

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT VALIDATION

Community Development Support Project (PADC), Republic of Cameroon

A. Basic Data

A. Basic Project Data			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region		Total project costs	US\$ 18.29 m		US\$ 12.358	
Country	Republic of Cameroon	IFAD Loan and % of total	11,7 m	64%	9,1 m	74%
Loan Number	No. 583-CM	Borrower	0,98	5%	2,4 m	19%
Type of project (sub-sector)	Community development	Co-financier 1	none		-	
Financing Type	Loan	Co-financier 2	-		-	
Lending Terms	HI	Co-financier 3	-		-	
Date of Approval	23.04.2002	Co-financier 4	-		-	
Date of Loan Signature	29.05.2002	From Beneficiaries	1.8 m	10%	0,5 m	4%
Date of Effectiveness	25.05.2003	From Other Sources:	MFIs: 3.78 m	21%	0,27m	2%
Loan Amendments	-	Number of beneficiaries	Not specified		201 villages	
Loan Closure Extensions	Closure 1 year ahead of schedule	Cooperating Institution	UNOPS until 2006, followed by direct supervision by IFAD			
Country Programme Managers	Muller Trupke Tounessi Toure Haidara Barry Marzin Gbossa	Loan Closing Date	30.06.2010		Not yet closed	
Regional Director(s)	M. Béavogui	Mid-Term Review	2006		May 2007	
PCR Reviewer	M. Reichmuth (consultant)	IFAD Loan Disbursement at project completion (%)			77.5%	
PCR Quality Control Panel	Luigi Cuna Fabrizio Felloni					
Please provide any comment if required						

Sources: President's Report 2002; Supervision Reports; PCR 2009.

B. Project Outline

1. *Project area.* The PADC targeted the Extreme North Province, a semi-arid Sudan-Sahel zone with 2.5 million inhabitants, and the Central Province, a humid forest area, with 2.3 million inhabitants. In both provinces, the majority of the population is engaged in agriculture despite its very low productivity level. The choice of programme area was motivated by the high poverty incidence (over 50% of the rural population below the poverty line) and the wish of the Government that IFAD apply and develop its community-centred approach in regions with different socio-economic and agro-ecological characteristics. In the two regions, other similar donor projects were being tested, providing a basis for the exchange of first experiences. In this context, a joint "Instruction Mission" was fielded with GTZ in February 2001.

2. *Project objectives.* The PADC aimed at the sustainable improvement of the living conditions and the standard of living in the targeted areas. The Logical Framework attached to the President's Report remained unchanged during project implementation. It stated three operational objectives: i) contribute to rural communities taking their development into their own hands through participation, coordination and solidarity; ii) contribute sustainably to an increase and diversification of the income of associated producers, particularly those from poorest groups; iii) improve the access of rural communities to basic social infrastructure¹.

3. *Project target population.* A generic definition of project target group is provided in all documents, with no outreach targets. The target group consisted of village populations at large (men, women and youth) that were expected to be mobilized in community development processes. Vulnerable groups like female-headed households, young unemployed population, handicapped, sick and elderly people, as well as landless labourers were to be included in community decision processes. At least 50% of component financing was expected to be reserved for income-generating activities of women (Appraisal Report, p.7).

4. *Project components.* The President's Report defined four components:

- (i) **Capacity-building/CB** (16% of total planned base cost). This component was to enable communities to take responsibility for their own development by strengthening their capacity to conduct participatory diagnostics, prepare village development action plans, mobilize resources, contact potential donors, implement and manage their projects, and maintain their infrastructure. Communities would also be trained to develop HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. This component also supported the capacity building of the communes and that of local private and public service-providers.
- (ii) **Rural infrastructure/RI** (40%). The project was to allocate resources for financing eligible investments (i.e. rural roads, schools, health centres, wells or small-scale irrigation infrastructures). Investment proposals would be selected from local development plans drawn up by the communities themselves, with support and advice from partner institutions and service providers.
- (iii) **Income-generating activities/IGA** (28%) The project aimed at supporting farm and non-farm income-generating activities, mostly for women, the young and the disabled. The project design called for recruitment of a business service specialist for each project unit at the province level. This specialist would coordinate the identification, training and promotion of potential local business service advisers, who would support the communities in the creation and development of micro-enterprises, connect them to the microfinance system and assist them in the management of their businesses. Under the IFAD National Microfinance Programme Support Project, a convention was expected to be established for the extension of microfinance institutions in the project area.
- (iv) **Project coordination/PC** (16%). The project was to be managed by a national project coordination unit, under the responsibility of MINAGRI (Department of Rural Engineering and Community Development (DGRDC)). A regional project coordination unit would be established in each one of the two provinces.

5. *Changes during project implementation.* No major context changes occurred during project implementation. There was a reduction in targets after the MTR – from 400 to 250 communities attended – due to implementation problems and difficulties to reach appraisal targets. Because of non-

¹ The formulation in the President's Report adds under i) the strengthening of support and service providers, and under iii) the access specifically of women to resources, assets and services (not adequately reflected in the Logical Framework).

compliance with loan contract conditions and the replacement of the project coordinator in January 2008 by an interim coordinator with limited mandate leading to a distinct slowing of project activities, the project has been closed by mutual agreement between the parties one year in advance to the originally planned schedule.

C. Main Assessment

Project Performance

C.1 Relevance

6. The IFAD loan portfolio in Cameroon was suspended between 1991 and 1998 due to the non-payment of loan arrears by the Government. In 1995, the Government signed a debt resettlement plan which allowed IFAD to consider the development of a new project pipeline. Relations between the Government and IFAD resumed in 1997 and, in 1998, a COSOP was elaborated. IFAD approved the co-financing of the World Bank-initiated National Agricultural Research and Extension Programmes. The IFAD-initiated National Microfinance Programme Support Project became effective in April 2001. The design of the PADC (Appraisal 2002) reflected in all its principal aspects the main features of the COSOP. Project design was also consistent with the Government's policy to reduce poverty as stated in its Local and Community Development Strategy, one of the pillars of its Rural Sector Development Strategy implemented since April 2003. The PADC was also aligned to the priorities expressed by representatives of the target populations.

7. PADC design may be characterized as very ambitious in view of the realities at systemic and beneficiary level. While reflecting IFAD good practice at the time of design, it implied very high implementation challenges for management and the steering committee (aiming at and reaching the poorest of the poor, demanding from local decision structures like the CDVs (Village Development Committees) to include the very poor in collective decision taking, formation of production and/or credit groups which are adequately structured and managed, microenterprises reaching the very poor, etc.). While it included appropriate features for a longer-term improvement of development conditions in the selected very poor areas, change processes for their implementation are likely to require at least 10 years for showing the results envisaged by the design. The relevance of the project is rated as moderately satisfactory (rating 4).

C.2 Effectiveness

Operational objective 1 ("contribute to rural communities taking their development into their own hands through participation, coordination and solidarity")

8. The participatory approach gradually gained ground and acceptance in target areas. Nevertheless, the PCR states that much is still required to strengthen corresponding local capacities. "As a consequence of the overload of the capacity building component, the planning and implementation of literacy campaigns, the fight against HIV/AIDS, village experience interchanges, community capacity development, capacity development in Ministries and decentralized state entities have not benefited from a significant support from the project. This is why results at beneficiary level have been very limited" (PCR p. 24).

9. Of the total amount of US\$ 3.8 million assigned under IFAD loan in the original budget to this component, less than one third (32.3%) was utilized. Total expenditure from all sources for this component amounted to US\$ 1.243 million. The Project Appraisal defined quantitative targets (400 villages attended), which have been revised by the MTR (250 villages). The project has been closed one year in advance, having reached half of the original prevision: a total of 201 community

development plans have been elaborated with the participation of the community development committees. As mentioned before, several activities have not been implemented.

10. Compliance rates with *revised* targets range from two thirds (support to community management) to almost 200% (literacy), with 80% of targeted villages attended. However, literacy classes only started in 2007 (in the North) and 2008 (in the Centre). The PADC rushed this literacy activity line through, although it would have been of fundamental importance to deliver it early in project life to create the basis for other project activities and objectives. The PCR states that implementation quality has been low (only one literacy agent per village with approximately 3000 persons on average, most of them illiterate). There are no data on how many persons actually learned to read and write. In this case, recorded project outputs cannot be considered as a proxy of development effects.

11. The training of elected village leaders shows over-compliance with the revised target (110%). However, only half the planned number of village steering committees have been established, one third of regional technical committees and a quarter of technical support committees for community management.

12. In March 2003, IFAD signed an agreement with GTZ for strengthening village planning and development capacities, based on former work of GTZ in these areas. This agreement was not enforced for various reasons, including the reduction in budget and personnel, the conceptual reorientation towards communities rather than villages by GTZ, and the lack of interest by the PADC (see PSR 2006).

13. Service providers have benefited since the start of the project from a number of training activities (100% compliance with training plan and 142% with training materials). However, their performance has been considered by the MTR to be of modest quality. According to the PCR, this was mainly because of the excessive number of providers (over 100). The project has been advised to stop this training and to evaluate the service providers so as to retain only “an optimal number” of them. The project continued until the end with 70 providers. The results suggest an imbalance between classroom training and application in the field, to the detriment of the latter.

14. Project design stressed the inclusion of women and youth in capacity building, but training addressed the general population rather than specific population groups. Relatively few activities were directed explicitly at women, although some women groups managed to create income generating activities. Women have been largely underrepresented in the community development committees, and the youth has been absent from these committees although they participated in community and income generating projects.

15. Both service providers and the PADC did not monitor sufficiently and adequately the activities in communities². This fact may explain the extended Project Supervision Reports by UNOPS and IFAD (2008) which needed to collect and summarize project result data. The PADC did avail of monitoring instruments but these have scarcely been applied.

Operational objective 2 (“contribute sustainably to an increase and diversification of the income of associated producers, particularly those from poorest groups”).

16. This objective was very much related to the activities implemented in the component dealing with income generating activities. Under this component, the project provided training in management and in technical aspects to micro-entrepreneurs. It included a revolving fund (RF) scheme assigned to and managed by the newly formed community development committees. RFs were supposed to be developed and applied in close relationship with the IFAD-initiated National Microfinance Programme Support Project. However, as stated in the PCR, this cooperation did not take place

² The PADC did not install, as recommended, a M&E unit considering that this is a task to be assumed at all levels (village, community, district, national) by the respective operational units.

because of the failures of the National Microfinance Programme, leading to great difficulties to make the revolving fund scheme work.

17. 607 group structures (*conseils organisationnels*) were established, mostly associations of younger people sharing a similar interest, and 680 micro-projects were supported (pigs, chicken, small ruminants, cows; yogurt production; onions, beans, corn, banana; phyto-sanitary treatments; extraction of groundnut oil; extraction of fruit juice; bread; etc.). For almost 600 of these sub-projects, a specific document for each one calculating its feasibility (inputs, training, activities, expected returns) was established, and a total of 680 initiatives have been supported. Technical and managerial assistance has been provided to a total of 8,483 persons, of which 3,363 were women (40%).

18. The RFs for microcredit have been established in 75 Village Development Committees (CDV) for an amount of CFA 48.7 million (around US\$ 0.1 million). Further to the recommendation of the MTR in mid-2007, no further such funds with other CDV were installed. Of the US\$ 0.55 million originally assigned to RF by IFAD, 20% have been utilized. The RFs financed 367 micro-projects for a total loan amount of CFA 115 million (some US\$ 0.23 million), with 221 associations benefiting from such loans. The repayment rate in the Centre province has been 52%, in the North Province 72%. A total of 15 villages obtained more than one credit, having repaid the former ones completely. In total, 437 persons were able to develop an activity from which they could generate livelihood. The project spent CFA 252 million (over US\$ 0.5 million) to service providers for such services, operating under yearly, renewable contracts which included all required services (structuring groups, identifying income opportunities, training, technical assistance, monitoring, etc.), including 11 microfinance institutions.

19. Setting up RFs has been a difficult and lengthy process, for the following reasons: (i) RFs at grassroots level (CDV) are complex mechanisms requiring clear rules, new capacities and usually institutional alliances, requiring a long time for their approval and installation; (ii) MFIs were hardly interested in integrating RFs with CDVs into their policies and procedures and the project did not succeed in bringing their target groups much closer to MFIs; a number of CDVs which repaid their credit fully, were not granted access to new credit (with the exception of 15 of them) as long as other CDVs were in arrears; (iii) because of many difficulties up to approval, credits for seasonal activities did often not arrive on time, leading to their use for other purposes; (iv) microcredit charges are complex in Cameroon resulting in high cost credit for productive purposes. The monitoring of RF credits by service providers (mainly NGO) has been deficient due to lack of technical specialisation. At the end of the project, a collective reflection on RFs took place, also to define how RF balances should be used.

20. As per the project strategy, technical assistance was expected to play an important role in supporting the development of income generating activities. However, the PCR highlights that it was not often adapted to the instruction level of beneficiaries because of (i) high illiteracy levels; (ii) insufficient assessment for income-generating activities in community planning; (iii) sometimes inadequate location (outside the village) whereas most technical assistance was provided at the production sites; (iv) dispersion in too many different activities with insufficiently knowledgeable service providers; (v) insufficiently structured and performing CDVs (sometimes reduced to the President, with other members not knowing what their functions are, and leading to formations without anyone taking note); (vi) competition by other projects which offered training free of charge while the PADC insisted that participants needed to cover the cost of their participation (transport, food); (vii) heterogeneity of knowledge levels among participants, namely between CDV and associations (the former being sometimes worried about their standing and influence, the latter in doing something new). Participation in training events has sometimes been low or nil, requiring the planning of a new training schedule. Training in productive activities often started in advance of capacity building of CDVs, due to a good extent to delayed service contracts because of late availability of project funds (from government and IFAD). Furthermore, long delays in launching tender processes (6 to 9 months) to provide required services for implementing the Community Development Plans demobilized the CDV.

21. Of the US\$ 6.9 million reserved for this component (including from beneficiaries and MFIs), the project managed to disburse only 24% or US\$ 1.6 million and the contribution from MFIs did not materialise. No data are available on the income generating effects promoted by the setting-up of micro-enterprises.

Operational Objective 3 (“improve the access of rural communities to basic social infrastructure”).

22. The project facilitated the construction of several and different small rural infrastructures, with greatly varying rates of implementation among different categories compared to targets. They covered the following areas: drinking water, public buildings, schooling, health, roads, bridges, energy and village planning. Wells with water pumps built or rehabilitated, and school improvements have been most frequent and far exceeded targets, as did the construction of community centres (16 of them, 13 were planned). In all other types of infrastructure, achievement was below target. Of the planned US 12.9 million assigned to this component, 83.7% have been disbursed (62% of the IFAD share), in total US\$ 10.8 million. While these infrastructures have engendered important improvements at community level, no information is provided as to their individual cost, use and maintenance.

23. Overall, this validation considers the PADC effectiveness as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3) in view of the low level of investment in programme components and the difficulties in delivery and thus achieving the expected results.

C.3 Efficiency

24. Overall, the project – closed one year ahead of schedule – spent 69% of the IFAD loan and slightly over two thirds of total project resources. The three operational components (CB, income generating activities including RFs, micro-infrastructures) underperformed, while for salaries 123% of the planned budget³, for vehicles and equipment 104%, and for operational cost 92% were spent, pointing to an unfavourable relationship between total operational cost and overall results. Overall, a total amount of US\$ 10.5 million was spent. Available reports indicate the large delays in paying out both government and IFAD funds, causing serious planning problems, disturbing a rational sequence of activities (CD – infrastructures – income activities). This also affected the motivation of field agents, service providers, CDVs and beneficiaries. The problem in accessing resources seriously affected the efficiency in terms of use of project resources.

25. In view of the resource allocation problems and the difficulties encountered in placing them, overall efficiency of the project is rated in this PCRV as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).

Rural Poverty Impact

C.4 Impact

(a) Household Income and Net Assets

26. The PCR does not include a specific section on project impact on household income. Three examples are presented in the section on impact on the local economy: they describe income increase from the productive activities undertaken by the supported groups, especially groups of women. This is however anecdotal evidence and the “significant effects” in income improvement mentioned in the Executive Summary of the PCR are not substantiated.

27. Net community (rather than household) assets increased through the construction of roads (186 km), bridges (59), market places (8), electrification (10 villages), and 26 other collective equipments.

³ Approved by IFAD on 16.03.2006 according to PSR 2006

Although no hard evidence is provided in the PCR, it can be hypothesised that these roads, market places and other infrastructure had contributed directly and/or indirectly to increase access to income earning opportunities. Nevertheless, the long term sustainability of these structures is at risk (as noted in the sustainability section).

28. For lack of data, the impact domain cannot be rated.

(b) Human and Social Capital and Empowerment

29. At the level of village leadership, the PCR states that the project was not implemented in a way that would effectively change the decision behaviour of elected village elders. However, the establishment of CDVs has created an institutional change agent, which is gradually being “appropriated” by beneficiaries. The participative approach in planning and implementation (e.g. beneficiaries participated in the selection of service providers) has marked a change, opened perspectives and induced beneficiary groups to discuss and take shared initiatives and to establish outside market relationships. Beneficiaries have recognized that the project has brought them the opportunity to acquire new knowledge about how to organise, produce and manage income-generating activities. Women in particular appreciated to also have access to credit, which improved their social standing.

30. Beneficiaries recognized that the social infrastructure installed (in education 435 infrastructure-related projects, in health 11, for drinking water access 156) has improved the basis for human and social capital development. This is because of the higher school enrolment rate, reduction in absenteeism, reduction in morbidity linked to illnesses caused by contaminated water, improved physical hygiene, etc. Also, the PCR states that – social and economic interventions taken together – social cohesion in villages has increased; conflicts both within and between villages have been reduced. Empowerment is evident by considering the fact that some committees started to take the initiative to approach pertinent authorities for providing health personnel or teachers or additional school infrastructure.

31. The PADC impact on human, social capital and empowerment is rated moderately satisfactory (rating 4).

(c) Food Security and Agricultural Productivity

32. The PCR mentions that the implementation of agro-pastoral micro-projects has improved food production but no evaluation has been done to show to which extent these improved the food security in the attended villages. The nature of the project was not strictly focused on agricultural development. The lack of evidence in this respect does not allow a rating of this impact area hence the domain is not rated.

(d) Natural Resources and Environment

33. The PCR states that the project has not produced visible impacts on the environment since projects undertaken have been small and dispersed. Both design and implementation recognized that the PADC would only have weak effects on the environment. This impact domain can, therefore, not be rated.

(e) Institutions and Policies

34. The main influence of the project in terms of institution-building was at community level and consisted in the activities aimed at promoting higher participation, coordination and solidarity in communities. Social capital building (already analysed above) has been strongly linked to this institutional aspect and aimed at increasing the participation of people in local institutions outside the traditional elite hence supporting their progressive democratization. The major institutional change

promoted by the project was the “concertation platform” between development agencies set up with the help of the project, first in the North, then in the Centre of the country, facilitating an exchange of experiences and intervention plans and avoidance of duplication of activities in the same area. This innovation (see section below) was however not fully effective in ensuring coordination of donors’ actions.

35. The project had no influence on development policies at regional or national level. Impact on institutions and policies of the PADC is rated moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).

Other Performance Criteria

C.5 Sustainability

36. The PCR provides a cautious and not very detailed assessment of the sustainability of structures and effects promoted by the PADC. Many questions remain about the consolidation of local institutions created or reinforced. While positive changes in dealing with public issues could be observed, the committees at community level mentioned a number of difficulties in their functioning. This includes the appropriation of negotiating capacity and instruments by beneficiaries as well as the capacity to manage and maintain the community infrastructures established. The maintenance of these structures is under the responsibility of the committees formed for this purpose. However, as soon as reparations involve financial cost, villages are not likely to be in a position to maintain them; this applies in particular to roads and electrification.

37. As noted under the impact section, the PCR raises doubts on the likelihoods that income generating activities initiated under the project would continue. The emergence of rural micro-entrepreneurship is in fact still in its infancy and exposed to severe business risks. Instruments like the RFs which built on local saving practices existing in the North (but not in the Centre), have to some extent been understood but not fully accepted. The way the system was implemented penalized those who so far paid back their credits (i.e. favoured those who did not). Intervention time has been too short to implant such an instrument. While the project did contribute to generate a social dynamic in villages introducing new ideas and practices, it is difficult to see which seeds planted by it will grow and result in permanent changes and improvements.

38. Overall, sustainability is rated as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).

C.6 Pro-Poor Innovation, Replication and Scaling-Up

39. The project introduced a bidding system for public works, in which the decision process at the community level plays a central role. Based on this example, UNOPS called upon other IFAD projects in Africa to apply such a modality. However, in 2005, the PADC decided to back off from this practice, integrating the bidding for project-financed works into the project, and taking decisions on contractors without community participation. IFAD called upon the project to re-introduce community participation in 2008, without success. Concerning the approaches (strengthening of community organisation and initiatives) used by the PADC, these have been present in similar projects of other donors as well and did therefore not constitute innovations.

40. Up-scaling. The revolving funds (RFs) have not resulted in a replicable model and require adaptation to have potential for replication. The overall prospects of replication and scaling-up are modest. The President’s Report considered principally the proposed implementation arrangements as innovative, namely a) donor intervention under the umbrella of a national development programme; b) separate funding for private and public goods and services; c) support to private sector economic activities coordinated by the project and the Microfinance Programme Support Project; and d) the coordination or management at village level of financial guarantees and micro-infrastructures. The first has been applied but did not result in an increased coordination of donors’ actions. The innovation under (b) and d) were promoted and implemented, but with a setback in the case of procurement (see

preceding paragraph). Concerning c), the cooperation with and by the Microfinance Programme did not materialize.

41. The performance of PADC against the innovation, replication and scaling-up criteria is moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).

C.7 Gender equality and women's empowerment

42. The project has actively promoted gender equality, particularly in terms of a stronger inclusion of women, in a number of aspects:

- In the CDV, the Executive Bureau of some 10 members included, on average, 3 women (should have been 50%);
- The promotion of credit access for women has been an important empowering instrument, improving their standing socially and in their family;
- In the CDV which did repay the credit from the RFs, borrowing groups were constituted mainly by women;
- Women participated mainly in decisions about community micro-infrastructures;
- Of the total of persons trained, 30% were women (3 363).

43. Nevertheless, despite female participation in the CDV and in productive activities, their influence at community level has still been modest and training opportunities for women scarce. The large majority of women have participated timidly or not at all in the decision processes at community level. At the level of Ministries and their decentralized services, in the seven technical workshops organized by the PADC at regional and departmental level, participation was 95% male and 5% female. At the extension level, 35% of participants put at the disposition by MIDADER were female; these agents have been crucial for the work at community level and it was recommended to reinforce their technical training and their operational means (the motorcycles demanded for their work were not delivered).

44. Overall, the project performance with regard to women empowerment and gender equity is rated moderately satisfactory (rating 4).

C.8 Performance of Partners

(a) IFAD's Performance

45. IFAD contracted UNOPS as project cooperating institution until 2007. As of 2008, IFAD took the project under its direct supervision. The PCR notes the satisfactory performance of IFAD in monitoring project implementation, but makes three observations: (i) project design set too optimistic targets (400 villages served); (ii) the project design did not include quantitative targets (i.e. in the logical framework); and (iii) IFAD took two unilateral deferments in 2008 (retained disbursement because of lack of counterpart funds, also once these were forthcoming) and 2009 (suspension of disbursements). In particular, the available documents show that confidence levels between IFAD and the government deteriorated in 2008 (hence after IFAD took over direct supervision) because of the non-compliance with the provision of counterpart funds and connected implementation problems. The change of the national coordinator and difficulties to re-compose the project management team motivated the unilateral decision by IFAD to suspend the project.

46. Project evolution demonstrated a series of difficulties to comply with intended and stated arrangements, such as the non-compliance with agreed partnerships (e.g. with GTZ, with the IFAD-supported microfinance project), the difficulties in setting up the M&E unit, the belated literacy campaign, the evident and serious problems in the project team (salaries, tensions and factions) and the problems with counterpart funds (flagged as a problematic aspect in the 2008 direct supervision mission). These critical factors have been observed by UNOPS in its supervision reports, and corrective actions were recommended. The high number of country programme managers (CPMs) involved in the management of this project (total of 8 CPMs from project design; 5 if calculated from

the date of loan approval) has been problematic. The PCR does not provide further information on how this impacted on the performance of the Fund and its capacity to respond to follow-up requirements.

47. IFAD took, however, decisions to deal with unsatisfactory project evolution, namely direct supervision as of 2008, the opening of an IFAD country office in Yaoundé, and the premature closing of this project as well as, a year earlier, another IFAD-supported project. IFAD's overall performance is considered moderately satisfactory (4).

(b) Government's Performance

48. There is very little information on the activities of the Steering Committee and how it complied with its tasks at a strategic level. The PCR mentions its composition (Ministries, grassroots representatives, civil society) and one annual meeting (except in 2008), although originally two meetings per year were envisaged. Consulted reports referring to government counterparts mention mainly financial issues (late payments), with serious consequences for project implementation.

49. With respect to the implementation structure (the National and two Regional Coordination Units, accompanied by two Regional Technical Committees), two aspects are highlighted by the PCR: i) project personnel has hardly been exposed to training on participative project methodology and other aspects which proved to be a serious limitation; no budget had been reserved for such activities; ii) the existence of tensions in the project team created an unfavourable work climate and problems in the flow of information between the three project units, affecting their effectiveness.

50. From 2006 onwards, the loan contract stipulated a significant rise in the national share in financing the operational cost of the PADC, from 15% to 50%. From this point onwards, problems in paying government counterpart funds increased. The government did not take into account the repeated demands by IFAD to pay the counterpart funds. This affected the level of confidence of IFAD into project support by the government.

51. The originally planned baseline study had not been done, M&E has been weak (project management did not take up the recommendation to establish an M&E unit), and no impact study has been undertaken. Large salary level variance within the project team caused tensions at lower levels (field agents, service personnel) to the point of denunciation letters sent to IFAD. Reports mention a difficult working environment in the project team, separated into factions. Field personnel lacked means of transport (motorcycles) reducing their performance. Government's performance is rated as unsatisfactory (rating 2).

C) Cooperating Institution

52. UNOPS has documented project evolution, results and difficulties in yearly reports and recommendations, providing a basis for corrections along the way. It benefited from counting on the same professional from 2003 to 2006, providing useful insights. UNOPS' performance is rated as moderately satisfactory (rating 4).

C.8 Overall Assessment of Project Achievements

53. The selection of two remote, very poor areas has presented great challenges to the project. To promote self-sustainable development in them, much strategic support in conceptual, operational and financial respects was required from the Steering Committee, as well as clear and convincing leadership from project management. Decisions at strategic and operational levels have not been sufficiently satisfactory to produce acceptable project results, leading to unsatisfactory efficiency and effectiveness of the PADC.

D. Assessment of the PCR Quality

(i) Scope

54. The PCR throws light on most relevant aspects of project evolution. Its scope is broad and at the same time detailed (73 pages plus annexes, in total 100), which helps understand its results. Important impact domains (such as food security and income) are not provided with an adequate basis of evidence. This can be explained with the difficulties of the project to put in place a solid M&E system. Rating is moderately satisfactory (4).

(i) Quality of data, methods, participatory process.

55. The assessment of effects has suffered from a lack of data as a result of an insufficient log-frame and M&E system of the project, the lack of a baseline study and later of impact studies. The PCR mentions feedbacks on specific issues from beneficiaries, i.e. took their opinion into account. The rating is moderately satisfactory (4).

(i) Lessons

56. Lessons (see paragraph 58) could have been more strategic in nature, pointing to essential requirements for further rural development projects in the light of PADC's strengths and weaknesses. It is acknowledged that the tense situation between IFAD and government authorities at (premature) project closing did not allow to conduct a final stakeholder workshop, impeding a shared drawing of conclusions and formulation of lessons.⁴ The fact remains that lessons learned in the PCR were weak and the rating of moderately unsatisfactory (3) refers to this fact.

(i) Candour

57. The report presents the features, achievements and difficulties of project implementation at different levels, from grassroots beneficiaries to government institutions, but could have characterized their limitations and shortcomings more explicitly for learning purposes and the lack of quantitative project targets – with the exception of one (400 villages attended) – facilitated an overly benevolent assessment at beneficiary level (mainly of learning processes, difficult to capture). Rating is moderately satisfactory (4).

E. Final Remarks

E.1 Lessons Learned

58. The PCR's lessons refer to the negotiation of loan conditions by government, payment procedures, insufficient M&E, complexity of RFs, lack of transport for field agents, knowledge management, and need to continue supporting communities, all valuable points.

59. However, for a better future support performance, most crucial are, at the strategic level, strong conceptual and financial support by the financing institutions, and at the operational level an equally strong, convincing, motivating leadership. Commitments and leadership at these two levels are the central factors for a successful compliance with project objectives. While the lack of information on the activities and influence of the steering committee do not allow to qualify its influence on project performance, the difficulties which arose during implementation point to the need for stronger leading bodies to achieve results.

⁴ All was not lost, however, since a last activity carried out under the PADC has been the formulation of a national community development strategy together with MINADER, allowing to inject lessons from PADC into the future local development and decentralization strategy.

G. Rating Comparisons

Project ratings			
Criterion	PMD Rating⁵	IOE Rating	Net Rating Disconnect (IOE PCR V - PMD)
Relevance	5	4	-1
Effectiveness	3	3	0
Efficiency	3	3	0
Project Performance⁶	n.p.	3	N.A.
Rural Poverty Impact			
(a) HH Income and Net Assets	4	-	N.A.
(b) Human and Social Capital Empowerment	3	4	+1
(c) Food Security and Agricultural Productivity	N.A.	-	N.A.
(d) Natural Resources and Environment	3	-	N.A.
(e) Institutions and Policies	3	3	0
Overall rural poverty impact⁷	3	3	0
Sustainability	3	3	0
Pro-poor Innovation, Replication and Scaling Up	4	3	-1
Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	4	0
Overall Assessment⁸	3	3	0
Performance of partners			
(a) IFAD	4	4	0
(b) Government	3	2	-1
(c) Cooperating Institution	3	4	+1
AVERAGE Net disconnect			-0.07
Ratings of the PCR document quality	PMD rating	IOE PCR V rating	Net disconnect
(a) Scope	4	4	0
(b) Quality (methods, data, participatory process)	4	4	0
(c) Lessons	3	3	0
(d) Candour	5	4	-1
Overall rating of PCR document	N.A.	4	N.A.

⁵ Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory; n.p. = not provided; n.a. = not applicable.

⁶ This is the arithmetic average of the ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

⁷ This is not an average of ratings of individual impact domains.

⁸ This is not an average of ratings of individual evaluation criteria. Moreover, ratings for performance of partners are not a component of overall project performance rating..

H. List of Sources Used for PCR Validation

MINAGRI: Demande de Projet, Décembre 1999

GTZ: Mission d'Instruction, Février 2001

IFAD: Inception Report, April 2000
Project Concept Document 2001
Rapport de Formulation PADC, Juillet 2001
Rapport de Pré-évaluation PADC, Mars 2002
Report and Recommendation of the President, April 2002
Office Memorandum: Back to Office Report, CPM Mission January 2007
Aide Mémoire, Mission de Supervision, Juillet 2008
Rapport d'Achèvement PADC, Décembre 2009

UNOPS: Rapport de la Mission de Supervision, Octobre 2003
Rapport de la Mission de Supervision, Octobre 2004
Rapport de la Mission de Supervision, Août 2006