

**Kingdom of Morocco**

**Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of  
Al-Haouz Province**

**PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**







Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation

**Kingdom of Morocco**

**Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of  
Al-Haouz Province**

**Project performance assessment**

This evaluation report is also available in French.

*Ce rapport d'évaluation est également disponible en français: [www.ifad.org/evaluation](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation)*

**December 2014**

**Report No. 3493-MA**

**Document of the International Fund for Agricultural Development**

Photos of activities supported by the Rural Development Project for Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDRZMH).

Front cover: Almond grove planted under the project.

Back cover: (Left) Farmers standing on the roadside awaiting for middlemen who will buy and market their boxes of apples (*Asni Commune*). (Right) Income-generating activities (sheep-raising and beekeeping) promoted by the Tamount Women's Association have substantially increased household income in *Douar* Amaghras, empowering women in the *douar*, who have become more enterprising.

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## **Foreword**

*The aim of the Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province in the Kingdom of Morocco was to improve the livelihoods, incomes and food security of the poor rural people by building their capacity to use their natural resource base in a sustainable manner.*

*Overall, the project made a considerable contribution to improving the livelihoods and production conditions in the mountain areas. Of central importance to these results was the use of a participatory approach intended to enable the beneficiaries to develop their own planning and management capacities by creating a douar (hamlet) development plan – thus strengthening capacity in local development planning and rural management. A number of grass-roots associations and organizations were established and the capacity of the local technical services to engage in a participatory approach and in dialogue with local stakeholders was built.*

*Other important achievements included establishing roads and tracks that opened up the selected douars, and providing access to drinking water for households by installing drinking water supply systems. Small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes and improvements in crop and livestock production helped to increase people's food security and household income. Income generating activities and micro-enterprises created by the project also contributed to increasing the population's incomes.*

*In Morocco, the project has become a major point of reference for the Government, IFAD and other donors with regard to interventions in mountain areas, using the douar-level participatory approach. Despite these achievements, the project performance assessment observes certain weaknesses with regard to overambitious targets, the lack of knowledge management related to the douar development plans, non-implementation of forest resource conservation activities and inadequate resources dedicated to achieve the targets set for gender equality and women's empowerment. The sustainability of certain interventions also remains fragile.*

*The present assessment was led by Catrina Perch, Evaluation Officer, with the contribution of Professor Ali Abaab, agriculture and rural development consultant. Internal peer reviewers from IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) – Ashwani Muthoo, Deputy Director, Anne-Marie Lambert, former Senior Evaluation Officer, and Miguel Torralba, Senior Evaluation Officer – contributed comments on the draft report, while Maria Cristina Spagnolo, Evaluation Assistant, provided administrative support.*

*The Independent Office of Evaluation is grateful to IFAD's Near East, North Africa and Europe Division and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for their insightful comments and their support throughout the assessment process.*

*I hope the results of this evaluation will contribute to the improvement of ongoing and future IFAD operations in Morocco.*



Oscar A. Garcia  
Director  
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

**Project activities supported the women's association "Tamount", by helping women to improve their living conditions and strengthen their technical and economic capacity. Activities included literacy and technical training.**

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## Currency equivalent

Currency unit = Moroccan dirham (MAD)

US\$1.00 = MAD 10.5 during project design

MAD 1.00 = US\$0.05 during project design

US\$1.00 = MAD 8.2822 at project completion

MAD 1.00 = US\$0.12074 at project completion

## Abbreviations and acronyms

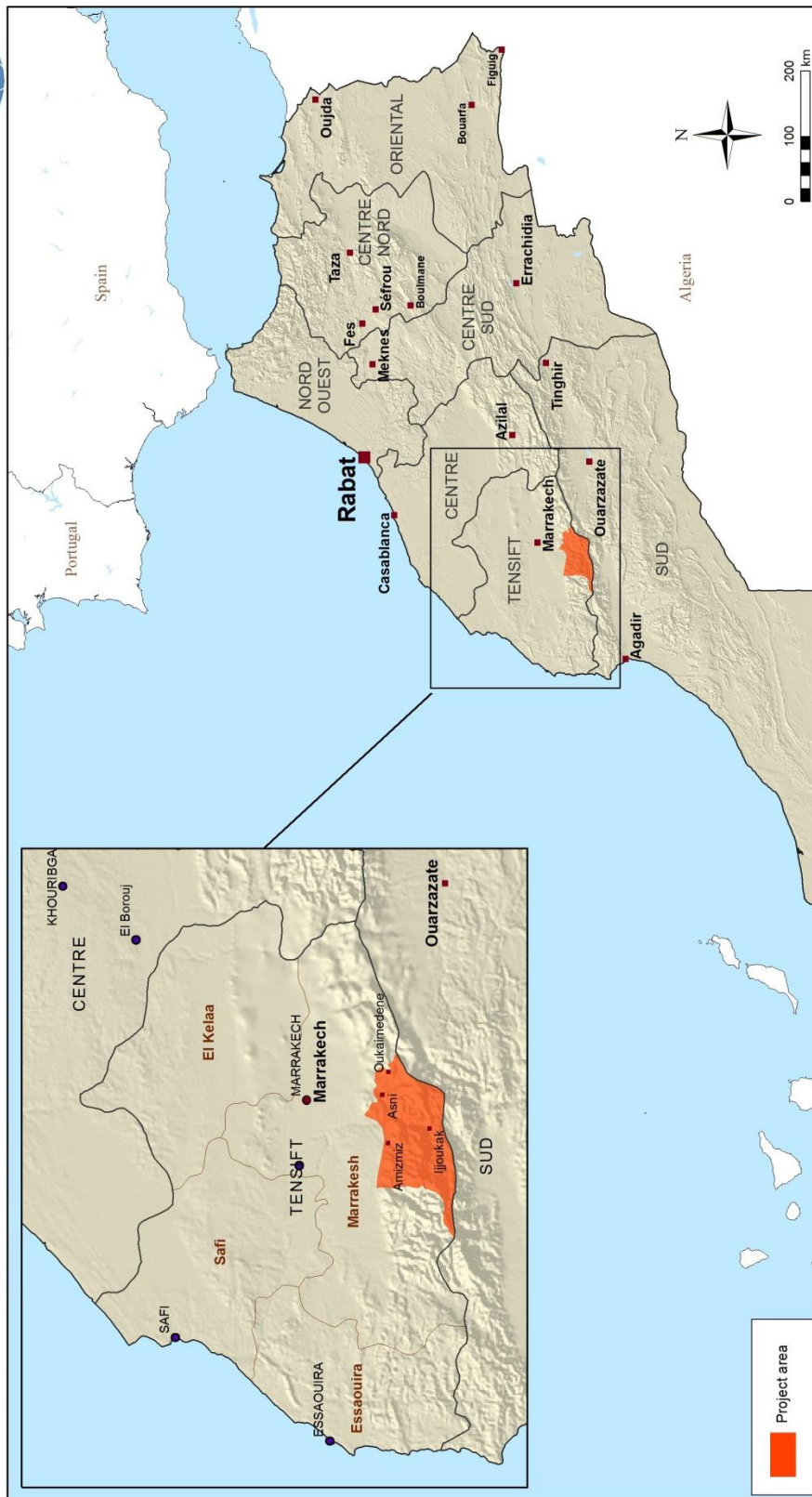
ANOC	National Association of Sheep and Goat Farmers ( <i>Association nationale des éleveurs d'ovins et de caprins</i> )
AUEA	Association of Agricultural Water Users ( <i>Association des usagers de l'eau agricole</i> )
CDP	Commune development plan
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
CPE	country programme evaluation
DDP	<i>Douar</i> development plan
DPA	Provincial Directorate of Agriculture
DREF	Regional Directorate of Water and Forests
ERR	Economic Rate of Return
GDA	Grass-roots Development Association
GDP	Gross domestic product
INDH	National Human Development Initiative
INRA	National Institute for Agricultural Research
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
PDFAZMH	Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province
PDRZMH	Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province
PPA	project performance assessment
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SMOP	Project Implementation Service
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services



# Map of the project area



## Kingdom of Morocco Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province Project performance evaluation



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.  
Map compiled by IFAD | 09-03-2015

## Executive summary

1. This report presents the findings of the project performance assessment (PPA) of the Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDRZMH) in the Kingdom of Morocco.
2. **Objectives.** The PPA's objectives were to assess the project's overall results and to generate findings and recommendations for the implementation of ongoing - and the design of future - operations in the country.
3. **Methodology.** The PPA followed the IOE Guidelines for Project Completion Report Validation and Project Performance Assessment<sup>1</sup> and builds on an extensive desk review of the project completion report and other relevant documentation. In addition, it includes findings from a mission to Morocco, with interviews taking place in the capital and in the field. During the fieldwork, data were collected to verify the information collated in the desk review and to reach an independent assessment of the project's performance and impact.
4. Given the limited level of resources IOE allocates for undertaking PPAs in general, no quantitative survey was undertaken. The information gathered was therefore mainly of a qualitative nature and focused on a restricted set of topics identified during the desk review and in consultations with the Country Programme Manager.
5. In this regard, particular emphasis was given to the relevance and application of the participatory approach at the *douar* level (equivalent to a hamlet), the development of the *Douar* Development Plans and the sustainability of project activities.
6. **PPA process.** The PPA mission was undertaken in September 2013, in close cooperation with the Government. The mission included field visits to project sites, and meetings and interviews were held with government officials, members of project-supported groups, individual farmers and other key stakeholders. The final PPA report has benefitted from a detailed internal peer review within IOE, and comments by IFAD's Near East, North Africa and Europe Division and the Government of Morocco.
7. **Limitations.** In the absence of *quasi-experimental* evaluation methods to assess results "before and after" and "with and without" the project, and given that other donors, such as the World Bank, the Millennium Challenge Cooperation and government agencies led projects that were contributing to general development in the region, it was challenging for the PPA to distinguish the respective impacts of the various interventions.
8. In addition, a follow-on IFAD-financed project (the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province) was approved in December 2011, and the current situation was likely to have been influenced by this project as well. However, specific PDRZMH physical outputs can be identified and to a large extent project participants can recall the PDRZMH support.
9. **Project background.** PDRZMH was approved in 2000 and implemented between 2002 and 2011. It was conceived as a pilot intervention to support the development of a particularly impoverished mountain area. It aimed to pilot various approaches that could then be scaled up and replicated in other mountain areas in the country, to encourage beneficiary participation through decentralization, and to support the creation of productive socio-economic infrastructure accessible to beneficiaries.
10. The project's main objective was to contribute to the sustainable socio-economic development of the disadvantaged rural population of the mountain zones of the

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<sup>1</sup> IFAD. Guidelines for Project Completion Report Validation and Project Performance Assessment: [www.ifad.org/evaluation/process\\_methodology/doc/pr\\_completion.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/pr_completion.pdf).

Al- Haouz Province. Specific objectives included to: (i) strengthen the self-management capacity of formal and informal grass-roots organizations; (ii) improve production conditions and increase and diversify the agricultural and non-agricultural income of the target groups; (iii) improve the living conditions of populations by facilitating their access to basic socio-economic infrastructures; (iv) facilitate the sustainable access of poor people, especially women, to financial services; and (v) promote sustainable management of natural resources.

11. The objectives were to be achieved through interventions in four components: (i) capacity-building and promotion of local development; (ii) implementation of local development programmes; (iii) support to rural financial services and to micro-enterprise development; and (iv) institutional support and project coordination and management.
12. The total project costs at design were US\$30.2 million, of which IFAD's contribution was US\$18.0 million. The remaining project costs were provided by the Government of Morocco (US\$10.9 million), beneficiaries (US\$800,000), and the United Nations Development Programme, the municipalities and the non-governmental organization selected for the microcredit activities (Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole) (US\$500,000). The project's main executing agency was the Ministry of Agriculture, with the provincial department of agriculture responsible for overall management of activities. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) conducted project supervision and implementation support until 2007, after which IFAD took over direct supervision.
13. **Project performance.** The project was in line with IFAD's strategic objectives for Morocco and the Government's strategies, including the strategy for rain-fed agriculture and the programmes aiming to provide basic infrastructure. It is generally considered as one of the first real attempts to implement the Government's 1999 Strategy for Rural Development (Stratégie 2020). The focus on infrastructure, as well as the other activities, was relevant to the needs of the target group as evidenced by the coherence between the priorities formulated by the population itself, through the participatory planning exercise, and the project components. In addition, the subcomponent on gender issues responded to the needs of rural women, whose situation was characterized by high levels of illiteracy and lack of access to income-generating activities.
14. PDRZMH was conceived as an integrated rural development project. The major investments in roads and small-scale irrigation supported the Government's thrust to improve accessibility of the poor rural population. A necessary consequence of the heavy investment in infrastructure was that the resources available for some of the other components were relatively limited, which in turn led to some implementation challenges. Likewise, the decision to target 17 communes spread over a large area in the province necessarily translated into a less intensive targeting than would have been the case in a smaller project area.
15. The most important approach introduced through PDRZMH was the participatory preparation of local development plans at the *douar* (hamlet) level. The "*douar* approach" and subsequent plan was to be the focus of a significant shift in power towards the inhabitants of the *douars*. This process included the participatory identification of beneficiaries' priority needs, the establishment of numerous grass-roots associations and organizations, and the strengthening of the capacities of district technical services. Based on the documentation reviewed and the field visits made, there is evidence that important achievements have been accomplished through this process. A high number of *douar* development plans were prepared, and as such, the participation of the population in defining their needs and priorities and in maintaining small-scale irrigation, water points and other productive assets through grass-roots organizations has increased. It is also clear

that the knowledge and understanding of the provincial administration and its technical departments in dealing with mountain areas have increased substantially.

16. In addition to the participatory local development process, three other investment areas (socio-economic infrastructure, rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes, and soil and water conservation) achieved important results. Specifically, 92 *douars* were provided with access to drinking water and 83 *douars* with rural roads. As a result, the distance to schools, health clinics and other social services was reduced. The rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes, including repairs to diversion channels, resulted in the extension of irrigated areas. This in turn led to diversification of crops cultivated and increased yields. The soil and water conservation measures taken (e.g. construction of ridges to control gullying) have helped to reduce erosion and protect basic infrastructure.
17. The PDRZMH has become an important point of reference in Morocco, not only for the Government and IFAD but also for other donors, on how to work in a participatory manner in mountain areas.
18. On the less positive side, the PPA noted that, while the preparation of *douar* development plans exceeded targets in terms of numbers, in many cases they did not result in comprehensive integrated annual plans of action, as originally intended, but rather in individual activities. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, the comprehensive plans did not include an annual budget and it quickly became apparent that there was insufficient budget to cover several years of activities. For this reason, the plans could not include a set of interventions covering social services and basic infrastructure as well as income-generating activities but had to focus on separate activities. There were also a number of methodological problems (e.g. lengthy time it took from preparing the plans to implementing activities on the ground, leading to a loss of momentum). Hence, the plans did not become the tool for planning, management and maintenance as intended. However, the development of the plans enabled the beneficiaries and technical staff to identify their needs and provided important baseline information of the area. The project also faced challenges with respect to certain partnerships with the Regional Department for Water and Forests and the National Institute for Agricultural Research, which in turn had an impact on the activities to be carried out.
19. In terms of efficiency the calculated Economic Rate of Return (ERR) was 13.41 per cent, slightly lower than the appraisal estimate of 15 per cent. If community investments, such as rural roads and water supply, are not considered, the ERR amounts to 28.2 per cent. Given the disadvantaged region in which the project took place and the fact that the ERR does not take into account a number of social benefits such as diversification of income, improvement in sanitation, etc., the PPA considers the ERR of 13.41 per cent as reasonable. According to the project documentation, project management costs were kept low. However, there were a number of delays during the project period (e.g. it took 13.5 months for the loan to become effective). In addition there was a slow-down at mid-term due to staff constraints (voluntary retirements and high turnover) resulting in weak management and budgetary constraints and consequently a 2.5-year extension of the project.
20. On the whole, however, the project was considered as having satisfactorily contributed to the overall objective of sustainable socio-economic development of the disadvantaged rural population in the area. The PPA assesses project relevance and effectiveness as satisfactory, whereas efficiency is considered as moderately satisfactory.
21. In terms of **rural poverty impact**, sources of income were diversified, in particular through small ruminants and beekeeping, but also through the introduction of fruit trees (e.g. cherries, plums, apples). The expansion in irrigated

areas led to higher yields and incomes. Additionally, the supply of drinking water helped improve sanitation and resulted in time being saved. Capacity was built, and the evaluation confirmed that a new type of leadership was emerging, which differed from that of the traditional elite. It represented youth and the leaders of grass-roots associations who were gaining experience in community work and were able to enter the local political arena. Some of the challenges faced by the project related to reaching high targets in terms of agricultural productivity (e.g. an increase of 50 per cent on irrigated soil for cereal, an increase of 25 per cent on rain-fed soils). In addition, and despite some real improvements in the productivity, the PPA noted that the impact could have been higher and more widespread had more support and guidance been provided to the farmers, particularly concerning the planting of trees (e.g. choice of species, density, size). All in all, however, the project achieved a satisfactory impact on rural poverty.

22. With regards to **sustainability**, the overall institutional environment appeared to be favourable for the continuation of some of the benefits streams. For example other programmes, such as the "Plan Maroc Vert", the National Initiative for Human Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, were active in the area and are likely to build on some of the results achieved so far. Furthermore, a new national strategy for the mountain areas is being formulated, which will add to the momentum created by the PDRZMH, and some activities will be continued through the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province. However several benefit streams remain fragile. The sustainability of the grass-roots associations was weak, with only 50 per cent remaining functional. The sustainability of the Douar Development Plans was very weak as it had been superseded by the communal plan with what appeared to be little reference to the work undertaken through the Douar Development Plans process. Maintenance of some of the basic infrastructure (tracks and diversion channels) deserves special attention as their upkeep and renewal appears to be beyond the means of the associations established for that purpose. The PPA assessed the sustainability of benefits as moderately satisfactory.
23. **Gender.** Efforts were made to increase gender equality by providing literacy training, encouraging women's participation in groups and associations, and enhancing women's involvement in income-generating activities through training and provision of access to financial services. Women benefitted from access to drinking water and literacy training, but insufficient resources were allocated to achieving the ambitious targets set in a conservative environment. Although there were several good examples of women's cooperatives that were working well, the documentation shows that very few of the trained women have access to stable revenue and overall the participation of women in associations and groups did not reach the originally intended levels. With respect to the literacy training, the project faced challenges in relation to lack of premises made available and lack of budget for the teachers. The PPA assesses gender equality and women's empowerment as moderately satisfactory.
24. PDRZMH was assessed as being **innovative**, as it was based on the participation and empowerment of beneficiaries, which were new concepts in the project area at the time of the project's design – even though IFAD was not the only agency applying this approach. The Douar Development Plans in particular constituted real progress towards beneficiary-led integrated development plans. Despite some challenges, the Douar Development Plans enabled the collection of important baseline data and introduced participatory approaches to both the beneficiaries and provincial staff. The introduction of improvements to the productive system through new species, extension, processing units, and organization of producers can also be considered as innovations in certain douars where some very old agricultural practices were still dominant.

25. In terms of **scaling up**, certain approaches have been replicated in other projects, such as the Irrigation Based Development Project managed by the World Bank. The follow-on project is also expected to scale up certain innovations that the project introduced, in particular in relation to value chains. It is not clear to what extent resources through the Plan Maroc Vert will be channelled towards scaling up innovations promoted by the project, but some public resources will need to be assigned if this is to take place. All in all, the PPA assesses innovation and scaling up as satisfactory.
26. **Partner performance.** IFAD took over direct supervision from UNOPS in 2007. This was perceived as an improvement, as guidance by UNOPS was seen as overly focused on administrative and financial issues rather than providing technical support. In general, the support provided through the IFAD supervision missions which took place at least once a year was assessed as useful in supporting the implementation of the project and providing relevant recommendations. However, it was highlighted that diversifying the composition of the teams could have been beneficial. The importance of ensuring that team members had an understanding of and expertise in mountainous areas was also emphasized.
27. Overall, the Government operated effectively. The project encountered some challenges in terms of the partnerships with certain institutions and departments. Examples included the relationship with the Department of Forestry on some of the pastoral and sylvo-pastoral activities, and the partnership with the National Institute for Agricultural Research on activities to support the Provincial Agricultural Department's technical services in setting up crop trials. These difficulties were linked to a lack of control over financial resources on the part of the partner institutions. There also appears to have been some difficulties in ensuring the timely allocation of funds, which had implications on the execution of the project. IFAD's performance is considered satisfactory, whereas the Government's performance is assessed as moderately satisfactory.
28. The **overall project achievement** for the PDRZMH is rated as satisfactory. The objectives were relevant given the enormous challenges facing farmers in the mountain areas of Al-Haouz. The choice of a pilot approach was justified because the project was complex and involved an integrated multi-sector approach to rural development. The project contributed to an increase in living standards (due to provision of access roads, irrigation and potable water). The PDRZMH also contributed to capacity-building in planning and management, through the application of the Douar approach at both Douar and provincial levels. This was a pilot project that introduced a number of innovations, and a follow-on project is currently being implemented.
29. The minor shortcomings related to targeting of too large a geographic area and to a very high diversity of activities. Likewise the project faced some challenges with respect to the gender activities as well as the activities related to range management and sylvo-pastoral resources. Despite a favourable institutional environment, sustainability remains fragile for a number of benefits.

### **Main recommendations**

30. **Incorporate a participatory process into communal planning.** In order to ensure that the participatory process is sustainable, a similar process should be incorporated into the current communal planning process. The adoption of a new local planning instrument – the Communal Development Plan – represents a significant step forward on the path to decentralization, and the systematic integration of a participatory process into this plan would add to the ownership and sustainability of development activities.

31. **Provide support to the Sustainable Development Strategy for Mountain Areas.** The mountain areas in Morocco will soon have a sustainable development strategy. This strategy could benefit from IFAD's experience in these areas with specific project design approaches, styles of intervention, etc. Building on this, and experiences of others, would be extremely useful, particularly for the new directorate responsible for rural and mountain zones, and could make a direct contribution to the planning of the strategy and relevant policies.
32. **Establish sound and functioning partnerships for project execution.** The development of partnerships between the institutional players involved in the project's implementation should be carefully analysed and planned during project formulation in order to minimize any potential dysfunctions. Methodological, administrative and financial aspects must be correctly considered and prepared in order to avoid delays in establishing agreements and, consequently, the project activities.
33. **Give special attention to agricultural extension.** Sustainable diversification and intensification of cropping systems requires support and training for farmers over an extended period of time so that they can acquire solid technical skills and know-how. It also entails scientific and technical support from research centres with a view to improving the technical knowledge of the provincial administration as well as farmers in mountain areas. Therefore, the agricultural extension component should receive special attention in projects operating in areas that employ fairly traditional farming practices.

# Kingdom of Morocco

## Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province

### Project performance assessment

#### I. Objectives, methodology and process

1. IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) undertakes project performance assessments (PPAs) for selected projects with a project completion report validation. The PPA is conducted shortly after the validation and entails field visits to supplement the observations in the validation report and fill in any information or knowledge gaps. The Rural Development Project in Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDRZMH), supported by IFAD in the Kingdom of Morocco, was selected for a performance assessment.
2. **Objectives.** The PPA's objectives were to (i) conduct an independent assessment of the project's overall results and impact with a view to better understanding the performance and development results of IFAD supported operations and (ii) generate findings and recommendations at the institutional level and strengthen the reliability and quality of IFAD's self-evaluation systems for the implementation of ongoing and future operations in the country. Specifically, this PDRZMH assessment makes it possible to issue recommendations and draw useful lessons for the new Rural Development Programme in Mountain Zones, whose preparation began in November 2013, and for the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDFAZMH), approved in December 2011.
3. **Methodology.** The PDRZMH performance assessment employs the evaluation criteria found in the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2009) and the Guidelines for Project Completion Report Validations and Project Performance Assessments. Performance in each of the domains is rated on a scale of 1-6, with 1 the lowest score and 6 the highest.
4. The initial findings are based on an internal review of the available documentation, used during preparation of the report issued for the project completion report validation. Particular attention has been paid to the assessment report, the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS), supervision reports and the project completion report. Primary and secondary data were gathered during the evaluation mission to support an independent assessment of performance and results. Data-gathering methods were generally participatory and the data basically qualitative in nature. Techniques and instruments such as individual and group interviews, thematic discussions with beneficiaries in the *douars* and direct observation were largely employed in the assessment. The evaluation team did not use statistical surveys, as the brevity of the mission made it impossible to build a reliable sample on which to make a judgement. Triangulation techniques were used to verify the observations from diverse information sources. The secondary data were obtained from studies conducted during project implementation, primarily by young researchers from the Hassan II Institute of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (see bibliography).
5. **Process.** The PPA mission was conducted from 2 to 13 September 2013<sup>1</sup> with support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Marine Fisheries. The main findings and preliminary conclusions were presented to the stakeholders at a debriefing in Rabat on 12 September 2013. Mrs. Catrina Perch, Evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> The team began by holding meetings in Rabat (3 days). The mission then traveled to Marrakech (2 days) and the project areas (5 days in 8 of the 17 communes). The field visits were targeted and designed to show the diversity of the project's activities, even in very remote areas.



Officer in IOE, led the PPA in collaboration with Mr. Ali Abaab (consultant, agro-economist).

6. The PPA team prepared an independent report, which was peer reviewed in IOE. Prior to finalization, the report was sent for comments to IFAD's Near East, North Africa and Europe Division and to the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

## **II. The project**

### **A. The project context**

7. Morocco is a middle-income country with an estimated population of 32.3 million and a declining average population growth rate (from 2.04 per cent to 1.1 per cent between the periods 1982-1994 and 2002-2008). The country's total gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices rose from US\$61 billion in 2005 to US\$98 billion in 2010, and per capita GDP from US\$1,920 to US\$2,900, or a 52 per cent increase in five years.<sup>2</sup>
8. From the outset, the 1990s were marked by evaluations and operations research for crisis management, together with accelerating liberalization and economic openness, financial sector reforms and modernization of the legal and institutional business frameworks. The period was characterized by slow growth, averaging 2.4 per cent per annum between 1990 and 1999.<sup>3</sup>
9. Nationwide, Morocco's rural regions had fallen considerably behind its cities in terms of economic and social infrastructure. These regions are characterized by underdeveloped public works (e.g. roads, drinking water supply, electrification), low levels of education, a mass rural exodus and an ageing farm population. With a view to alleviating the difficult situation in rural areas, the Government of Morocco took a first step in the mid-1990s by introducing a large number of basic infrastructure programmes (e.g. Global Rural Electrification Programme – PERG, Rural Water Supply Programme – PAGER). Its Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Marine Fisheries then drew up the 2020 Strategy for Rural Development (in 1999). The policy that grew out of this strategy revolved around two main areas: (i) farmland and agricultural activities; and (ii) special programme development.
10. Since the mid-2000s, rural development policy has focused on establishing two instruments for intervention by the public authorities (El Mekki A.A., 2008): the pursuit of entrepreneurial activities, through a new generation of integrated rural development projects, to put rainfed lands into use; and the launch of programmes under the National Human Development Initiative (INDH). Launched in May 2005, the INDH is a national initiative whose main purpose is to improve the country's ranking on the Human Development Index, primarily by reducing poverty in the country's poorest communes. In its design, the INDH is consistent with the existing anti-poverty programmes in Morocco, especially integrated rural development projects, and with the principles for action established in the 2020 Strategy.<sup>4</sup>
11. In 2008, the Green Morocco Plan was launched with a view to reviving Moroccan agriculture, for which a general recovery and development strategy had been lacking since the end of the structural adjustment programmes. The Green Morocco Plan was designed to provide Moroccan agriculture with the means it lacked and to make the sector "the principal engine of growth and the fight against poverty in Morocco" by 2020. The Green Morocco Plan rests on two pillars: (i) pillar I, modernization, to develop competitive agriculture adapted to the rules of the market and with high value added, thanks to a new wave of private investment organized around new "aggregator" business models; and (ii) pillar II, joint support for small- and medium-scale farming to reduce poverty and substantially increase

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/morocco> (accessed 4 November 2013).

<sup>3</sup> National Report 2009: Millennium Development Goals.

<sup>4</sup> La Vie éco of 8/11/2010 and The Economist of 6/6/2011.

the income of the poorest farmers, especially in disadvantaged areas. The Plan would focus on projects for the modernization, diversification and intensification of agricultural production.

12. After the economic stagnation of the 1990s, the Kingdom of Morocco bounced back, thanks to sound macroeconomic policies and the sustained growth of its non-agricultural sectors. Growth in 2011 was estimated at 5 per cent. However, it remains heavily dependent on agriculture, whose contribution to GDP ranges from 12 to 24 per cent, depending on weather conditions.<sup>5</sup> The agriculture sector (subsistence and commercial farming) employs 40 per cent of the economically active population and generates 80 per cent of rural employment.
13. Cereals, grown on 68 per cent of the land and chiefly on low-rainfall rangelands,<sup>6</sup> are by far the most important crops. With production ranging from 2 million tonnes to more than 10 million tonnes per year, for an average of just under 6 million tonnes, they have considerable weight in the Moroccan economy. The irrigated sector, covering 13 per cent of the arable farmland, accounts for 45 per cent of agricultural value added and 75 per cent of agricultural exports. Unlike cereals, export crops, such as citrus fruits, tomatoes, potatoes and olives, are grown on irrigated land. Domestic production covers 100 per cent of the country's meat, fruit and legume requirements, 82 per cent of its milk requirements, 47 per cent of its sugar requirements, 62 per cent of its cereal requirements, 31 per cent of its butter requirements and 21 per cent of its edible oil requirements.<sup>7</sup>
14. Morocco has made significant progress in reducing absolute poverty, which fell from 15.3 per cent in 2001 to 9 per cent in 2007. However, economic vulnerability (quasi-poverty) is still very widespread, with one quarter of the population that lives in absolute poverty or the constant threat of it generally located in rural areas. In fact, 70 per cent of the country's poor live in rural areas, where the poverty rate is 14.5 per cent, in contrast to 4.8 per cent in urban areas. Morocco's social indicators are also behind those of other countries with an equivalent income level, with women being especially disadvantaged: 72 per cent of rural women do not know how to read, in contrast to the national average of 52.7 per cent. Only 40 to 50 per cent of schoolchildren complete the six-year primary cycle, with even lower rates among girls. Nutritional status is also a matter of great concern, with one out of five children under five exhibiting stunting or emaciation.<sup>8</sup>
15. **Project objectives.** The project's overall objective was to strengthen the local management and development capacity of mountain populations to boost their income, raise their standard of living and increase their food security while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. The project's specific objectives were to: (i) strengthen the self-management capacity of formal and informal grass-roots associations; (ii) improve production conditions and increase and diversify the agricultural and non-agricultural income of the target groups; (iii) improve the living conditions of populations by facilitating their access to basic socio-economic infrastructures; (iv) facilitate the sustainable access of poor people, especially women, to financial services; and (v) promote sustainable management of natural resources.<sup>9</sup>
16. **Project financing.** Loan agreement No. 556-MA, which provides co-financing for the PDRZMH, entered into force on 22 January 2002. The project financing consisted of an IFAD loan of US\$18 million, or 60 per cent of the total cost of the project. The expected Government contribution was US\$10.9 million (36 per cent);

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<sup>5</sup> IFAD, 2008, Country Programme Evaluation, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> A distinction is made between "favourable" areas, corresponding to the arable farmland on plains and hillsides with rainfall of more than 400 mm, and "unfavourable" areas, corresponding to arable farmland in the mountainous semi-arid zone.

<sup>7</sup> IFAD, 2008, Country Strategic Opportunities Programme.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.banquemondiale.org/fr/country/morocco/overview> (accessed in December 2013).

<sup>9</sup> IFAD, 2001, Loan Agreement, p. 11.

the beneficiaries' contribution US\$800,000 (2.6 per cent) and that of the other parties US\$500,000 (1.7 per cent).

Table 1  
Summary of project costs in US\$\*

<i>Component</i>	<i>Costs (in US\$ thousands)</i>	<i>Percentage of base costs</i>	<i>Actual costs (in US\$ thousands)</i>	<i>Percentage of actual costs</i>
Capacity-building and promotion of local development	3 578	13	1 075	3
Implementation of local development programmes	21 205	78	34 830	95
Support to rural financial services and microenterprise development	1 027	4	253	0.7
Institutional support and project coordination and management	1 548	6	468	1.3
<b>Total base costs</b>	<b>27 358</b>		<b>36 626</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Report and Recommendation of the President (2000) and completion report (2013).

\*Any discrepancy in the totals is due to rounding.

17. According to the project completion report, the total actual cost of the project was US\$36.62 million. IFAD's contribution was US\$20.44 million and the Government's US\$15.97 million. The beneficiaries' contribution was 98 per cent of the amount stipulated in the project design, or US\$0.952 million.
18. **Project components.** Project implementation revolved around four major components: (i) capacity-building and promotion of local development; (ii) implementation of local development programmes; (iii) support for rural financial services and microenterprise development; and (iv) institutional support and project coordination and management.
19. **Project area.** The project covered 17 poor rural communes in Al-Haouz Province, situated in the administrative spheres of Amizmiz and Asni, south of Marrakech. The total project area was 239,200 hectares (ha), 86.4 per cent of which were covered by State forests and community rangelands. Only 32,600 ha of this area were arable farmland (13.6 per cent), distributed among some 12,000 farmers, with a relatively large portion of this land (40 per cent) irrigated in the traditional manner.
20. **Target group.** The target group consisted of the poorest of the 112,000 residents (18,550 households) of the project area. Half of the farmers worked less than 1 ha of land and 96 per cent worked less than 5 ha. The extremely low income produced by most of these parcels put the majority of the households involved in the vulnerable indigent group targeted by the project. The high vulnerability of the rural population led to the adoption of a three-level targeting mechanism: (i) priority to the poorest communes; (ii) identification of homogeneous socio-geographical intervention areas with the greatest needs in the priority communes; and (iii) the targeting of selected vulnerable groups – for example, farmers engaged in subsistence agriculture, women and young people due to their particular problems.
21. **Institutional arrangements.** The project was placed under the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Marine Fisheries and received support from a

national steering committee. The President's Report<sup>10</sup> called for its initial administrative placement under the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture (DPA) and its ultimate transfer, after no more than two or three years, to the agricultural work centre in Amizmiz. For the piloting of the project, the director had the support of a provincial technical committee, and for project implementation, a project coordination unit comprised of several staff members facilitated by a coordinator. In the communes, local agricultural development committees provided project support. Many other responsibilities were delegated, under agreements, to other entities, such as the agricultural work centre in Amizmiz (facilitation activities), the Regional Directorate of Water and Forests (sylvo-pastoral and forestry activities), the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) (research and development activities), the Regional Directorate for Irrigation Infrastructure, (drinking water supply activities), among others.

22. **Changes/new events affecting project implementation.** Initially scheduled for March 2008, project completion was reported on 30 September 2010 and the closure of the loan on 31 March 2011. This extension was accompanied by a reallocation of the loan proceeds.<sup>11</sup>
23. From the outset (preparation of the *douar* development plans - DDPs), the project had qualified personnel (male and female facilitators and subject specialists) and the equipment and inputs necessary for its operations (e.g. vehicles, fuel, supplies), as well as assistance from a consulting firm. However, due to the relatively frequent change in project director, staff turnover, a voluntary staff separation programme (late 2005) and the gap between the activities foreseen in the programme of work and the timely withdrawal applications, implementation of project activities began to slow, essentially mid-way through the project. Likewise, the slow implementation of partnership agreements with selected regional services (Regional Directorate of Water and Forests – DREF, INRA) for a variety of reasons (e.g. administrative, intervention approaches) did not favour optimal implementation of certain project activities.
24. It should also be noted that the project's steering committee always worked out of the DPA in Marrakech, even though the President's report called for its eventual transfer to the agricultural work centre in Amizmiz. In the same vein, the project was managed by the DPA director, although that responsibility was also supposed to be transferred to the work centre in Amizmiz. The diminished role of agricultural work centres countrywide and the reduction in the means at their disposal could be why project management was never transferred to the work centre in Amizmiz.

## **B. Project implementation**

25. The tangible achievements of the PDRZMH are presented in the project outputs table (annex 6). The paragraphs below describe and briefly review the tangible achievements and outputs obtained. The evaluation team has not had an opportunity to verify all the figures in the completion report.
26. **Capacity-building and promotion of local development.** This is an important component, as it is considered one of the factors for success and innovation in the project's programme of action. Under this component, 217 DDPs (versus the 210 programmed) were developed, covering 370 *douars*. These DDPs were developed using a participatory approach that directly involved beneficiaries in the identification of needs, priorities and the actions to take to improve the socio-economic situation of the target populations. These plans led to the signing of 70 annual programme contracts and multiple work contracts with grass-roots development associations (GDAs). For women's empowerment, the project furnished materials for 70 literacy classes (versus the 210 programmed) attended

<sup>10</sup> IFAD, 2010, President's Report, page 10.

<sup>11</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, Appendix 3: Summary of amendments to the Loan Agreement.

by 4,878 women and contributed to the creation of around 20 women's associations. Furthermore, the project held 62,000 training seminars, 46 per cent of them for managers and technical personnel and 53 per cent for farmers, rural youth and women. The number of training seminars exceeded expectations (corresponding to 103 per cent of the number programmed for associations, 120 per cent of those for livestock production and 433 per cent of those for product marketing).

27. **Implementation of local development programmes.** The purpose of this component was to include the activities selected by village communities under annual programme contacts. It was divided into several sub-components and resulted in:
- (i) **the development of small- and medium-scale irrigation infrastructure**, with partial rehabilitation of the irrigation networks (supply and distribution) of 91 areas covering 4,816 ha (4,000 ha programmed); the lining of 183.9 km of diversion channels (canals) with concrete; the construction of 42 check dams; the repair of 13 existing dams; and the development of 8 irrigation schemes;
  - (ii) **access to drinking water** in 92 *douars* (versus the 71 programmed), with the construction of 27 water catchment works, the laying of 167,000 m of polyethylene pipes, and the construction of reservoirs with a total capacity of 3,085 m<sup>3</sup>. To open up these areas, the project constructed 122.5 km of stabilized rural roads (versus the 155 km planned) and 117.5 km of new rural roads (versus the 134 km planned) benefitting 82 *douars* (versus the 73 planned);
  - (iii) **soil and water conservation and land development activities** involving the construction of ridges to control gullyng, for a volume of 28,000 m<sup>3</sup> (versus the 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> programmed); the construction of terraces for soil protection and regeneration (2,100 ha versus the 2,000 ha programmed); and stone walls (400 ha versus the 1,000 ha programmed);
  - (iv) **improvements in orchard production with the planting of 192,700 trees** (olive, almond, apple, cherry, carob, etc.), increasing the value of a 2,100 ha area, and efforts to combat the wild *jujube* weed, which have restored viability to 1,730 ha of the 3,000 ha programmed. At project completion, 55,263 fruit trees and 13 different species had been planted, versus the 55,000 programmed;
  - (v) **livestock production and health activities**, which have led to the genetic improvement of the herd (73 Sardi stud rams instead of the 80 programmed), the trial introduction of molasses blocks in feed (10 tonnes), 22 fattening trials (distribution of 22 tonnes of compound feed to farmers), the organization of stockfarmers in associations under a partnership agreement with the National Association of Sheep and Goat Farmers (*Association nationale des éleveurs d'ovins et de caprins* – ANOC), vaccination against enterotoxaemia (77,000 sheep per year), internal parasite control campaigns for small ruminants (164,000 sheep and 105,000 goats per year) and bee treatment campaigns to combat the varroa mite (4,220 beehives/year).<sup>12</sup>
28. **Support for rural financial services and microenterprise development.** This component led to the creation of 79 income-generating activities and microenterprises (versus the 10 microenterprises programmed), 33 of them financed through partnerships between the Government and associations and 46 in partnership with other stakeholders. This component enabled the creation of microcredit associations in the zone: the Foundation for Local Development and

<sup>12</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 11.

Partnerships (*Fondation pour le développement local et le partenariat* – FONDEP), the ARDI Foundation (*Fondation ARDI*) and the Al Amana Foundation (*Fondation Al Amana*), which have granted loans to some 22,300 beneficiaries.

29. **Institutional support and project coordination and management.** The project's entry into force was contingent upon the creation of a project coordination unit, the designation of the project director, and the availability of facilitators (men and women alike) and subject specialists, who contributed to the successful launch of the project. The main elements of the **monitoring and evaluation** system were put in place: baseline data, administrative and financial monitoring and indicators of the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS).
30. In terms of tangible results, the PDRZMH yielded significant achievements in terms of the number of *douar* development plans prepared, training (number of sessions), small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes, rural roads that facilitated access to the *douars*, drinking water supply systems and project management and coordination. Land management activities exceeded expectations in terms of controlling gullying (a 180 per cent increase), while other activities either did not meet their objectives (e.g. stone walls: 40 per cent) or were not carried out (some silvo-pastoral development and pasture management activities).

#### **Key points**

- The project's general objective was to strengthen the local management and development capacities of populations in the mountains to increase their income, raise their standard of living and improve their food security while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.
- Project implementation involved four major components: (i) capacity-building and promotion of local development; (ii) implementation of local development programmes; (iii) support for rural financial services and microenterprise development; and (iv) institutional support and project coordination and management.
- Ninety-five per cent of the actual costs were under component 2 (implementation of local development programmes).
- The project area covered 17 disadvantaged rural communes in Al-Haouz Province, situated in the administrative spheres of Amizmiz and Asni, south of Marrakech.
- Implementation of activities slowed down at mid-term; consequently, project completion, initially programmed for March 2008, was reported on 30 September 2010.

### **III. Review of findings**

#### **A. Project performance**

##### **Relevance**

31. The objectives of the PDRZMH were generally relevant to both the strategies and public policies of the Government of Morocco, aiming at reducing poverty and promoting rural development, and to the IFAD strategy in Morocco. More particularly, the project was aligned with Law 33-94 on the development of low-rainfall rangelands and with the country's basic rural infrastructure programmes (e.g. Global Electrification Programme – PERG, Rural Water Supply Programme – PAGER). The PDRZMH can also be considered the first major project implemented under the 2020 Strategy for Rural Development. It was also part of the dynamic of promoting partnerships between public technical services and civil society, which really began to flower in the 1990s.<sup>13</sup> In the same vein, the project contributed to the spread of participatory approaches, sustained largely by international donor

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<sup>13</sup> This gave rise in 2003 to the Institutional Framework for Public Service Partnerships with Civil Society, through Circular No. 7 of the Prime Minister.

agencies and designed to involve beneficiaries and their organizations in development activities that traditionally were the sole purview of public services.<sup>14</sup>

32. As to the project's relevance for IFAD, in its Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) for Morocco (1999), the Fund called for an improvement in the living conditions of the rural poor and concentrated its assistance to the Government of Morocco on four major areas of action<sup>15</sup> and its interventions in three priority zones, including the mountains. The PDRZMH is fully aligned with the objectives and socio-spatial priorities of the COSOP.
33. Characteristics of the project design. The project, which was conceived at the beginning of the millennium, had the characteristics of an integrated rural development project. This type of project, which includes a wide range of activities to improve production, agricultural infrastructure and services and raise the standard of living, stresses the links between the various components. This approach was consistent with the COSOP for Morocco,<sup>16</sup> which prescribed a geographic, rather than a sectoral, approach. The risk with such an approach is that resources might be spread too thin and the consequent impact minimal. The three main investments, as stipulated in the President's Report are the following sub-components: (i) improvement of socio-economic infrastructures (25 per cent of the base costs); (ii) rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes (23 per cent of the base costs); and (iii) participatory local development (10 per cent of the base costs). The first two sub-components were embedded in the second component, "implementation of local development programmes", which was the main investment (78 per cent of the base costs). As a result, relatively speaking, only limited resources (22 per cent of the base costs) were available for the other components and sub-components: for example, support to financial services and microenterprise development (2 per cent of the base costs) and support for women's empowerment (3 per cent of the base costs). The project supported activities for the improvement of pastoral and sylvo-pastoral systems, crop production, animal health, research and development, microenterprise development, ecotourism, among others. All of these activities were justified, but with the limited resources allocated, some of them were unable to yield significant results. A more effective strategy would probably have been for the project to concentrate on fewer activities. According to the former country programme manager, the spread of activities did not pose a problem, since they were designed to test technologies and approaches (e.g. research). The PPA team found the imbalance in the budget components comprehensible, given the enormous need in the project area for basic public works and the fact that without a substantial budget increase, it would have been difficult to address the numerous needs identified by the population without encountering this obstacle. In the field, the mission noticed the priority accorded to basic infrastructure, somewhat to the detriment of activities geared to support, leadership and capacity-building for producers.
34. The project's objectives and approaches, as well as the intervention subsectors, were generally relevant. However, the country programme evaluation (CPE) noted that certain activities were hindered by constraints related to the capacities of the beneficiaries and implementing agencies, as well as a lack of project flexibility, both of which prevented adaptation to new situations. For example, the PDRZMH

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<sup>14</sup> For example the integrated rural development project centred on small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes, financed by the World Bank; the Project for Protection and Participatory Management of Forest Ecosystems of the RIF, financed by the European Community; the Inaouen project, implemented by Enda-Maghrab.

<sup>15</sup> (i) respond to the needs expressed by rural communities concerning agricultural development and the improvement of living conditions; (ii) promote national and household food security by diversifying production and supporting products with a comparative advantage in domestic and international markets; (iii) strengthen decentralized, deconcentrated planning and implementation by supporting the creation or consolidation of local and civil society institutions; and (iv) increase the access of poor rural households to productive resources such as land, water, technical know-how, and financial services.

<sup>16</sup> COSOP 1999.

envisaged the drafting of 210 *douar* development plans during the first three years; this proved unrealistic, not only because of the limited organizational and operational capacity of the implementing agency (Marrakech Provincial Directorate of Agriculture) but also because of budget constraints imposed by the Ministry of Finance. The clearest example of this was the replacement of the annual programme contracts, with grass-roots associations, with work contracts of individual activities, due to the unavailability of timely budgetary resources.

35. On another level, certain problems or negative impacts observed during implementation were not anticipated during the project design stage, sometimes with unfortunate consequences for the project and its beneficiaries. For example, land issues, which prevented certain infrastructures from being built (e.g. a bridge over the *Douar* Azal wadi); the unavailability of locales for literacy activities (*Douar* Ighil); unfair market practices and lack of certification of some local products (*Douar* El Maghzen, Agoundes cooperative); the reduction and even the cancellation of public subsidies for livestock production (Tiourer branch of ANOC/Ouled Mataa *commune*); sanitation problems in many *douars* where households had access to piped drinking water. Solving these problems was not always easy, especially, as the CPE underscores, adapting or changing the plans of projects carried out by the implementing agencies to evolving issues proved difficult.<sup>17</sup>
36. Needs of the rural poor. Overall, the project was addressing the needs of poor people and the main problems that require solutions to alleviate poverty. The CPE noted that virtually all the activities directly targeted the most vulnerable populations. Relevance was evaluated in terms of coherence between the populations' priorities and the content of the project components (objectives and expected outcomes). Similarly, the sub-component on women's empowerment addressed the needs of women, considering their vulnerable situation characterized by high illiteracy levels, lack of organization and lack of income.<sup>18</sup>
37. Targeting. The PDRZMH employed an approach that consisted of targeting an entire *douar*: interventions were programmed based on a *Douar* Development Plan prepared jointly with local populations. The communes were involved in the selection of the neediest *douars*, especially in terms of basic infrastructures. Furthermore, the targeting process enabled the project, which already took place in one of the 14 provinces designated by the Government as a social priority zone, to target the poorest rural communes and *douars*.<sup>19</sup> However, the projects reached only half the beneficiaries<sup>20</sup> envisaged in the President's Report (112,000 people).<sup>21</sup> The project completion report provided no explanation for this. The PPA team is of the opinion that given the resources made available to the project, the vastness of the territory (2,400 km<sup>2</sup>), the scattered location of the *douars* involved and the relatively high cost of interventions in mountain zones, expanding the target group to include the entire population of the 17 communes during project formulation was likely too ambitious both in terms of geographic coverage and target group.
38. In sum, the PDRZMH project was highly relevant in terms of the country's situation, IFAD priorities and the beneficiaries' needs. The PPA team noted a minor weakness in the targeting of too large a territory and the diversity of the activities

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<sup>17</sup> IFAD, 2008, Country Programme Evaluation, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> The targeting first considered the three agro-ecological zones (high mountains, low mountains, lowlands). In each zone, three targeting levels were prioritized: the first level involved the poorest *douars* in the zone; the second level, the populations of *douars* sharing the same natural resource (e.g. water, rangeland, forests) or working on a grass-roots *commune* infrastructure project (e.g. roads, drinking water supply system); the third level, the most vulnerable strata: small or landless farmers, women and young people, who were to receive specific support from the project (Project Completion Report, DPA, March 2012).

<sup>20</sup> IFAD, 2013, Completion Report, p. vi.

<sup>21</sup> IFAD, 2000, Report and Recommendation of the President page 4.



to be undertaken, some of which exceeded the competencies of the implementing agency (DPA). The mission therefore gives *relevance* a satisfactory rating (5).

### **Effectiveness**

39. Project outcomes are measured in terms of the degree to which the project met its specific objectives and are examined in detail below.

#### **Specific objective 1: Strengthen the self-management capacity of formal and informal grass-roots organizations**

Under the project, the *douar* development plans and annual programme contracts were to be prepared with the assistance of a team of facilitators. According to the completion report, the PDRZMH met this objective with the preparation of 217 DDPs, despite a reduction in the number of facilitators.<sup>22</sup> However, preparing all the DDPs took three years, while the plans were supposed to have been in place in the first year.<sup>23</sup> Quantitatively, these results are satisfactory. However, the completion report does not discuss either the quality of the DDPs or their implementation. The mid-term report (2006) observed that the integration of activities, the targeting of beneficiaries and their training were posing some challenges.

40. Furthermore, it should be noted that only 70 of the 217 DDPs prepared led to the establishment of annual programme contracts with grass-roots associations. In the other DDPs, project management focused on individual activities. Moreover, despite their "annual" designation, these programme contracts were not subdivided into several years and their costs were not considered during the preparation of the annual budget, which was therefore very inadequate. As for implementation, some methodological, organizational, administrative and technical constraints were encountered, which in some cases led to criticism from the partners (populations and local authorities) and undermined the trust built through facilitation, awareness-raising among the beneficiary population and the participatory drafting of the DDPs.<sup>24</sup> Due to the replacement of the annual work programme contracts with individual activities, the DDP and the participatory approach were called into question. The DDP did not really provide the populations involved with a contractual instrument between them and the administration on the development process in their area. Furthermore, only the DPA had the DDP documents (in French).<sup>25</sup> This substantially reduced the impact of the participatory approach, the essence of which was for beneficiaries to gradually take ownership of their own development and destiny. Nevertheless, some DDP activities were well-internalized by the beneficiaries (e.g. small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes, drinking water supply projects).<sup>26</sup>
41. The field investigations during the PPA mission showed that, as an instrument for promoting local development, the DDP made it possible to identify needs in the *douars* and plan priority activities. Despite this, the DDP is often forgotten today by the beneficiaries and even the administration, leading to the conclusion that this instrument has fulfilled its purpose as a diagnostic tool but has been less successful as a planning instrument for negotiating between local actors and the administration.
42. The project sought to encourage communities to establish grass-roots development associations (GDAs) to participate in the preparation of the DDP and the implementation and management of activities. GDA representatives were to receive training in programming of project activities and administrative and accounting management linked to their specific responsibilities (e.g. irrigation network

<sup>22</sup> Certain DDPs covered several communities instead of just one as initially planned (thus 370 communities were targeted instead of 217).

<sup>23</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> IFAD, 2006, Mid-term Review Report, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> This is not the case of the commune development plans, which are available in Arabic in all the communes visited.

<sup>26</sup> DPA of Marrakech, 2012, PDRZMH Completion Report, pp. 30 and 31.

management, drinking water supply, income-generating activities). In addition, visits would be organized to share experiences with other *douars*. The project supported the creation of 156 associations and the strengthening of 52 existing ones. According to the completion report, all of these GDAs (against a target of 20 per cent) managed to secure legal status. The completion report observed that GDAs had become vital partners in provision of community services such as management of drinking water supply installations and small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes. However, in other areas (e.g. literacy efforts, road maintenance, pastoral and forest development, certain income-generating activities), they have not performed nearly as well.

43. The project included activities to improve the living conditions of women through literacy classes and the equipping of 50 multipurpose centres. The project's activities in this domain are discussed in greater detail in the section on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment but it can be concluded that the objective of empowering women was only partially met.

**Specific objective 2: Improve production conditions and increase and diversify the agricultural and non-agricultural income of the target groups**

44. The project sought to improve agricultural production on irrigated and low-rainfall rangeland. To this end, it promoted hydro-agricultural development by means of small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes and helped improve and diversify crop production through tree planting. Progress in this area is described in the section on project implementation (paragraphs 24–29), and it is clear that the expansion of irrigated land (totalling 4,816 ha) due to irrigation schemes yielded significant results including: (i) crop diversification through more efficient, modernized water distribution networks (for example, the introduction of cherry trees in *Douar Ouawisseft*); and (ii) the increase in fruit and vegetable yields (by 23 per cent and 18–27 per cent, respectively). The project's ultimate goal of a 50 per cent increase in irrigated crop production was only half attained, since, according to the completion report, the majority of the fruit tree seedlings distributed were not yet productive.<sup>27</sup> However, the PPA team found that farmers' lack of technical skills in crop management could equally be the reason for the small increase in irrigated production.
45. Overall, the activities that appear to have had a positive impact in terms of diversifying crop production systems in mountain zones did not always translate into significantly higher yields due to numerous technical issues associated with the cultivation process, mainly the choice of species and varieties in mountain zones, orchard density, tree size and crop and irrigation management. This is the case, for example, of highly dense almond and apple orchards planted on small parcels irrigated by ineffective gravity-fed irrigation schemes.
46. With respect to increasing the value of products, the project introduced two crushing units and six fixed threshers, which have helped to improve the quality of finished agricultural products, notably olive oil and wheat flour. The oil extraction equipment for walnuts and aromatic and medicinal plants, procured jointly with other projects, has not only improved the quality of agricultural products but increased the professionalism of farmers. These are important achievements, but it should be noted that the impact of this machinery and processing equipment is still rather limited, except in the case of the Zitouna Dahbia cooperative, which received a crushing unit and reaping and cutting implements. This cooperative, whose members consist of 18 olive growers, appears to have boosted the yield of its olive trees and improved the quality of the oil. The impact of the other crushing units installed in the region (*Douar Maghrira* and *Douar Ighil*) has been rather limited, and the necessary conditions for boosting production potential (e.g. appropriate locales, technical competencies of cooperative members, distance

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<sup>27</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, pp. 10 and 15.

from and access to the market) may be lacking. In the case of aromatic and medicinal plants, the Agoundes cooperative (*Douar El Maghzen*) is fairly representative, since, despite the oil extraction equipment provided, the cooperative is forced to sell 75 per cent of its harvest in the form of dried plants, translating into losses that must be recovered. The reasons for these losses are primarily the lack of certification of its products and unfair competition from inferior products sold at half the price on the market.

47. The project has certainly helped to increase the value of agricultural products. However, it is hard to assert that it has fostered value chain development, especially since the role of traditional middlemen in the sale of farm products, especially those of small-scale mountain producers, is undiminished, and use of the equipment introduced by the project for processing farm products is still limited.
48. Research and development efforts focused on developing new varieties of maize and green beans and on technical aspects of potato, olive, apple, plum and quince cultivation. At project completion, 63 per cent of the anticipated demonstration trials had been conducted. The delay in drafting and implementing the agreement for collaboration between the DPA and INRA appears to have hindered the implementation of all programmed activities. Furthermore, interviews conducted by the PPA mission at INRA in Marrakech revealed that a substantial portion of the research carried out under the project focused more on extension services and training for producers than on generating scientific knowledge to bolster the basic technical data needed by DPA technical personnel for their interventions in mountain zones.
49. Activities in livestock production and health involved the distribution of 73 Sardi stud rams (against a target of 80) to genetically improve the local herd. However, no stud goats were distributed to farmers, even though 80 were programmed, nor were the 20 stud bulls initially envisaged by the project.<sup>28</sup> According to the Government, this was a decision made by consensus with the project supervision missions. Two stockbreeders associations were created in the rural communes of Sidi Belhaj and Ouled Matâa.
50. In addition, the project vaccinated livestock against enterotoxaemia and conducted internal parasite control campaigns for small ruminants. It also conducted annual bee treatment campaigns to combat the varroa mite. These activities appear to have had a positive impact, according to the livestock farmers and beekeepers that the mission encountered.<sup>29</sup>
51. At the end of the day, the livestock activities undoubtedly furthered the intensification of livestock production; however, sustaining this achievement will depend on the effects of the drought and State policy – notably with respect to subsidies – whose impact could reduce the efforts to improve livestock production to nothing. It could be argued, however, that without IFAD's intervention, livestock production would be in even more dire straits, given the aforementioned constraints.

**Specific objective 3: Improve the living conditions of populations by facilitating their access to basic socio-economic infrastructures**

52. The project aimed to provide support to isolated village communities seriously affected by closure to the outside world and lack of access to drinking water. The construction of 240 km of rural roads opened up 82 *douars*, or 112 per cent of those envisioned. The network of developed roads substantially improved access to markets, lowered transportation costs and operating expenses, and contributed to a relative increase in farmers' income. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that some of the roads that were built neither fully nor permanently eliminated the

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<sup>28</sup> DPA, 2012, Completion Report, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> DPA, 2012, Completion Report, p. 22.

isolation of certain *douars* (e.g. Azal, Tassila), mainly because of land issues and an inadequate budget.

53. In terms of drinking water supply, as a result of the project, service was provided to 92 *douars*, or 130 per cent of the expected number. The drinking water supply systems installed in the *douars* provided families with household water connections, improved sanitation and reduced the time devoted to fetching water, a chore reserved for women and children. The close partnership between the DPA and the provincial water service, as well as active participation by the population, ensured the success of this aspect of the PDRZMH.

**Specific objective 4: Facilitate the sustainable access of poor people, especially women, to financial services**

54. Regarding access to microcredit, the ARDI and Al Amana foundations are present and active in the project area. Women, as well as young people and men, have access to credit, although not always without difficulties. A total of 22,370 loans were granted, while the project envisaged only 18,000 (or a performance rate of 124 per cent). Women accounted for 32 per cent of the beneficiaries. The project created 79 income-generating activities and microenterprises, 33 of which were financed by the project (partnership between the Government and associations) and 46 in partnership with other stakeholders (INDH). This figure far exceeds project expectations, which included ten microenterprises. The income-generating activities involved various domains: beekeeping; aromatic and medicinal plants; sheep, goat and rabbit production; ecotourism; and processing and value-adding equipment for agricultural products. These activities somewhat boosted potential in the zone, provided a great deal of satisfaction to certain project managers and familiarized women and young people with microcredit and partnership building. The results for income generation vary. The best results were obtained with livestock production activities (goats and sheep), which can yield MAD 1,000 (US\$121) to MAD 3,000/year (US\$362) for goats and sheep, respectively, in addition to the benefits of on-farm consumption and increased herd size. According to the project completion report, the Tifaouine women's cooperative, where an instructor is always present to guide the women and facilitate marketing, managed to generate an income of MAD 25,000/year (US\$3,019). We consider this figure realistic, based on the mission's interview with the instructor, whose channels for the collection and marketing of products manufactured by the women of the region is fairly well developed and organized.

**Specific objective 5: Promote sustainable management of natural resources**

55. Water and soil conservation and land management activities involved filling gullies, for a volume of 28,000 m<sup>3</sup> and constructing 2,100 ha of terraces (for soil protection and regeneration) and 400 ha of stone walls. These activities had positive impacts, mainly: the stemming of torrential floods and the protection of basic infrastructures (e.g. roads, canals); the control and mitigation of water erosion; tree planting (especially olive trees); and the development of natural vegetation upstream from the infrastructure works. It can also be said that the infrastructures built, together with those already in place, to some extent helped to protect the irrigation works built downstream (Lalla Takerkoust dam and irrigated sector in Al-Haouz).
56. Nevertheless, with regard to pastoral and sylvo-pastoral development, the project's effectiveness in promoting sustainable natural resource management was limited, given the low level of activity. Specifically, the targets of improving 3,000 ha of forested land and taking 5,000 ha out of production were never met. Socio-institutional constraints in connection with mobilizing populations and implementing the agreement between the DPA and the Regional Directorate of Water and Forests (DREF) were cited as the causes of this situation.<sup>30</sup> In this

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<sup>30</sup> IFAD, 2010, Supervision Mission Report, paragraph 49.

regard, senior DREF officials noted differences of opinion about the approach to take in forested areas, informing the PPA mission that the participatory approach for forest users should not be the same as for farmers. Having said this, it should be noted that the population of *Douar* Assoul (a beneficiary of project activities) reached an agreement with DREF to reforest 220 ha (cactus, carob trees, almond trees) outside of the PDRZMH dynamic.

57. In conclusion, the four principal allocation domains (socio-economic infrastructures, rehabilitation of small-irrigated parcels, participatory local development and water and soil conservation) exhibited high performance levels and therefore substantially contributed to meeting the objectives. In view of the preceding analysis, the performance assessment gives the PDRZMH's *effectiveness* a satisfactory rating (5). To arrive at this rating, the evaluators considered the level of investment allocated and the actual costs of the various activities – particularly the emphasis on infrastructure. The fact that the project was conceived as a pilot to test innovative approaches was also taken into consideration in giving this rating, which explains why the effectiveness varied from activity to activity.

### **Efficiency**

58. The economic analysis of the project showed that the economic rate of return (ERR) (13.41 per cent) was slightly below the 15 per cent indicated in the President's report. The project's updated ERR was on the order of 28.2 per cent, not considering social infrastructures (rural roads to open up the *douars*; drinking water supply). Under the scenario of an eventual 15 per cent increase in operating and maintenance costs beginning in the first year after project completion (2012), the ERR would be 13 per cent. In any case, the project's ERR has been deemed acceptable for a project operating in a disadvantaged region of the economy dominated by peasant farming and whose main objective was fighting poverty. In addition to the economic advantage, it is necessary to add the project's numerous social advantages – namely access to socio-economic infrastructures, the ending of the *douars'* isolation, the socio-professional dynamic, income diversification, improved sanitation and nutrition, local capacity-building, the inclusion of rural women in the development process, and the preservation of natural resources.
59. Certain unit costs were higher than initially expected, among them: (i) rural roads; and (ii) small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes (45-94 per cent higher). The main reasons cited for this are the soaring prices of raw materials (e.g. cement, steel) and labour costs. More particularly, from the outset, costs related to small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes appeared to be high compared to the average cost of rehabilitation operations at national level. Two major characteristics of the Al-Haouz project can justify the higher average cost per hectare: the project's location in mountain zones, even high mountain zones; and the scattered nature of the areas developed, a great many of which are fairly distant from one another (91 parcels in all), with an average area of less than 53 ha per parcel. The completion report also notes that certain estimates for small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes were lower than the unit costs employed by other development agencies in recent projects. Thus, the average cost to the project of rehabilitating parcels with small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes was MAD 20,388/ha. A review of other projects at the provincial level shows that the maximum permissible cost for the World Bank was MAD 27,500/ha and for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (USA), MAD 30,000/ha. The total programme costs for drinking water supply to 103 *douars* and sub-*douars* was MAD 28.29 million, for a total population of 43,000 habitants, or an average of MAD 657,857/1,000 habitants. This low figure stems from the fact that the project financed only part of the infrastructure; the beneficiaries financed the rest – either

directly or with aid from other partners.<sup>31</sup> It should be recalled that drinking water supply was not included in the first version of the project which is why IFAD financed only 4 per cent of this component, while the rest was covered by the Government. The costs of the other components (soil protection and regeneration, territorial development, the planting of fruit trees and agro-pastoral development) were consistent with evaluation estimates.

60. Project management costs were estimated at US\$1.5 million, or 6 per cent of the base costs in the President's Report. According to the data in the project completion report, the actual cost was equal to 1.3 per cent of the base costs. This figure is extremely low, but we do not have supplementary data to confirm or refute it. In any case, the extension of the project in itself, price inflation and, probably, the need for technical assistance generally entailed higher costs.
61. The PDRZMH was approved on 7 December 2000 and went into effect on 22 January 2002, or 13 months and two weeks later, which is above the average for the region (11 months and two weeks) and IFAD as well (12 months). Completion was reported two and a half years late because of the major delays that occurred midway through the project. According to the project completion report, there was a slowdown at that point due to staffing issues (high turnover, early retirements) resulting from a policy decision (voluntary retirement), poor personnel management and budget constraints.
62. In view of these factors, the mission gives *efficiency* a moderately satisfactory rating (4).

## **B. Rural poverty impact**

63. The paragraphs below describe the main impacts of the PDRZMH.
64. Before examining the impacts observed, it should be noted that it is hard to attribute the changes in the region primarily to the project's interventions. In fact, for at least a decade, the region as a whole has witnessed significant changes associated with Morocco's overall economic and social trends, as well as the activities of numerous programmes and projects operating in the region, including the PDRZMH.
65. **Household income and assets.** According to the logical framework (President's report), income was to increase directly as a result of the growth and diversification of crop and livestock production and the expansion of microenterprise development. In this regard, the evaluation of the effects and impacts of the PDRZMH shows that the activities that brought in the most income were related to livestock production (goats and sheep), which generated income ranging from MAD 1,000 to MAD 3,000/year for goats and sheep, respectively, not to mention the benefits of on-farm consumption and an increase in the size of the herd. The case of the women's association of Tamount (*Douar* Ameghrass) is typical: the acquisition of 54 ewes for 27 women beneficiaries in 2008; by 2013, the herd numbered more than 600 head. It was found that even though the women's associations were not very successful, the one in Tifaouine, where an instructor was always present to guide the women and help them market their products, generated income of MAD 25,000/year. In fact, the instructor-turned-businesswoman oversees much of the handicrafts production in the hotels and areas around major cities, notably Casablanca, helping to boost the income of Tifaouine association members. Furthermore, in a five-year period, beekeeping activities<sup>32</sup> generated a net income of MAD 82,270 to MAD 102,060 from an apiary of 30 hives; the quality of the region's honey is a major asset, commanding an

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<sup>31</sup> In contrast, we note that a water supply project for eight *douars* in Tiznit Province, implemented in 2010, cost nearly MAD 5 million for a population of 1,013.

<sup>32</sup> *Douar* Assoul, rural commune of Talat N'Yacoub and Tiwizi *Douar* Taourirte, rural commune of Asni.

average price of MAD 300 to MAD 400/kg, which is very profitable for producers. Overall, according to the field survey of the project completion report, 69 per cent of poor rural households were able to engage in one income-generating activity that boosted their income. Income-generating activities contributed 21 per cent of household income, on average, with a variation of 1 to 49 per cent, depending on the nature of the activity. Livestock production, the processing and packaging of farm products and beekeeping had the most positive impact on household income.

66. The project completion report used the analysis of economic return to determine that between 2002 and 2010, the increase in farmers' income attributable to the additional gross margin generated by crop and livestock production averaged MAD 1,604/farmer/year. The report notes that this margin changed during the project observation period and, depending on the products involved, could reach MAD 6,231/farmer/year by 2030. These estimates, however, are speculative, and there are no data on income growth during the life of the project. That being said, from the interviews conducted during the PPA mission, it was clear that: (i) farmers in the high valleys who developed or introduced certain species of fruit trees (e.g. cherry, plum, apple) clearly increased their agricultural income; (ii) small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes had a positive impact on the income of irrigators, mainly due to the expansion of irrigated land and higher yields; (iii) the modernization of beekeeping had a positive impact on household income due to greater hive productivity; (iv) the most significant achievement in terms of income was small ruminant production by women; and (v) initiatives for the development of aromatic and medicinal plants and the acquisition of crushing machines do not appear to have substantially increased the beneficiaries' income, at least for the moment.
67. The CPE report contains examples of infrastructure projects that have significantly improved rural households' access to markets: (i) *Douar Ouidraren* (rural commune of Aghbar) benefitted from a 1 km access road and a major project (a submersible reinforced concrete ford) to cross the *wadi* (valley) that kept it isolated, which tangibly improved living conditions and local walnut production; and (ii) in *Douar Tizi Imli* (rural commune of Imigdal, Asni district), residents have said that bottled gas and sacks of wheat were 20 to 30 per cent cheaper after the construction of a 6 km stretch of road that served four *douars*.<sup>33</sup>
68. The impact on material assets largely involved improvements in social capital (for example, rural road construction). According to the RIMS survey, however, the project's impact was heightened by indirect effects such as: (i) the improvement in the habitat developed; (ii) the use of gas for cooking in over 55 per cent of households by mid-project and 70 per cent currently; (iii) the electrification rate, which rose from 75 per cent of households at mid-project to the current 94 per cent; and (iv) the number of households with a television, which rose from 74 per cent at mid-project to the current 91 per cent. Although these results are encouraging, it is still hard to attribute them to the project, since other programmes are operating in the region and households are receiving remittances from employment outside the region (especially major cities such as Agadir, Casablanca and Marrakech), significantly contributing to the improvement of living conditions in the *douars*.
69. Based on the above assessment, the criterion of *household income and assets* is rated satisfactory (5).
70. **Human and social capital and empowerment.** The participatory drafting of *douar* development plans, in which local populations and their grass-roots associations and organizations were involved, was the project's main tool for capacity-building among local actors to empower them to take ownership of the development process in their territory. According to the project completion report,

<sup>33</sup> IFAD, 2008, Country Programme Evaluation Report, p. 32.

this approach led to a change in attitudes and boosted the confidence of the population. More particularly, the report comments that the beneficiaries are more confident and better able to analyse their potential and constraints and to propose activities more suited to their environment. These achievements are actually very hard to measure, especially since the project did not gather baseline data in this regard. Therefore, there is no way to validate these assertions. However, in the field, the PPA team found that the representatives of rural populations it met with in the *douars* were well versed in the local development problems in their area. It was also found that the representatives were capable of dialoguing with their partners (and with the project) and that they had on their own initiative launched social initiatives to improve life in their *douars* (e.g. drinking water supply, roads, canals).

71. With respect to the GDAs, strengthened capacity and empowerment can be seen in many aspects. The innovative idea of financing the income-generating activities and microenterprises of GDAs has made them more financially independent and, to a certain extent, increased their sustainability. Thus, some of these GDAs are capable of: (i) generating their own projects and searching for marketing channels; (ii) becoming increasingly able to conclude partnerships and mobilizing additional financing without the support of the project; and (iii) providing support for women's and young people's groups and/or associations to help them become production or service cooperatives.<sup>34</sup> The scale of these results, however, has not been evaluated. In sum, it can be said that the project truly enabled these associations to take off. However, it is worth noting that the GDAs on the soundest footing are those involved in managing drinking or irrigation water to benefit the entire *douar*. In contrast, the GDAs (created for income-generating activities) do not really work as a group and are often characterized by action and strategies for the benefit of individuals.
72. On another level, GDA development has led to the emergence of a new type of leadership elite that breaks with the traditional one. This group consists of young association heads who are rapidly leaving association work to venture into local politics.<sup>35</sup> Some of these leaders are highly visible in their sphere of action and local INDH committees. Associations are becoming a venue for competition and power politics.
73. With respect to drinking water, due to the development of drinking water supply systems, the project has made it possible to: (i) supply water to households; (ii) improve sanitation; and (iii) free up time for women and children, who are responsible for fetching water. According to the RIMS survey, 87 per cent of households currently have piped drinking water (versus 50 at mid-project). Most of the populations encountered during visits to the *douars* consider the cost of drinking water acceptable (MAD 3/m<sup>3</sup>), all the more so because the drinking water supply systems are managed by associations in the spirit of solidarity and mutual support, given the economic situation (especially that of the most disadvantaged populations).
74. Likewise, rural road construction has substantially improved the socio-economic situation, resulting in a drop in transportation costs, the improvement of transportation conditions, easier access to socio-economic infrastructures and increased trade with the outside world – in short, an end to isolation. Thus, for example, the distance and time involved in getting to school have been cut from 6 km to 5 km and from 1.87 to 0.67 hours, respectively, while the distance involved in reaching the clinic has been cut from 5.19 km to 4.22 km, and the time from 1.58 hours to 0.81 hours.<sup>36</sup> In sum, the network of roads built by the project

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<sup>34</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> The members of the PPA mission (September 2013) had the opportunity to meet with former GDA members who had become commune presidents or elected officials.

<sup>36</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 16.



has facilitated travel for people from relatively inaccessible and isolated mountain *douars* and for people needing to access social services, which are generally located in cities in low-lying areas. Maintaining this network, however, will be a real challenge to the communes and *douars*, whose resources are often limited.

75. Following a review of the project documents and the mission's field visits, it appears that the most significant project outcomes were in the domain of human capital and empowerment. This is generally confirmed in the CPE (2008).
76. Based on these factors, the mission gives *human and social capital and empowerment* a highly satisfactory rating (6). To arrive at this rating, the evaluation team gave particular weight to improved access to better services through the construction of rural roads and drinking water supply systems.
77. **Food security and agricultural productivity.** On completion, the project anticipated a 50 per cent increase in production in irrigated zones, a 25 per cent average increase in cereal yields in low-rainfall rangelands and a 30 per cent increase in fruit-tree yields. According to the available documents, these targets were not met. However, in terms of farm production, the project contributed to the diversification of cropping systems and the intensification of production systems, increasing the yield of certain crops, especially: (i) cereals, whose yields increased by 16 per cent; (ii) fruits (especially olives, apples, almonds, cherries and walnuts), which benefitted from a more than 10 per cent increase in the size of the production area, with yields increasing by 18 per cent (irrigated zone) to 27 per cent (low-rainfall rangelands); and (iii) vegetables, whose production area grew by 22 per cent in 2011, resulting in a 23 per cent increase in yields.<sup>37</sup>
78. As for livestock and honey production, the project anticipated a 20 per cent increase in yield per unit and a 40 per cent average increase in the yield of hives. The improvement in livestock production was to stem largely from the fattening of lambs, resulting in income growth of close to MAD 1,000 per head; and for beekeeping, the doubling, or even tripling, of hive productivity through modernization, boosting yields from 2 kg to 6 kg of honey per hive. Similarly, treating the hives enabled beekeepers to double their productivity, which rose from 10 kg to 20 kg/hive.<sup>38</sup> All the productivity increases indicated in the project completion report were, obviously, hard to verify during the brief field mission. However, many of the beneficiaries interviewed indicated that the higher productivity was very real. That being said, the agricultural improvements could have had a greater and wider impact had the project offered farmers greater support and leadership, especially on land in the most inaccessible mountain *douars*, where the mission encountered problems with orchard production (e.g. choice of species, density, size). These problems were due to the farmers' poor mastery of the technical aspects of cultivation and, to a lack of leadership on the part of the services involved.
79. With regard to food security, the project completion report notes an improvement, since 93 per cent of the target population stated that it had not experienced food shortages in the previous 12 months. However, the report provides no information on the situation prior to the advent of the project. The RIMS survey underscores that prior to the project, 51 per cent of children under five suffered from chronic malnutrition; at mid-project, that figure was 42 per cent; and in 2012, it was only 25 per cent. According to the report, this achievement was the result of several factors: (i) the irrigation of land, which helped diversify crops and boost yields, resulting in higher profit margins; (ii) the intensification and diversification of crop and livestock production, with the distribution of seedlings, breeding stock and small farm implements and organizational and technical capacity-building – all of which contributed to higher farm productivity; and (iii) the upgrading of local

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<sup>37</sup> IFAD, 2012, Project Completion Report, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> DPA, 2012, Completion Report, p. 28.

products and natural resources through income-generating activities, microenterprise development and access to microcredit. It should be pointed out, however, that the increased food security cannot be attributed mainly to the project's activities, since several factors appear to have come into play, namely: (i) the acceleration of growth in the country in the 2000s compared to that of the previous decade, averaging 4.6 per cent from 2000 to 2009 versus 2.6 per cent in the 1990s; (ii) the region's integration into a more dynamic domestic, even international, economic environment; (iii) the interventions of other projects and programmes, especially INDH, beginning in 2005; and (iv) migration, with many of the region's inhabitants moving to major cities in the country in search of employment (remittances have been critical for the populations of the mountain *douars* targeted by PDRZMH interventions).

80. Given the project's expected outcomes in terms of farm production, and based on the review of the preceding points, the mission gives *food security and farm productivity* a moderately satisfactory rating (4).
81. **Natural resources, environment and climate change.** The project had a specific objective related to the issue of sustainable natural resource management. More particularly, the proposed activities were aimed at preserving water resources, curbing soil degradation and safeguarding the area's sylvo-pastoral potential.
82. The project area benefitted from several infrastructure works (irrigation and drinking water supply) and development efforts (water and soil conservation, community rangelands). The development of irrigation schemes reduced water losses by lining canals with concrete, which substantially mitigated the negative impact of runoff on the land, and the installation of equipment to rationalize water use facilitated the preservation of water resources (for example, in the El Massira area). That being said, gravity-based irrigation at the parcel level, combined with very high tree density, does not necessarily permit the greatest advantage to be taken of a scarce water resource. On the other hand, the community drinking water supply systems that were built have curbed drilling activity and the uncontrolled digging of individual wells and, above all, have given poor people easy access to water and improved sanitation. However, it is unclear if an analysis of the water catchment area was undertaken.
83. Water and soil conservation and land management activities have helped conserve water and soils through the following measures: (i) the regeneration of degraded soils upstream of the infrastructures built (terraces, dry stone walls, gabion walls); and (ii) management of runoff, which replenishes groundwater reserves. Done on a rather modest stretch of land, pastoral development (the planting of 700 ha of atriplex and 100 ha of *Medicago arborea*) has clearly had only a very small impact in terms of rehabilitating degraded rangeland, improving livestock nutrition and preserving biodiversity. Reforestation and the conservation of forest resources have not taken place. In the domain of environmental education, the project raised awareness among numerous area operators and associations and fostered the adoption of good practices for sustainable management of natural resources. This education was reinforced in several women's groups and associations, in partnership with the Toubkal Nature Reserve and the DPA. In addition, activities to increase the value of aromatic and medicinal plants and develop beekeeping helped preserve the area's natural biodiversity (forest, fauna, rangeland). The impact of the public awareness activities is hard to verify in the reports. It is possible, however, that to a limited degree awareness of beneficiaries has been achieved.
84. Nothing was specifically done to improve resilience to climate change. However, it is likely that the activities to protect natural resources, especially water, soil and vegetation cover, directly or indirectly contributed to resilience. This is especially true in the project area, which is already suffering from recurrent droughts and the

risk of extreme weather conditions such as flash floods, inundations and, mudslides, a sign of climate change which can lead to major erosion in the mountain zones.

85. Overall, this objective was partially met through the results of the water and soil conservation, land management and irrigation activities. However, agreements with the population on sylvo-pastoral management have not been signed. Moreover, improvements in range management and vegetation cover have been limited.
86. Based on the above analysis, the ratings for *natural resources, environment and climate change* is moderately satisfactory (4).
87. **Institutions and policies.** The PDRZMH did not have a direct impact on either institutions or policies. However, it did contribute somewhat to decentralization, as the Marrakech Provincial Directorate of Agriculture was responsible for managing all the activities. This decentralization, however, did not lead to the transfer of project management to the agricultural work centre in Amizmiz, as envisaged during project formulation.
88. Nevertheless, it can be said that the capacities of public service providers were indirectly strengthened, especially with respect to interventions in remote mountain zones. Similarly, the project activities definitely strengthened the cohesion of commune activities, enabling communes to improve basic infrastructure coverage and promoting territorial integration and cohesion. In the *douars*, the project strengthened ties among community members through concerted management of their land and natural resources. In addition, the project revived the dialogue and partnerships between grass-roots organizations and public services, which to some extent improved local governance.
89. In terms of the general development strategy, the PDRZMH helped drawing attention to the problems of mountain zones and the need for an appropriate sustainable development strategy for these zones. A new entity, the Directorate for Rural Development and Mountain Zones, has been established, and will oversee the implementation of the strategy.
90. Based on these factors, the rating for *institutions and policies* is moderately satisfactory (4).
91. To summarize, based on the data in the project completion report and the information and observations gathered in the field, the evaluation gives the project's overall impact on poverty a satisfactory rating (5). In issuing this rating, the evaluation has emphasized the progress in the development of human and social capital and empowerment.

### **C. Other performance criteria**

92. **Sustainability.** The project's sustainability varied according to the benefit streams created. Certain outcomes will benefit from the support of the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDFAZMH), approved in December 2011. Other programmes, such as the Green Morocco Plan, the National Human Development Initiative and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, will create an enabling environment to consolidate the project's achievements.
93. In the current situation, the sustainability of the activities to empower women is not *a priori* guaranteed, especially since many women's centres and training and literacy workshops are no longer operational. However, it is foreseeable that in this domain, action by the specialized public services such as INDH and the relevant ministry services related to the development of the strategy for mountain zones will increase, thus ensuring some level of sustainability of the progress achieved.

94. At the institutional level, the Government is emphasizing the development of mountain zones, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries has created an institutional structure made up of diverse provincial and regional committees tasked with coordinating and managing the Green Morocco Plan. Putting management of the PDFAZMH under the DPA is designed to build on the experience of the PDRZMH coordination unit, even if some of its original members are no longer there.
95. The sustainability of many of the GDAs created or strengthened by the PDRZMH is open to doubt. Furthermore, only 50 per cent of the 156 GDAs created, and the 52 strengthened, are operational. This problem especially involves the GDAs with a focus on economically-oriented GDAs (particularly cooperatives and similar groups), which generally are facing difficulties related to the production, organization and marketing techniques as well as competition with the private sector. The sustainability of associations focused on drinking water supply and associations of agricultural water users (AUEA) hinges on the interest and social cohesion of their members.
96. The sustainability of DDPs is very tenuous. Furthermore, no *douar* continues to make use of this planning instrument, which, nonetheless, was very useful in identifying needs, setting priorities and determining the action to take under the PDRZMH. Today DDPs simply constitute a database that the DPA can use for operations similar to those of the PDRZMH. The fact is, however, that only by integrating the DDP into commune development plans will the sustainability of future DDPs be guaranteed, which is not the case at this time. A brief examination of the Asni commune development plan (2009-2014) showed that it did not mention the DDPs nor the needs and actions outlined therein. This poses a dual problem related, on the one hand, to the link between the DDP process and the local institutional development planning process, and on the other, to knowledge management at the project level, which does not appear to have been guaranteed, at least in terms of capitalizing on the achievements of the DDP process.
97. Diversifying cropping systems appears to have had a positive impact. However, it did not always translate into a marked improvement in yields, due to numerous technical problems associated with crop management, especially the choice of species and varieties in mountain zones, plant density, tree size, the treatment of planted areas and irrigation. This is the case, for example, of the highly dense olive and apple orchards planted on small terraces irrigated by an ineffective gravity-fed submersion system. Some of the orchards that the PPA team visited were not in very good condition, calling their sustainability into question.
98. In terms of improving livestock production, two stockbreeders associations were created in the rural communes of Ouled Matâa and Sidi Belhaj. The Tiourer group (90 stockbreeders), created in 2010 in Ouled Matâa commune, has since lost a good many of its members due to the drought and the drastic cutbacks in public subsidies for animal feed and vaccination and its sustainability appears fragile.
99. Concerning the sustainability of income-generating activities, it was observed that it is the economic activities which are run by individuals that are the most likely to be sustainable, whereas the group activities were not generally very successful, except for beekeeping projects. The difficulties encountered were due to a poor understanding of the technical aspects of managing income-generating activities, the lack/inadequacy of financing for operations, marketing problems and insufficient follow up and assistance provided by the project. Nevertheless, it seems that the PDFAZMH could capitalize on certain achievements of the PDRZMH. For example, the new project includes organizational and technical assistance for product certification, labelling, marketing and the professionalization of value chain members.

100. The maintenance of infrastructure faces some challenges. Although the associations are by and large well-organized, the AUEAs lack the financial means to take over the maintenance of irrigation schemes and the replacement of certain drinking water supply equipment. Current drinking water rates for households in the *douars* are affordable, but it is clear that, as a rule, the rates cover only the direct cost of the water, ultimately leading to the risk of deteriorating facilities and a lack of funding for upkeep and equipment replacement. Furthermore, connecting housing to the drinking water supply network in certain *douars* has led to sanitation problems linked with wastewater disposal that were not considered from the outset, and replacing the heavy water-supply equipment may pose a problem going forward.
101. The rural roads equally faces some challenges, as problems have already arisen, including deterioration of the pavement, erosion and gullyng. These problems are exacerbated by lack of coordination among the various stakeholders working in the area. With respect to rural road upkeep, lack of coordination is making it unclear who will contribute what, resulting in an absence of sufficient budget allocations to ensure timely maintenance.
102. Overall, the sustainability of several benefits created is at risk, although some of them will be ensured by the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province. However, the sustainability of the DDPs and their integration into the national development planning and governance system (integration of the DDP in the commune development plan) poses problems. In addition, the sustainability of certain basic infrastructures (e.g. rural roads, drinking water supply, canals) merits particular attention, as it is hard to imagine that the associations on their own will be able to continue creating and maintaining these types of installations, whose upkeep, or even replacement, will sometimes require funding well beyond their means. Furthermore, some commune presidents complain that they are sometimes obliged to take over run-down public works that are not their responsibility.
103. Based on these factors, the rating for *sustainability* is moderately satisfactory rating (4).
104. **Innovation and scaling up.** IFAD defines innovation as “a process that adds value or solves a problem in new ways” and states that “in order to qualify as an innovation, a product, idea or approach needs to be new in its context, useful and cost-effective in relation to a goal, and able to ‘stick’ after pilot testing.”<sup>39</sup> Based on this definition, it can be said that the PDRZMH contributed several innovations.
105. The project intervention approach, in particular, was innovative,<sup>40</sup> since it was based on beneficiary participation and ownership, which involved the preparation of the DDPs and the implementation and management of community projects. The CPE confirmed that the participatory approach was an innovative aspect, calling the project’s *douar* development plan approach a real step toward more geographically and socially integrated interventions.<sup>41</sup> The CPE noted that in addition to the diagnostic and planning activities for *douar* development, the participatory approach was likewise employed at all stages of small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes and drinking water supply projects (from information and awareness-raising to project implementation). Notwithstanding, some of the limitations with the DDPs have been cited earlier.
106. The proliferation of GDAs and their direct participation in project implementation can be considered innovative, even though social organization has always been present and has always fostered solidarity and cooperation in the Touiza tradition.

<sup>39</sup> IFAD, 2009, Evaluation Manual: Methodology and Processes.

<sup>40</sup> The participatory approach had been adopted by other projects before the PDRZMH (see Relevance, above).

<sup>41</sup> IFAD, 2008, Country Programme Evaluation, p. 28.

The creation of women's associations is probably the most important social innovation.

107. As for boosting the productivity of crop and livestock production, the introduction of new crop species, genetic improvement of the herd, the expansion of new farming practices, the introduction of agricultural processing equipment, the development of agricultural value chains and the creation of producers associations and similar groups were genuine innovations in certain *douars* where ancestral farming practices were sometimes still the norm.
108. Concerning the scaling up of innovations, it was observed that the partnerships forged with the private sector in different areas (e.g. leadership-building, financing, marketing, training) will be scaled up under the PDFAZMH. The project will also scale up certain initiatives introduced by microenterprises and income-generating activities, among them the opening of bed and breakfasts and demonstration sites and the acquisition of agricultural processing units to add value to the zone's main products (olives, apples and meat).
109. At the present time, there is no guarantee of the availability of project and State resources through the Green Morocco Plan to ensure scaled-up implementation of the project's innovations, but it will be hard to promote these changes without public sector intervention. The CPE pointed out that the participatory approach has been adopted by other projects, such as the Irrigation-based Community Development Project<sup>42</sup> in Al-Haouz Province and other development projects on low-rainfall rangeland.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the PDFAZMH is programmed to scale up implementation of certain innovations introduced by the PDRZMH, especially those involving value chain development and techniques for adding value to local production.
110. Based on these factors, the mission gives the *innovation and scaling up* domain a rating of satisfactory (5). In issuing this rating, the mission gave great weight to the fact that the project had been conceived as a pilot intervention for testing and validating different conceptual approaches.
111. **Gender equality and women's empowerment.** Objective 3 of the President's Report and Recommendation (2000) prescribed the growth and diversification of agricultural and non-agricultural income through income-generating activities that benefit women and youth. The logical framework thus included a sub-component for empowering rural women that represented 3 per cent of the project's base costs. More specifically, apart from the activities related to drinking water supply systems, microcredit and income-generating activities that chiefly targeted women, the PDRZMH provided other benefits such as: functional literacy classes, basic job training and the creation of childcare centres for young children to enable mothers to engage in income-generating activities.
112. In the domain of grass-roots development associations, women were represented in 43 such associations (or 20 per cent against a target of 40 per cent envisaged by the project). Only one of the associations was headed by a woman. Concerning women's participation in decision-making, it was noted that for cultural reasons, women's participation was very limited and that the participatory dynamic appeared to be only just emerging. In some cases, this situation led women to create their own associations. By the end of the project, the area had 15 women's associations and 40 women's groups. Some of the associations have taken steps to become cooperatives. The CPE furthermore underscored that IFAD projects in Morocco had also helped women connect with institutions outside their region, either to request guidance, obtain services or secure microcredit.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Financed by the World Bank.

<sup>43</sup> IFAD, 2008, Country Programme Evaluation, p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 12.

113. On an economic level, the project contributed to the development of income-generating activities that benefitted women, especially activities related to livestock and handicrafts production. Access to microcredit played a role in these activities, which have furthered the economic empowerment of women through income generation. In terms of access to financial services, 22,370 loans were granted, and 32 per cent of the beneficiaries were women. The project completion report indicates that 244 women received conceptual and practical training in numerous topics related to the income-generating activities; 142 benefitted from study trips; and 1,077 took part in workshops on cooperative organizing, health and family planning. The report estimates that around 100 women have a stable income, which seems like quite a low number.<sup>45</sup>
114. The project equipped 70 literacy classrooms instead of the expected 210 (or 33 per cent). Although the literacy programme reached some 4,900 women, 2,113 of whom passed the exam, the PCR considered the results of the literacy programme unsatisfactory. The reasons for this had to do with the fact that many *douars* were not able to offer literacy classes due to a lack of space or budget to pay the instructor. Illiteracy is still very much a fact of life for the vast majority of women, even girls, in the *douars*. Moreover, even girls with schooling are often forced to drop out of school very prematurely due to the lack of funds to pursue their education beyond the primary level. Furthermore, the supervision mission's mid-term review recommended that the number of centres programmed be cut from 50 to 10.
115. In relative terms, the project's efforts on behalf of women clearly improved their living conditions (drinking water) and their technical and economic capabilities (e.g. literacy, technical training). However, they contributed only modestly to changing social conditions to raise women's status in the life of the *douars*. Given the limited resources allocated for such activities and the conservative environment of the project area, the PPA gives *gender equality and women's empowerment* a moderately satisfactory rating (4).

#### **D. Performance of partners**

116. **IFAD.** Supervision was initially the responsibility of UNOPS and based on the contractual reports defined with IFAD. Emphasizing basic needs under the terms of the loan, UNOPS did not provide technical support to the project. As of 2007, however, project supervision was overseen directly by IFAD and covered not only financial management but also project implementation as a whole. Supervision missions took place at least once a year to monitor project implementation, analyse progress and issue recommendations; support missions also took place on request to assist the project coordination unit. DPA staff who had taken part in the project appeared to be satisfied with the support provided by the consultant teams hired by IFAD. However, the DPA managers whom the mission met with stressed the need for arrangements to replace and diversify IFAD's consultant teams to ensure monitoring and assist with project implementation – especially to promote the hiring of experts with a good knowledge of the rural world and farming in mountain zones. Concerning the project's exit strategy, the project's achievements are expected to be reinforced in the PDFAZMH.
117. IFAD's *performance* rating is 5 (satisfactory).
118. **Government.** Project managers exhibited high performance in terms of piloting and implementing the project. A concerted effort was made to strengthen associative and cooperative aspects, especially the participatory approach, identifying and implementing priority activities, including those aimed at promoting gender equality. Project managers also facilitated the presence of young researchers

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<sup>45</sup> IFAD, 2012, Completion Report, p. 12.

tasked with research activities in the project area.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, numerous departures of staff sometimes led to delays or even the cancellation of some activities.

119. The PPA team noted with interest the existence of multiple partnerships in the project. Some of these partnerships were more problematic than others. According to some partners, project management and the DPA were not always successful in finding operational solutions to solve these issues (with DREF and INRA, for example). They also noted fiduciary issues, which led to delays in certain activities and, thus, the prolongation of the project. The monitoring and evaluation system does not appear to have been a real tool for managing and adjusting project interventions, although it produced a number of surveys on the project's impact and made it possible to monitor outputs.
120. Concerning the project completion report, the evaluation gave the scope of the report and its quality (methods, data, and participatory processes) a satisfactory rating, since the causes and effects appear to have been analysed. It likewise found the lessons noted in the completion report relevant and gave them a satisfactory rating. The rating on candour was downgraded to moderately satisfactory, however, due to the excessive weight given to outputs (for example, the number of PPDs and not their use and linkage with the overall project objectives).
121. The performance rating for *government performance* is moderately satisfactory (4).

## **E. Overall project performance**

122. The evaluation gave the *overall performance* of the PDRZMH a satisfactory rating (5). This rating was based not only on the scores for the seven evaluation criteria<sup>47</sup> but also on the evaluators' judgment. The PDRMZH ratings for project performance and rural poverty ranged from moderately satisfactory to satisfactory but were pulled up by the ratings for human and social capital and infrastructure activities. The scaling-up criterion was also given a satisfactory rating. Moderately satisfactory ratings were given for gender equality, efficiency and sustainability. In determining the rating for overall performance, the evaluation also considered the innovative and pilot nature of the project in an area that was especially disadvantaged due to the lack of services and socio-economic infrastructures, an arid climate and limited prospects for income-generating activities.
123. More specifically, the evaluation considered the fact that the project was designed to test a large number of approaches and activities. While not all activities generated the expected results, the evaluation deemed that the principal allocations made a substantial contribution to improving the livelihood and living conditions of the target population. Furthermore, the PDRZMH succeeded in improving rural intervention approaches and strengthening partnerships between the administrations offering the technical services and rural populations.

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<sup>46</sup> Memoirs of the third cycle of students at the Hassan II Institute of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine on the impact of income-generating activities (Mrs Sanae Benmali, 2009) and on the conditions for developing apple production in Asni (Ms Rabah Imane, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> These criteria are: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, rural poverty impact, sustainability, innovation and scaling up, gender equality and women's empowerment.



### Key points

- The project was highly relevant to the country context, IFAD priorities and the beneficiaries' needs. A few shortcomings were found, especially the scattered nature of the interventions and the ambitious targets for certain activities. The project's relevance is rated as satisfactory (5).
- The project's effectiveness is rated as satisfactory (5). In arriving at this rating, the fact that the main investments (socio-economic infrastructures, rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes, participatory local development and soil and water conservation) exhibited high performance levels was taken into account.
- Sustainability was rated as moderately satisfactory (4), given the generally favourable institutional environment and the projected continuity of the activities under the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in Al-Haouz Province. However, the sustainability of several achievements, such as the DDPs, certain income-generating activities, basic infrastructures and certain crops, is tenuous.
- The project substantially improved the living and production conditions of the target populations in mountain zones; it also improved rural intervention approaches and strengthened partnerships between the administrations offering technical services and rural populations. Therefore, overall project performance is rated as satisfactory (5).
- In view of the services that IFAD provided to properly ensure the design of the project, implementation assistance and soft assistance for project management, IFAD's performance is rated as satisfactory (5). The government's performance is rated as moderately satisfactory (4) due to the problems with certain partners and delays encountered.

## IV. Conclusions and recommendations

### A. Conclusions

124. The project was conceived as a pilot intervention for the development of especially disadvantaged mountain zones. Its aims were to: test and validate different conceptual approaches with the potential for development and replication in other mountain zones in the country; encourage beneficiary participation through decentralization, with an emphasis on women's empowerment; and support the creation of productive socio-economic infrastructures accessible to the beneficiaries.
125. The overall objective of the PDRZMH was to strengthen the local management and development capacity of mountain populations to boost their income, raise their standard of living and increase their food security while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. Because of this, the project was distinguished by its high degree of **relevance** to the country context, IFAD priorities and the beneficiaries' needs. Its shortcomings lay in its targeting of too large a territory and the wide range of activities programmed, some of which exceeded the technical competencies of the implementing agency (DPA) (paragraphs 31-38).
126. The project's **effectiveness** was satisfactory. In fact, although to varying degrees, the PDRZMH generally met its five objectives, namely to: (i) strengthen the self-management capacity of formal and informal grass-roots associations; (ii) improve production conditions and increase and diversify the agricultural and non-agricultural income of the target groups; (iii) improve the living conditions of populations by facilitating their access to basic socio-economic infrastructures; (iv) facilitate the sustainable access of poor people, especially women, to financial

services; and (v) promote sustainable management of natural resources. The four major investments (socio-economic infrastructures, rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes, local development and soil and water conservation) exhibited high performance levels (paragraphs 39-57).

127. The unit costs of the project activities were generally under the average cost ceilings observed in the country, and the project's rate of return was fairly close to what had been programmed. However, implementation was marked by budget constraints and personnel management problems, leading to the conclusion that the project was moderately **efficient** in terms of implementing its different components (paragraphs 58-62).
128. At project completion, it can be said that the living conditions of the population had substantially improved, due in large part to the opening of the *douars* with the construction of rural roads and the provision of drinking water to households. Small- and medium-scale irrigation schemes and improved crop and livestock production helped to improve the food security of populations and increase household income. The income-generating activities and microenterprises created by the project also contributed somewhat to higher income for the populations. In addition, the PDRZMH boosted rural planning and management capacity by introducing the *douar* approach. Through a participatory process, this approach made it possible to identify the priority needs of populations, foster the emergence of numerous grass-roots associations and organizations, and improve the ability of technical service providers to employ a participatory approach and dialogue with local stakeholders. All of these achievements lead to the conclusion that the project had a positive **impact** in terms of reducing poverty in the region (paragraphs 63-91).
129. Despite the project's generally positive performance, especially with regard to relevance, effectiveness, and poverty impact, the implementation of its various components faced some challenges that compromised the **sustainability** of certain achievements – in particular the DDPs, which no *douar* has continued to use since the project ended. The reasons for this lies mainly in the fact that the *douar* approach was not integrated into institutional (commune) planning. Another similar problem was knowledge management at the project level, which appears to have been insufficient to capitalize on the achievements of the DDP process.
130. The same holds true for crop production in mountain zones. The activities appear to have had a positive impact, but certain orchards were in poor condition, raising doubts about their sustainability.
131. The sustainability of certain income-generating activities is also in doubt. The evaluation notes that the activities spearheaded by individuals are those that managed to continue and even expand. Community activities were less successful, with the exception of beekeeping projects. The organization of producers is still in its infancy.
132. Finally, mechanisms and resources for infrastructure maintenance continue to be limited (paragraphs 92-103).
133. Activities in the domain of **gender equality and women's empowerment** contributed only modestly to a change in social traditions from the standpoint of women's status in the life of the *douars* (paragraphs 111-115).
134. Project implementation envisaged the establishment of framework agreements with several partner institutions. Among these partnerships, those with the Provincial Directorate of Public Works and the Crop Protection Service worked very well. Others, in contrast, met with difficulties, among them those with the Regional Directorate of Water and Forests and the National Institute for Agricultural Research. Additional problems were related primarily to disagreements between

the DPA and its partners about the financing of framework agreements and roles and intervention approaches (paragraph 119).

135. The experience of the PDRZMH and the innovations it introduced or developed are very important for the development not only of the mountain region of Haouz but for similar regions in Morocco. However, it must be pointed out that in terms of project achievements, knowledge management has been rather modest or even non-existent. In fact, little effort has been made to study the dissemination, improvement and replication of project successes (paragraph 96).

## **B. Recommendations**

136. This section offers recommendations on aspects of importance to current and future IFAD operations in Morocco. The four recommendations below are considered strategic for both IFAD and the Government.
137. **Commune planning.** To ensure the sustainability of the future participatory process, it seems logical that it be included in the commune plans already in place. Since the enactment of Law No. 17-08 in 2009 amending and supplementing Law No. 78-00 on Commune Charters, communes are required to prepare economic and social development plans. Under this new law, "with a view to sustainable development and based on a participatory approach that includes special consideration of the gender approach, the six-year commune development plan describes the development activities to be undertaken in commune territory." The adoption of this new local planning instrument, the commune development plan is a major step toward decentralization, which rural development operations, including IFAD projects, must take into account. In fact, the systematic inclusion of these operations in commune development plans is a supplementary gauge of ownership and the sustainability of development activities (paragraph 129).
138. **Sustainable development strategy in mountain zones.** Mountain zones will soon be the focus of a sustainable development strategy that could build on IFAD's long record of accomplishment in Morocco's mountain zones. Indeed, the achievements of IFAD projects in this domain are numerous and largely involve specific approaches to project design and intervention modalities in mountain zones. Capitalizing on the achievements of IFAD and other agencies operating in these areas would be very useful, especially for the new Directorate of Rural Areas and Mountain Zones, and could directly support the development of the strategy and other policies (paragraph 135).
139. **Partnerships for project implementation.** Potential partnerships among the institutional stakeholders involved in project implementation should be carefully explored and fostered from the outset in the project design stage to keep potential problems to a minimum. Proper planning of methodological, administrative and financial aspects will prevent delays in the implementation of agreements, and consequently, activities (paragraph 134).
140. **Agricultural extension.** For sustainable diversification and intensification of cultivation systems, farmers should receive long-term support and guidance to acquire sound technical skills. Research centres should likewise provide scientific and technical support to improve technical know-how for mountain zones. Particular attention should therefore be paid to the agricultural extension component of projects operating in areas where traditional agricultural practices are the norm (paragraph 130).
141. These four recommendations apply directly to the partnership between Morocco and IFAD, and in particular to the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDFAZMH), under way since 2012, and the future Rural Development Programme in Mountain Zones, which will eventually cover the mountain zones of Azilal, Ouarzazate, Sefrou and Tinghir, and be implemented over a 15-year period in three 5-year phases.

## Rating comparison

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>IFAD-PMD rating<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>PPA rating<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Rating disconnect</i>
<b>Project performance</b>			
Relevance	6	5	-1
Effectiveness	5	5	0
Efficiency	4	4	0
<b>Project performance<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4,7</b>	<b>-0,3</b>
<b>Rural poverty impact</b>			
Household income and assets	5	5	0
Human and social capital and empowerment	6	6	0
Food security and agricultural productivity	5	4	-1
Natural resources, environment and climate change	5	4	-1
Institutions and policies	5	4	-1
<b>Rural poverty impact<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other performance criteria</b>			
Sustainability	4	4	0
Innovation and scaling up	5	5	0
Gender equality and women's empowerment	5	4	-1
<b>Overall project achievement<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Performance of partners<sup>e</sup></b>			
IFAD	5	5	0
Government	5	4	-1
<b>Average net disconnect</b>			<b>-0, 46</b>

<sup>a</sup> 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.

<sup>b</sup> Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

<sup>c</sup> This is not an average of ratings of individual impact domains.

<sup>d</sup> 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.

<sup>e</sup> The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall assessment ratings.

### Ratings of the Project Completion Report quality

	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCR V rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Scope	6	5	-1
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)	6	5	-1
Lessons	6	6	0
Candour	6	4	-2

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

## Basic project data

			Approval <sup>f</sup> (US\$ m)		Actual <sup>f</sup> (US\$ m)	
Region	Near East and North Africa	Total project costs	30,243		36,574	
Country	Morocco	IFAD loan and percentage of total	18 028	60%	20 444	56%
Loan number	556-MA	Borrower	10 946	36%	15 974	44%
Type of project (subsector)	Rural development	Cofinancier 1: local government	240	0,79%	N/A	N/A
Financing type	Loan	Cofinancier 2: national financing institution	80	0,26%	N/A	N/A
Lending terms <sup>c</sup>	Intermediate	Cofinancier 3: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	128	0,4%	156	0,4%
Date of approval	7/12/2000	Cofinancier 4	41	0,14	N/A	N/A
Date of loan signature	25/07/2001	Beneficiaries	780	2,58%	N/A	N/A
Date of effectiveness	22/01/2002	Other sources:				
Loan amendments	1	Number of beneficiaries: (if appropriate, specify if direct or indirect)	112 000		60 000 (12 000 direct and 48 000 indirect)	
Loan closure extensions	1	Cooperating institution	United Nations Office for Project Services (2007 IFAD)			
Country programme managers	Abdelhamid Abdouli (current) Mounif Nourallah	Loan closing date	30/09/2008		31/03/2011	
Regional director(s)	Khalida Bouzar <sup>d</sup> (current)	Mid-term review	May 2006		November 2006	
Project completion report reviewer	Catrina Perch	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%) <sup>e</sup>			95%	
Project completion report quality control panel	Ashwani Muthoo Miguel Torralba Anne Marie Lambert	Date of project completion report			December 2012	

Source: PPMS; LGS; Project Completion Report

<sup>a</sup>IFAD's Project Portfolio Management System (PPMS). Some inconsistencies between the PPMS and the project completion report were found

<sup>b</sup> IFAD's project completion report 2012

<sup>c</sup> 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.

<sup>d</sup> Previous regional directors: Abdelmajid Slama (June 1999 – September 2004); Mona Bishay (September 2004 – July 2008); Nadim Khouri (July 2008 – August 2011)

<sup>e</sup> The actual amount does not correspond exactly to the 95% disbursement rate due to the fluctuation of the SDR-US\$ exchange rate.

## Terms of reference

### A. Introduction

1. The Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function, conducted in 2010 by the Evaluation Cooperation Group, recommended that the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) change its project evaluation approach<sup>1</sup> and proceed to project completion report validation, conducting only a limited number of project performance assessments (PPA).
2. The project performance assessment is a succinct form of project evaluation. It is the second stage of the project completion report validation and analysis of the project completion report and other available documents and reports. The project performance assessment includes field visits to supplement the findings of the project completion report validation and fill in any information or knowledge gaps. The primary purpose of the project performance assessment is to shed light on aspects of a project's implementation and/or impact that were not thoroughly addressed in the project completion report validation. Like the completion report, the project performance assessment applies the evaluation criteria<sup>2</sup> enumerated in the IOE Evaluation Manual,<sup>3</sup> along with the supplementary evaluation criteria.<sup>4</sup>
3. The Rural Development Project in Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDRZMH), supported by IFAD in the Kingdom of Morocco, was selected for a performance assessment.

### B. The Rural Development Project in Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province (PDRZMPH)

4. Loan Agreement No. 556-MA, which finances the Rural Development Project in Mountain Zones of Al-Haouz Province, entered into force on 22 January 2002. The project was initially programmed to run six years from that date. However, to optimize resource management, it was extended so that funds could be reallocated to address two priorities: (i) the target groups: the poor, rural women and unemployed youth; (ii) recourse to institutional delays to strengthen the capacity of grass-roots organizations. Originally slated for March 2008, completion was thus reported on 30 September 2010 and the closing of the loan on 31 March 2011. The project financing consisted of an IFAD loan of US\$18 million, or 60 per cent of the total project cost. The expected government contribution was US\$10.9 million (36 per cent); the beneficiaries' contribution, US\$800,000 (2.6 per cent); and the other partners' contribution, US\$500,000 (1.7 per cent).
5. **Project objective.** The overall objective of the project was to contribute to sustainable social and economic development of the disadvantaged rural population in mountain zones of Al-Haouz Province. Specifically, this meant emphasizing the growth and diversification of the income of that population to improve its living conditions and at the same time foster sustainable management of natural resources.
6. The specific objectives were to implement approaches, procedures, mechanisms, and techniques to: (i) strengthen the self-management capacity of formal and informal grass-roots associations; (ii) improve production conditions and increase and diversify the agricultural and non-agricultural income of the target groups; (iii) improve the living conditions of populations by facilitating their access to basic socio-economic infrastructures; (iv) facilitate the sustainable access of poor

<sup>1</sup> The IFAD Evaluation Policy of May 2011 can be accessed at: <http://www.ifad.org/pub/policy/oe.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The evaluation criteria are: project performance (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency), rural poverty impact (household income and assets, human and social capital and empowerment, food security and agricultural productivity, natural resources and the environment, climate change and institutions and policies), sustainability, gender equality and women's empowerment, promotion of pro-poor innovation, replication, and scaling up and performance of partners.

<sup>3</sup> IOE (2009) : Evaluation Manual : Methodology and Processes. See: [http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process\\_methodology/doc/manual.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/manual.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/101/e/EB-2010-101-R-8.pdf>

people, especially women, to financial services; and (v) promote sustainable management of natural resources. The project was implemented in 17 disadvantaged rural *communes* in Al-Haouz Province, located in the administrative spheres of Amizmiz and Asni, south of Marrakech.

7. **Project target group.** The target group consisted of the poorest of the 111,773 residents of the project area. The number of households at the time of project formulation was estimated at 18,549, with a ratio of six people per dwelling.
8. **Project rationale.** The project was conceived as a pilot intervention for the development of especially disadvantaged mountain zones. It was designed to test and validate conceptual approaches that could be adopted and replicated in other mountain zones in the country, encourage beneficiary participation as part of decentralization by emphasizing women's empowerment and support the construction of productive socio-economic infrastructures accessible to the beneficiaries.
9. **Project components and costs.** Project implementation revolved around four components:
10. **Capacity-building and promotion of local development** (13 per cent of the base costs). This component consisted of implementing the participatory approach and launching development activities targeted to rural women by providing conceptual and practical training to project personnel, as well as staff from the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture (DPA) and the agricultural work centre involved in project activities.
11. In addition to activities related to drinking water supply, microcredit and income generation, which primarily benefitted women, this component included other activities specifically targeting women – for example: functional literacy classes, basic job training, and the creation of childcare facilities.
12. **Implementation of local development programmes** (78 per cent of the base costs). This component reorganized the activities selected by the village communities within the framework of annual programme contracts. It is divided into seven sub-components, each with the supplementary material and financing necessary for operating expenses and maintenance costs:
  - Small-scale initiatives
  - Rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation schemes
  - Soil and water conservation and land improvements
  - Improvement and diversification of production systems
  - Boosting the productivity of pastoral and sylvo-pastoral systems
  - Livestock production and health
  - Improvement of socio-economic infrastructures
13. **Support to financial services and microenterprises** (2 per cent of the base costs). The project supported microcredit development and facilitated farmers' access to agricultural credit by developing retail financial services.
14. **Institutional support and project coordination and management.** Responsibility for project implementation was to be transferred from the DPA in Marrakech to the agricultural work centre in Amizmiz, the leading institution in the vicinity, which was to ensure participatory implementation of the project. Implementation was under the direction of the project coordination unit, comprised of eight managers supervised by a highly qualified coordinator.

### C. Purpose and evaluation objectives

15. The main purpose of project performance assessments, within the constraints of the time and resources provided, is to gather supplementary information to fill in any gaps and correct inconsistencies or analytical weaknesses in the project completion report validation. The assessment will therefore make it possible to evaluate PDRZMH achievements in terms of all the criteria indicated in the IOE Evaluation Manual (including those related to gender equality and empowerment, climate change, and scaling up innovations). The weight given to each criterion, however, will depend on the treatment of the criteria in the project completion report validation, as well as the conclusions of the performance assessment process.
16. The general objectives of the PDRZMH performance assessment are: (i) to conduct an independent evaluation of project outcomes and impact to gain a better idea of the performance and results (in development terms) of IFAD-supported operations and improve them; and (ii) to draw institutional lessons and improve the reliability and quality of IFAD self-evaluation mechanisms.
17. Specifically, this PDRZMH assessment will make it possible to formulate recommendations and draw useful lessons for a new rural development programme in mountain zones, whose design will begin in November 2013.
18. A review of the completion report and completion report validation yields the conclusion that the assessment should place particular emphasis on the following aspects:
19. *The participatory approach and project implementation.* The participatory approach was central to the project and consisted primarily of a partnership between rural communities and the project team to prepare the douar development plans (DDP) and annual programme contracts. The completion report describes this process in generally positive terms and stresses the number of DDPs prepared. Preparation of these plans was followed by the signing of annual programme contracts with grass-roots associations (GDAs). However, according to the completion report, only 50 per cent of the 156 GDAs created and the 52 strengthened are currently operational. The assessment could examine the extent to which IFAD could draw lessons from the project in order to improve its current or future interventions aimed at professionalizing and empowering GDAs in the same or similar zones and ensuring the sustainability of the community structure.
20. *Sustainability.* The project's sustainability is partly ensured by the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in Al-Haouz Province. However, the sustainability of some of its achievements, such as the *douar* development plans and their integration into the national institutional planning and development governance systems (transfer of the DDP to *commune* planning) needs to be validated. Furthermore, the PPA should focus more on aspects of the project that have led to problems and analyse their impact on sustainability. Of particular interest are: (i) rural road maintenance; (ii) certain associations involved with drinking water supply and associations of agricultural water users; and (iii) grass-roots development organizations.

### D. Performance assessment methodology

21. **Evaluation criteria.** The PDRZMPH performance assessment will be based on the evaluation criteria enumerated in the Evaluation Manual of IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation (2009), including the supplementary criteria found in the addendum, namely: gender equality and women's empowerment, climate change and the promotion of pro-poor innovation, replication and scaling up (2010), pursuant to the directives on project completion report validation and project performance assessment. Performance in each domain will be rated on a six-point scale (with 1 the lowest rating and 6 the highest).
22. **Data gathering.** The initial findings are based on an internal review of the available documentation, conducted during the preparation of the project



completion report validation. During the evaluation mission, primary and secondary data will be gathered to support an independent assessment of project performance and results. Data gathering methods will largely be of a participatory nature, and the data generally qualitative. The assessment will prioritize techniques and instruments such as individual and group interviews, thematic discussions with the beneficiaries and direct observation. Statistical surveys will not be used, the brevity of the mission preventing the construction of a reliable sample on which to base judgments. If possible, the assessment will use supplementary data furnished by the project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Triangulation techniques will be used to verify the findings of various information sources.

## Methodological note on project performance assessments

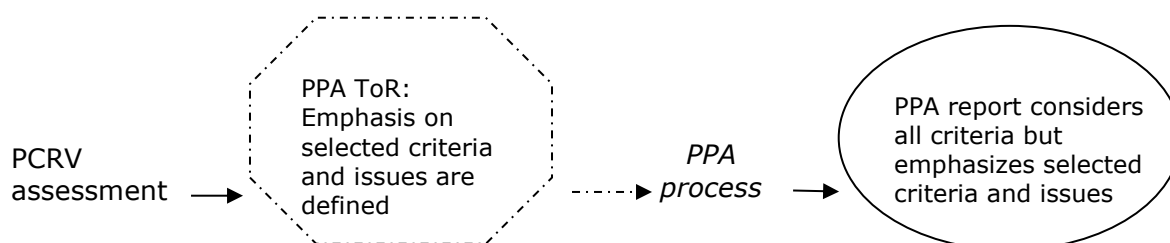
### A. What is a project performance assessment?<sup>1</sup>

1. The project performance assessment (PPA) conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) entails one mission of 7-10 days<sup>2</sup> and two mission members<sup>3</sup>. PPAs are conducted on a sample of projects for which project completion reports have been validated by IOE, and take account of the following criteria (not mutually exclusive): (i) synergies with forthcoming or ongoing IOE evaluations (e.g. country programme or corporate-level evaluations); (ii) major information gaps in project completion reports (PCRs); (iii) novel approaches; and (iv) geographic balance.
2. The objectives of the PPA are to: assess the results and impact of the project under consideration; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in the country involved. When the PPA is to be used as an input for a country programme evaluation, this should be reflected at the beginning of the report. The PPA is based on the project completion report validation (PCR/V) results, further desk review, interviews at IFAD headquarters, and a dedicated mission to the country, to include meetings in the capital city and field visits. The scope of the PPA is set out in the respective terms of reference.

### B. Preparing a PPA

3. Based on the results of the PCR/V, IOE prepares brief terms of reference (ToR) for the PPA in order to sharpen the focus of the exercise.<sup>4</sup> As in the case of PCR/Vs, PPAs do not attempt to respond to each and every question contained in the Evaluation Manual. Instead, they concentrate on the most salient facets of the criteria calling for PPA analysis, especially those not adequately explained in the PCR/V.
4. When preparing a PPA, the emphasis placed on each evaluation criterion will depend both on the PCR/V assessment and on findings that emerge during the PPA process. When a criterion or issue is not identified as problematic or in need of further investigation, and no additional information or evidence emerges during the PPA process, the PPA report will re-elaborate the PCR/V findings.

#### Scope of the PPA



<sup>1</sup> Extract from the PCR/V and PPA Guidelines.

<sup>2</sup> PPAs are to be conducted within a budget ceiling of US\$25,000.

<sup>3</sup> Typically, a PPA mission would be conducted by an IOE staff member with the support of a consultant (international or national). An additional (national) consultant may be recruited if required and feasible within the evaluation budget.

<sup>4</sup> Rather than an approach paper, IOE prepares terms of reference for PPAs. These terms of reference ensure coverage of information gaps, areas of focus identified through PCR/Vs and comments by the country programme manager, and will concentrate the PPA on those areas. The terms of reference will be included as an annex to the PPA.

### C. Evaluation criteria

5. The PPA is well suited to provide an informed summary assessment of project relevance. This includes assessing the relevance of project objectives and of design. While, at the design stage, project logical frameworks are sometimes succinct and sketchy, they do contain a number of (tacit) assumptions on mechanisms and processes expected to generate the final results. At the post-completion phase, and with the benefit of hindsight, it will be clearer to the evaluators which of these assumptions have proved to be realistic, and which did not hold up during implementation and why.
6. For example, the PPA of a project with a major agricultural marketing component may consider whether the project framework incorporated key information on the value chain. Did it investigate issues relating to input and output markets (distance, information, monopolistic power)? Did it make realistic assumptions on post-harvest conservation and losses? In such cases, staff responsible for the PPA will not be expected to conduct extensive market analyses, but might consider the different steps (e.g. production, processing, transportation, distribution, retail) involved and conduct interviews with selected actors along the value chain.
7. An assessment of effectiveness, the extent to which a project's overall objectives have been achieved, should be preferably made at project completion, when the components are expected to have been executed and all resources fully utilized. The PPA considers the overall objectives<sup>5</sup> set out in the final project design document and as modified during implementation. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to capture good performance or under-performance in areas that were not defined as an objective in the initial design but emerged during the course of implementation.
8. The PPA mission may interview farmers regarding an extension component, the objective of which was to diffuse a certain agricultural practice (say, adoption of a soil nutrient conservation technique). The purpose here would be to understand whether the farmers found it useful, to what extent they applied it and their perception of the results obtained. The PPA may look into reasons for the farmers' interest in new techniques, and into adoption rates. For example, was the extension message delivered through lectures? Did extension agents use audio-visual tools? Did extension agents engage farmers in interactive and participatory modules? These type of questions help illustrate *why* certain initiatives have been conducive (or not conducive) to obtaining the desired results.
9. The Evaluation Manual suggests methods for assessing efficiency, such as calculating the economic internal rate of return (EIRR),<sup>6</sup> estimating unit costs and comparing them with standards (cost-effectiveness approach), or addressing managerial aspects of efficiency (timely delivery of activities, respect of budget provisions). The documentation used in preparing the PCRV should normally provide sufficient evidence of delays and cost overruns and make it possible to explain why they happened.
10. As far as rural poverty impact is concerned, the following domains are contemplated in the Evaluation Manual: (a) household income and assets; (b) human and social capital and empowerment; (c) food security and agricultural

<sup>5</sup> Overall objectives will be considered as a reference for assessing effectiveness. However, these are not always stated clearly or consistent throughout the documentation. The assessment may be made by component if objectives are defined by components; however the evaluation will try to establish a correspondence between the overall objectives and outputs.

<sup>6</sup> Calculating an EIRR may be challenging for a PPA as it is time consuming and the required high quality data are often not available. The PPA may help verify whether some of the crucial assumptions for EIRR calculation are consistent with field observations. The mission may also help shed light on the cost-effectiveness aspects of efficiency, for example whether, in an irrigation project, a simple upgrade of traditional seasonal flood water canalization systems might have been an option, rather than investing on a complex irrigation system, when access to markets is seriously constrained.

productivity; (d) natural resources, the environment and climate change;<sup>7</sup> and (e) institutions and policies. As shown in past evaluations, IFAD-funded projects generally collect very little data on household or community-level impact indicators. Even when impact data are available, both their quality and the methodological rigour of impact assessments are still questionable. For example, although data report significant increases in household assets, these may be due to exogenous factors (e.g. falling prices of certain commodities; a general economic upturn; households receiving remittances), and not to the project.

11. PPAs may help address the "attribution issue" (i.e. establishing to what extent certain results are due to a development intervention rather than to exogenous factors) by:
  - i) following the logical chain of the project, identifying key hypotheses and reassessing the plausibility chain; and
  - ii) conducting interviews with non-beneficiaries sharing key characteristics (e.g. socio-economic status, livelihood, farming system), which would give the mission an idea of what would have happened without the project (counterfactual).<sup>8</sup>
12. When sufficient resources are available, simple data collection exercises (mini-surveys) may be conducted by a local consultant prior to the PPA mission.<sup>9</sup> Another non-mutually exclusive option is to spot-check typical data ranges or patterns described in the PCR by means of case studies (e.g. do PCR claims regarding increases in average food-secure months fall within the typical ranges recorded in the field?). It is to be noted that, while data collected by a PPA mission may not be representative in a statistical sense, such data often provide useful reference points and insights. It is important to exercise care in selecting sites for interviews in order to avoid blatant cases of non-beneficiaries profiting from the project.). Sites for field visits are selected by IOE in consultation with the government concerned. Government staff may also accompany the PPA mission on these visits.
13. The typical timing of the PPA (1-2 years after project closure) may be useful for identifying factors that enhance or threaten the sustainability of benefits. By that stage, the project management unit may have been disbanded and some of the support activities (technical, financial, organizational) terminated, unless a second phase is going forward or other funding has become available. Typical factors of sustainability (political support, availability of budgetary resources for maintenance, technical capacity, commitment, ownership by the beneficiaries, environmental resilience) can be better understood at the ex post stage..
14. The PPA also concentrates on IFAD's role with regard to the promotion of innovations and scaling up. For example, it might be observed that some innovations are easily scaled up at low cost (e.g. simple but improved cattle-rearing practices that can be disseminated with limited funding). In other cases, scaling up may involve risks: consider the case of a high-yield crop variety for which market demand is static. Broad adoption of the variety may be beneficial in terms of ensuring food security, but may also depress market prices and thereby reduce sale revenues for many households unless there are other, complementary activities for the processing of raw products.
15. The PPA addresses gender equality and women's empowerment, a criterion recently introduced into IFAD's evaluation methodology. This relates to the emphasis placed on gender issues: whether it has been followed up during

<sup>7</sup> Climate change criterion will be addressed if and when pertinent in the context of the project, as most completed projects evaluated did not integrate this issue into the project design.

<sup>8</sup> See also the discussion of attribution issues in the section on PCRVs.

<sup>9</sup> If the PPA is conducted in the context of a country programme evaluation, then the PPA can piggy-back on the CPE and dedicate more resources to primary data collection.

implementation, including the monitoring of gender-related indicators; and the results achieved.

16. Information from the PCRV may be often sufficient to assess the performance of partners, namely, IFAD and the government. The PPA mission may provide further insights, such as on IFAD's responsiveness, if relevant, to implementation issues or problems of coordination among the project implementation unit and local and central governments. The PPA does not assess the performance of cooperating institutions, which now has little or no learning value for IFAD.
17. Having completed the analysis, the PPA provides its own ratings in accordance with the evaluation criteria and compares them with PMD's ratings. PPA ratings are final for evaluation reporting purposes. The PPA also rates the quality of the PCR document.
18. The PPA formulates short conclusions: a storyline of the main findings. Thereafter, a few key recommendations are presented with a view to following up projects, or other interventions with a similar focus or components in different areas of the country.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Practices differ among multilateral development banks, including recommendations in PPAs. At the World Bank, there are no recommendations but "lessons learned" are presented in a typical PPA. On the other hand, PPAs prepared by Asian Development Bank include "issues and lessons" as well as "follow-up actions" although the latter tend to take the form of either generic technical guidelines for a future (hypothetical) intervention in the same sector or for an ongoing follow-up project (at Asian Development Bank, PPAs are undertaken at least three years after project closure).

## Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Definition<sup>a</sup></i>
<b>Project performance</b>	
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.
<b>Rural poverty impact<sup>b</sup></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.
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.
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.
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.
Natural resources, the 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.
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.
<b>Other performance criteria</b>	
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.
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.
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.
<b>Overall project achievement</b>	This provides an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the analysis made under the various evaluation criteria cited above.
<b>Performance of partners</b>	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation.
IFAD	It also assesses the performance of individual partners against their expected role and responsibilities in the project life cycle.
Government	

<sup>a</sup> 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).

<sup>b</sup> 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.

## Project outputs

Component/aspect of the project/activity	Unit	PROGRAMMED		Outputs as of 31/12/2010	% achieved	
		Total rural dev. project 1	Total REVISED project 2		(3)/(2) (3)/(1)	(3)/(1)
<b><u>I Capacity-building</u></b>						
<b>1. Participatory approach</b>						
<b>1-1 Preparation of DDP</b>						
		210	210	217	103%	103%
<b>1-2 Training</b>						
- Personnel	Unit	3	3	5	167%	167%
- Beneficiaries	Session	21	21	21	100%	100%
<b>1-3 Aid and subsidies to associations</b>						
	Assoc.	0	47	41	87%	
<b>1-4 Technical assistance</b>						
- International Consultant	Pers/month	7	7	2.5	36%	36%
- National Consultant	Pers/month	13.5	13.5	4	30%	30%
<b>1-5 Women's empowerment</b>						
* Literacy classes						
- Equipment	Number	210	71	71	100%	34%
* Women's centres						
- Equipment	Number	50	10	10	100%	20%
*Training of community volunteers (ANPF)	Number	-	50	27	54%	
<b><u>II Implementation of development programme</u></b>						
<b>2-1 Facilitation activities</b>						
	<i>Douars</i>	210	50	49	98%	23%
<b>2-2 small-and medium-scale irrigation</b>						
. Development and topography studies.	Ha	4000	4000	4657	116%	116%
.Activities	Ha	4000	4670	4021	86%	101%
. Training						
- AUEA	Session	70	70	58	83%	83%
<b>2-3 Land management</b>						
<b>.Activities</b>						
- Control of wild jujube weed	Ha	3 000	1 500	1989	133%	66%
- Stone walls	Ha	1 000	350	400	114%	40%
- Planting of fruit trees	Ha	2 000	2 000	1800	90%	90%
- Gullying control	m3	10 000	30 000	28061	94%	281%
- Orchard terraces						
* Soil protection and regeneration	Ha	100	0	0		0%
<b>2-4 Crop production assistance</b>						
<b>. Equipment</b>						
- Treatment supplies	Number	-	14	68	486%	

Component/aspect of the project/activity	Unit	PROGRAMMED		Outputs as of 31/12/2010	% achieved	
		Total rural dev. project	Total REVISED project		(3)/(2)	(3)/(1)
		1	2	3		
<b>. Training</b>						
- Technical personnel	Session	6	6	9	150%	150%
- On-site	Day	300	210	194	92%	65%
- Workshops	Workshop	3	18	15	83%	500%
- In the classroom	Session	10	10	13	130%	130%
- Travel	Trip	7	8	26	325%	371%
<b>. Farm competitions</b>	Unit	60	60	22	37%	37%
<b>. Expansion of planting (fruit trees)</b>	1000	550	550	336.11	61%	61%
<b>. Harvesting equipment</b>	Unit	96	10	10	100%	10%
<b>. Demonstration trials</b>	Unit	280	217	132	61%	47%
<b>. Advice to farmers</b>	Unit	0	1	0	0%	
<b>2-5 Sylvo-pastoral development</b>						
<b>. Studies</b>	Unit	3	3	2	67%	67%
Eco-tourism support	Per year	6	6	0.5	8%	8%
Technical support	Pers/month	5	5	3	60%	60%
<b>. Activities</b>						
Pastoral improvement	Ha	3000	174	0	0%	0%
Assisted rehabilitation/regeneration	Ha	600	0	0		0%
Taking land out of production	Ha	5000	0	0		0%
<b>. Training</b>						
Engineers	Session	3	3	2	67%	67%
Internships	Intern	4	4	2	50%	50%
Forest users	Session	4	4	3	75%	75%
<b>2-6 Livestock production</b>						
Distribution of rams	Ram	80	80	14	18%	18%
Training for farmers	Session	5	5	8	160%	160%
<b>2-7 Assistance for livestock production</b>						
Fattening trials						
-Sheep	Unit	40	40	0	0%	0%
-Cattle	Unit	24	44	67	152%	279%
Distribution of stud animals						
- Cattle	Bull		20			
- Goats	Buck		80			
Agreement with ANOC	Unit	0	1	0	0%	
Agreement with ANPVR	Unit	0	1	0	0%	



Component/aspect of the project/activity	Unit	PROGRAMMED		Outputs as of 31/12/2010	% achieved	
		Total rural dev. project	Total REVISED project		(3)/(2)	(3)/(1)
		1	2	3		
<b>2-8 Research and development</b>						
Agreement with INRA	Unit	1	1	0.75	75%	75%
<b>2-9 Improvement of community rangeland</b>						
. <b>Agro-pastoral study</b>	Contract	1	1	1	100%	100%
. <b>Training for farmers</b>						
- On-site	Session	5	5	5	100%	100%
- Travel	Trip	2	2	2	100%	100%
- Engineers and technical personnel	Session	7	7	7	100%	100%
. <b>Technical assistance</b>	Pers/month	6	6	2	33%	33%
. <b>Pastoral improvement</b>						
- Community lands, piedmont	Ha	1000	1000	720	72%	72%
- Private	Ha	250	0	0		0%
- Community lands, mountain	Ha	1000	300	100	33%	10%
. Water source creation and development	Unit	16	-	0		0%
<b>2-10 Animal health</b>						
. Treatment of internal parasites, sheep	1000 head	500	1000	1346.283	135%	269%
. Vaccination against enterotoxaemia	1000 head	500	500	571.37	114%	114%
. Treatment for internal parasites, cattle	1000 head	24	24	17	71%	71%
. Treatment for internal parasites, equines	1000 head	18	18	7	39%	39%
. Treatment for external parasites, sheep+goats	1000 head	500	500	115.795	23%	23%
. Control of the varroa mite	100 hives	210	210	254.59	121%	121%
. Training	Session	4	4	4	100%	100%
. Epidemiological studies	Year	3	3	1	33%	33%
. Technical assistance	Pers/month	3	3	0	0%	0%
<b>2-11 Access roads</b>						
. <b>Topography studies</b>	Km	155	155	148	95%	95%
. <b>Activities</b>						
- Opening and stabilization	Km	155	121	124	102%	80%
- Construction works to bridge obstacles	Unit	83	24	0	0%	0%
- <b>Supervision</b>	Km	155	142	124	87%	80%

Component/aspect of the project/activity	Unit	PROGRAMMED		Outputs as of 31/12/2010	% achieved	
		Total rural dev. project	Total REVISED project		(3)/(2)	(3)/(1)
		1	2	3		
<b>2-12 Water supply</b>						
. Studies	Contract	1	1	1	100%	100%
<b>. Water source creation and development</b>						
Fords	Unit	64	64	64	100%	100%
Water source development and equipping	Unit	64	64	41	64%	64%
<b><u>III-Support to financial services and microenterprise development</u></b>						
<b>. NGO installation</b>						
. Set-up and equipping of offices	Lot	3	3	3	100%	100%
. Marketing study on rural markets	Unit	1	1	0	0%	0%
. Training for personnel	60 days	15	15	9	60%	60%
. Organization of regional seminars and mini-fairs	Seminar	0	2	0	0%	
. Organization of exchange trips	Contract	0	2	1	50%	
. Value adding micro-projects	Project	0	6	3	50%	
. Technical assistance	Unit	0	1	0	0%	
<b><u>IV- Management and coordination</u></b>						
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>						
. Project launch seminar	Contract	1	1	1	100%	100%
. Baseline study	Contract	1	1	1	100%	100%
. Annual monitoring workshops	Contract	5	8	5	63%	100%
. Monitoring of food security	Contract	2	2	2	100%	100%
. Training in project management	Session	1	1	1	100%	100%
. Mid-term evaluation	Contract	1	1	1	100%	100%

## List of key persons met

### Government

Mahjoub Lahrache, Chief of Service, Directorate of Irrigation and Land Management

Ali Ayoujil, in charge of monitoring projects financed by IFAD, Directorate of Irrigation and Land Management

Jabrane Reklaoui, Director, Directorate for the Development of Rural and Mountain Zones

Sanae Lehmami, Staff, Agency for Agricultural Development

Nessrine Tarraji, Staff, Agency for Agricultural Development

Miloudi Ratmi, Staff, Agency for Agricultural Development

Abdelakirm Kanfaoui, Staff, Agency for Agricultural Development

Said Feguiche, Staff, Agency for Agricultural Development

Youssef Farhat, Assistant Budget Director, Ministry of Economy and Finance

Moha Bicha, Chief, Multilateral Finance Division, Ministry of Economy and Finance

Moulay Abdeslem Mrini, Secretary-General, Government of El Haouz

Ahmed Lhimer, Sociologist, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Samira Hadraoui, Chief, PDFAZMH Project Management Unit, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Abdeljalil Boukraoui, Engineer, Project Implementation Service (SMOP), Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Abdelkabar Qalfi, SMOP Technician, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Ahmed Fatimi, SMOP Technician, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Amal Zerqala, SMOP Engineer, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

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Najia Tika, SMOP Engineer, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Saloua Nouiym, Engineer, Extension and Support Service, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Abdslem El Faouzi, Chief, SAP Service, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Mustapha Monrtaji, Chief, Extension and Support Service, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

My Abdellah El Mendili, Provincial Director, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Marrakech

Berkaoui, Director, Regional Directorate of Water and Forests, Marrakech

Mohamed Ouzai, Staff, National Office for Food Safety, Marrakech

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ISBN 978-92-9072-501-5



IFAD Internal Printing Services