

Chad: Food Security Project in the Northern Guéra Region

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country& Project Name	Chad: Food Security Project in the Northern Guéra Region	
Loan No.	531-TD	
Project Id.	1144	
Board Date	03 May 2000	
Effectiveness Date	12 Dec 2001	
Original Closing Date	30 Jun 2010	
Final Closing Date	30 Jun 2010	
Total Project Cost USD(M)	USD 17.63 million	
IFAD loan USD (M)	USD 11.67 million	
Cofinanciers (if any)	USD 4.01 million (Belgian Survival Fund/ BSF: USD 3.68 million; World Food Programme/ WFP: USD 0.33 million)	
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture	
Principal Components	The project's overall objective is to promote rural grassroots institutions in the Northern Guéra Region, allowing their members to improve in a sustainable way their well-being, food security and nutritional status, and to undertake their own development. Specific objectives include: (i) improvement of food security; (ii) empowerment of grassroots institutions and women; and (iii) improvement of health and sanitation situation. This is to be achieved through the following components: (i) development of rural organizations; (ii) rural development fund; (iii) promotion of microfinance services; and (iv) project management.	
Project Performance		
Relevance	The project aims at improving food security and the nutritional status of the rural population in the northern Guéra Region, in particular women and children. It is in line with the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which identifies food security and nutrition as key development objectives, and also with IFAD's mandate, policies and strategies of intervention in the country. It capitalizes on the achievements of a first IFAD project and thus, directly responds to the actual needs of the rural populations in the region. The project is particularly relevant given the exceptionally harsh agro-ecological climate of the region and hence the precarious conditions under which the populations live as shown by the high child malnutrition and mortality rates. Its main objective and components were revised at the mid-term review (MTR) to better clarify the project's focus and to take into account the fact that the country's decentralization and state disengagement processes did not become effective as quickly as expected.	5
Effectiveness	The project's objectives were reached in qualitative but not in quantitative terms. A delayed effective project start-up combined with an overoptimistic appraisal allowed the project to reach only 236 out of the 400 villages planned. Also, physical achievement rates were relatively low (roads, drillings, low-land development, etc.). Nevertheless, the project has markedly contributed to: (i) creating and strengthening the capacities of CBOs through the creation of 236 VDC of which 194 have a legal status; (ii) identification by the beneficiaries of 853 priority socio-economic micro-projects of which 488 were financed; (iii) improving food security and rural livelihoods in the region through 488 socio-economic projects at community level incl. 129 warehouses and 78 village storage facilities. Also, improved access to microfinance has allowed beneficiaries to engage into small economic activities (94 IGAs- income generating activities), enabling them to increase their incomes and thus their capacity to purchase food.	4
Efficiency	The project's effective start-up was delayed by 2 years due to difficulties in hiring the project's key implementation partners. As a result, the project did not meet its quantitative target of establishing 400 village development committees and plans, but only 236. Other factors that have affected project efficiency include: (i) high transportation costs; (ii) cumbersome procurement procedures leading to an average 5 months to get a micro-project started; (iii) lengthy approval processes (Gov/CI/IFAD); (iv) a village level planning process which is not very cost effective; and (v) rebel attacks in 2006 and 2008. By contrast, the refocusing of project activities at MTR combined with an appropriate reallocation of funds has positively contributed to increasing its relative efficiency. The IFAD loan reached a disbursement rate of nearly 92% at completion.	4
Project Performance		4
Partner Performance		
IFAD	IFAD was criticized for an overoptimistic project design but commended for having taken the necessary action at mid-term review/ MTR to refocus the project and reduce the physical targets to a realistic level. IFAD projects in Chad benefit from a liaison office in the capital, N'Djamena. Project implementation was however affected by the frequent changes in country program managers/ CPM responsibilities (5 CPMs in 8 years) and IFAD's slow follow-up on important decisions.	5

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Cooperating Institution	UN Office for Project Services/ UNOPS performance was satisfactory in terms of frequency and quality of the support provided. The cooperating institution/ CI was commended for the professionalism it has shown throughout the supervision process. Its performance was, however, not further analysed in the PCR.	5
Government	Since this project is a follow-up phase, Government was directly involved in project design, through the project coordination unit of the predecessor project. Government has provided due support to the project during implementation. It can be assumed that the presence of an IFAD Liaison Office in N'Djamena has considerably helped following-up on day-to-day matters (WAs, direct payments) and on the implementation of supervision mission recommendations. The late and inadequate payment of counterpart funds has, however, consistently affected project implementation (no payment made in 2008 & 2009). Also, Government has taken little initiative in organizing its own supervision or follow-up missions. Cumbersome procurement procedures have been another hindrance to project implementation.	4
NGO/CBOs	Project activities were subcontracted to various public and private services providers and NGOs. Altogether, 10 different framework contracts were signed. All partners performed satisfactorily with the exception of two whose contracts were not renewed. Local contractors responsible for civil works performed satisfactorily too. Only 3 out of 170 contracts had to be cancelled. The Food Security Association of Northern Guéra, which is an official representation of the beneficiaries created under the predecessor project, has played an important role by speaking on behalf of the populations in different fora such as the local procurement committee.	5
Cofinancier(s)	WFP: Provided food aid worth US\$ 100 000 instead of the US\$ 330 000 for storage facilities as initially foreseen. The reasons were internal to WFP, but not further explained in the PCR. BSF: The Belgian Survival Fund was to provide the equivalent of USD 3.68 million for vocational training, access to water and school facilities, but only 62% were disbursed. Categories with particularly low disbursement include salaries, equipment and civil works.	3
Combined Partner Performance	Partners have shown a good collaboration which has allowed the project to reach its key achievements. However, they have sometimes been slow in providing administrative and financial approvals and contradictory in the directions given to the project.	
Rural Poverty Impact		
Household Income and Net Assets	The project aimed at increasing household incomes and assets using two instruments: (i) a village development fund to finance socio-economic community projects; and (ii) the CECA, a local savings and credit scheme. A total of 488 community projects financed under the village development fund contributed to improving access to food (129 warehouses, 78 storage facilities, 14 village shops), water (17 wells, 66 pumps, 67 drillings rehabilitated), sanitation and education in 337 villages. The project also provided support to the creation of 41 new CECAs (in addition to 26 from the old project). However, the CECA network is not yet fully operational and will receive further strengthening under a follow-up project. 94 IGAs could be financed in the areas of small livestock, vegetable production, reforestation, food processing, petty trade, and other off farm activities such as soap making. All of these activities have contributed to increasing household incomes.	5
Food Security	All 3 components of the project were geared towards improving food security and the nutritional status of the populations either directly, or indirectly. More than half of the micro-projects identified by the beneficiaries aimed at increasing food security. First to mention is the construction of 129 village warehouses, capable of holding 884 tons of cereals, and of 78 storage facilities. These will help 4500 households to access food during the dry season. More than 22 000 beneficiaries were sensitized in the area of nutrition and 3344 women followed a regular training programme on child nutrition. They are now able to better feed their children and to recognize the signs of malnutrition. In 2007, around 800 children in the region could be saved from starvation. Even if the child malnutrition rate could not be reduced in the region (16.6% in 2010 compared to 12.5% in 2004), the project seems to have helped mitigating the negative effects of the recent droughts.	4
Agricultural Productivity	The project has had very little impact on agricultural production and productivity as it did support the development of a specific value-chain. Due to the village-based approach, any form of support was ad hoc, based on the priorities identified by the villages. Its impact was limited to agriculture-related micro-projects such as small livestock, vegetable production, etc.. This weakness was highlighted during the PCR validation workshop. It was suggested that more attention be given in the future to the sustainable development of the natural resource base, incl. agricultural production, as a source of livelihoods, taking into account the fragility of the region's ecosystems.	3

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Food Security and Agricultural Productivity	Rated as 4; since the impact on food security seemed really high, project seemed to have increased nutrition levels, and mitigated the effect of recent droughts	4
Natural Resources and Environment	It is difficult to assess the project's impact on natural resources and the environment as it has not been sufficiently analysed in the PCR. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the development of low-land agriculture has had both positive and negative effects on the environment. An increased agricultural production has probably helped water retention of the soils and reduced wind and water erosion. On the other hand, it has been recognized that there is a need, in the future to better analyze the impact of increased agricultural production on the low-lands ecosystems of the region.	4
Human and Social Capital and Empowerment	The project has had a considerable impact in various areas: (i) beneficiaries were given the necessary tools to analyze their situation in a participatory way and decide jointly on priority actions to improve food security; (ii) the capacities to mobilize financial resources both at village level and from outside were strengthened: (iii) 236 VDC, 64 WUAs and the management committees of 117 warehouses and 42 village storage facilities were strengthened; and (iv) social cohesion was strengthened by integrating the marginalized into the village-level decision making bodies. The project has further created 64 village training centers which has allowed the beneficiaries to receive literacy training and training in health and nutrition.	5
Institutions and Policies	The Food Security Association of Northern Guéra (ASANG), created under the predecessor project, was further strengthened and has become the official representative of the beneficiaries in the local procurement process. However, the structure still shows many weaknesses. A proposal to restructure the association has to be reviewed and finalized.	4
Markets	n.a.	NR
Rural Poverty Impact	<i>Despite lower-than-expected results, the project is perceived by Government as a show-case in terms of rural development. The project has had a felt impact in 3 key areas: capacity strengthening, food security and access to assets (water, sanitation, technologies, financial services, etc.). The establishment of village warehouses (food security) and creation of the CECA network (Access to microfinance) are the project's successful prominent achievements.</i>	5
Other Performance Criteria		
Innovation	The project has introduced innovations at 3 levels: (i) a participatory development approach; (ii) a targeting mechanism whereby each village had to identify the most vulnerable groups and where all groups (men, women, youth, widows, disabled, elder etc.) were given the same chance to express their needs; (iii) a procurement process at local level involving the beneficiaries in the decision-making process.	4
Replicability and Scaling-up	All 3 innovations could be easily replicated across the region and in other countries.	4
Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up		4
Sustainability and Ownership	Many of the structures (ASANG, CECA network), management committees and producer organizations established under the project will need to be further strengthened to ensure sustainability of the achievements. This will be done under the Rural Development Support Programme in Guéra approved in Dec. 2010.	5
Targeting	In order to reach the women and thus the children, the village targeting process was undertaken by a team of 1man/1women. This has proven helpful to make sure women would express themselves and show interest in the project. The project did however not succeed in reaching the most vulnerable. All micro-projects identified under the VDP require a self-contribution by the beneficiaries either in cash or in kind, a pre-requisite that cannot be fulfilled by the poorest. To correct these inequalities, some villages have decided for example to grant free access to the warehouse to widows.	4
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	The sensitization process at village level was undertaken by a team of 1man/1women, to ensure that women were given equal opportunities. This was crucial as women are the head of around one third of the households in the region. Women have effectively participated in village decision-making bodies (VDC, warehouse/storage management committees). They have shown a particularly strong interest in the vocational training on health and nutrition. This has contributed to improving child health, nutrition and prenatal care. 43% of the CECA members are women. Altogether, more than half of the project beneficiaries are women.	4
Overall Performance		5
Estimated number of beneficiaries	214 211 have benefited from project activities which corresponds to 91% of the appraisal target. 114 756 or 54% are women.	

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PCR Quality		
Scope	The PCR covers all required sections and annexes.	6
Quality	The PCR is altogether of good quality but the impact is not sufficiently analysed. Most impact statements are not substantiated with figures. The PCR focuses on output figures and these are sometimes contradictory.	4
Lessons	The PCR is weak in this area. The short summary of the PCR validation workshop points out that agricultural production/productivity and NRM were not sufficiently taken into account by the project and that any follow-up interventions should put a greater emphasis on these two areas. Protecting the fragile ecosystems and developing the agricultural potential in a sustainable way should be priorities of future interventions.	4
Candour	The PCR is self-critical	5