

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

National Programme for Rangeland Rehabilitation and Development

Project Performance Assessment

Executive Summary

1. **The project.** The National Programme for Rangeland Rehabilitation and Development (1999-2006) was a project designed as the first phase of a programme that aimed at arresting and reverting the continued decline in Jordanian rangeland resources linked in particular to sharp increase in livestock numbers. The overall goal was to re-establish the productive capacity of rangeland resources in order to realize their significant environmental, social, cultural and economic contribution for present and future generations. The objective of the project was to reduce environmental degradation of rangeland resources in the Badia region by introducing sustainable community driven resource management practices and supporting the establishment of a functional Directorate of Rangeland Management in the Ministry of Agriculture. Activities at the national level included capacity building in generating the information and knowledge needed to develop strategies and policies for the sustainable improvement and use of the rangeland resources. At the local level, participatory rangeland restoration and management activities were implemented in five pilot areas in North-East and South Badia. The project costs were estimated at US\$9 million of which US\$4 million came from the IFAD loan. Total expenditures at project completion were US\$5.47 million.
2. **The assessment.** The present performance assessment of the above project was undertaken in the context of the country programme evaluation of IFAD-supported activities in Jordan. The aim was to provide an independent assessment of the project results and draw lessons for future IFAD cooperation in Jordan as well as Government programmes in the Badia.
3. The project performance was low during its first three years and a half, with a disbursement rate of only 17%. This was due in part to a persistent drought during the period but can be mainly attributed to internal factors, e.g.: (i) project management unit located in North-East Badia and inheriting staff and activities from a closed project; (ii) imbalance of activities between this area and South Badia; (iii) insufficient project start-up and monitoring and evaluation arrangements; and (iv) top-down approach with communities. Corrective measures were taken after four years so the actual implementation period was reduced to two years for most of the physical works and the participatory management plans.
4. Despite the above difficulties and the socio-economic complexity and environmental vulnerability of rangeland management in the Badia, the project managed to achieve several results. The pastoral resources information monitoring and evaluation (PRIME) unit at the Directorate of Range Management was established and functional until project closure. Most of the training activities for herders and technical staff were conducted and most of the water harvesting and conservation structures were constructed, functional and maintained. Protected areas were established, which contributed to savings in supplementary feeding for a small number of herders.
5. But the core social and organizational aspects needed more time and could only be achieved in a very limited way. The PRIME unit did not influence important policy changes for the rangelands and became dysfunctional after project closure.

The rangeland management groups constituted in each pilot site were generally composed of the better-off herders and did not lead to the development of the community-driven participatory plans for the sustainable management of the rangelands. The participatory approach was poorly implemented and there were problems with site selection. The current improved and rested areas are small and concentrated only in two out of the five pilot sites. Grazing in these rested areas could only happen twice overall and the areas are now managed by the field directorate of agriculture and not by the communities. The project benefits were limited to a few savings for some better-off herders on supplementary feeding and water availability for some flocks.

6. The overall impact and sustainability of the project were limited for the following main reasons: (i) drought and issues of land use rights in some sites; (ii) start-up and management problems that caused serious implementation delays in the South Badia pilot sites; (iii) poor performance in the implementation of participatory planning both for community empowerment and rangeland management; and (iv) lack of an exit strategy to ensure sustainability of the groups as well as community ownership and management of the pilot sites.
7. Based on the limited achievements and in view of alternative funding sources for rangeland activities in Jordan, the Government and IFAD decided not to pursue this pilot phase with a next phase of the programme.
8. **Findings and recommendations.** In addition to the above summary assessment of project results and contributing factors, the evaluation has identified three main findings. First, the project failed to develop an appropriate implementation strategy lacking in particular a thorough start-up phase, a solid monitoring and evaluation system, a transparent recruitment process for project staff and an exit strategy. Second, the sustainability of institutional and capacity building interventions were affected by high staff turn-over and insufficient resources in the counterpart institution as well as insufficient involvement of other stakeholders. Third, supplementary feeding – barley feeds and crop residue – plays a key role in livestock breeding in Jordan while the contribution of the rangeland is limited. Feed prices and related subsidies therefore play a major role both in supporting smaller herders and promoting rangeland resource conservation.
9. The main recommendations relate to the following: (i) give due attention to the implementation strategy and set up oversight mechanisms that enable rapid corrective measures in case of serious difficulties in project management; (ii) define a holistic strategy for the sustainable rehabilitation of the rangelands with carefully planned long-term bottom-up approaches incorporating linkages between water, soil, animal nutrition and health as well as long-term financial and environmental sustainability of herders' livelihoods; (iii) adopt a true participatory approach as one of the key elements of sustainability, and (iv) set up an enabling policy environment with legal, financial and institutional tools and drivers including land tenure rights and an incentives and compensations system that ensures the viability of herding within the overall context of national food security.