

Côte d'Ivoire

Small Horticultural Producer Support Project

Project Completion Report Digest

Côte d'Ivoire - Small Horticultural Producer Support Project

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country & Project Name	Côte d'Ivoire - Small Horticultural Producer Support Project (PPMS)	PMD
Loan No.:	536-CI	
Project Id.	1133	
Board Date	4 May 2000	
Effectiveness Date	11 September 2001	
Original Closing Date	30 June 2012	
Final Closing Date	30 June 2012	
Total Project Cost USD(M)	14 026	
IFAD loan US\$(M)	11 174	
Cofinanciers (if any)	Government of Côte d'Ivoire (GoCI): US\$1 740; Beneficiaries: US\$1 112	
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRA)	
Principal Components	<p>The project comprised four components based on a flexible and participatory programming approach, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass-roots participatory planning and capacity-building of local capacity to diagnose development constraints, and plan, monitor and manage community investments; group creation and strengthening focused especially on capitalizing on existing informal structures; sensitization related to women's groups and structuring small-irrigation activities in ways conducive to their needs; functional literacy for women; and support to strengthening of village development committees. • Irrigation development for valley bottom (bas fonds) and small vegetable plots, including: participatory site selection and feasibility studies for creating new small irrigation infrastructure and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure; and financing of the infrastructure itself through the contracting of local artisans and civil-works companies. • Horticultural subsector development support to improve the economic and social environment in ways that enhance the effectiveness of the production level and group development investments outlined above. Sub-components include: agricultural extension support for irrigation management, vegetable production and marketing; creation of linkages with existing microfinance institutions (COOPECs and CMECs); vegetable subsector strengthening in the form of assistance to the emergence of professional organizations of vegetable producers and the provision of market information. • Project coordination which includes the: open and competitive contracting of a small cadre of professional staff; transport, office equipment and materials; short-term technical support; and establishment of an M&E system. In addition, the project coordination team will manage a horticultural development fund to support village-level investments to enhance agricultural production potential and improve well-being (eligible investments include civil works related to irrigation development, feeder-road rehabilitation and repair, storage facilities, and purchase of processing and drying equipment). 	
Project Performance		
Relevance	<p>The project was considered highly relevant at appraisal. It aimed to respond to the growing demand for vegetable products by addressing the main constraints linked to it, incl. the limited access to irrigation facilities, erratic climate conditions, and by developing off-season production. The project responded directly to the Agricultural Master plan 1992-2015 and to the National Agricultural Investment Plan, and was aligned with the country's PRSP. The project was strongly affected by the long period of civil unrest the country underwent between 2002 and 2005, and again between Nov 2010 and July 2011. Given the positive results achieved at completion, i.e. after an effective implementation period of 3 years only (instead of 8), it is considered highly relevant with regard to its overall objective. The original project fully responded to the needs of the beneficiaries at that time. It was reframed in 2008 taking into account the new needs of a population coming out of a long period of civil war and affected by increased poverty, degraded rural infrastructure, poor means production and displacements. Two components were added: (i) access to potable water; and (ii) development of food crops (primarily rice but also soya, maize, cassava, yams) to consolidate the achievements of the IFAD-financed PACIL closed in 2007. Project implementation was highly participatory with most stakeholders involved in its implementation. It was however pointed out that a more active participation on the side of the general counsels, included into the Orientation Committee as of 2008, would have allowed a better identification of the beneficiaries. Also, the project was criticized for its lack of flexibility during implementation. At several instances, very specific needs of the population were not taken into account and good practices were overwritten with the project's approaches and principles. This has led to several failures.</p>	5

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Effectiveness	The project can be considered partly effective, despite the difficulties it has encountered during implementation. This is demonstrated by an overall achievement rate of 72 % (51 out of 70 horticultural development plans developed). Impressive production results have been reached over the last 3 years: 54 900 tons of paddy, 32 900 tons of rice, 9 600 tons of maize and 6 000 tons of vegetables. This has contributed to re-establishing the production base, increasing the incomes (of women and the youth in particular), improving food security and the livelihoods in general. All specific objectives (original design) could be met: (i) the institutional, organizational and technical capacities of farmers and their organizations could be improved; (ii) small-scale irrigation techniques could be improved and have contributed to boosting vegetable production and incomes; and (iii) agricultural productivity and incomes from vegetables production in particular could be increased. However, sustainability is threatened given the short implementation period which has not allowed consolidation of achievements. Women's participation in vegetable and soya production, and in the management of horticultural production groups is of 80% or more, which is satisfactory. Project implementation has benefited from a highly dedicated small PCU as of 2008. Nevertheless, project effectiveness has suffered from several implementation difficulties. Adding 2 new components has reduced the original focus of the project and led to a scattered approach further exacerbated by the approval in EUR 2.28 million under the EU Food Security Thematic Programme. As a result, several important activities could not be completed such as: access to drinking water (not done), improvement of small-scale irrigation (34% achieved), reactivation of WUAs (not done), implementation of mini rice processing units (not done) and the development of new horticultural sites (not done). Other factors which have negatively affected project effectiveness include: weak project monitoring and supervision by the PCU and GoCI, and the absence of a proper M&E system. This is largely due to the temporary relocation of the PCU to the capital and the loss of the project's management and M&E tools which could only partly be reconstructed. Important output figures were missing (production figures in particular) and could only partially be reconstructed by the completion mission.	4
Efficiency	The project became effective in Sept 2001. However, activities were stopped abruptly the year after, following an attempted coup in Sept 2002, which triggered a prolonged period of civil unrest. Project operations were suspended from 2003 to 2005. GoCI kept a small implementation unit in place, allowing the project to be gradually re-started in 2006. It was reframed in 2008 and effectively re-started in 2009. From 2009 to 2011, the project was fully implemented, with a short interruption of 7 months, due to the electoral crisis of November 2010. Total project costs were reduced from 9154.5 million CFA to 8006.55 million CFA following the decline in the exchange rate between the CFA and the SDR. Costs by financier were reduced proportionally, with a slight increase on the Government's share and a decrease of the IFAD share. With a total disbursement rate of 71.4%, an IFAD disbursement rate of 87% and an achievement rate of 72%, the project is considered fairly efficient. Around 20 % of the project costs were disbursed between 2001 and 2008, and 60% after 2008. The IRR could not be calculated, due to the absence of figures. The PCR however indicates that agricultural goods in the amount of 9.9 billion CFA were produced since 2008, which corresponds to a per capita income of 680 412 CFA by producer. This figure is higher than the average per capita GDP in 2011. Information about unit costs is missing. The PCR however mentions that some partners/services providers have charged the project higher than average management costs.	4
Project Performance		4
Partner Performance		
IFAD	IFAD should be commended for having kept the project "alive" throughout the period of civil unrest. This has allowed the organization to be present during the post-conflict period and to quickly address some of the most urgent needs faced by the population in the former conflict zone. According to the PCR, IFAD is however responsible for the ill definition of results indicators at appraisal, which did not allow keeping track of production outputs and yield increases over time. IFAD is also responsible for not having followed-up closely enough on two important aspects of project implementation: (i) the need to establish a proper M&E system, and (ii) the timely and adequate release of counterpart funds, which have remained below target.	4
Cooperating Institution	The project was supervised by UNOPS until the end of 2010. Its performance is not assessed in the PCR.	n.a
Government	GoCI ownership of the project was weak, mainly because of the prolonged political crisis. MINAGRI acted more like an "observer" than an "actor". It regularly joined the UNOPS/IFAD supervision missions but organized only 2 own supervision missions. Altogether, MINAGRI lacked a more proactive approach (no AWP&B planning sessions organized, for example) and made little effort to enforce supervision mission recommendations. The completion mission further noted	4

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	that the Government officers involved in the project had little knowledge about the project and the issues to be addressed. MEF was responsible for the release of counterpart funds, which reached a disbursement level of 49% only, compared to an IFAD disbursement rate of 86%. These delays were mainly due to cash flow problems, which MEF could have addressed, and cumbersome disbursement methods. Finally, it appears that local government institutions, such as the general counsels who were added to the Project's Orientation Committee in 2008, were weakly involved in overall supervision and oversight. Possibly, they should have been closer involved from the beginning, to strengthen their overall ownership of the project. GoCI should however be commended for having kept a small project implementation unit in place during the period when loan activities were frozen.	
NGO/Other	Performance of services providers was not always satisfactory. According to existing procedures, services providers are to receive a 30% advance on their services before being paid the residual amount upon completion of the assigned task. The payment of advances was, however, often delayed by the PCU and the political crisis of 2010-11 has had a negative impact on the processing of final payments. Final payments were also delayed because of missing bills and receipts. Services providers did not always have the necessary resources to pre-finance the rest of the activities, leading to further delays in their execution. Altogether, the performance of partners was uneven. Some like ANADER were considerably weakened after the civil war and were operating with reduced staff and few means of operation. Others performed better. Technical follow-up was often affected, including the preparation of final reports and bills.	3
Cofinancier(s)		
Combined Partner Performance	Close collaboration among partners has allowed the project to survive the crisis and to achieve notable results at completion. Cooperation and collaboration has been particularly effective since 2008 with the re-establishment of the Orientation and Steering Committee and the inclusion of the general local counsellors.	
Rural Poverty Impact		
Household Income and Net Assets	The project has provided support to developing 123 ha of land for horticultural production and 5296 ha for rice production in 2 cycles. Also, 36 horticultural development plans were established, which have led to 255 micro projects of which 167 were implemented. Despite the absence of figures, it can be assumed that this has contributed to increasing and diversifying beneficiaries' incomes. The development of horticultural sites combined with capacity strengthening, technical support and improved advisory services has helped many horticultural producers to increase their incomes and in some cases to double their purchasing power. The development of off-season production has further helped them to reach a more stable income throughout the year. This has opened up new income earning opportunities especially to young women, who have dropped out of school, and young men, who found an incentive to stay in rural areas. The project has facilitated the access to quality inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) and equipment, reduced the dependence on local lenders and provided marketing skills and tools (weighs, bags, sacks), all of which has had a positive impact on income levels. Land tenure arrangements were clarified for 199 agricultural sites where the project intervened. Access to water for irrigation could be improved, though targets were only partly met. Out of 50 irrigation works planned (23 pumps and 27 wells), only 17 pumps and 11 wells were operational. The construction of 16 wells could not be completed. New activities such as beekeeping and aviculture have contributed to diversifying incomes. The PCR mentions cases where higher incomes have enabled beneficiaries to finance important social infrastructure in their respective village such as electrification of school building or the rehabilitation of water pumps (not done by the project). It appears that a large number of activities have had a positive impact on household incomes. Figures to assess the extent of this improvement are however largely missing and the planned study as not completed. The 2011 SR states that incomes from horticultural production have increased by 6% in 2010. Given the short implementation period of 3 years only, income increases can be considered satisfactory.	4
Natural Resources and Environment	The technical innovation(s) introduced by the Eco farm such as biogas production, the use of organic fertilizer and environmentally friendly production techniques have contributed to the improving natural resource management and conservation. A total of 33 farmers and 11 agricultural advisers were trained. However, not all farmers trained could adopt the proposed technologies, due to the limited access to water, financial resources and material.	4
Human, Social Capital and Empowerment	Capacity strengthening was a core element of project design. The project mostly provided technical training of beneficiaries in production and irrigation techniques. It also provided basic training in processing and marketing. Capacities of 4600 beneficiaries (3700 women) were strengthened through the implementation of 36 horticultural development plans and more than 411 relay individuals (170 women) were trained in production techniques, organization and	4

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	management. At project completion, they had already transferred their knowledge to an additional 1215 producers (1198 women). A total of 5309 producers (4333 women) received general technical support and training and 1168 were given specific training in horticultural production. A large number of 63000 individuals received in situ training for rice production. In addition, the project strengthened the capacities of 136 leaders and 37 ANADER staff. With regard to other food crops, the number of beneficiaries sensitized/trained strongly varied between crops: 4456 individuals belonging to 164 groups were trained in soya production, 117 individuals in the production of yams seedlings, 80 women were trained in the production of attiéké (a variety of couscous), 30895 producers received training in maize production and 30 women in the preparation of maize couscous. The project provided support to the organization and management of producers groups and organizations, in particular horticultural groups led by women. Altogether 50 site management committees were established but only 28 received support in organization and management. Producer groups were organized into 7 umbrella organizations (departmental cooperatives), of which 4 were operational at completion. In terms of literacy training, 25 trainers and 758 individuals were trained which corresponds to only 50% of the target set. The PCR states that while absolute figures are impressive, the duration of sensitization and training activities was too short and have not allowed beneficiaries to fully internalize what they have learned. Further support is needed to consolidate the achievements. The project has also facilitated the contact between producer groups and school canteens, which has had a positive effect on school attendance. Difficulties were encountered in improving access to potable water. Out of 471 sites identified, only 78 were rehabilitated. Water User Associations were not re-established as planned.	
Ag. Productivity	The project has allowed to significantly increasing total agricultural production and yields, to develop off-season production and to secure more regular returns from agricultural production across the year. A total of 50 horticultural sites (123 ha) were developed benefiting 4600 producers including 3700 (or 86%) women. In 2009/10, the project has provided 294 kg of quality seeds to develop the main horticultural products. Yields could be significantly increased: chilli (+25%), tomato (+75%), okra (+80%), eggplant (+42%) and courgette (+50%). The implementation of a rice priority programme has allowed 5296 ha to be developed over 2 cycles. Large amounts of inputs (1000 t of quality seeds, 1375 t of fertilizer and 16 000 l of herbicide) and equipment (1000 small tool kits, 30 tillers, 14 threshers, etc.) were provided and have allowed a total of 53 000 tons of paddy to be produced. Rice yields doubled from 2.5 tons/ha to 5 tons/ha by cycle. The project has also introduced 2 new cassava varieties and 4 new yams varieties. Cassava yields were doubled as well. A total of 200 cassava producers were trained of which 30% were women. 117 farmers were trained in the production of yams seedlings on a total surface of 17 ha. Maize and soya production could be substantially developed too. Soya production was introduced on 619 ha with 4456 producers (80% women). Maize production was developed on 3870 ha instead of 400 ha originally foreseen, involving 30895 producers of which 52% were women. The total production target of maize could be largely surpassed (309%). Finally, 31 individuals were trained in grass cutter rearing which has allowed the number of heads to be increased from 400 to 700. New production techniques were introduced through the Eco farm including the use of organic fertilizer and micro irrigation techniques. A total of 33 producers and 11 village advisers were trained. However, some producers were unable to replicate these innovations due to limited access to water, financial resources and appropriate material. The project has reached a significant impact on agricultural productivity, particularly for horticultural production, rice (100%), cassava (100%), yams (80%) and maize (78%).	5
Food Security	The PCR does not assess how the food security situation in the project area and household food consumption have evolved over the time. However, it can be assumed that food security among beneficiary households has significantly improved due to the reconstruction of the production base and the development of vegetable production and various food crops. The last supervision report suggests that 5296 ha of rice fields were rehabilitated which is very close to the target of 5500 ha and must have had a significant impact on food security. A EU grant under the Food Security Thematic programme has helped address key issues that were rightly identified during project design but could not be addressed: (i) access to quality inputs, (ii) seed certification and (iii) food security. Seed certification has helped improve yields and quality of food products.	5
Agricultural Productivity and Food Security		5
Inst. & Policies	The project had little impact on institutions and policies. Nevertheless, it provided support to the creation of producer organizations and their umbrella organizations. Out of the 7 umbrella organizations established (departmental Cooperatives), 4 were operational at completion. They handled the provision of inputs, information, processing and marketing. - Even though not part of	4

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	the original objective, important lessons were drawn from the project and fed into the National Agricultural Investment Programme (PNIA), 2010-15, in particular in the area of value chain development and capacity strengthening of their actors. The project's experience in reaching out to the poorest has also been used for drafting the National Development Plan 2012-15 which defines the broad lines towards national reconstruction, consolidation of peace and social cohesion, and how to restart the economic activity.	
Markets	The PCR does not assess the project's impact on markets. According to the SR, the project has strengthened the capacities of the producer sales office in Bouaké by providing essential equipment (2 motorbikes, 1 computer) and establishing a 3-year operational plan for the implementation of a market information system. It has also helped establishing 6 horticultural marketing committees. The impact of these activities is not assessed, possibly, because they have been introduced late in the life of the project.	n.a
Project Impact		4
Overarching Factors		
Innovation	The project has developed a simple irrigation system whereby water is pumped into large tanks from where plant beds are being irrigated manually, using watering cans. This is a simple system to replace the more expensive and sophisticated drip irrigation system. The project has also introduced various environmentally friendly innovations through the integrated Eco farm system, such as the production and use of organic fertilizer to increase agricultural production and of biogas for cooking and lighting. The have a potentially high impact on the livelihoods of the population as they contribute to reducing costs of production and living, dealing with waste, reducing deforestation, reducing greenhouse effects, mitigating the negative effects of climate change and improving the NRM in general. The CPIS further mentions that the introduction of soybean inoculum in soybean cultivation is a major innovation, which has the potential of being replicated across the region.	5
Replicability and Scaling-up	The replicability of above mentioned innovations is however limited by the low number of beneficiaries trained (33 producers and 11 advisers trained) and the difficulties linked to access to water, financial resources and appropriate equipment.	3
Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up		4
Sustainability and Ownership	The project has strengthened the organizational and management capacities of beneficiaries' organizations, which increases the chances of sustainability of its operations. The project has also developed important partnerships at local level among the different organizations (site management committees, WUAs, producer groups and the departmental cooperatives) and between them and public/private services providers and other development partners. It can be assumed that this will contribute to maintaining the project's achievements. Nevertheless, with an actual implementation period of 3 years, time was too short to allow many of these structures to consolidate and operate autonomously. The SR also points out that beneficiaries have not had the chance to fully internalize the achievements of the project that sensitization and advisory support directed towards the beneficiaries has not been sufficient and that local government structures were too weakly involved in project implementation. The CPSI indicates that project achievements will be consolidated in the new PRAREP, which is a follow-up programme implemented in the same project zone.	4
Targeting	The way the project was designed, it was targeted to benefit especially women and the youth. By re-shaping the project and adding on new components, the project lost its original focus. Nevertheless, it was still targeted to reach the poorest and most needy following the prolonged period of civil unrest.	5
Gender	Thanks to its focus on horticultural development, the project targeted directly women and the youth. Women have been empowered by strengthened their organizational, technical and financial capacities. Their incomes could be significantly increased which has improved their self-esteem and has given them more independence and decision-making power. They now deal more actively with schooling, health care and nutrition. Also, they have been able to purchase small equipment and means of transportation (bicycles). The SR however points out that they are still weakly represented in the site management committees. Regarding the youth, it appears that the project's support to horticultural development and rice production has opened up important income earning opportunities which have helped reduce off-season rural to urban exodus. In some areas, off-season horticultural production allows them to earn higher income in shorter period of time than by looking for work in the coastal areas.	5
Overall Performance		4
Estimated number of beneficiaries	The project has benefited 77830 households or 634 groups.	

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PCR Quality		
Scope	The report is strongly focused on physical results with few figures. The impact section is quasi inexistent, there are no lessons learned and several annexes are missing (financial & economic analysis, impact on the environment).	3
Quality	The PCR is well written but lengthy, repetitive and not very analytical due to the absence of figures. Also, the global picture is missing: What factors have contributed to keeping the project alive throughout the period of civil unrest? Under what conditions and arrangements was it reshaped? How will the achievements be consolidated and possibly scaled up? The impact analysis is very weak. According to the PCR, the project has financed 6 studies of which 5 were not yet validated and therefore not available when the PCR was prepared. One of these is the project's impact on beneficiary incomes levels.	4
Lessons	Instead of lessons learned the report includes a section entitled "recommendations" which is more a summary of the PCR with recommendations about how to improve project implementation if it did continue. As such, these recommendations are more of a supervision than of a completion report.	3
Candour	The PCR appears objective though sometimes overly positive.	4