

## Morocco: Rural Development Project for Taourirt-Tafouralt

| Item                              | Assessment Remarks  | Rating |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------|
| <b>Country &amp; Project Name</b> | <b>Morocco: Rural Development Project for Taourirt-Tafouralt</b>  |        |
| Loan No.                          | 437-MA  |        |
| Project Id.                       | 1010  |        |
| Board Date                        | 4 Dec 1996  |        |
| Effectiveness Date                | 16 Oct 1998   |        |
| Original Closing Date             | 31 Dec 2005   |        |
| Final Closing Date                | 30 Jun 2010   |        |
| Total Project Cost USD(M)         | USD 49.42 million   |        |
| IFAD loan USD (M)                 | USD 19.52 million   |        |
| Cofinanciers (if any)             | USD 7.05 (OFID- Opec Fund for International Development) (and USD 22.85 million (Kingdom of Morocco))   |        |
| Implementing Agency               | Ministry of Agriculture through the Direction Provinciale de l'Agriculture (DPA), Office Régional de Mise en Valeur Agricole de la Moulouya (ORMVAM); Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêts de l'Oriental (DREFO); and Laboratoire Régional des Analyses et Recherches Vétérinaires (LRARVO)   |        |
| Principal Components              | The overall objective of the project was to improve the incomes and living conditions of the rural populations, especially women through activities aiming at improved natural resources management and protection, increased agricultural production and profitability, and sustainable rangeland development. It also aims at improving the living conditions of women and the youth through support to income generating activities and developing domestic water. Components include: (i) land development; (ii) intensification of agricultural production; (iii) socio-economic development; and (iv) project management.   |        |
|                                   |   |        |
| <b>Project Performance</b>        |   |        |
| Relevance                         | The project was approved in 1996, before IFAD introduced the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) and the Strategic Framework. It is aligned with Government's strategy to improve the living conditions of the rural populations. It is also aligned with more recent strategies such as the National Initiative for Human Development (2005), the Strategy 2020, the Green Morocco Plan and others. Common strategic elements are: (i) beneficiaries' participation in project implementation; and (ii) sustainable natural resources management. Despite not being fully participatory (no participatory design of village or community development plans), the project builds on an in-depth analysis of the main development constraints faced by the beneficiaries in the project area and their needs. Later, the approach gradually changed and the project sought to establish an open dialogue with the beneficiaries. Given the specificity of the region, it combines improved living conditions and incomes with the rehabilitation and protection of the natural resource base (land and water).   | 5      |
| Effectiveness                     | The project's objectives were altogether met and results were satisfactory. Most achievement rates were reached or even surpassed. Adoption rates were high. The project has contributed to improving rural incomes through the development of small & medium irrigation systems, water supply, agricultural intensification (alley cropping, introduction of fodder shrubs and new profitable crops), land development including de-rocking (rangeland, forest areas, farm land), soil and water conservation, and support to socio-economic activities targeted at women and the youth including the development of profitable value chains (olive oil, almond, milk and honey production). Its main success has been the empowerment of the beneficiaries through the creation, strengthening and consolidation of more than 180 different associations & cooperatives, capable now to establish their own partnerships (water user associations/ WUAs, forest user & rangeland management associations, producer organizations, etc.). The project's only weak point has been its failure to support the creation of micro-enterprises for the youth. All activities have had a positive impact on hh incomes, food security and rural livelihoods in general. The project was extended for a total duration of 4.5 years which has contributed to the consolidation of achievements. | 5      |
| Efficiency                        | All planned activities were implemented and achievements rates were reached or could be surpassed. However, the project was extended twice for a total duration of 4.5 years. These extension allowed it to compensate for initial delays (effectiveness lag of 22.7 months) and a slow overall implementation pace (inefficient implementation arrangements) and to reach higher achievement / disbursement rates and tangible results. The PCR provides a detailed analysis of costs (unit costs, activity costs) and profitability of the project. Some costs were higher, other similar or lower than appraisal estimates. Price competition enabled the project to purchase some goods or services at prices lower than those established at appraisal. The economic rate of return (ERR) was calculated and found to be lower than the ERR estimated at appraisal (12.9% against 22.2%). However, several benefits could not be accounted for either because the necessary cost elements were not available or because benefits   | 4      |

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|                                     | were not quantifiable (improved living conditions, increased food availability). In the PCR, efficiency is rated moderately satisfactory compared with other IFAD projects in Morocco and with projects implemented under similar conditions. The disbursement rate at completion was 75% (July 2010).   |        |
| Project Performance                 |  | 5      |
| <b>Partner Performance</b>          |  |        |
| IFAD                                | IFAD support was found satisfactory but there is no detailed assessment. IFAD has carried out regular follow-up missions and an MTR in 2003 which has adjusted the project to the real needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and their implementation partners. IFAD has also provided support to the implementation of a coordination mechanism between the various Government agencies responsible for the implementation of the project. The various training/exchange workshops organized by IFAD in the region have been highly appreciated by government staff. Project implementation has probably also benefited from the IFAD liaison office in Rabat but this has not been assessed in the PCR.  | 5      |
| Cooperating Institution             | The project has benefited from 12 supervisions missions (1 every year between 1999-2010). Supervision missions by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) were considered timely and recommendations and directions given were appropriate and useful. However, these missions were found weak in terms of technical and organizational support, since they are short and generally more focused on administrative and fiduciary aspects. As such, the supervision mission did not always respond to the actual needs of the project.   | 4      |
| Government                          | The DPA, who was responsible for managing the project (PMU), has played a key role in mobilizing the populations around environmentally and economically relevant activities, in strengthening their capacities and contributing to their empowerment. Government's performance was satisfactory and cost efficient. Nevertheless, it lacked pro-active management towards finding solutions to emerging problems. Government performance was particularly weak in two areas: (i) M&E: this function was never really taken on by the relevant department within the Ministry of Agriculture. As a result, project M&E was limited to collecting quantitative output figures (no impact measurement); (ii) project management: project management and coordination was not undertaken by an independent and autonomous body but by the DPA, which managed the project aside its others responsibilities. Responsibilities were spread over several departments, activities were inappropriately coordinated and fluctuation of staff has had a disruptive effect on implementation. Finally, technical support and follow-up at local level was weak. Counterpart funds were paid, but not always in the expected amount. The steering committee last met in 2004.                                 | 4      |
| NGO/CBOs                            | The project was approved in 1996 and implemented through existing states structures. No major activities were sub-contracted to NGOs or private partners. Nevertheless, the project has largely benefited from synergies with other partners, both national and international (bilateral, NGOs), incl. the parallel financing of complementary interventions in the same area. These partnership interventions are neither presented nor analysed in detail in the PCR, but it seems that these have greatly contributed to the project's achievements and might be a very positive example for efficient partnership development at local level.  | 5      |
| Cofinancier(s)                      | OFID was identified as a co-financer for drinking water (USD 7.05 million). Its performance is however not assessed due to lack of information.  | NR     |
| <b>Combined Partner Performance</b> | Cooperation, communication and partnership building seem to have worked very well throughout the implementation period. The project has greatly benefited from synergies of joint interventions by IFAD, other IFIs, bilateral, Government financed programmes and NGOs in the same area of intervention.  |        |
| <b>Rural Poverty Impact</b>         |  |        |
| Household Income and Net Assets     | The project has helped improving access to water, land, livestock & technologies. Access to water was improved through improved water supply infrastructure and the creation of WUAs to ensure more sustainable use & management. Access to land was improved through de-rocking which led to land price increases from 5000 to 40000 – 70000 DH/ha after de-rocking. Access to livestock was improved through: (i) distribution of small livestock to interested groups (incl. new breeds); (ii) land resting on 17198 ha which has allowed the regeneration of perennial tree species; and (iii) expansion of land coverage with fodder shrubs (17-30% increase). Finally, access to technologies was improved through the introduction of new agricultural production techniques (alley cropping) and new crops (i.e. alfalfa, capers, olives and almonds). As a result, agricultural production could be expanded, intensified, and diversified. New sources of incomes were introduced: goat and sheep rearing, beekeeping, olive oil production, almond production, medicinal plants, and irrigation systems assistance (women and the youth). Adoption rates are high and it can be assumed that these activities have greatly contributed to improving and diversifying household incomes. | 5      |

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| Food Security                               | The project's impact on food security is not assessed in the PCR. However, it can be assumed that the various activities supported by the project and which all aimed directly or indirectly at increasing agricultural production and productivity, and at diversifying agricultural production, contributed to improving food security and household diets. Increased incomes also improved beneficiaries' capacity to purchase food.  | 4        |
| Agricultural Productivity                   | Results in terms of productivity increases are mixed. The development of irrigation had a positive effect on large irrigated areas such as Oued Za where 68% of farmers mentioned productivity increases as opposed to only 12% of the smallholders. Technology development has mainly benefited livestock farmers and beekeepers. One women cooperative increased sheep production from 13.9 kg/U to 22.3 kg/U. Land and irrigation development activities have allowed the introduction of new and more profitable crops (i.e. alfalfa, capers, olives and almonds). A positive example is the region of Sidi Bouhria and Rislane which has become an almond production zone following the introduction of this new crop through the distribution of seedlings by the project. Rehabilitation and construction of new irrigation systems (improved intakes and reduced losses) has allowed crop intensification (from 0.90 to 1.32). Land de-rocking has further contributed to yield increases. These doubled in the case of cereals and tripled for vegetable and almond production. The average gross benefit per ha increased from 900 DH before and 2000 DH after de-rocking. Finally, rehabilitated hill sides were planted with high value crops (potatoes & peas). The effect on the poorest is unknown. | 5        |
| Food Security and Agricultural Productivity |  | 4        |
| Natural Resources and Environment           | The project was strongly focused on natural resource management and environmental protection. Improved irrigation systems have allowed increased fodder production on irrigated land (alfalfa) which has reduced the pressure on rangeland. Also, the creation of WUAs, rangeland user associations and forest user associations has allowed a more rational and sustainable use of scarce water and forest resources and fragile rangeland. At beneficiary level, the training and empowerment of producer organizations has helped raising awareness about environmental issues among the populations (sensitization about the risks of water pollution through domestic activity on open irrigation canals).  | 5        |
| Human and Social Capital and Empowerment    | Beneficiaries' needs were identified based on the results of 7 in-depth studies carried out at the beginning of project implementation. This has led to the early definition of precise activities to be carried out in favour of the rural populations, including training in various technical areas. In line with the principles of participation, beneficiaries were closely involved in the implementation and management of these activities. The project has also strengthened their organizational and managerial capacities by providing support to the creation of several beneficiaries' organizations (25 rangeland management associations, 20 forest user associations, more than 29 WUAs and 24 women associations and cooperatives). While they were created with the objective to improve natural resources management, they have contributed to the empowerment of the beneficiaries who are now able to manage their own natural resources base and to deal with outside partners. Some cooperatives and associations, incl. WUAs have mobilized further financing from the EU, the Belgian Government, and international NGOs.   | 5        |
| Institutions and Policies                   | At the time the project was designed, institution building was not yet a priority of rural development projects. Its impact on local institutions was therefore modest. By contrast, the project has helped strengthening the capacities of the DPA through various training activities, incl. participatory planning methodologies. Besides, the project has created, strengthened and helped consolidating several local level institutions incl. 25 rangeland management associations, 20 forest user associations, more than 29 WUAs and 24 women cooperatives. Capacities of support structures (DPA and ORMVAM) were however not sufficiently strengthened to provide the required technical support to existing or new WUAs. There was no impact on policies (the project as not designed as such).   | 4        |
| Markets                                     | The project's impact on markets was not assessed in the PCR. However, it appears that the marketing of new products introduced by the project (olive oil, almonds, capers) needs further development.  | 3        |
| <b>Rural Poverty Impact</b>                 | <b><i>The project's overall impact on rural poverty is difficult to be assessed as: (i) it is not clear to what extent the poorest were actually targeted and/or benefited from the project's activities; and (ii) the project was designed at a time when approaches were still focused on the distribution of inputs and tools and on the predefinition of activities to be carried out for the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it seems that after a long implementation period, the project has had, altogether, a very positive impact on incomes and livelihoods of the populations.</i></b>  | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Other Performance</b>                    |  |          |

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| <b>Criteria</b>                                 |   |          |
| Innovation                                      | The project has introduced several technical, social and institutional innovations. The most important are: (i) the project's approach based on socio-territorial units which take into account the agro-ecological specificities of the project area; (ii) new farming techniques such as alley cropping which combines cereal production with fodder shrubs; (iii) organizational and managerial support for the creation of rangeland management associations; (iv) caper production; (v) honey and olive oil production, incl. the fair trade marketing of olive oil; (vi) goat rearing (introduction of an alpine breed) and development of the whole value chain incl. goat cheese production (cheese factory established by an association of young producers in Taforalt); (vii) rangeland rain water collection; (viii) pressure irrigation system in Sidi Okba;   | 5        |
| Replicability and Scaling-up                    | The PCR identifies the following activities which have a high potential for replicability and scaling up: (i) participatory approach; (ii) alley cropping which has already been replicated outside the project area; (iii) partnership building with partners outside the project which strengthen the achievements and enhances chances for sustainability; (iv) creation of producer organizations (associations, cooperatives) for a more rational and sustainable use and management of natural resources (rangeland, water); and (v) rangeland rainwater collection technique. However, the project did however not take the necessary steps to initiate replication of some of these innovations.  | 5        |
| <b>Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up</b> |   | <b>5</b> |
| Sustainability and Ownership                    | Extensive capacity strengthening has helped most associations and cooperatives to become sustainable from an organizational, managerial and financial point of view. However, sustainability is threatened by the absence of appropriate technical assistance at local level, needed to ensure maintenance of the equipment's (water user associations/ WUAs). Some associations may therefore need further training to build up their technical capacities and their ability to deal with outside services providers (still facilitated by project so far). This will partly be done by the Green Morocco Plan and other Government initiative in the region. Furthermore, the project has initiated the development of some value-chains (olive oil, almonds, honey, milk production and products). The associations and cooperatives involved in these activities will need further support to develop the marketing aspect of the value-chain. The last UNOPS/IFAD missions have asked for a sound exit strategy to be developed by the project. It is not clear whether this has been done. In addition, the project has failed to publish and draw the main conclusions from the various studies conducted in the course of project implementation. This also applies to the impact study (2009) which results were not available to the PCR. | 4        |
| Targeting                                       | Women and young people were directly targeted through the implementation of socio-economic activities (component 3). They were considered as the most vulnerable groups among the rural populations of the project area. Other vulnerable groups were not specifically targeted. The socio-territorial unit as entry point of the project was found appropriate to reach the neediest.  | 4        |
| Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment         | Gender aspects were directly targeted under the third component. The project has helped women to better integrate into the socio-economic mainstream and to take part in local decision-making processes through their associations and cooperatives. Women have benefited from various sensitization and training activities, exchange visits, the distribution of gas oven and solar panels and the creation of women activity center equipped with sewing machines, weaving looms, etc. More specifically, women associations were created and strengthened around profitable economic activities such as small livestock (goats, rabbits), beekeeping and the production of aromatic and medicinal plants. This has altogether contributed to their empowerment. It also helped them to increase their incomes which they use to improve livelihoods of the families. Nevertheless, initial objectives were however not fully met as the project faced difficulties in hiring specialized staff to sensitize, train and assist women such as female sociologist, extension workers and trainer.   | 5        |
| <b>Overall Performance</b>                      |   | <b>5</b> |
| Estimated number of beneficiaries               | Rural population of 100 776 beneficiaries (direct and indirect) or 14 000 households  |          |
| <b>PCR Quality</b>                              |   |          |
| Scope   | All sections are covered and all annexes are included.  | 6        |

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| Quality                           | The PCR is strong focus on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and physical outputs. The impact analysis is weak in comparison. It appears that the project did not collect impact data. To overcome this weakness, an impact analysis was undertaken in 2009 (covering 144 households). The results of this analysis were however not yet available when the PCR was prepared. . | 4      |
| Lessons                           | Several useful lessons are drawn but not all of them are relevant as they relate to a generation of projects which has phased out. Some lessons are rather areas that need further support and follow-up.  | 5      |
| Candour                           | The PCR is altogether fairly objective, though sometimes overcritical, in particular in the annexes. This is slightly in contradiction with the very positive tone of the last supervision report.   | 5      |