

India: North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country & Project Name	India: North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP)	
Loan No.	444-IN	
Project Id.	1040	
Board Date	29th April 1997	
Effectiveness Date	February 1999	
Original Closing Date	March 2006	
Final Closing Date	September 2008	
Total Project Cost USD(M)	33.2	
IFAD loan USD (M)	22.9	
Cofinanciers (if any)	-	
Implementing Agency	North Eastern Council under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region	
Principal Components	The overall objective of NERCORMP is: "to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base in a way that contributes to preservation and restoration of the environment". Its components are: i) economic livelihood activity, ii) social sector support, iii) village road and rural electrification, iv) conserving biodiversity/NRM (natural resource management), and v) capacity building.	
Project Performance		
Design	Considering the good results of the project and the positive judgement made by the beneficiaries we can infer that the design of the project was satisfactory. The PCR mentions a number of approaches envisaged by the AR that turned out to be successful such as the inclusive development approach and the high level of trust given to the communities (the village development funds managed by the communities are included in this).	5
Implementation	After a slow start (the PCR does not tell us the reason), the project was able to get back on track thanks to the efforts of its staff and the good partnership with the local FNGOs and the external service providers. Also, project management remained unchanged for 4-5 years in a row which gave the project a certain stability and strength. Effective collaboration and convergence with other line departments was also achieved. The project was also able to set up a number of IGAs (income generating activities) thanks to the partnerships it managed to build with the private sector. The M&E system is a bit weak (too quantitative and not focused on outcomes).	5
Relevance	The section on relevance did not talk about relevance. However considering the types of constraints of poor people in the area, and the fact that the project's activities were appreciated by the beneficiaries (info from final stakeholder workshop), we can say that the designed activities were relevant.	5
Effectiveness	The PCR does not give us a quantitative idea of the extent to which the project fulfilled all the targets. The MTR (midterm review) expanded the number of villages to be covered to 1000 (from the original 460) and the project reached 860 villages overall. Considering the original target, the achievement is very good. From the PCRs narrative, the project did well on almost all its components, the only limitations being that it did not reach all the villages and was not that successful in trying to federate the CBOs into Apex organizations.	4
Efficiency	The PCR does not give information on this. (the section on efficiency actually talks about effectiveness.) Judging from the delays and extensions in project implementation however we can infer that efficiency was not fully satisfactory.	4
Partner Performance		
IFAD	The PCR records a good performance of IFAD with respect to its support of the project. This is especially true after IFAD opened a small IFAD office in India.	5
Cooperating Institution	UNOPS was the Cooperating Institution to review the progress and guide the Project on behalf of IFAD and the GOI. It conducted joint review missions once or twice every year to review and recommend corrective measures and areas of improvement. According to the PCR UNOPS has played a key role in nurturing and guiding the Project through various stages. This was made possible by regularly engaging experts/consultants in all the missions.	5
Government	The PCR describes the Government's performance as very good. However, it also states that the Government's commitment to take on project activities once IFAD funds end, has not been very strong.	4
NGO/Other	The performance of NGOs has been mixed: some have been able to support CBOs (community based organisations) very well, others were less effective. The PCR does not give details of the specific reasons.	4
Cofinancier(s)	-	

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country & Project Name	India: North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP)	
Combined Partner Performance	<i>Overall, partner performance has been good: there has been good convergence between partners and the PMU has done a good job at coordinating all the partners. Some NGOs have been a bit weak and Government support has been less forthcoming with respect to the sustainability of the project.</i>	4
Rural Poverty Impact		
Physical Assets	The project has increased the access of the communities to a number of important social infrastructures: latrines, schools, roads, water tanks, electricity (24% more of hh have access to electricity now). According to the PCR, this component has impacted greatly on the lives of the beneficiaries. In terms of entitlements, the project has tried to support an increase in the access to land by the poor. So, thanks to the increase in income, the poor and women have been able to purchase small plots of land for cultivation, and in areas where ownership of land is vested in the hands of individual owners and clans, the project has been able to facilitate the poor and women to sign longer lease agreements. Also, with formation of NRM Groups, annual wealth ranking exercise are carried out by the groups for each household to facilitate identification of the poorest households and prioritize allotment of wet terrace lands.	5
Financial Assets	Thanks to the project, credit facilities were readily available to the villagers through the SHG (self-help group) revolving funds. This encouraged the villagers to take formal loans from the SHGs as well as from formal financial institutions for various livelihood activities at a lower interest rate than from the private money lenders. With the increase in savings, household expenses for asset creation, consumption purposes and education have also risen. Though the project has been instrumental in the creation of vibrant institutions to support IGAs, these remain too small to be able to help farmers have access to bigger loans, which is what they ask for. There is therefore now a limited access to credit, and the links with banks is still limited. Another problem is that of limited market linkages that limits the amount of profits to be made by the IGAs.	4
Food Security	The PCR states that food insecurity has been considerably reduced (only 15% of the beneficiary population is considered food insecure). With the increase in income at the household level and better food quality through regular vegetable intake from vegetable gardens, regular access to meat, and purchasing power, women and children now have better access to nutritious food. In terms of access to food (income) the final impact assessment shows that the increase in overall household income as compared to the base line for the six districts was 66%. This has led to an increase in household consumption, part of which is on food.	5
Environment	The project has facilitated and encouraged the NRM-Groups to conserve and bring into fold large forests under the forest conservation sub-component. In the six districts the communities have brought about 1835 sq. km of both pristine and degraded forest under conservation through general awareness creation and persuasion. On environmental protection, the NRM-Gs have formulated rules and regulations towards better management of forests: fines have been imposed for those who do not abide by the laws. Due to this initiative communities are experiencing an increase in NTFPs, wildlife, fish, better water discharge, etc. The results and impact of the bio-diversity sub-component have been less successful due to issues pertaining to land tenure, i.e. small villages having limited land and therefore few incentives towards conservation practices. In general, however the project has succeeded in creating awareness on the need for the conservation of biodiversity; indeed some non-project villages have taken up some of the measures introduced by the project.	5
Human Assets	The project has facilitated in creating better access to safe drinking water supply- at least 42% more hh have access to safe drinking water and 39% more hh have adopted water purification measures. The status of sanitation has also improved remarkably in the project villages due to increased use of low cost toilets (33% more households got toilet facilities), proper disposal of garbage and good drainage. First Contact Carers have also been established entailing better health care, and the construction of schools has led to access to primary education, especially for girls. These improvements however have only been experienced by a limited number of villages due to limited resources. In terms of capacity building, the PCR does not give figures on this. The last PSR tells us that capacity building was carried out well- with all NRM Groups and SHGs covered.	4
Soc. Cap. & Emp.	At the micro level, the project has helped set up strong CBOs (NRM Groups and SHGs) that are responsible for village level development planning and implementation. There is evidence that it has also tried to empower the poorest and women. Communities were also financially empowered as all village development funds were managed by the communities themselves through their own bank accounts. The project had an unsatisfactory impact in creating Apex associations that were supposed to have a greater clout/lobbying power and greater marketing abilities at the district level. These require more funds and capacity building.	4

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country & Project Name	India: North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP)	
Ag. Productivity	The PCR does not give data in terms of yields. It tells that the various agro forestry models promoted by the project have increased crop yields. There has however been an increase of vegetable production due to change in land use: the area under home gardens and vegetable cultivation increased by 88% and shifting cultivation has been reduced by 45%. There has also been an increase in the production of paddy, fruit, timber and bamboo.	4
Inst. & Serv.	Though the project has created strong CBOs at both the village and cluster levels, it has had limited success in linking them to banks. SHG savings and revolving funds provided by the project have not been large enough for those farmers wanting to create larger enterprises. Also, due to the difficult geographical location of the villages, extension services by line departments have not been very forthcoming.	4
Markets	This aspect of the project is a bit weak. The project has facilitated the NRM-Gs to take up cluster level production especially on agricultural and horticultural activities and has created a cadre of Self Employed Business Agents (SEBA) to assist in collective bargaining and marketing at the cluster level. However, due to their low capacity and to poor connectivity and access to large markets, some producers are at times not able to find their way to larger markets. Also due to lack of organic certification, farmers are not able to get better prices for their produces.	4
Project Impact	<i>The project has a number of strong aspects (increased access to physical assets, increased food security, good environmental impact and development of social capital at local level). The scope of the project may have been more limited than expected (i.e. in some villages it has less impact than desired) and its capacity to link the activities to solid financial institutions and to relevant line departments was a bit weak therefore compromising the sustained impact of its efforts.</i>	4
Overarching Factors		
Innovation	The project has not introduced any major change. The only change for the area that is worth mentioning is the good participatory approach introduced by the project. NRM Groups have been set up for village level planning and implementation, and they managed the VD (village development) Fund. The project has strengthened community empowerment and helped build up the credibility of the CBOs vis-à-vis locally elected bodies and government agencies.	3
Replicability and Scaling-up	The Government of one of the three States where the project is being implemented would like to replicate the participatory mode of the project and use NRM Gs to deliver its services. The GoI has requested the World Bank to upscale the project's model in all the 7 States of the North East.	4
Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up		4
Sustainability and Ownership	There are still some efforts to be made in order to consolidate the project's results achieved so far. For example, more capacity building is needed for the NRM Groups, the SHG Federations and the Apex bodies. The Cluster Associations need further strengthening in addressing issues of marketing, coordination with line departments, etc., whereas the SHG Federations need capacity building on financial management, micro credit and greater convergence from financial institutions. Whereas much has been achieved in terms of social sustainability at village level (both NRM-Gs and SHGs have been established with the support of the Traditional Institutions (TIs) by signing a social agreement between the Project and the TIs of each village), political sustainability is quite weak as there is no substantial financial support and commitment coming from the line departments to merge the project activities into government programmes.	4
Targeting	The PCR does not have a paragraph/section dedicated to this topic. From various statements however it seems clear that some of the project activities were clearly aimed at the poor. In terms of entitlements, the project has tried to support an increase in the access to land by the poor. So, thanks to the increase in income, the poor and women have been able to purchase small plots of land for cultivation, and in areas where ownership of land is vested in the hands of individual owners and clans, the project has been able to facilitate the poor and women to sign longer lease agreements. Also, with formation of NRM Groups, annual wealth ranking exercise are carried out by the groups for each household to facilitate identification of the poorest households and prioritize allotment of wet terrace lands. However this has been achieved only in a few places and some of the project activities are targeted at those who have land and therefore are not the poorest.	4
Gender	Gender mainstreaming has been a strong aspect of the project. On a practical level, the increased access to water has reduced drudgery of women. Many of the SHGs are made up by women, and women have experienced this as a process of empowerment: being responsible for the economic development of their hh, improving household income, improving their financial assets, besides being more respected in	5

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country & Project Name	India: North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP)	
	the decision making processes at both village and household levels. This process has been different across the project area: some villages have experience more women empowerment than others.	
Overall Performance	<i>The project has made some good achievements and is considered as a good model of NRM. Its weak aspect is its sustainability: more needs to be done in terms of capacity building of the Apex organizations so as to empower the citizens vis-à-vis market and state actors.</i>	<u>4</u>
Estimated number of beneficiaries	36161 households (more than planned)	
PCR Quality		
Scope	The PCR was detailed and covered all the topics that it was requested to cover. It carried out a series of final stakeholder workshops to collect the necessary information.	5
Quality	The quality of the report was overall good. It was good at balancing the positive aspects of the project with the negative ones too, rather than omitting the latter. It was at times a bit repetitive and long winded and there are some sections that talked about topics that were different from the title of the Section (relevance and efficiency for example).	4
Lessons	The section on lessons is very long and 2/3 of it is not about lessons but about project achievements. This dilutes the content of the lessons, so that these are reduced to one line and few details are given on the lesson.	4