

Project Completion Report Validation

Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (PLPR)

Republic of Cape Verde

Date of validation by IOE: December 2015

I. Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region	West and Central Africa Division (WCA)	Total project costs	18.34		36.09	
Country	Cape Verde	IFAD loan and percentage of total	9.25	13.5	37%	
Loan number	510-CV	Borrower	6.56	18.58	52%	
Type of project (subsector)	Rural development	Cofinancier 1	0			
Financing type		Cofinancier 2				
Lending terms*	HC	Cofinancier 3				
Date of approval	08 September 1999	Cofinancier 4				
Date of loan signature	15 November 1999	Beneficiaries	2.53	4.01	11%	
Date of effectiveness	14 July 2000	Other sources				
Loan amendments	11 November 2002	Number of beneficiaries	11000 direct households			
Loan closure extensions	1					
Country programme managers	Loko Nsimpassi	Loan closing date	31 March 2013	September 2013		
Regional director(s)	Ides De Willebois	Mid-term review	31 July 2007			
Project completion report reviewer	Mohamed Tounessi	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)			90%	
Project completion report quality control panel	Ashwani Muthoo Mona Bishay	Date of the project completion report	September 2013			

Source: PCR, and PSRs.

* There are four types of lending terms: (i) special loans on highly concessional terms, free of interest but bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75%) per annum and having a maturity period of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (ii) loans on hardened terms, bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75%) per annum and having a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (iii) loans on intermediate terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to 50 per cent of the variable reference interest rate and a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of five years; (iv) loans on ordinary terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to one hundred per cent (100%) of the variable reference interest rate, and a maturity period of 15-18 years, including a grace period of three years.

II. Project outline

1. The Republic of Cape Verde is an archipelago of ten small islands, in the Atlantic Ocean. The population (about 400 000 people) is concentrated in the islands of Santiago, Santo Antão, São Vicente, Fogo and São Nicolau. Cape Verde, has been an African success story. Since it gained independence from Portugal in 1975, it gradually developed strong democratic institutions. Cape Verde's economy expanded rapidly, supported by a set of market-based reforms, dating back to the 1990s. In the years 2003-2008, growth averaged 7.2 per cent annually and Cape Verde's per capita Gross National Income nearly doubled¹. The structure of the gross domestic product (GDP) is characterized by the overwhelming importance of the services sector (78 per cent), with industry accounting for 14 per cent and agriculture, forestry and fisheries for only 7 per cent. Strong economic performance translated into real progress on human development outcomes. Poverty fell from 49 per cent in 1988/89 to 37 per cent in 2001/02 and 27 per cent in 2007.
2. Nonetheless, Cape Verde's overall economic progress masks important geographic variations. Rural areas generally lag behind national averages, and the more isolated rural islands (such as Fogo, Brava, and Santo Antão) have significantly higher rates of poverty. Moreover, rural poverty in these isolated islands is more entrenched owing to high transport costs, limited access to quality education and health care. In order to sustain economic growth, and enable the poor to engage in the opportunities made possible by the country's economic growth, the Government of Cape Verde developed an integrated set of poverty interventions, under the Cape Verde's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (GPRSP).
3. **Objectives and components.** The objective of the programme is to alleviate rural poverty by increasing the social capital of poor people living in the rural areas. **The Specific objectives** of the programme are to (i) improve the living conditions of the rural poor, measured in terms of better access to basic social services (water, education, professional training, housing and markets), greater availability of production inputs, increased production/productivity in agriculture and fisheries, and the development/diversification of artisanal activities, in response to emerging market opportunities; (ii) establish four regional commissions of partners (CRPs) in the programme area for the purpose of developing a specific strategy for alleviating local poverty conditions, formulating three-year indicative investment programmes, and formulating, approving and implementing annual workplans and budgets (AWPBs); and (iii) establish effective and fruitful cooperation between CRPs and the public administration at the central and local levels, i.e. technical municipal offices and decentralized line ministry units².
4. **The programme had four components:** (i) financing of the local poverty alleviation plans (PLL) and the CRP; (ii) demonstration activities; (iii) training and capacity-building; and (iv) programme management.
5. **The first component, Support to Local poverty alleviation programmes,** representing 64 per cent of total base costs, aimed to support the initiatives of local groups, communities and other CRPs through Local poverty reduction programme fund, to fund micro projects. The programme will provide funds on a grant basis, regardless of whether the purpose of the micro project is to build social infrastructure or to develop income-generating activities.
6. **The second component demonstration activities,** representing 8 per cent of total base costs, had an objective to promote rural methodology aimed at

¹ WB, country economic memorandum, 2013

² President's report, september 1999, para.19 and 20

mobilizing local communities' interests and initiatives; promote dialogue among communities with a view to raising awareness about common objectives and to mobilize rural poor to form associations that will support future initiatives. The demonstration activities were expected, to lead to the formation of community and group associations that will establish CRPs.

7. **The third component, animation and training**, representing 11 per cent of total base costs, was funding field-based community mobilization agents and local NGOs to assist CRPs and community development associations (ACDs) to devise local development plans, and design and execute micro projects.
8. **The fourth component, Support for Programme coordination and management**, representing 18 per cent of total base costs, was articulated to fund the investment and recurrent costs of central management and technical units backing up the four CRPs.
9. **Programme Area and Target group**. Although the proposed programme was national in scope, it was initially limited to the islands of Santo Antão, Fogo, Brava, São Nicolau and two municipalities of the islands of Santiago, Tarrafal and São Miguel where more than two thirds of the country's rural poor were located. The target group comprised about 11 000 households who lived below the poverty threshold³. The rural population in the programme area is estimated at about 100 000 (22 000 households).
10. **Implementation arrangements**. The programme built on the Government's decentralization policy that supported the establishment of four private CRPs. Membership of the CRPs were made up of local communities and common interest groups, NGOs operating in the area, and representatives of municipalities and decentralized government services. The CRPs were responsible for implementing local poverty-alleviation programmes, formulated and planned by the beneficiaries themselves, based on a participatory process, for identifying local poverty problems and opportunities. Financial resources were provided to each CRP participating in the programme. Decisions on allocations of resources to fund individual micro projects were made by the general assemblies of the CRPs. The programme was intended to form an integral part of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (PNLP) supported by the Government and other donors (World Bank, UNDP). As such, PLPR was coordinated by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) established in the Vice Prime Minister's office and directed by the CNA. The programme designed, two levels of executing agencies: at the central level, a programme desk was set up within the PCU to assist in the administration of funds.
11. In accordance with IFAD policy on flexible lending⁴, the PLPR was implemented in three Phases. A start-up phase of three years, and two full-scale phases of 3 years each. Specific performance indicators to be met to enter Phase 2 and Phase 3 were elaborated at design stage⁵. The eligibility of the Programme to enter Phase 2 and Phase 3 were assessed by two joint IFAD-GOCV programme reviews, that were undertaken respectively in November 2003 and July 2007.
12. The first phase, of about three years, was devoted to establishing the institutional setting, training persons from the central and municipal governments, participating NGOs and community members at the CRP level, and implementing a number of demonstration activities (micro projects). The investment programme formulated by the CRPs was implemented during the second and third phases.

³ President's report 1999.

⁴ Paper concept on Flexible Lending Mechanism, EB 98/64/R.9/ September 1998. A loan provided under the FLM differed from a standard loan in that it has a longer loan repayment period to allow for the achievement of sustainable development objectives; a continuous and evolving design process through implementation of distinct, three- to four-year cycles; and clearly defined preconditions, or "triggers", for proceeding to subsequent cycles. However, the use of FLM has been discontinued in IFAD based on the PMD assessment of FLM, submitted to the Executive Board in September 2007.

⁵ Appraisal report, July 1999, page VI, para.9

The main objective of the programme's second cycle was to consolidate and build on the achievements of the first cycle by harnessing the institutions, mechanisms and procedures established, empowering grass-roots organizations and improving the quality of, and access to, community-based micro projects. The third cycle focused on increasing the outreach of PLPR and rendering its approach and instruments more efficient and effective.

13. **Major changes during implementation.** To better fit local situation and demands, modifications were made to the original design, concerning duration of intervention at commune level, targeting, production support methods and adjustments in financial management. During the second phase, some institutional and financial problems were encountered, making it necessary to delay the commencement of the third phase by one year. A supplementary IFAD's loan of US\$ 4.25 million was granted by IFAD, in April 2008, to top up the remaining proceeds of the loan approved in September 1999, in view of extension of PLPR activities in zones which were not covered initially by PLPR. The programme was extended by 18 months. Loan reallocation and extension of programme and loan completion were approved by IFAD⁶. Since 2010 IFAD took over UNOPS to supervise directly the PLPR.

Review of findings.

14. The PCRV report presents findings based on review of the programme documents, the Implementation Completion, RIMS reports, supervision reports, and other relevant materials.

A. Project performance

Relevance

15. **Objectives.** The Project Completion Report (PCR) was generally short in its assessment of programme relevance⁷. Hence, IOE has also reviewed several other documents related to the programme to make its final evaluative judgment.
16. The PCRV notes that the programme objectives were aligned with the Government's National Poverty Alleviation Programme, through increasing the social capital of the poor people living in rural areas, and mobilizing the entrepreneurial potential of local communities. Additional subsequent analysis of related reports⁸ showed that the objectives of the PLPR were relevant to Cape Verde's development priorities as contained in the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (PNLP) and later in 2004 with GPRSP-I. Moreover, the PLRP objectives were consistent with the main objectives and priorities of IFAD's 1996 country strategy (COSOP) for Cape Verde.
17. **Design.** The programme was designed in accordance with the IFAD's FLM policy, enabling a step-wise approach to implementation. The FLM was based on wide recognition in the late 1990s of two essential preconditions for achieving greater effectiveness and impact of grass-roots development projects: (i) decentralizing decision-making processes to the local level through local institution-building and empowerment processes; and (ii) adopting appropriate participatory processes involving all stakeholders. It also recognized that providing appropriate support to such processes takes more time than the usual loan period and requires a different approach to both design and implementation. Well-performing project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was a precondition for moving to the second and subsequent cycles.

⁶ see table basic programme information

⁷ PCR, relevance section 4, page 7.

⁸ Supervision reports 2010, PSRs 2010-2013, FLM report September 1998 and FLM self assessment report, December 2007.

18. The self-assessment of the Flexible Lending Mechanism (FLM)⁹ by the IFAD Management has shown that the introduction of a new lending instrument (i.e., the FLM) to meet the longer-term development needs of some of IFAD's Member States has met with only limited success. It has also shown that the benefits originally envisaged were not always realistic. The lack of resources during implementation, absence of procedures (governing inter-cycle reviews, reallocations, cycle closing date, etc.) and relatively low corporate priority led to a series of shortcomings¹⁰. In addition, since the design of the FLM, the international aid architecture has changed dramatically. New requirements for lending introduced at IFAD, the performance-based allocation system (PBAS) and the Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF), also affected the relevance of the FLM as a financing tool¹¹.
19. The PCRV however notes that the FLM approach to the programme permitted a better match between the programme time frame and the pursuit of long-term development objectives, given a longer implementation period is considered necessary to meet such objectives. However, the PCRV also found that the programme's M&E was not systematically included as a trigger, and thus the expected result of improved M&E systems did not materialize in PLPR. Moreover, implementation constraints (see paragraph 13 above) during first and second phase and a lack of a robust M&E system led to a series of weak performance in programme effectiveness and efficiency.
20. Concerning the programme design, it was prepared following extensive consultation with various stakeholders under the Government's leadership. The PLPR, incorporated the lessons learned from the previous operations. Despite the difficulties encountered during the first and second phase, the PLRP was considered a flagship intervention by the government, as it was well imbedded into the National Poverty Alleviation Programme.
21. **Rating.** The programme's objectives were consistent with Government's objectives for rural poverty reduction, IFAD's COSOP for Cape Verde, and the need of the rural poor. Moreover, the programme was designed in a participatory manner, building on past lessons and experiences.
22. With regard to design, the FLM approach did not provide the required enabling framework for programme implementation. Moreover, inadequate attention was devoted to M&E in design, the latter being a critical feature to ensure the success of the programmes based on the FLM. The PCRV therefore rates programme relevance overall as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Effectiveness

23. The PCRV concurs with the PCR that PLPR reached the objectives underlined in the president's report¹². The PCR section on programme¹³ effectiveness is reporting over full five pages on targets and achievements per objective and output as set in the logical framework.
24. Nine CRPs (instead of five) to cover more islands and 496 ACDs (instead of 234) were established. The CRPs fully played their roles as interface between the rural populations and partners at local level. An average of 160 micro-projects were financed annually (compared to a target of 100). At the end of the programme, about 77 per cent of the resources of the ACDs were mobilized outside the PLRP framework, which demonstrates the high degree of autonomy reached by these organizations and a solid partnership between the CRPs and the public

⁹ Ibid, para.29.

¹⁰ Ibid, para.29

¹¹ Ibid, para.30

¹² PLPR President's report, September 1999, Annex 1, logical framework

¹³ PCR, section 5, page 8 to 12.

administration. More than 10 000 beneficiaries were trained from which 45 per cent were women. Demonstration activities, were completely implemented. PCR noted, a shift in purpose of micro projects, during phase III, moving from tank water storage and social housing, to more economic activities, such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock and eco-tourism¹⁴. All together, PLPR has benefited 37 917 people (compared to an appraisal target of 20 000) which corresponds to 30 per cent of the rural poor in the year 2000.

25. In terms of results, the project has generally performed well in as much as it has reached, an overall financial execution rate of 76 per cent, despite, all human and institutional difficulties encountered in programme financial management. The IFAD loan disbursements reached 90 per cent. However, implementation performance of AWPB was less satisfactory showing important variations, 75 per cent in 2008, 68 per cent in 2009, 56 per cent in 2010, 76 per cent in 2011 and 56 per cent in 2012¹⁵. By contrast, the M&E system failed to provide the needed data collection and analysis for decision-making and assessment of different impacts¹⁶.
26. Taking into consideration, the analysis of different sources of information, the PCR rates effectiveness as **satisfactory (5)**.

Efficiency

27. The PCR does not provide insight for a sound assessment of efficiency. A cost-benefit analysis was not carried out and information provided in the PCR does not show how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted into results. As mentioned by PMD, "components¹⁷ which were compared with one another by calculating the weighted average of their quality scores (1-6 scores) by their relative share in total project costs, does not give a realistic picture of how efficient were programme interventions". The absence of production and productivity data as well as of financial and economic analysis makes the PCR's assessment difficult.
28. Notwithstanding the above, the programme remained under implementation for close to 13 years, and spent 90 per cent of IFAD's loan (US\$13.5 million). This is a very long time, absorbing higher amounts of costs for supervision and implementation support as compared to other IFAD-funded operations. Moreover, the ex-ante costs for project management were 18 per cent of total costs, which is also a little higher than the norms. The time from loan approval to loan effectiveness was ten months, which is more or less in the norm for IFAD operations, but the programme was extended by 18 months to allow for activities to be completed.
29. All in all, however, given the lack of data, the PCR does not rate operational efficiency.

B. Rural poverty impact

30. The assessment on this criterion is constrained by the lack of availability of data and non performing M&E system¹⁸. PCR¹⁹ and supervision mission²⁰ refer to partial impact evaluation conducted in 2011, which was based, on a non-representative

¹⁴ Ibid, page 8.

¹⁵ Ibid. PCR

¹⁶ Ibid, PCR, 13

¹⁷ PCR, page 19.

¹⁸ The PLPR design document emphasized the importance of a well-performing M&E system to overall programme performance, and it is also a precondition for moving to the second and subsequent cycles. However, M&E was not systematically included as a trigger, and thus the expected result of improved M&E systems did not materialize.

¹⁹ PCR, section 6. No baseline survey, no impact survey, no household survey, no nutrition analysis.

²⁰ Supervision mission, November 2012, para.15

sample. The PCR also used the results from the RIMS indicators. However, they need to be treated with caution as they refer to a limited period of time, and are not based on actual M&E data but on beneficiary opinions. The PLPR has not done well in capturing, impact on the livelihoods and wellbeing of the rural population in the programme area. This limitation has to be kept in mind when assessing the five impact domains below.

Household income and assets.

31. According to the PCR²¹, the Programme had a positive impact on physical assets and household income, through the development of IGAs, which contributed to the improvement of household incomes and well-being. 1 441 rural poor people benefited on support to agriculture livestock and fisheries.²² Training in various areas (personal care, bakery, tailoring, construction, eco-tourism) has provided new income sources to the poorest, including women and youth. 994 people benefited from 69 training programmes. However, as noted by the PCR, there was room for improvement on training activities identified by the beneficiaries, which needed to be better adjusted to the labour demand in the market. The increase in household income led to improved living conditions. 5 223 persons (2 420 men and 2 803 women) benefited from programme initiatives, allowing 975 households to access to electricity, new assets such as TV and refrigerator²³.
32. A total of 7 424 poor people have further benefited from improved access to water, which had positively impacted on their health, nutrition and livelihoods in general²⁴. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that improved education and infrastructure (construction of schools equipped with latrines), improved hygiene and sanitation. Finally, the PCR mentions that according to secondary data available from the national statistical institute, the programme provided access to micro credit to more than 20 per cent of the country's rural poor²⁵. In light of the above, the PCR rates household income and assets **as satisfactory (5)**.

Human and social capital and empowerment.

33. The PLPR rationale is based on the idea that the best way to alleviate rural poverty is to empower poor rural people to decide for themselves on how best to approach their own challenge. In that connection, the PCR reported, that the social capital of beneficiaries had been strengthened, with an improved capacity of ADPs and CRPs to identify and prioritize their needs, implement projects and operate/maintain the facilities. The programme trained and supported in particular, CRDs and ACDs, thereby building a sense of self image and self-reliance that has the ripple effect of greater social cohesion in the local community. Rather than passively receiving support on a top-down basis, the beneficiaries, were encouraged to participate into the decision making of the programme activities. Moreover, the implementation of a decentralized, community-based, demand-driven participatory-approach development model, by the PLPR, planted the seeds of beneficiary and community empowerment and created a self-propelled dynamics, which provided the CRDs and ARDs with the necessary tools to play a significant role in identifying their needs and take part in implementing key community-based investments, such as micro projects, IGAs, water supply, health and sanitation.
34. However, there is little evidence on the magnitude of the impact of PLPR interventions, but it can be assumed, that the support provided, strengthened ACDs and CRPs which become key actors in the development and poverty reduction process at local level and recognized partners by Government structures,

²¹ PCR, section 6.1 and 6.2

²² Ibid, page 15, section on food security.

²³ PCR, page 17, section improved social housing and increased assets.

²⁴ Ibid, page 16, section access to potable water.

²⁵ Ibid, page 18, section access of the rural poor to financial services.

NGOs and donors. All together, the intensive training in professional skills and IGAs, provided by the PLPR, had raised the level of community development capacity, contributed to increasing social capital, empowerment and motivation, improved, physical, human, social and personal assets and impacted on interpersonal skills and self-confidence. The PCRV rating for human and social capital empowerment is **satisfactory (5)**.

Food security and agricultural productivity.

35. Support to micro projects in agriculture, livestock and fisheries, together with improved access to water and irrigation have led to better household food security and nutrition, however actual data is practically missing. As stated in PMD's assessment remarks, neither the PCR nor the supervision reports provide data in order to quantify the magnitude of this impact domain. With regard, to agricultural productivity, PCR and supervision reports are both weak, in analyzing increased production and productivity. Some constraints and limiting factors for increased productivity are underlined in the PCR, raising some doubts about this impact domain and therefore, PCRV is not in a good position to rate impact on food security and agricultural productivity. There is no supportive evidence to agree with PMD's ratings (5) and therefore PCRV does not rate this impact domain.

Natural resources, the environment and climate change.

36. Not assessed or rated in the PCR and no evidence in other relevant documents. Therefore, also does not assess/rate this criterion.

Institutions and policies.

37. The programme's impact on institutions and policies is not explicitly assessed in the PCR. However, according to Supervision mission reports, the PLPR had an impact on rural community organizations and strongly supported the decentralization process at local level through targeted capacity strengthening. The programme supported the creation of local decision-making fora and provided the methods and tools for dealing with development issues at different all levels. 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 analyzed 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.
38. The major institutional change promoted by the programme was the association of partners (CRP), one in each programme zone, which were entrusted with the responsibility of implementing local poverty alleviation programmes. CRP are recognized as "NGOs of the first level, responsible for implementing local poverty-alleviation programmes formulated and planned by the beneficiaries themselves, based on a participatory process through ACDs. Members were adequately trained and assisted in the preparation of micro projects. The establishment of CRPs and ACDs, as community-based institutions, encouraged beneficiary ownership and further contributed to strengthening the grass-roots democracy. In light of the above and given the lack of concrete evidence, the PCRV rates institutions and policies as **satisfactory (5)**.

C. Other performance criteria

Sustainability.

39. The Programme helped local communities improve their livelihoods, increase their incomes and reduce risk and vulnerability. The emphasis on decentralization and participatory development and capacity building of ADPs and CRPs to initiate and manage development investments, is one of the hallmarks of PLPR success. However, the PCR failed to assess PLPR sustainability, along the sub-criteria of

economic, financial, social, technical, institutional, political and environmental sustainability. Sustainability is mainly approached from an institutional perspective.

40. From qualitative information at disposal, in terms of economic sustainability, the income generating activities seem to have good prospects of economic sustainability, since the number of PLPR financed micro-projects decreased, while the number of directly financed micro-projects was increasing, leading to growing financial autonomy. By the end of the implementation period, they were able to mobilize five to eight times the amount of funds available through the PLPR. Chances for sustainability of these achievements are lessened by the structural problems of ADPs and CRPs reported in the PCR such as governance, leadership, organisation, resource mobilization and financial management. It would seem, therefore, that further support in terms of capacity building is needed to make the results achieved in the institution-building domain fully sustainable in a long-term perspective.
41. Overall, despite the absence of an explicit exit strategy and thorough PLPR assessment of sustainability, the programme is considered **moderately satisfactory (4)** for sustainability.

Innovation and scaling up

42. The main innovative feature of PLPR contained a mechanism by which associations of rural poor may join as equal partners both in implementing the Government's poverty alleviation policy, in accordance with their own strategic choices and in selecting projects to implement that policy. The first, the second and the third programme cycles have built significantly on institutional innovations, through the creation of the CRPs and ACDs. They were instrumental, as a way for creating a collaborative framework for fighting rural poverty and to contribute to enhancing the Government's decentralization policy. As such, CRPs and ACDs have led to a strategic link between national poverty policy and actual needs of resource rural poor people. ACDs and CRPs have obtained legal recognition and became a strategic mainstream instrument for poverty reduction in Cabo Verde.
43. PLPR has paved the way for deepening implementation for pro-poor decentralized service delivery, under the POSER project. In addition, the PCR mentions that interactions with the CRPs and the PCU during implementation has led to a number of technical and organizational innovations that have emerged at the level of the ACDs, including eco-tourism as a new source of income, partnership for marketing, ACDs fund management and local knowledge management. As rightly stated by the PCR, these innovations deserved to be better capitalized²⁶. In addition to the main innovations highlighted above, the 2008 President's Report²⁷ identified also effective use of migrants' financial resources and skills for development purposes in conjunction with the IFAD-managed Financing Facility for Remittances. This expected innovation is not covered by the PCR, PSRs and supervision reports.
44. While the project has introduced several innovations, analysis by PCR of different documents (PCR, CPIS, PSRs and supervision missions) showed no specific measures taken to ensure that successful innovations could be scaled up in wider Government policies or programmes funded by the Government or other development partners. For instance, no evidence is available to show that specific efforts were made to document and share innovations, or to engage in specific dialogue with Government or other development partners to scale up the successful innovations promoted under the intervention. There was no knowledge management strategy in place to collect essential lessons and knowledge. The PCR

²⁶ PCR page 20, para. 8.2

²⁷ President's report

notes that this would have been necessary to ensure capitalization, replication and scaling up of good practices. The PCR furthermore reports that the project failed to take stock of the impact of some of its main achievements which could have helped to pave the way for future operations.

45. To sum up, given the innovations introduced but limited evidence on scaling up, the PCR rates innovation and scaling up as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Gender equality and women's empowerment.

46. A gender strategy was prepared by PLPR, completed by operational plans at the UCP level and each CRP. The project took into serious consideration the cross cutting issues relating to gender equality and women's empowerment. The PCR reports, that the programme actively promoted gender equality, particularly in terms of a stronger inclusion of women, in a number of aspects, in access to social services as well as to training, productive activities, community micro projects and IGAs.
47. In all micro-projects, particularly the ones relating to the establishment of socio-economic infrastructure and the promotion of income generating activities, women beneficiaries represented a significant percentage of more than 50 per cent of the overall target group²⁸. Women particularly benefited from initiatives aimed to micro projects on fisheries, livestock and small agro-processing activities.
48. The programme, however, did not succeed in increasing the share of women in decision-making bodies and hence, in empowering them. This is recognized by the PCR, who underlines the opportunities for future IFAD-financed interventions. Only 44 per cent of the anticipated target was reached. PCR also recognized that an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the beneficiaries of the PLPR would have helped the programme to have a better understanding of beneficiary socio economic situation.
49. In light of the above, the PCR rates the performance of the programme, as **moderately satisfactory (4)** in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

D. Performance of partners

IFAD

50. Only the PCR report provides some information on IFAD's performance. The PCR praises IFAD's innovative design under the flexible lending mechanism (FLM). It provided the flexibility to adapt to changing context, opportunities and challenges. It is seen that throughout the programme life cycle, IFAD was flexible and willing to make changes in the programme and amended the design in accordance with lessons that emerged during the implementation. Under the leadership of IFAD, two inter-cycle missions were carried out. They were instrumental, in providing the triggers for the successive phases.
51. IFAD also intensified its oversight role and implementation support when it decided to take over the supervision of the programme in 2010, from UNOPS as Cooperating Institution. In this regard, while this surely was a positive move, the PCR questions why IFAD delayed the transfer of supervision responsibilities from UNOPS to IFAD till 2010, when the new direct supervision and implementation support policy of IFAD was adopted by the Board in December 2006.
52. Taking the above into account and given the weaknesses in the programme's M&E system (which is a shared responsibility with Government) and the generous ratings assigned by the Management to some evaluation criteria in the PCR, the PCR does not agree with a highly satisfactory (6) rating to IFAD's performance. Instead, the PCR rates IFAD's performance as **satisfactory (5)**.

²⁸ PCR, Table page 21.

Government

53. The PCR notes that the government played a key role in the management and implementation of the PLPR. The government was supportive of the programme and has continued to make decentralization and poverty reduction a high priority. Its involvement in supervision and inter cycle review missions was appreciated. Recent supervision missions underlined, that loan covenants and financial agreements were respected. The Government followed procurement rules and ensured audits of good quality in a timely manner. Project management was commended by supervision missions with regard to implementation progress.
54. However, Government support during the period of crisis between 2004 and 2006 was inadequate, leading to implementation delays and hence to delays in the transition to the third phase. The crisis started with issues affecting the salaries and contractual arrangements of staff at central level (PNLP and PLPR) and of the Technical Support Units. In addition, the Government had not taken measures to enforce and implement effective M&E system, for critical decision-making, during the course of PLPR.
55. In view of the above, the performance of the government is rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

E. Overall project achievements

56. Despite the difficulties encountered during the first and second phase of implementation, the Programme made fast progress towards achieving most of its physical targets with success in decentralization and community mobilization through the establishment of key decision-making mechanisms at community level such as CRPs and ACDs. Through the Programme, these bodies acted as local catalysts and have supported communities to initiate and manage development investments in a transparent and accountable way that increased beneficiary ownership and contributed to sustainability.
57. All together, the intensive training in professional skills and IGAs, provided by the PLPR, had raised the level of community development capacity, contributed to increasing social capital, empowerment and motivation, improved, human, social and personal assets and impacted on interpersonal skills and self-confidence. Tangible results were reached with regard to micro projects in agriculture, livestock and fisheries, together with improved access to water and irrigation. The programme had also actively promoted gender equality, particularly in terms of a stronger inclusion of women, in a number of aspects, in access to social services as well as to training, productive activities, community micro projects and IGAs.
58. There are however a number of weakness that the PCRV underlines. These includes poor data collection and analysis systems (i.e., is weak M&E), very long implementation period including an 18 month extension, only 90 per cent of IFAD loan disbursements, delay in transfer of supervision responsibilities from UNOPS to IFAD, relatively high costs absorbed by project management, challenges with sustainability of benefits, insufficient attention to scaling up, inadequate quality of PCR (see next section). Last but not least, the use of the FLM as a financing instrument is questionable, which is supported by the fact that IFAD has since discontinued using the FLM. Taking these are other limiting factors into account, the PCRV has been rated overall programme achievement as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

III. Assessment of PCR quality

Scope

59. PCR scope is very uneven. Some mandatory sections of a PCR are not addressed. A number of sections of the PCR did not provide in-depth analysis as required in the IFAD guidelines for PCR preparation. None of the required PCR annexes were provided. On this basis, PCRV assesses PCR scope as **moderately unsatisfactory**

(3).

Quality

60. Data quality and analysis methods are not up to the mark of a good PCR. The report analysis is more output than outcome oriented. The assessment made in the PCR is often not substantiated and raises issues of data reliability. PLPR suffered from a poor monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, which had undermined the assessment on the impact section. In addition, The PCR is completely devoid of relevant footnotes and of a bibliography. In view of the above shortcomings, the PCRV rating of PCR quality is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Lessons

61. The PCR did not attempt to derive overarching lessons learnt from programme implementation and therefore did not pay tribute to this innovative and pertinent programme to reduce rural poverty. Lessons could have been more strategic in nature, pointing to essential requirements for further rural development projects in the light of PLPR's strengths and weaknesses. The PCRV ratings with regard to lessons is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Candour

62. In general terms, the PCR appears to summarize positively the performance of PLPR, despite the absence of performing M&E system. The PCR is not concerned by the fact that almost, the entire document is not evidence-based, without a single precise reference, but rather relying on, admittedly professionally competent opinions and judgment. The PCRV ratings with regard to candour is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.
63. The overall rating for the PCR (not rated by PMD) is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Rating comparison

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE rating^a</i>	<i>Net rating disconnect (IOE PCRV – PMD)</i>
Project performance			
Relevance	5	4	-1
Effectiveness	5	5	0
Efficiency	4	-	N/A
Project performance^b			
Rural poverty impact	4.7	-	N/A
Household income and assets	5	5	0
Human and social capital and empowerment	6	5	-1
Food security and agricultural productivity	4	N/A	0
Natural resources, environment and climate change	N/A	N/A	N/A
Institutions and policies	5	5	0
Rural poverty impact^c			
Other performance criteria	5	5	0
Sustainability	4	4	0
Innovation and scaling up	5	4	-1
Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	4	0
Overall project achievement^d	5	4	-1
Performance of partners^e			
IFAD	6	5	-1
Government	4	4	0
Average net disconnect			-0.36

Ratings of the PCR quality

	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCRV rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Scope	3	3	0
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)	4	3	-1
Lessons	3	3	0
Candour	4	3	-1
Overall rating of PCR	3.5	3	0.5

^a 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.

^b Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

^c This is not an average of ratings of individual impact domains.

^d This is not an average of ratings of individual evaluation criteria but an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the rating for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, rural poverty impact, sustainability, innovation and scaling up, and gender.

^e The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall assessment ratings.

Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Definition^a</i>
Project performance	
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies. It also entails an assessment of project design in achieving its objectives.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
Rural poverty impact^b	Impact is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household income and assets 	Household income provides a means of assessing the flow of economic benefits accruing to an individual or group, whereas assets relate to a stock of accumulated items of economic value.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human and social capital and empowerment 	Human and social capital and empowerment include an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the empowerment of individuals, the quality of grassroots organizations and institutions, and the poor's individual and collective capacity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security and agricultural productivity 	Changes in food security relate to availability, access to food and stability of access, whereas changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resources, environment and climate change 	The focus on natural resources and the environment involves assessing the extent to which a project contributes to changes in the protection, rehabilitation or depletion of natural resources and the environment as well as in mitigating the negative impact of climate change or promoting adaptation measures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions and policies 	The criterion relating to institutions and policies is designed to assess changes in the quality and performance of institutions, policies and the regulatory framework that influence the lives of the poor.
Other performance criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability 	The likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation and scaling up 	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have: (i) introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction; and (ii) the extent to which these interventions have been (or are likely to be) replicated and scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality and women's empowerment 	The criterion assesses the efforts made to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the design, implementation, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation of IFAD-assisted projects.
Overall project achievement	This provides an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the analysis made under the various evaluation criteria cited above.
Performance of partners	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation. It also assesses the performance of individual partners against their expected role and responsibilities in the project life cycle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD Government 	

^a These definitions have been taken from the OECD/DAC *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management* and from the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2009).

^b The IFAD Evaluation Manual also deals with the 'lack of intervention', that is, no specific intervention may have been foreseen or intended with respect to one or more of the five impact domains. In spite of this, if positive or negative changes are detected and can be attributed in whole or in part to the project, a rating should be assigned to the particular impact domain. On the other hand, if no changes are detected and no intervention was foreseen or intended, then no rating (or the mention 'not applicable') is assigned.

List of sources used for PCRV

PLPR, Programme de Lutte contre la Pauvreté en Milieu Rural, Rapport d'Achevement, septembre 2013.

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FLM, concept paper, 1998.

PLPR, implementation of the second cycle, under FLM, EB 2007/92/INF.4, December 2007.

Report to the Executive Board, December 2007 on Self assessment of FLM.