabled the women to have a higher bargaining power at home and change their gender relations with their men. Empowering women by providing them with opportunities to access to, control over and benefit from resources, particularly to credit and to hold dominating positions in ICOs and effectively manage and implement poverty alleviation projects is a remarkable achievement. According to a survey conducted in 2001, about 85% of women felt that their access to health, nutrition and credit has improved due to the project and the biggest benefit to women is their acceptance of the rightful place in the society. The utilisation and repayment of credit has been good. The groups have been proactive in the creation of community infrastructure and assets of common good, wherever such assistance was provided. Integrated Community Organisations (ICOs) were entrusted with implementation of small civil works. This was a measure of confidence building.

11. Implementation of a special programme for the NGOs forum's participation in all the project's decision making bodies was one of the important agreements reached between IFAD and GOSL. It includes exposure of provincial and project officials to best practices in pro-poor development initiatives, initiation of partnerships with private, public and NGO sector, and policy reforms. Despite initial delays the project has been able to bring back NGOs to its fold. The project increased allocations for pro-poor interventions such as backyard poultry, cattle rearing and goat farming.

12. In hilly parts of the project area the available land is very steep and is, therefore, in need of soil conservation practices to prevent erosion during the wet season, and water conservation practices to preserve the rain water for the dry season. The project lays emphasis on agro-forestry system of agriculture which is the best method for soil conservation in hilly terrain of the project. Resource Management based development strategy of the project assists poor farmers forced by population pressure to cultivate degradation threatened land to increase production while reducing the risk of erosion by providing incentives for farmers to undertake soil and water conservation activities and to undertake inter-cropping with minor export crop. The project has stepped up support for introduction of fruit crops. This is an important activity with high potential for alleviating poverty of small holders.

13. Livestock development activities supported by the project include backyard poultry, and pig and goat rearing. Supervision Report 2002 recommended that only local breed of poultry is provided to beneficiaries as against the exotic breed that is being presently provided in backyard poultry activities.

14. The physical infrastructure component consists of three main sub-components comprising Minor irrigation, Village Access Roads, and Rural Water Supplies. The concept of minor irrigation is improvement of the availability of irrigation water through the rehabilitation of anicut schemes and small tank schemes, desilting of tanks and construction of new small irrigation schemes based on the felt needs of the mobilised poor people.

15. The project provided financial assistance for improved access facilities to the villages located in remote areas such as at the bottom of a valley with steep gradient and/or in difficult terrain. The project envisages that these must be felt needs of the villagers' groups. Similarly financial assistance was provided to the sub-component Rural Water Supply to ensure sufficient availability of pure drinking water to those living in the backward villages of project area, thus ensuring healthy living conditions free from the spread of communicable diseases that spread from contaminated water.

16. A prominent weakness shared by all IFAD funded projects is the absence of participatory monitoring and evaluation system built in the project cycle despite the strong emphasis on participatory methods by these projects. The present project has not developed an effective monitoring and evaluation system with the exception of input reporting functions. The MTR had recommended an effective MIS. The Supervision reports suggest the development of a simple and adaptable management information system at the Project Management Office (PMO) capable of identifying both improvements and bottlenecks in implementation as well as monitoring the progress of different components and activities. Besides developing MIS at PMO the involvement of project beneficiaries and participants in monitoring and evaluation needs to be emphasised. According to Project Document the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit of PMO would develop a beneficiary contact monitoring system in which beneficiaries would themselves participate, enabling assessment to be made of the extent to which the project is successful in reaching the target population and would undertake qualitative evaluations of the project's impact.

### **III. FIELD INTERVIEWS: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

17. Poverty in the project area is chiefly a result of the low land to man ratio. With the increase in population the situation will become worse as 92% of the population lives and to a great extent is dependent on the rural areas. Thus the pressure on land which is high will become still higher and the rural landless and the near landless will occupy Government land in the steep, marginal and unsuitable areas to eke out a living at even below subsistence level.

18. Project has changed the lives of many poor in remote project areas by salvaging the poor from the vicious cycle of indebtedness created by money lenders and middlemen by ICOs establishing internal credit system. Micro-credit enabled the poor to obtain credit at a reasonable rate with no collateral to match the amount requested. This has led the project beneficiaries to completely come out of the clutches of moneylenders which could be considered a major impact of the project. Changing the occupations of the poor from manual labourers working for others to independent farmers, micro-entrepreneurs and traders is another impact of the project. Project interventions have changed their life from manual labourers who lived on a day to day basis to much better settled farmers with a decent income and savings in their accounts. Project has increased the incomes of a sizeable section of the poor who are now well above the poverty line in terms of income.

19. Community mobilisation programme of the project has created awareness among the poor, made them self-reliant and more articulate, trained them to analyse their problems and come up with solutions, increased ability among the poor to plan and make proposals, inculcated the habit of saving among members, and developed credit discipline. The community has developed the skill of co-operation and understanding in working with Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies. The mobilisation process has facilitated self help, collective action, labour sharing, and imparted financial management skills through savings and lending operations. The process has given confidence to the

poor house-holds to interact with the governmental agencies, banks and other organisations, including visiting international missions.

20. The Project Management has undertaken measures to harness the opportunities available for enhancing the productivity of the natural resources owned by the poor house-holds. The project has generated new skills, knowledge, and competencies amongst the poor, especially women. It has facilitated new partnerships between different agencies of the Government, between the Government and NGOs and financial institutions, and above all with the people. The project has facilitated diversification of economic base of the poor and established linkages between community groups and markets and research institutions.

21. The project management has developed strong partnership with the NGOs and other stakeholders. There is, however, lack of linkages with existing institutions. There are institutions and projects, which are engaged in poverty alleviation, many have several useful experiences they could share with and resources to offer to similar efforts made by others. It would have been much more useful if this project had built up strong linkages and interactions with such institutions. In addition to learning from other experiences the IFAD funded projects could develop a network at project level as well as federation and ICO levels to learn from each other's best practices and successes as well as failures.

22. At the grassroots level there is a tendency to have multiple institutions and all projects and programmes are seemingly working with their own groups and with little or no linkages. There is a need to ensure that this duplication is avoided, existing institutions are strengthened, maturity indices are set up for their graduation and support based on their maturity and core strengths are provided. With regard to small-scale community infrastructure works the reports indicate sub-standard quality with no maintenance arrangement after completion and non-involvement of communities in the planning, design and implementation processes. The Supervision Reports suggest that if investments in small scale rural infrastructure development are to be supported, there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity of the ICOs and groups so that they can undertake planning, design and construction. Policy design in this area is required to enable adequate technical supervision and co-operation from relevant Government institutions.

23. In Sri Lanka several donors including IFAD are funding co-operative and NGO micro-finance institutions. But, the performance of these institutions and their financial sustainability without donor funding remains doubtful. Most of these institutions yet do not have prudential guidelines incorporating micro-finance best practices concerning capital adequacy, reserve norms, asset classification norms and bad debt provision norms.

24. In the steep, erosion prone project area intensive cultivation of perennial crops is considered the best land use practice. The project assisted the poor farmers to inter crop small extents with minor export crops such as pepper, cardamom, coffee and other crops considered suitable. Such inter-cropping with indigenous species making use of local knowledge about their cultivation resulted in increased income and reduced risk of crop failure.

25. The concept of live stock development is to improve incomes and nutritional level through rearing of animals with focus on goat rearing and poultry keeping with chicken of local breeds with the use of crop residues available in nearby wasteland for feeding and the use of excess family labour which has no opportunity cost.

26. One of the most successful activities that have been undertaken by the project is Small Tea Holder Development. Two factors contribute to this. First, the agro-ecology of the area is conducive to cultivation of these crops. Second, the stake holders involved are specialised in these activities and have required technical competence and are able to provide market access. Tea, being a permanent

crop, once well established, will continue to give a regular income for a few decades. Such activities have the highest potential for alleviating poverty.

27. Some of the farmers have undertaken cultivation of vegetables without using inorganic fertiliser and insecticides /pesticides. The farmers are using cattle dung manure/organic manure instead of inorganic fertiliser. They are using locally available herbs as insecticides. With increasing awareness about environmental pollution and good nutrition the demand for organic food which is so far confined to vegetable cultivation is on the increase. Such vegetables produced by the beneficiaries under the project fetches good price. Through the project does not support these activities specifically yet the farmers are undertaking organic farming. This is primarily because of two reasons: one the farmers have good knowledge of locally available rich flora which could be used as insecticides / pesticides, and secondly the organic food gives good economic returns. This aspect, however, has not been documented. Among the herbal insecticides/pesticides used by the beneficiaries are Merrigold, tobacco, Neem oil and ash etc. There is a long list of locally available plants which are used for this purpose. It may be worthwhile to compile them and promote their use on a much larger scale. While tobacco is spread after soaking it in the water the local experience is that besides using leaves even planting of merrigold around vegetable crops keep the insects/pests away. Spraying of ash on paddy crop at the time the appearance of paddy spike keeps the insects away. Though not supported by scientific reasoning the local population gives enough importance to start various agricultural operations during an auspicious time/ period based on their culture and belief.

28. Farmers have adopted several innovative methods for storage of agricultural produce. A unique method of storing maize is to hang it over the fire place. Dry leaves of some locally available herbs are used for storing pulses. These measures according to local population are quite effective and proven.

29. Interaction with project beneficiaries revealed that there is a huge potential of cultivating medicinal plants. Large varieties of herbs, shrubs and trees of medicinal value are found in the project area. Some indigenous people in remote areas are practicing Ayurvedic system of medicine using locally available plants. Promoting cultivation of medicinal plants has vast potential and could form an important component of income generating activities - an aspect which was not included in the project income generation programmes.

30. In order to increase productivity high yielding varieties of paddy and other crops are being used throughout the world and so are in Sri Lanka. This has pushed the good old strains on the verge of extinction. Revival of cultivation of some such strains has been observed. For example, Manavsampat a local NGO is promoting cultivation of a paddy variety called 'Raddal' on a buy back arrangement with farmers. Rice of Raddal variety is oily, tasty and is said to have medicinal properties. Such efforts will lead to conservation of biodiversity.

31. The edaphic and climatic condition in Badulla region is very conducive to cultivation of minor export crops like tea, coffee, spices and fruits. Cinnamon, for example, grows very well in project area and has export potential. Hitherto a notification by GOSL prohibited cultivation of cinnamon in the uphill. Keeping in view the good, sustainable growth and export potential of cinnamon GOSL modified its policy thereby permitting its cultivation in Badulla region. Now many project beneficiaries are engaged in cinnamon cultivation.

32. Many fruit trees when introduced in Badulla region on a commercial scale were found to grow very well. For example, Rambota earlier cultivated generally around Colombo comes well in Badulla region. Rambota and also Mango in Badulla region are not only growing well but also fruiting in a different season. These fruits in the off season have great economic potential.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND INSIGHTS

33. Despite the major advances in reducing poverty made during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, poverty and social exclusion continue to be a major challenge for humanity. Social inequality, marginalisation and discrimination still exclude many people from full participation in economic, political and cultural life. Poverty and social exclusion are problems common to both poor and rich countries. The farmers over the years followed the advice and undertook cultivation as were directed by experts and scientists. This led to complete dependence of high input crops. The result was a loss of the varieties of seeds and plants that were carried through history spanning three or more millennia. Obviously the current economic models of agricultural production have not worked. It has led to production of current seed varieties that require large energy and biocide inputs to gain optimal production. As against this the need is to produce seed and plants that are effective at low levels of external inputs. Indigenous Knowledge and Innovations are the result of a continuous process of experimentation, innovation, and adaptation. It can blend with knowledge based on science and technology, and thus could be considered complementary to scientific and technological efforts to solve problems in social and economic development.

34. The disadvantage of indigenous knowledge, however, is that it could not be captured and stored in a systematic manner. It is primarily because it is handed down orally from generation to generation. Under the circumstance it is likely that indigenous knowledge systems and practices may become extinct. It is, however, encouraging that over the last one decade or so there has been increasing realisation that indigenous knowledge can play an important role in participatory approaches to sustainable development. It is evident from the fact that a large number of activities based on local knowledge and innovations have been started.

35. Importance of indigenous knowledge is being increasingly realised at a time when current development models have not proved very successful. Large number of marginalised people all over the world is still deprived of the benefits of development. It has been observed that development interventions have failed to motivate people to participate where they don't get opportunity to use their own knowledge. Recent research has given valuable insights into how people use their own locally generated knowledge to change and to improve natural resource management. Small Tea Holder Development activity of this project in Sri Lanka is a classic example. The main reason for the success of this activity is that implementation is based on indigenous knowledge.

36. The concept of best practices on indigenous knowledge is to develop cost effective and sustainable survival strategies for poverty alleviation and income generation. There are wide ranges of traditional tree crop practices in Sri Lanka which offer exciting prospects for the further development of agro-forestry throughout the country. The declining ratio of land to people and the steady reduction in the per capita availability of agriculture land has made agro-forestry a promising possible solution to the present problems. Small agro-forestry based cottage industries will keep agro-forestry farmers away from natural forests, which are now under great pressure, and will also discourage people from migration to already overpopulated urban areas.

37. Sustainability has occupied the centre stage during the last few years of project implementation. Since community mobilisation is the thrust area of the project, the sustainability of the project would largely depend on the institutional maturity of ICOs. The present reality is that there exists 286 functioning ICOs at the grassroots and these have not yet reached required institutional maturity. The challenge before GOSL at this stage is to make ICOs institutionally and financially viable entities with required capacity for social and financial inter-mediation. There is a need to build a strong structure of ICOs at Zonal, Divisional and District levels. The formation of 286 ICOs will eventually become a meaningless effort unless they are brought together at all the above levels. It would be much better to have a strong Federation of 286 ICOs rather than 286 scattered small organisations with no organisational unity among them. The Federation will eliminate the social isolation of the poor, make them more powerful in confronting the forces which go against their organisations, increase their

bargaining power, share experiences and resources with each other, and attract donor funding even after the closure of the project.



**CASE STUDY - EIGHT**  
**THE HA GIANG DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES (HPM),**  
**IFAD LOAN NO. 460-VN**

**I. PROJECT BRIEF**

1. The Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities (HPM) is a multi-sector area development and poverty alleviation project which has been in operation in Ha Giang Province since July 1998. With a six-year implementation period, the project is being co-financed through loan assistance from IFAD and grant assistance from UNDP and SIDA, with a contribution from the Government of Vietnam. The total cost of the project is USD 18.5 million. The major components consist of Rural Infrastructure, Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry Production, Education, Health, and Income Diversification and Credit. The UNDP grant has been utilised in capacity building programmes at provincial and district levels.

**II. DOCUMENT REVIEW**

**A. Socio-economic assessment of Ha Giang Province (1996)**

1. The assessment gives explicit prominence to ‘local knowledge’ and ethnic traditions in the choice of crops, cropping patterns, use of fertilisers and pesticides, livestock development, utilisation of natural resources, land tenure systems, conservation of biodiversity, management of natural resources and the nature of support services. It also encourages sensitivity to existing systems in the regulation of natural resources like wild honey and timber (p. 55), in the shift from swidden to settled cultivations where lack of fallow periods may cause over-exploitation (p. 48), and in defining ‘poverty’, where indigenous minorities may not regard themselves as ‘poor’ (p.58). Referring to current interventions, it indicates that policy makers tend to substitute maize for higher value trees and commercial crops (p.11). Roads are seen as conceived and constructed for motor vehicles which may also accelerate the unauthorised exploitation of forest resources, while its users are mainly pedestrians who may gain more from inter-village roads (p. 38).

2. The assessment advocates an interactive education system with sensitised teachers and flexible schedules designed to enhance local skill and knowledge of medicinal plants, basket making, weaving, blacksmithing and musical instruments (p. 70). While encouraging a comprehensive marketing information system and focussing on collective bargaining power, the document emphasises the continued importance of the existing well-developed ‘tribal markets’ (p.78). Encouraging community self-reliance, the document prescribes priority to traditional herbal healers and members of their families and drafting a manual on herbal plants in the minority language (p.77). Research activities to strengthen indigenous crop varieties and minimise the use of external inputs are stressed (p. 81-82). In general, the assessment proposes ‘locally and culturally specific approaches appropriate to the diverse socio-economic and environmental settings’ (p.3).

3. Referring to gender disparities the document highlights the specificity of male/female relations among the highlands’ minorities, and suggests ‘it would be more useful to look at the complementarity between male and female rather than to their presumed inequality’. It cautions that with the expanding market economy and the consequent devaluation of their current activities the status of indigenous women may actually deteriorate (p.61).

**B. Loan Agreement**

4. Although the Loan Agreement contains no references to Indigenous Knowledge as such, there are a number of references to the importance of the mechanisms and processes of community-based planning. ‘Beneficiaries will be involved in the decision-making of the project, beginning at the

village level' (p. vi); 'the key organisational structure for the project will be the village coordination units' (p. 10); the VCUs, it is explained in Annex VI – 3, 'will initially include two representatives chosen by the village to represent it on CDB. As project activities are progressively implemented in the village, VCU will be expanded to include representatives from various interest groups (WUGs, S&C groups, farmers groups etc.)'. In para 56 of page 11, headed Involvement of Local Communities, it states: 'Since over 90% of the population in the project area is comprised of about 20 different ethnic minorities, each with their own beliefs, traditions and cultures, project planning needs to be as decentralised as possible so that target beneficiaries are able to express their needs and priorities directly and have these translated into workplans'. As an example of community ownership, it is emphasised that micro-irrigation schemes will be 'farmer-owned and operated' (p.5).

### **C. Appraisal Report**

5. The Appraisal report repeats the emphasis on community decision-making and the importance of the VCUs (see p. 39). Village-level groups, it says, 'should be embedded in the existing social organisations' (Annex 1/15), and 'VCUs should be encouraged to give their opinions about the quality and quantity of project achievements' (Annex 1/5). Paragraph 196 of the main report states: 'There is a risk that if these communities are not genuinely involved in the planning process, the impact of the project will be sub-optimal. The design of the project attempts to address this risk both by developing community- based planning processes ... and also by allocating specific resources for the development of farmer extension programmes, educational curricula and community healthcare models that are adapted to the needs of different groups' (p. 52).

6. Significantly, one of the guidelines for the selection and training of Village Health Workers is as follows: 'VHWs must have knowledge of both western medicine and traditional herbal medicine' (Annex 1/19).

### **D. Mid-Term Review**

7. The Mid Term Review contains a separate section on The Utilisation of Indigenous Knowledge which is worth quoting in full:

- Much emphasis is rightly placed by IFAD on the importance of traditional knowledge and its utilisation in Project planning and implementation. The shortcomings in this respect are closely tied to the problems in the conduct of PRA and to the survival of the top-down approach in certain components. The Mission did not encounter any explicit opposition among implementing agencies to indigenous knowledge, but there does appear to be further potential for its utilisation. Some agro-forestry models seem to have been established without due regard to micro-climatic and geophysical factors, with a preference for mango, lichee and longan in all areas. Local knowledge concerning water sources and irrigation systems has not always been respected, and considerable potential exists for the replication of traditional household level irrigation schemes widely practised in Zone 2. On-going SIDA studies on indigenous fodder in Zone 1 and Non-Timber Forest Products and enrichment of forest gardens in Zone 3 provide a good starting point for the development of low-input farming systems based on indigenous knowledge.

8. The following paragraph commends the Health Department for incorporating traditional knowledge into its refresher training for VHWs and draws attention to the publication of their booklet Traditional Medical Herbs at Home. However, it also refers to the problematic relations between orthodox and traditional therapeutic practices, which are further discussed in Annex 6.

9. Among the MTR's recommendations (p. 27) is the suggestion that group mechanisms as well as issues of criteria, responsibility, defaults, incentives and sanctions should be decided by the groups themselves. An interesting local initiative in terms of forestry protection is outlined on pp. 19/20, and

important reservations concerning hybrid maize are signaled on p. 17. Both these issues are taken up below.

### **III. FIELD INTERVIEWS: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **A. Project Co-ordination Unit (PCU)**

11. The Project Director said that the Mission's visit had alerted the Project Management to the significance of local knowledge and had started them thinking about where it might be sought and how it might be utilised more effectively. He also suggested that someone at provincial level should be assigned the job of collating examples of IK, which would be the most certain way of ensuring some continuity in this respect. The PCU had prepared a list of thirteen cases where they felt such knowledge had been or might be utilised in the operation of the project, including: local dry stone walling techniques in upland areas utilised by the project for retaining walls and revetments in road construction; techniques of domestic water supply; design and construction of local irrigation schemes; indigenous farming systems and patterns of intercropping; local beekeeping initiatives; stall-feeding and forage provision for livestock; traditional herbs, handcrafts and farming tools.

12. At PCU-level, the M&E section expressed itself satisfied with the monitoring aspect of its function, and emphasised that the formal requirements of reporting from commune and district level were maintained. Monthly commune reports are collated at district level and forwarded to the province. Alongside this, formal process exists the usual informal communications networks. The question as to whether these formal and informal networks are adequate to capture and disseminate significant examples of IK cannot be answered with a straight yes or no. Most examples of local knowledge are well-known either within the particular district or within the province and are treated as a matter of common knowledge. The point is to instil from the beginning of a project the idea that such things should be positively pursued, recorded and utilised where appropriate.

### **IV. COMMUNE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS**

13. In the capture and utilisation of such knowledge, the nature and extent of the links between the farmers and householders at village level with the commune and district officials is clearly crucial. In the HPM, this in turn depends largely on the effectiveness of the Commune Development Boards as the effective interface between district/commune and the villages. UNOPS supervision reports and the Mid-Term Review both stress that the Village Coordination Units exist in name only, and that village representation on the CDBs has been ineffective. Various reasons are suggested for this, among them the geographical distances involved, the remoteness of many of the villages and, in certain areas, the scattered patterns of settlements within so-called villages. Another problem has been the lack of uniformity in the operation of the various project components, so that in many communes only one or two activities have been undertaken. In these cases, the CDB has met infrequently and only for specific interventions, thus having no permanent or sustainable existence in fact. Two villagers (normally the Village Leader and the Leader of the Women's Union) have attended these meetings, but it was admitted to the MTR mission by the project SMA that the village representatives were often reluctant to speak up at these meetings. Certainly, the extended VCUs envisaged in the Appraisal Document and consisting also of representatives of Water Users Groups and Farmers Associations did not materialise. The Mission's own meetings with village leaders confirmed these observations (see below).

14. The additional CDF component that was added to project activities during implementation was designed both to concentrate remaining project funds and activities in smaller areas (and thus to produce a discernible impact) and also to address certain perceived weaknesses of the project in terms of participatory mechanisms. In the majority of CDF communes, the activities are only at the planning stage, with commune development plans awaiting approval from the district. However, the Mission's opinion is that village representation at commune level is still more or less a formality, with village representatives too timid (and in some cases handicapped by linguistic problems) to partake in any

decision-making process. The result is that the commune meetings continue to be a means for the district/commune to instruct the villages rather than being made aware of their needs and priorities.

### **C. Applications of Local Knowledge**

#### **Drystone Walling and Local Craftsmanship in Dong Van**

15. In Dong Van district, the Mission visited Ta Phin village of Ta Phin commune and saw the excellent quality of the dry stone walling techniques customarily employed by the villagers in building the walls enclosing their household compounds. Some of this was of the most superior levels of workmanship, with unmortared walls of great durability and strength, and even right-angled corners perfectly executed. These building techniques have been widely employed by the district in the construction of retaining walls and revetments for the project road building programme. Since the techniques are common to most of the H'mong communities in the area, they cannot be described precisely as a local initiative, and are connected with a long tradition not with a recent innovation. However, the project's awareness of and utilisation of an existing tradition is a good example of how such indigenous knowledge may be usefully and profitably employed.

16. It was also observed by the Mission, however, that several HPM-funded branch schools built in the highlands might also have benefited from a handsome and durable retaining wall demarcating the school precinct and also providing a level play/garden area in front of the school. In one particular branch school, at Tung Timh village of Sung Trai commune, the construction work was complete yet soil immediately behind the school (which was built on a steep slope) was already beginning to clog up the drainage channel for lack of a proper retaining wall. In front of the school, there was a small area of uncultivated soil which ran directly down into maize fields. Recent storms had already started to erode this soil and without a retaining wall, it was easy to see that soon little would be left of the would-be 'play area'. Had the local community been more closely involved in the design and building of the school, it is certain that their own knowledge of soil, weather and stone would have provided the appropriate 'local' solution. In general, the new branch schools visited by the Mission had the appearance of being rather hastily 'added' to the village environment – meeting the formal specifications in terms of classroom space and building materials but neglecting the opportunity to create the kind of 'model' environment that would have been possible with some extra care and a little extra investment. Local materials such as timber had been used in schools where the material was available locally, but even in villages where there was evidence of local craftsmanship in terms of decorative woodworking, these techniques were notably absent in the schools themselves. In Tung Tinh village, several of the stone bases of the wooden columns were elegantly carved and decorated, but these simple adornments had not been employed for the school building. While it is understandable that the Education Department should opt for a standardised and economical model for school buildings, small details of local workmanship would serve to beautify local branch schools and to give them some of the distinctive character of the locality.

#### **Forestry Protection in Quan Ba**

17. In Na Trang village of Tam Son town in the district of Quan Ba, the Mission met with a number of key farmers under the forestry protection scheme promoted and supported by HPM. The forestry protection scheme is based on a five-year contracting of forest areas to local villagers, by which selected villagers receive a yearly allowance for undertaking the protection of the forest. Acting on their own initiative as a community, in 1990 the villagers established their own system of protecting the local forest, which over a period of many years had been subject to depredation at the hands of local and outside agencies. The resulting deforestation had started to have an impact on the local water resources, and the villagers acted by selecting eight of their number to undertake the work of protecting the forest. Every household contributed to the provision of 200 kgs of rice for the eight protection workers involved. The system worked successfully for eight years before the setting up of the HPM contract scheme. In effect, the HPM scheme simply added a cash incentive to an existing initiative, and according to the key farmers (including the village leader) interviewed by the Mission,

enabled them significantly to increase the remuneration to the forest protection workers. All agreed that the re-greening of the forest over the period since 1990 was immediately discernible. In the year 2000, the MTR had raised certain questions as to the sustainability of the contract scheme, suggesting that protection of the forest might cease when the protection fees were no longer paid (after five years). In Ha Trang village, what is truly sustainable – just because it resulted from a local initiative without outside help – is the community determination to protect its own forest, based on its own awareness of their importance in terms of water, soil conservation and micro-climate.

### **Silvi-cultural initiatives in Quan Ba**

18. In Truc Son village in Quan Ba, the Agricultural Extension department had encouraged and assisted the cultivation and harvesting of two separate silvi-cultural products, namely the truc bamboo and the medicinal herb thao qua. The truc bamboo is indigenous to the region and has long been selectively harvested by the villagers who sell the cane for export to China, where it is used in various articles of furniture as well as for fishing rods. The initiative of the Agricultural Extension department, operating through the HPM project, has been to teach farmers to plant and tend the indigenous bamboo species in new areas, thereby increasing the production and the resulting cash income. The Mission was shown certain cases where areas normally reserved for the planting of maize have now been turned over to the cultivation of truc bamboo. The case of the thao qua medicinal herb is similar. The wild plant is harvested in the forest by the villagers and sold for export to China, where it is a valued ingredient in a number of Chinese herbal medicines. The Agricultural Department has supported the cultivation of the herb in new locations in the forest: the rootstock is divided and re-planted in favourable spots, and harvested accordingly. In both these examples, the project has grafted a new activity on to an indigenous practice and thus been able to make better use of an already existing market. The fact that villagers have been turning from their staple maize cultivation to cultivation of truc bamboo indicates their confidence in this new source of income.

### **Hybrid vs. Indigenous Varieties of Maize**

19. The reservations expressed by the 1996 Socio-Economic Assessment (see 2.1 above) were reiterated by the Mid-Term Review four years later. And yet the Agricultural Department seems to have persisted with the idea of the superiority of the hybrid varieties, based on yield alone and regardless of whether or not they are suited for cultivation in the highland areas. The Mission encountered several instances where local upland farmers objected to the hybrid varieties. In Truc Son village of Quan Ba district, a group of farmers told the Mission that the hybrid crop could not be stored for more than a month before being attacked by a pest that effectively ruined the crop. The village leader in the neighbouring Pan Ho village confirmed this, pointing also to the poor size of the cobs and giving his verdict that the hybrid seed was ‘good for nothing’. Yet there had been a considerable DARD initiative to support the planting of the hybrid variety in these regions the previous season, an initiative of which the local households had clearly suffered the consequences. The local project officer admitted that the initiative had been a failure in the upland areas. This is a case, it seems, where the so-called improved variety has been preferred by DARD without due consideration for the virtues of the indigenous variety. In the Ha De villages of Dong Van, the Mission saw recently harvested cobs of the indigenous strain that could hardly be bettered for size and appearance. The inherent problem of sustainability connected with the use of hybrid varieties should also be referred to. If the farmers are dependent on the government (and also on international trading agreements) for their supply of seed, there does exist an underlying lack of security in this respect. At present, subsidised hybrid seed is made available to farmers, but there can be no guarantee that this provision will continue indefinitely. Therefore, there are four separate counts on which the indigenous crop is preferable in many highland areas – storage, preferred taste, shorter cooking times (and therefore less fuelwood consumption) and sustainability. The project might have taken more energetic steps to collaborate and consult with DARD over this issue, which essentially is one of ‘indigenous’ versus ‘imported’ wisdom.

## **Traditional Medicine**

20. The HPM loan document specifically provides for the Village Health Workers trained under the project to receive some instruction in traditional therapies, and the MTR noted that this did not appear to have taken place. The Health Department responded by saying that this was due to the shortness of the initial training and not to any objections on their part. They reminded the MTR that they had issued a booklet on the uses of traditional herbs. Various enquiries made by the current Mission seemed to indicate that indeed there is no rooted opposition to traditional medicine on the part of the health authorities, and one celebrated traditional healer, Mr. Luong Huy Ding, in an interview with the Mission in Dong Van town, said that his relations with the local health department were cordial. Doctors at the hospital, he said, would regularly consult with him over difficult cases. He also pointed out that there a tradition of secrecy among traditional healers does exist, among who in most cases the medicinal knowledge is passed on from generation to generation but never shared with outsiders. There also exists – quite understandably – a suspicion among government health authorities of crank healers, often referred to as mere fortune-tellers. The relationship between traditional and ‘modern’ (i.e. western) medicine is complex, but the indications in Ha Giang are that a relationship does exist and might usefully be pursued further.

## **Tea cultivation in Bac Quang**

21. The development of tea-planting in the highland regions of Zone 3, where conditions are appropriate, was supported by a SIDA programme in certain communes, and has also been encouraged by the government in the shape of a VND 5 million initial subsidy to farmers. Privately-owned tea processing plants already exist, and export markets to Taiwan and Pakistan have been established. At one processing plant, the owner told the Mission that her enterprise was running at well below maximum capacity because of the shortage of raw material. On her own initiative she had carried out training programmes for local farmers to encourage them to increase the hectareage of tea plantations. This is perhaps a case where if the HPM had been more aware of the possibilities of what was essentially a local initiative, they might have channelled funds into appropriate training programmes, farmer field schools and so on.

## **Handicrafts**

22. Most handmade clothes, baskets, bags and utensils are made for home use. Some of them are of excellent workmanship, notably brightly-patterned costumes and headresses. The techniques of hemp cultivation and linen production among the H’mong communities are ingenious and sophisticated. However, they are also extremely laborious and cannot be extended unless suitable markets exist. One Women’s Union Leader from Vi Xuyen district took the initiative to supervise and improve the production of a simple yet elegant carrying bag of local Thai design, and sent some examples of this to Italy. (See also ‘Development of Marketing’, Annexe, 1.3).

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND INSIGHTS**

23. Of the 23 ethnic minorities in Ha Giang province, the H’mong peoples may be said, geographically and culturally, to exist at the greatest remove from mainstream development patterns. For this reason, special attention was given to these groups in the 1996 Socio-Economic Assessment, and workers in development at all levels tend to regard their situation as presenting the greatest and most intractable challenge. However, it should be emphasised – and this is perhaps the single most encouraging finding to arise from the current study – that attitudes to the H’mong culture among government officials and elected representatives are by no means negative. There is in fact a widespread admiration for what the H’mong have achieved in terms of subsistence agriculture in terrain of the most difficult kind. The vice-chairman of the Provincial Peoples Committee and chairman of the Project Steering Committee singled out the expertise of the H’mong farmers, giving as examples their sophisticated inter-cropping techniques, their household-level iron forges, and their extreme diligence in cultivating maize on very steep slopes, which often requires soil to be

transported from the valleys to allow the planting of maize among the rocks of the hilltops. This respect was echoed by the PCU, who highlighted the suitability of indigenous animal breeds and crop varieties, the development of bee-keeping related to the flowering of certain wild flowers after the maize harvest, the quality of homemade tools, the stall-feeding of cattle and efficient fodder management.

24. In other words, the poverty of remote H'mong villages has to do with water shortage, the harsh and rugged environment, population increase and the remoteness of markets, and not at all with an inherent lack of expertise or knowledge. The pressure on scant natural resources and a long previous process of deforestation has led in remote upland areas to cycles of soil erosion and drought to which there is no simple solution. The conservation of soils and forests can only be carried out where there are forests and soils to conserve. The CPRE Mission, and the Ha Giang MTR mission that followed, both drew attention to the growing environmental crisis in certain areas, and two radical proposals were made: that H'mong villagers should be paid with maize or rice to replant denuded slopes; and that saplings should be made freely available to households for planting in locations of their choice. Such proposals tend to provoke objections from government departments as well as donor agencies, who for rather different reasons are opposed to interventions of this kind. However, the point to be grasped is that the indigenous knowledge of the subtle relations between soils, farming systems, forests and micro-climates does already exist. What is lacking is not the knowledge but the means to reverse long-term cycles of environmental decline, and these means can only be supplied through major investments and radical solutions.

25. In terms of management culture, the Mission was generally impressed by the sympathetic and sensitive approach of officials toward indigenous knowledge. The suggestion of the Project Director that future projects of this kind attempt to institutionalise the process of identifying and 'capturing' examples of local knowledge by allocating specific responsibility at provincial level seems a sound proposal. Again, what is needed is not instruction in the significance of local initiatives but simply the formal establishing of appropriate fora and channels whereby such knowledge may be communicated and disseminated. The responsibility for IK within the PCU might be allocated to the individual responsible for social mobilisation initiatives, since he or she will be closest to the existing and developing channels of communication between provincial, district, commune and village level.

26. The preference under Project activities for large-scale interventions, and the provision that the 'investors' in schemes over VND 10 million should be the provincial and district authorities, serve to restrict the effective scope of commune-level and village-level competence. (For a fuller discussion, see Annexe 1.2 and 2.2). One effect of this is the predominance of road building in commune plans. To take single example, a commune in Zone 1 will build two kilometres of three-metre wide road at a cost of VND 160 million dong, out of a CDF total of VND 400 million, or around forty percent of the entire sum. There are thirteen villages in the commune and the new road will connect one of them to the commune. The villagers of the other twelve will continue to manage their lives on foot as before, and indeed the majority of the villagers in the first village will do so as well. Only those prosperous enough to spend VND 7-10 million on a motorbike will directly benefit from the road. The rest will walk, not on the new road, because it will go a very long way round, whereas the old established paths are short cuts one and all. They do not cause erosion, they do not devour scarce cultivable areas, and the village people who use them, and whose ancestors have used them for centuries, are perfectly adapted to their use. It will be argued that the importance of the road consists in what will be brought along it: fertilisers, medical supplies, breeze blocks, school furniture, metal guttering and so on. But the road will only reach one village out of the thirteen. Besides, animal dung is both more sustainable and more environmentally sensitive than chemical fertiliser; bamboo guttering is cheap, practical and aesthetically pleasing; school furniture can be locally manufactured; breeze blocks can be made on site, using local labour and also the natural resource for which Zone 1 is most conspicuous: stone. The provincial authorities already provide a subsidy for the purchase of stone crushers, which in the case of villages without roads might be assembled in situ.

27. The rationale of the introduction by the Project of the CDF is that the villagers themselves determine their priorities, and if they freely choose to spend the bulk of the fund on road building, there can be no objection. Yet it is a surprising choice in cases where some families still go hungry for two or three months a year, where many of the schoolchildren don't go to school on cold days because they do not have warm clothes, where the children of the poorest households may not attend school at all during the hungry months, where many of the houses are partly open to the weather and where the animal quarters are immediately next to the homes themselves. The 1996 socio-economic assessment, which of all project documents demonstrates the most sensitivity to local knowledge and local priorities, warns against roads being seen as a panacea for development issues, but the implications of this warning were not adequately reflected in project design, which required more stringent guarantees that local priorities be effectively respected. Given the lack of experience of decentralisation within the province prior to the operation of the HPM, given the uneven distribution of project interventions and given the nature of the terrain itself, it is hardly surprising that the 'key organisational structure' (the VCU) has failed to materialise and that village priorities have not been effectively consulted. However, important issues have thereby been raised and these may be addressed in the design of future IFAD projects in Vietnam and elsewhere.

## **VI. THE MISSION**

28. The Mission for the HPM case study consisted of Mr. Roger Norman, Ms. Divya Nair, Mr. Pham Quang Hoa and Ms. Phan Y Ly. Interviews and field visits were conducted in Ha Giang town, Dong Van district and Quan Ba district between August 19<sup>th</sup> and August 30<sup>th</sup> 2002. The Mission is especially grateful to HPM Project Director Mr. Hoang Van Son for his help and guidance.

## **Thematic Evaluation on Promotion of Local Knowledge and Innovations in Asia and the Pacific Region**

### **Stakeholders' Workshop Concept Note**

#### **A. Background**

In 2002-2003, IFAD's Office of Evaluation (OE) undertook a thematic evaluation on local knowledge and innovations in Asia. The overall objective of the evaluation was to analyse current practices and experiences of the Asia and Pacific Division (PI) with regard to scouting, utilising and promoting local knowledge and innovations. It would also provide building blocks to ensure greater mainstreaming of local knowledge and innovations in PI's regional strategy and overall operations.

It is an established practice for OE to organise, in close consultation with key partners, a stakeholders' workshop as a final stage in the thematic evaluation process. Such a workshop would provide an opportunity to discuss with a wider partnership the findings and conclusions from the evaluation, as well as develop a common understanding on the broad directions for future strategy and investment opportunities in the region.

#### **B. Objectives of Workshop**

The overall objective of the workshop is to prepare the grounds for formulating the evaluation's Agreement at Completion Point (ACP), based on the issues papers (see section C) to be discussed during the workshop. The ACP will include key insights and concrete recommendations that will guide IFAD and its partners in defining priority areas of action and in further developing PI's regional strategy that will contribute to systematically incorporating local knowledge and innovations as a key element in IFAD-assisted project/programmes.

The workshop will also serve as a platform for presenting the results of the Contest to Scout for Local Knowledge and Innovations in the Asia region, which was undertaken between October 2002 and February 2003. This was an activity undertaken within the framework of the evaluation to identify good practices and innovations of the rural poor as well as to showcase the potential of their creativity. The three winners (farmers) together with their scouts will be invited to attend an awards ceremony that will be held in their honour during the workshop. The farmers and their scouts will share and discuss with workshop participants their innovation/good practice.

#### **C. Expected Focus and Output of the workshop**

The workshop will consider three key themes emerging from the evaluation that require further reflection and discussion. Based on the evaluation report and the eight project case studies undertaken, an issues paper on each of the themes will be prepared. The issues paper will constitute the starting point for discussion during the workshop, which will benefit from the observations and suggestions of the participants. The themes are as follows: (a) Enabling environment for local knowledge and innovations; (b) Pre-requisites for promotion of local knowledge and innovations through peoples' participation; and (c) Operational procedures for enhanced utilisation of local knowledge and innovations.

The main output of the workshop will be a short document summarising an agreement reached among workshop participants on important issues, insights and recommendations for the future co-operation framework between IFAD, the representatives of the eight projects, concerned governments, representatives from NGOs/Civil Society, UNOPS and others.

#### **D. Time, Venue and Accommodation**<sup>17</sup>

The workshop will be held at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok on 23-24 July 2003 (1½ days). The proposed agenda for the workshop is being prepared and will be forwarded to all the concerned parties as soon as possible for their comments.

#### **E. Field Visit**

A field visit will be organised before the workshop from 21-22 July to Prachuap Khiri Khan and Phetchaburi provinces<sup>18</sup>. This will provide an opportunity to visiting project staff and others to hold discussions with beneficiaries and to see activities on the ground. The team will travel from Bangkok to the provinces and back by coach.

#### **F. Invitation to the Workshop and Background Documentation**

Invitations will be extended by Director OE. In terms of documents, IFAD will distribute the draft report on the thematic evaluation and copies of the issues papers on the topics mentioned under section C.

#### **G. Attendance and Proposed List of Participants**

The final list of participants is being currently prepared by IFAD and it will tentatively include representatives from the following institutions:

##### **Project Co-ordinator or their representatives**

1. Cambodia: Agriculture Development Support Project to Seila
2. China: Yunnan-Simao Minorities Area Agricultural Development Project
3. India: Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project
4. India: North-East Region Community Resource Management Project
5. Nepal: Hills Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development Project
6. Philippines: Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project
7. Sri Lanka: Second Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project
8. Vietnam: Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities

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<sup>17</sup> A one-day seminar will be held on 25 July devoted entirely to Monitoring and Evaluation. The workshop will be facilitated by Dr Fredric William Swierczek, Professor in the School of Management at AIT. The key objective will be to sensitise project staff to the M&E Guide, and to identify their concerns about M&E in general and the M&E Guide in particular. The concrete experiences of an IFAD-funded project in Laos in using the new M&E Guide will also be presented and discussed. The participants of the Stakeholders' Workshop on local knowledge and innovations are invited to attend this seminar as well. The key document for discussions on 25 July will be IFAD M&E Guide, which has been distributed by PI to all concerned. This one-day workshop will be facilitated by Mr Jim Woodhill, one of the core authors of the M&E Guide.

<sup>18</sup> Field work will include visit to: (a) Nong Khlang Dong Self-Learning and Integrated Development Center, Sam Roi Yot district, Prachuap Khiri Khan province. Briefing and discussion by the community leaders on self-reliance and sustainable community, data collection techniques, problem identification and prioritisation, formulation of self-reliance community plan, planning procedures, how to make the plan works with less interference from the outside and differences between government-led development projects and community-led development projects; and (b) Huai Sai Royal Development Study Center, Cha Am district, Phetchaburi province. Briefing and discussion on the royal initiatives on integrated area development: the "New Theory Model" or the proper management of land and water resources for optimum benefits for poor farmers, "the Bad Land Project" for soil and water conservation, agricultural technology transfer on land use planning and the use of vetiver grass, research and development on livestock, vegetables, herbs and cottage industry, etc. Observe activities around the Center.

9. One project representative (preferably the M&E officer) will be invited from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao and Pakistan, particularly to participate in the one day M&E workshop on 25 July (see footnote 1).

### **Government Representatives**

One government representative will be invited from Cambodia, China, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The specific institution/person to be invited from each country will be discussed with PI.

### **Regional Development Partners**

1. Asian Development Bank
2. Food & Agricultural Organisation
3. United Nations Development Programme
4. World Bank
5. ESCAP
6. UNOPS Staff - Asia Office
7. WFP Regional Office, Bangkok
8. Global Knowledge Partnership, Malaysia

### **NGOs/CBOs**

1. Cambodia, Seilanithih
2. China, CIAD
3. India, Chaitanya
4. Nepal, DEPROSC
5. Philippines, Consortium of Cordillera Organisations for Resource Equitability and Development Inc. and the Shontoug Community Consortium
6. Sri Lanka, Women's Conference

### **Resource Persons**

1. Prof. Anil Gupta, Co-ordinator, SRISTI & Indian Institute of Management
2. Mr B.N. Yugandhar, Lead Consultant
3. Mr Wietse Bruinsma, Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation, NUFFIC
4. Ms. Shalini Kala, ENRAP Co-ordinator
5. Other IFAD TAG-recipients (ICIMOD, ICRAF)

### **IFAD Staff & Consultants**

1. Mr Luciano Lavizzari, Director OE
2. Mr Erik Martens, Officer in Charge, Asia and Pacific Division (PI)
3. Mr Ganesh Thapa, Regional Economist, PI
4. Mr Ashwani Muthoo, Evaluation Officer, OE
5. Ms Anita Joshi, Workshop focal point, OE
6. Ms Lucy Ariano, Evaluation Assistant, OE

### **Contest winners**

#### **First place**

West Guangxi Poverty Alleviation Project, China

Farmers: Huang Meizhen, Feng Shimei and Ma Xiuhua from Ma Du sub-village (Guo Tao village in Long He Township, Na Po County) represented by Mr. Gao Keyi, Program Officer - West Guangxi Poverty Alleviation Project

Scout: Mr. Huang Yubin, Deputy Director – Napo Country Project Management Office  
Innovation: Dyeing technique of the black Zhuang nationality's black cloth

### **Second place**

Maharashtra Rural Credit Project, India

Farmer: Mr. Chaitram Deochand Pawar from Baripada in Tehsil Sakri, District Dhule

Scout: Dr. Anand Gajanan Phatak, Janaseva Foundation

Innovation: Community-based organisation for the protection, conservation and development of forest in Maharashtra

### **Third place**

Ha Tinh Rural Development Project, Vietnam

Farmer: Mr. Tran Dinh Quy from Can Loc District of Ha Tinh

Scout: Mr. Tran Dinh Hoa, Project Coordinator, Ha Tinh Rural Development Project

Innovation: Protecting ripe longan fruits from bats using flowers of the “Da Lan Huon” tree

## **H. Design of the Workshop**

A proposed Workshop agenda is being formulated for consideration by the concerned parties, with the emphasis on maintaining the discussion on key insights emerging from the evaluation, including policy and strategic issues. The agenda will be formulated to enable smooth coverage of discussions over a one and a half-day period.

Professor Anil Gupta will be the keynote speaker of the workshop and invited to make opening remarks about local knowledge and innovations. The IFAD Director of OE and Officer in Charge of PI will then be asked to share their thoughts and observations. Subsequently, a presentation on the key insights from the evaluation will be made by the responsible Evaluation Officer. This will lead the way for a presentation by resources person(s) on the issues papers prepared on the key workshop themes. Time will be reserved for reflection, observation and debate from the floor in the plenary session. Before making a break for lunch, the awards ceremony will take place to honour the three winning farmers and their scouts, who submitted the best examples of good practices and innovations from the grassroots level.

After lunch break, the farmers will each be given the opportunity to present their innovations in the plenary. This session will last approximately an hour, thus giving participants a possibility to interact and engage in discussion with the farmers and their scouts. Following this item, the participants will break out into three Working Groups. Each group will be asked to brainstorm on one of the Workshop themes. A short closing plenary session will be convened at the end of day one of the workshop for few general observations.

Following opening remarks made by the Chairperson on the morning of day two, the Coordinator of ENRAP will make a short presentation in the plenary on the role of ENRAP (IFAD Electronic Network for Rural Poverty Alleviation in Asia/Pacific) in documenting and disseminating grassroots innovations and good practices. Subsequently, each Working Group will present to the plenary their feedback on the issues examined during the group sessions on day one, with the aim of providing a useful way to achieve appropriate integration among the topics discussed. During this session, time will be devoted to discussions in the plenary and the workshop facilitator (see next paragraph) will summarise the key points. The lead OE evaluation office will then report on the next steps in the finalisation of the evaluation.

The workshop will be conducted under the Chairmanship of Professor Gajendra Singh, Dean AIT Extension, AIT). A workshop facilitator (Dr Fredric Swierczek, Faculty Coordinator at the School of Management, AIT) will be responsible for facilitating plenary discussions, providing adequate space and attention to key issues and all participants.

**J. Workshop Preparation Process**

- |                                                                     |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Distribution of Draft Workshop Concept Note to PI                 | 6 June 2003       |
| • Revision of Concept Note                                          | 11 June           |
| • Invitation letters sent to projects and others                    | 13 June           |
| • Discussion at IFAD on draft report & identification of w/s issues | 17 June           |
| • Preparation of issues paper                                       | 17 June – 11 July |
| • Finalisation of Provisional workshop agenda                       | 11 July           |
| • Dispatch Concept Note & Provisional Agenda to all                 | Week 14 July      |
| • Travel to Bangkok for Workshop                                    | 19-20 July        |
| • Field visit to project site                                       | 21-22 July        |
| • Workshop on Local Knowledge & Innovations                         | 23-24 July        |
| • Workshop on M&E                                                   | 25 July           |
| • Draft ACP for distribution                                        | 15 August         |
| • Finalisation of ACP                                               | 30 August         |



**WORKSHOP ON PROMOTION OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATIONS  
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION**

**(BANGKOK, 24 JULY 2003)**

**CLOSING STATEMENT**

Mr Luciano Lavizzari  
Director  
IFAD Office of Evaluation

Let me start by saying that I am pleased to have this opportunity at the end of the workshop to share my thoughts with you about the discussions we have had in the last couple of days. I will also provide you a synopsis of the major issues that have emerged and recommendations on local knowledge and innovations.

However, before I go into the details, I would like to convey how pleased i was to see your very active participation in the workshop deliberations, which is an illustration of your appreciation for the need to provide greater space to local knowledge and innovations in the preparation of development strategies and in the design of IFAD-supported project and programmes.

I will now provide you some highlights of the discussions held in the plenary sessions of the workshop and the main issues and recommendations that were captured in the power point presentations made by the three working groups. But, before doing so, I would like to recall the three core themes that each working group discussed:

Working Group 1:	<b>Enabling environment for Local Knowledge &amp; Innovations</b>
Working Group 2:	<b>Prerequisites for promotion of Local Knowledge &amp; Innovations through people's participation</b>
Working Group 3:	<b>Operational procedures for promotion of Local Knowledge &amp; Innovations</b>

A very important recommendation that was made under theme I was the need to include a clear policy statement on local knowledge & innovation in the IFAD regional strategy paper for Asia and the Pacific and the various country strategy and opportunities paper (COSOPs). It was also agreed that IFAD and others need to allocate adequate resources to operationalise their strategic objectives related to local knowledge & innovation. In addition, the need to undertake a review of the IFAD project design process was considered important, in order to ensure the mainstreaming of local knowledge & innovation right from the outset in the project life cycle.

On theme I, the workshop also emphasized the need for IFAD to engage systematically in policy dialogue during the preparations of COSOPs and new activities with governments and other partners in order to promote pro-poor policies and development approaches that pay due attention to local knowledge and innovations. There were other recommendations too, on issues related to capacity building, dissemination, the need to devise incentive structures, the importance of promoting adaptive research to develop sustainable low-cost technologies and on IFAD's facilitation role for building partnerships and stakeholder coalitions. The detailed recommendations on these topics will be recorded in the evaluation's agreement at completion point which will be shared with all of you in the coming days in draft format.

There were three broad areas covered by the working group dealing with theme 2 on prerequisites for promotion of local knowledge & innovations through people's participation. These 3 areas were: (a) project cycle; (b) institutional aspects; and (c) implementation aspects. Under project cycle, it was stressed that there should be the full involvement of primary stakeholders in all key aspects of project formulation and that IFAD should facilitate their participation throughout implementation. With regard to participation, participants stressed it should be a continuous process throughout the project life cycle that would, inter-alia, allow them to take control of their own development, and provided an opportunity to promote their local knowledge & innovation. The quality of participation was emphasized, rather than just the quantity of groups established and numbers of people involved.

Under institutional aspects, it was strongly recommended that community-based organizations be given greater management responsibilities and control over resources, so that they can be empowered to take decisions and be responsible for their own development. However, it was recognized that such actions will have to be matched by the capacity building of local communities. It was also recommended that existing informal and formal organizations be strengthened and fully utilized before new organizations are promoted.

On implementation aspects, the plenary discuss among other aspects, the need to ensure continuous identification, documentation, validation, dissemination and customization of local knowledge & innovations. Finally, the need to establish and develop the approach to revolving fundings and cost sharing mechanisms for mainstreaming local knowledge & innovation was considered important.

Finally, the main objective of the group 3 presentation on operational procedures for promotion of local knowledge & innovations was to emphasise that there may be conflict between local knowledge and official norms, and that IFAD must therefore insist on certain contractual conditions to ensure genuine community participation. The capture of local knowledge & innovations may best be achieved by enabling local people to come up with their own solution. This process of enablement will include decentralization measures, timely capacity building programmes and genuinely participatory M&E systems.

As mentioned before, all the valuable comments and suggestions made during the plenary this morning and by the working groups which have not been captured in these closing remarks will be summarized in the evaluation's Agreement at Completion Point.

Very briefly now, I would like to summarise the next steps in finalizing the thematic evaluation on local knowledge and evaluation. Firstly, we will prepare the final report of the evaluation, and simultaneously, we will prepare the agreement at completion point. The ACP

is an action-oriented document containing the key insights & recommendations from the evaluation and the workshop discussions. The Agreement at Completion Point, which will be shared with you in draft format, will provide the starting point for the implementation of recommendations that have been discussed. Following the finalization of the report and the agreement at completion point, an evaluation profile will be prepared. a profile is a 500-700 word summary written in reader friendly style of the evaluation for broader dissemination. in addition, we shall produce one or more evaluation insights. Each insight will be built on one, only one, key learning hypothesis from the evaluation, and served to further the very interesting debate we have had through the thematic evaluation.

The report, Agreement at Completion Point, profile & insights will all be provided to you all in hard copies and posted on the IFAD website under the section on evaluation. In terms of time-frame, we shall send you the draft agreement at completion point by end of august, and finalise all other documents by the end October 2003.

Before closing, this workshop, I would like to thank each and every one of you for being here with us in Bangkok. For those who participated in the field visit, I sincerely hope you found it instructive and enjoyable. As you know, we have another days work ahead of us tomorrow on monitoring & evaluation. However, I know some of you will not be able to join us due to other engagements. For those of you who will be leaving us, on behalf of IFAD and all the participants, I would like to thank you for coming and wish you a safe journey home.

On behalf of IFAD, I reserve my final word of deepest gratitude to Professor Gajendra Singh and his team from AIT extension for their highly effective and efficient collaboration in the organization of the workshop. It was a real pleasure to come to know you Professor Singh, both as a person and as a highly capable Chairman and Professor. I would also like to thank Dr Fredrick Swierczek for very ably facilitating our plenary discussions this morning.

There is a boat trip cum dinner tonight and I look forward to seeing you then!