

## Mauritania: Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project – Phase II

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
<b>Country &amp; Project Name</b>	<b>Mauritania: Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project – Phase II (PACDM II)</b>	
Loan No.	590-MR	
Project Id.	1180	
Board Date	05 Sep 2002	
Effectiveness Date	23 Jul 2003	
Original Closing Date	31 Mar 2010	
Final Closing Date	31 Jan 2011	
Total Project Cost USD(M)	USD 13.99 million	
IFAD loan USD (M)	USD 10.05 million	
Cofinanciers (if any)	USD 1.25 million (World Bank)	
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Rural Development through SONADER (Société Nationale de Développement Rural)	
Principal Components	The project aims at contributing to achieving the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) objectives of reducing the incidence and severity of rural poverty; and improving the human development indicators and the institutional capacities of the rural populations. In particular it aims at improving: (i) the capacities of beneficiary organizations to plan, implement, manage and evaluate activities and programmes benefiting them; (ii) incomes of the rural poor, in particular of the most vulnerable; (iii) the living conditions of the rural poor by improving access to basic infrastructures and services; and (iv) sustainability of the natural resource base. Components include: (a) development of local capacities; (b) promotion of economic activities; (c) rural roads and basic infrastructure; and (d) project coordination.	
<b>Project Performance</b>		
Relevance	The PACDM II was designed to expand and consolidate the achievements of the PACDM I. It aimed to making best use of the agricultural potential developed during the first phase, consolidate land tenure arrangements, open up the region through road constructions, provide access to basic socio-economic infrastructure and strengthen the capacities of the populations to improve their organizational and self-management capacities, and their farm and non-farm activities. The project was fully aligned with the IFAD COSOP, which embodies the lessons learned from the first phase and it directly responds to three key development objectives of the PRSP: (i) reducing the incidence and severity of poverty; (ii) improving the living conditions of the populations; and (iii) improving human and institutional development and people's participation. The project is aligned with several sector policies and strategies (Rural Sector Development Strategy, Decentralization, Policy Declaration on Water Resources & Irrigation, National Gender Strategy). Through its approach based on participation, solidarity and equity, the project was designed to identify and address the priority needs of the rural populations, incl. the more vulnerable.	6
Effectiveness	The project area is isolated from the rest of the country due to the lack of functional roads and it suffers from the lack socio-economic infrastructures. The combined results of the two phases have contributed to opening up the region and making life of the populations easier by: (i) reducing the physical, economic and social isolation of the area; (ii) developing its agro-ecological potential; and (iii) improving the living conditions of the population by improving their capacities, access to physical assets, income levels and by reducing food insecurity. Major achievements have been: (i) the establishment of flood recession works (flood recession areas were increased from 3000 ha to 9000 ha; (ii) the consolidation of land tenure arrangements in all villages of the area ("entente foncière"); (iii) broad based capacity strengthening (participatory planning methodologies, literacy training and technical, organizational and managerial training); and (iv) the implementation of various socio-economic activities benefiting the various target groups. These achievements are attributable to the IFAD PACDM I and PACDM II.	5
Efficiency	In qualitative terms, the project has largely met its objectives (see Effectiveness section). Most physical targets have been met too. The target set for road construction could be surpassed thanks to a reallocation of funds which allowed a 30% increase of the related component. The closing date was extended by 10 months to allow for the sound completion of the activities initiated and the IFAD loan reached a disbursement rate of 98% at closing date. According to the PCR, 2 factors have negatively affected efficiency of the project: (i) a long delay between project approval in September 2002 and its effective start-up in July 2004; and (ii) high fluctuation of administrative and financial staff during the first half of the project which has had an impact on the project's financial management (cash flow problems). The PCR also hints at the fact that project costs have been underestimated at appraisal. The IRR was not calculated (no economic & financial analysis at appraisal).	4

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Project Performance		5
<b>Partner Performance</b>		
IFAD	Project design was sound and built on the lessons from the first phase. The implementation support provided by IFAD was very satisfactory. IFAD was commended for the enthusiasm with which it has followed the activities of the project, in particular since 2006, and for the nomination of a permanent focal point in Mauritania (local staff). This has greatly facilitated the smooth implementation of the project. The PCR highlights two positive decisions taken by IFAD: (i) following Government's approval of a master plan for opening of the region of Maghama, IFAD has approved a reallocation of funds, incl. a 30% increase of the road construction category; and (ii) an extension of the loan closing date allowing activities to be completed in a satisfactory way.	5
Cooperating Institution	UN Office for Project Services/ UNOPS (2003-2008): UNOPS supervision missions were timely, effective and responsive. They took place annually. The recommendations were found constructive and allowed activities of the project to be oriented into the right direction. The processing of WAs was found generally slow. IFAD (2009-2010): IFAD performance as a CI is not assessed in the PCR.	5
Government	Government's performance is perceived as partly satisfactory. Loan covenants were respected at all times. Counterpart funds were timely and appropriate. Also, the GoM mobilized an additional USD 1.20 million to contribute to the road construction component (within the framework of its master plan for the opening up of the region of Maghama). The PCR however mentions that SONADER, the agency in charge of project implementation, has largely failed to play its role. The Project Coordinator was often left alone in taking important decisions.	4
NGO/CBOs	The performance of partners was uneven. The main operating partners and specialized partners have performed mostly satisfactorily. The consulting firms who have provided support to the micro-finance sub-component were found particularly strong. By contrast, it appears that the quasi-absence of qualified civil engineering companies has continuously affected the implementation of infrastructure works.	4
Cofinancier(s)	World Bank: Even though not a co-financier when the project started, the World Bank accepted to contribute to the project with an amount of USD 1.25 million, within the framework of Government's master plan for the opening up of the region of Maghama. The World Bank's performance as co-financier is not assessed in the PCR but judged satisfactory.	5
<b>Combined Partner Performance</b>	From the number of positive decisions taken in particular during the second half of project implementation (additional funds for the opening up of the Maghama region made available by GoM and the World Bank, significant reallocation of funds, extension of the loan closing date, etc.), it can be concluded that cooperation and communication between partners was very positive.	
<b>Rural Poverty Impact</b>		
Household Income and Net Assets	The project has had a significant impact on access to land by expanding the flood recession area from 3000 ha to 9000 ha. This has had a considerable impact on agricultural production and productivity and allowed new farmers to access land. Access to land was also improved through the "Entente foncière" (see Institutions) which gives land use right to the more vulnerable. Other activities have directly/indirectly contributed to increasing incomes: (i) training on agricultural production techniques, including vegetable production; (ii) support to 458 income generating activities (IGAs); (iii) support to the emergence of new and profitable employment opportunities (mid-wives, health worker, plumber, veterinary helper, village animators, solar panel technician, etc.); and (iv) provision of marketing training to 652 women. In addition, the project has provided support to existing "tontine" networks and to the creation of two mutual credit funds. According to the PCR, support to microfinance has been, altogether, weak.	5
Food Security	It can be assumed that increased and improved agricultural production (food crops, vegetables) has contributed to improving households' diets and reducing food insecurity. RIMS (IFAD's Results and Impact Management System) data collected in 2007 (MTR) and 2009 suggest that the percentage of households having experienced a food shortage period has significantly decreased from 91% in 2007 to 67% in 2009. By contrast, child malnutrition has decreased from 26% in 2007 to 23% in 2009 only. However, this result cannot be attributed to the PACDM II only. Others (donors, NGOs and GoM) have provided support in the area of food security too. Also, it is not clear how much can be attributed to weather conditions.	4
Agricultural Productivity	The project has enabled expansion of the flood recession area from 3000 ha to 9000 ha which has had, according to the PCR, a considerable impact on overall agricultural production (maize and sorghum), productivity and on agricultural diversification. Agricultural productivity in rainfed areas could be improved through the farmer-school approach. The project has also provided various sensitization and	4

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	training activities to improve overall water resource management. It has also provided support to women involved in vegetable production by facilitating access land, water, tools and equipment, and by providing specific training. Support to agricultural productivity was targeted at various types of beneficiaries: the Walo flood recession farmers, with the highest productivity potential, the Diéri rainfed farmers who belong to the poorest communities as they entirely depend on dry land farming and women. The PCR unfortunately, does not provide any production or yield increase figures to substantiate these conclusions.	
Food Security and Agricultural Productivity		4
Natural Resources and Environment	The implementation of large flood recession works has had, so far, no negative impact on the ecosystems. Nevertheless, it is assumed in the PCR that the increased availability of water might increase the pressure on adjacent forest areas (risk of encroachment), reduce the presence of tree species not adapted to the prolonged floods and attract larger and more herds. On the positive side, it has been noted that more fish can be found during the floods. The project has carried out several sensitization and training activities aiming at improved natural resources management and environmental protection such as: (i) training of farmers on integrated pest management (farmer schools); (ii) soil fertility control; (iii) sensitization on charcoal vs. other sources of energy (i.e. solar energy); (iv) implementation of a dialogue between crop farmers and livestock farmers to reduce conflicts and reduce pressure on land; (v) forest area protection; (vi) watershed management; and (vii) bush fire protection. The project has failed, however, to introduce appropriate measure for the protection of the sylvo-pastoral transition area of El Atef (originally to be financed by the Global Environment Facility- GEF)	4
Human and Social Capital and Empowerment	Capacity strengthening of the populations was mainly achieved through the participatory planning process applied by the project. 54 Village Dev. Committees were established and have contributed to strengthening the human and social capital through better organization, communication and management at local level. Some of the VDCs are still weak, but the approach has been well internalized by the populations who have become more dynamic and pro-active with regard to their own development. Other capacity strengthening activities include: (i) literacy training of 1900 individuals; (ii) 10 502 individuals received IEC; (iii) capacity strengthening in various new employment areas; and (iii) a Walo user association was established and members were trained to ensure to manage and maintenance of the infrastructure works. Besides, the beneficiaries greatly benefited from increased access to basic socio-economic infrastructure such as drinking water, schooling facilities; health care facilities. RIMS data show that adult literacy rates have improved between 2007 and 2009 from 3% to 18% for women and 4% to 30% for men.	5
Institutions and Policies	The PACDM I and PACDM II have helped establishing and consolidating the so called “Entente foncière” which are land tenure arrangements agreed, developed and implemented by the beneficiaries and which guarantee secure and fair access of tenure to flood recession lands developed by the project (incl. landless). This “right” is being respected by all parties concerned, owners and users, and can be considered a major achievement of the project, both phases combined. The project has further provided support to establishing the WaloUser Association, a beneficiary's association which has been strengthened to take over the management and maintenance of the flood recession works once the project is over.	5
Markets	Through its large road construction component (25% of the IFAD loan), the project greatly contributed (alongside GoM and the World Bank) to the opening up of the Maghama region and thus to the implementation of Government's master plan for the development of Maghama approved in 2004. It is assumed that this, together with the development of the agro-ecological potential of the region (food crops, vegetables), must have had an important impact on the beneficiaries' access to markets. The PCR, however, does not provide any data confirming this assumption (such as the percentage changes in the amount of produce marketed, type of produce marketed, etc.)	4
Rural Poverty Impact	<b><i>Project has had a felt impact on the agricultural production, incomes, food security and on the capacity of the beneficiaries to manage their own development and negotiate conflicts. It has also greatly contributed to reducing the isolation of the Maghama region from the rest of the country and improving the mobility of goods and people within and outside the region.</i></b>	5

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Other Performance Criteria		
Innovation	The various reports provide little information on innovation introduced by this second-phase project (PACDM II). The PCR states: (i) introducing a participatory development approach whereby all members of a community identify their development needs and activities to improve their situation; (ii) establishing a dialogue between crop farmers and livestock farmers to reduce conflicts and pressure on land; (iii) providing support to the improved “tontine” whereby the groups, once they manage their books, can access credits exceeding their own capacities through the mutual credit funds.	4
Replicability and Scaling-up	Not assessed in the PCR.	NR
<b>Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up</b>		<b>4</b>
Sustainability and Ownership	Sustainability of flood recession works is ensured by the Walo Users’ Association (AuW) which has been established and strengthened to manage the functioning and maintenance of the works. The AuW is operational. AuW will however not have the financial capacity to meet the costs of major investments/repairs, should they be needed. Also, some concerns have been raised regarding its legal status and the clear distribution of responsibilities between the AuW and the GoM. These issues were addressed during an IFAD support mission in Nov. 2010. The construction of major road connections will have a sustainable impact on the economic development of the region. Maintenance of these road infrastructures is ensured by the GoM’s master plan. A solution needs to be found, however, for the rehabilitation of a specific road section which was not covered by the IFAD loan but which is key to the development of the entire region. The land tenure arrangements which have been formalized through the “Entente foncière”, signed by all 28 Walo villages, have been consolidated during this 2nd phase and are now respected by all. An observatory needs to be established to ensure close follow-up and increase its chances for sustainability.	5
Targeting	The project applied two complementary targeting methodologies. Geographical targeting: In line with the PRSP and the IFAD Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) the area of intervention was identified as one of the poorest rural areas in Mauritania. Self-targeting: through the participatory planning approach, all sections of the populations were included in the decision-making process and jointly identified activities and actions responding to their needs. It is not clear to what extent these targeting measures were effective.	4
Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	Through its participatory approach whereby all sections of the populations are included in the decision making process at village level, women and the youth are given a voice. They have in particular benefited from literacy training, IEC (information, education and communication) and IGAs. Specific training activities identified by the beneficiaries have opened up new employment opportunities and hence, new sources of income (mid-wives, health worker, plumber, veterinary helper, village animators, solar panel technician, etc.). The project has also implemented village focal points and village intermediaries for IEC activities benefiting mainly women. Women are now less discriminate than before. Also, early marriage and other practices against women’s rights are being progressively abandoned. Women involved in vegetable production have received specific training to improve their production techniques and 652 received training on marketing aspects. This has led to higher outputs, improved household food security and diet, and higher incomes.	5
<b>Overall Performance</b>	Despite some weaknesses, a good project which has achieved significant results in a very difficult context.	<b>5</b>
Estimated number of beneficiaries	64 groups corresponding to 6963 households with a total population of 55 776 individuals (28 802 women).	
<b>PCR Quality</b>		
Scope	The guidelines were respected, with few exceptions (replicability and scaling-up not assessed, no financial & economic analysis)	5
Quality	The PCR is short but synthetic and to the point. It provides useful conclusions but few figures. It refers in particular to RIMS indicators while it would have been necessary to measure, in addition, more specific indicators, including intermediate progress indicators, to provide an overall picture of project results. The PCR give the feeling of a good project while the PSR (Project Status Report) assessment is more critical.	4
Lessons	Identifies a number of lessons for the design of future interventions (interventions should be less in number but better focused with special attention to analysing synergies between activities) and provides recommendations for others.	5
Candour	Not enough self-critical.	3