



Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Independent Office of Evaluation

Guidelines

Project completion report validation and project performance assessment

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Contents

Abbreviations	ii
I. Introduction	1
A. Background	1
B. Contents of the guidelines	1
II. Main purpose and nature of PCRVs and PPAs	2
III. PCRV and PPA process: an overview	3
IV. Guidance for project completion report validation	3
A. What is a PCRV?	3
B. PCRV report writing	3
C. PCRV process	4
D. Quality assurance	5
E. PMD comments and finalization of the PCRV	5
F. Methodological difficulties	6
G. Volume of documentation	6
H. Useful documents/websites for PCRVs	9
V. Guidance for project performance assessment	10
A. What is a PPA?	10
B. Preparing a PPA	10
C. Methodological difficulties	13
D. PPA process	14
Annexes	
1. Format for PCRV reports	20
2. Annotated table of contents for PPA reports	24
3. Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE	29
4. Information gathered from PCRVs and PPAs	30
5. Fax announcing a PPA to governments	32
6. Proposed text of section I of the PPA report on background, methodology and process	33
7. Bibliography	34

Abbreviations

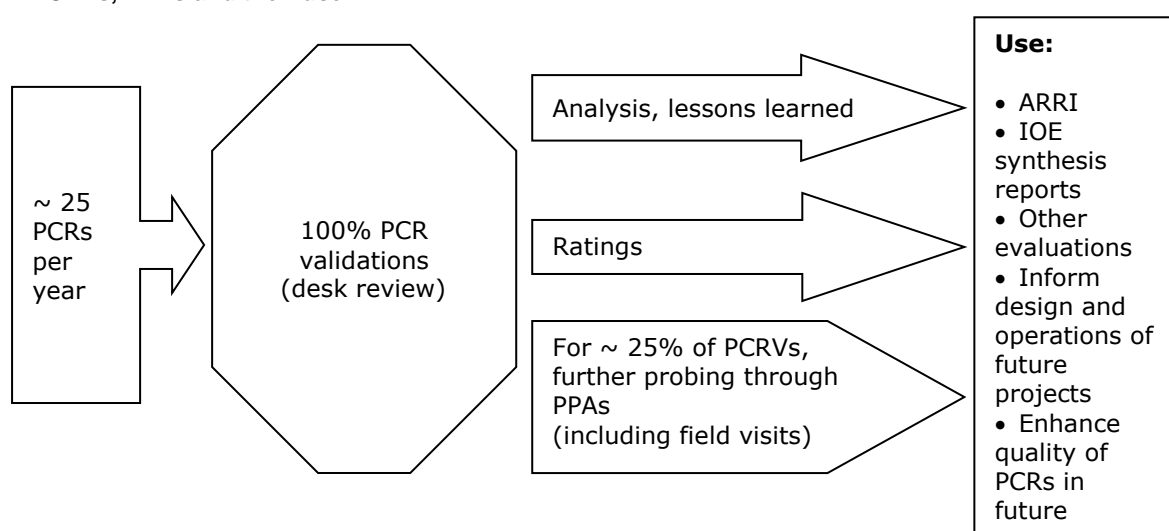
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARRI	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations
CLE	corporate-level evaluation
CPE	country programme evaluation
CPM	country programme manager
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
MDB	multilateral development bank
PCR	project completion report
PCRv	project completion report validation
PMD	Programme Management Department (IFAD)
PPA	project performance assessment
PSR	project status report

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. In line with the recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function by the Evaluation Cooperation Group, in 2011 the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) modified its approach to evaluation¹ by introducing project completion report validations (PCRVs)² and project performance assessments (PPAs). IOE intends to validate about 25 PCRs per year, including: (i) the latest ones available; and (ii) earlier ones undertaken in countries where IOE is conducting, or plans to conduct, a country programme evaluation (CPE). PCRVs and PPAs also provide analyses and ratings that are reflected in the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI), in synthesis reports³ and in other evaluations, e.g. country programme evaluations (CPEs) and corporate-level evaluations (CLEs) (figure I.1).
2. As a general rule, PCRVs are prepared by staff members of IOE; PPAs are conducted under the leadership and responsibility of IOE staff members, who may recruit consultants to provide additional, specialized support.

Figure I.1.
PCRVs, PPAs and their use



B. Contents of the guidelines

3. These guidelines set out the objectives, scope, methodology and format to be used for preparing PCRVs and PPAs. Drawing on the wealth of experience in the evaluation offices of multilateral banks (MDBs),⁴ the authors have sought to adapt such information to the IFAD context (typology of projects, evaluation methodology, contents, and the production of PCRs).
4. The guidelines benefit from inputs and comments from a senior external advisor⁵ conversant with PCRV and PPA processes in several MDBs. They also build on a pilot exercise undertaken in September-December 2010, on the first year of full-scale

¹ IFAD's Evaluation Policy of May 2011 may be found on: <http://www.ifad.org/pub/policy/oe.pdf>.

² Governments are obliged to prepare PCRs before the closing dates of loans (IFAD General Conditions for Agricultural Development Financing 2009, p. 18). In recent years, PCR preparation has been increasingly supported by the Programme Management Department (PMD) of IFAD. PCR guidelines were issued by IFAD management in 2006.

³ In line with the recommendations of the peer review, IOE has recently embarked on a number of synthesis reports on specific themes, as a contribution to IFAD's current knowledge management work.

⁴ The documentation reviewed included guidelines and documents produced by the evaluation offices of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Islamic Development Bank and World Bank.

⁵ Patrick Grasso, currently consultant to the Director-General, Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank and formerly Evaluation Knowledge Manager, IEG/World Bank.

experience (2011)⁶ and a comprehensive stocktaking exercise in October 2011, and incorporate feedback from IOE staff. An earlier version of the guidelines contributed to revision of the harmonization agreement between PMD and IOE on the contents of PCRs, of PMD's self-assessment and of the PCR quality assurance process. The earlier version was also used in preparing the IFAD Action Plan for Strengthening the Self-evaluation System, approved by the Executive Board in September 2011.

5. The present document is organized as follows: sections B and C briefly outline the purpose and nature of PCRVs and PPAs and their preparation; sections D and E provide more specific guidelines on conducting them. The proposed PCRV format is shown in annex 1, and an annotated table of contents for PPAs is contained in annex 2. Annex 3 gives the definitions of evaluation criteria used by IOE. Annex 4 provides an overview of information that may be extrapolated from PCRVs and PPAs. Annex 5 provides a draft text for announcing PPAs to governments and annex 6 presents the proposed text of section I of the PPA report (background, methodology and process).

II. Main purpose and nature of PCRVs and PPAs

6. PCRVs and PPAs support: (i) accountability on the performance and development results of IFAD's operations; (ii) institutional learning; (iii) improvement of IFAD's operations; and (iv) reliability and quality of the self-evaluation system at IFAD, including project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E), as well as quality of the project completion process and report (see paragraphs 14 and 47).
7. PCRVs consist of desk reviews of PCRs. Other relevant documents and websites (see section B, IV) are used to fill information gaps or, on a selective basis, to cross-check the data in PCRs. PPAs are conducted on a subset of projects for which PCRVs⁷ have been already undertaken, and involve country visits. They require inputs from IOE staff⁸ and, selectively, from consultants hired by IOE.
8. PCRVs and PPAs follow the evaluation criteria outlined in the Evaluation Manual⁹ of 2009, which sets the methodological fundamentals for evaluations at IFAD. The Manual has been expanded to include gender, climate change and more specific questions on scaling up.¹⁰ PCRVs and PPAs provide information on findings, lessons learned (in PCRVs) and recommendations (in PPAs); and, in both, IOE assigns its own ratings that it may further process, consolidate and use in other evaluations.
9. PPAs involve more limited financial and human resources than past project evaluations, and therefore problems may arise because of the reduced time available for field validations. Some of the approaches to enhancing validity are explained in sections F-G, section IV and include verification of intra- and inter-documentation consistency, theory-based approaches (whereby the project conceptual framework is assessed against available information and key hypotheses are discussed and commented on), expert validation and focused case studies in the field.

⁶ The pilot consisted of conducting five PCRVs and one PPA on a trial basis. It helped establish substantive contents, methodology and operational guidelines for PCRV and PPA exercises in preparation for their full application starting 2011. It also helped to develop and finalize a format for PCRVs and PPAs and to estimate resource requirements for conducting both types of exercise.

⁷ Projects for PPAs are selected by IOE, taking account of: (i) information gaps in PCRs; (ii) innovative or new, less tested approaches in projects; (iii) information needs for forthcoming CPEs or CLEs; and (iv) geographical balance.

⁸ The standard IOE staff time allocated is 11 full-time working days for a PCRV and 35 full-time working days for a PPA.

⁹ IFAD's Evaluation Manual may be downloaded from IFAD's corporate website at: http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/manual.pdf. See also the additional evaluation criteria available on: <http://www.ifad.org/gbdosc/eb/ec/e/65/EC-2010-65-W-P-6.pdf>.

¹⁰ See annex II of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Findings and Recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Evaluation System, available on IFAD's corporate website at <http://www.ifad.org/gbdosc/eb/ec/e/65/EC-2010-65-W-P-6.pdf>.

III. PCRV and PPA process: an overview

10. Despite involving modest costs, PCRVs and PPAs nevertheless follow the methodology set out in the Evaluation Manual. As a measure of quality assurance, both PCRVs and PPAs are subjected to peer reviews within IOE, with particular focus on the overall rigour of analysis, robustness of the evidence trail and justification for ratings.
11. While relying on a review of documentation, PCRVs call for interaction with PMD and, in particular, with country programme managers (CPMs) who provide information on project/programme performance, respond to questions and comment on draft PCRVs.
12. As with past project evaluations, PPAs involve field visits. However, such visits are shorter and focus on issues highlighted by the PCRV (as well as others, as required). PPAs call for interaction with government authorities, who provide immediate feedback at the end of field visits and are invited to comment on the draft reports. Other interaction may occur with relevant interlocutors in the field, such as donor representatives, NGOs and academics. The responsible CPM facilitates contacts within the country by providing a list of persons to be interviewed. Further details are provided in the following sections.

IV. Guidance for project completion report validation

A. What is a PCRV?

13. The PCRV consists of a desk review of the PCR and other selected documentation, as well as discussions at IFAD headquarters (for example, with the responsible CPM or technical adviser) in order to fill information gaps and cross-check from different documentary sources.
14. The PCRV serves to provide: (i) an independent verification of the analytical quality of the PCR; (ii) an independent review of project performance and results (including ratings); and (iii) key findings and lessons learned for further synthesis and systematization exercises. The above functions are expected to contribute to accountability and institutional learning, thereby improving the design and implementation of IFAD's projects and self-evaluation systems, and to enhancing the quality of future PCRs.

B. PCRV report writing

15. The Evaluation Manual serves as a general reference for criteria, definitions and key operational questions. PCRVs follow the criteria stipulated in the manual but are not expected to provide explicit answers to each and every question it contains. These validations, which follow the standard format shown in annex 1, ascertain whether or not the PCR (and related documentation) provides the narrative, data and information that fit key facets of the evaluation criteria in a credible manner. Main elements are described below.
16. As a first step, the PCRV provides basic project data such as the country, title, sector(s) of intervention, milestones (approval, effectiveness, closing), financial envelope broken down by cofinancier, and implementation arrangements. Where appropriate, comparisons are made between provisions at the loan approval stage and completion dates (e.g. foreseen vs. actual). If required, brief comments may be provided on observed differences (annex 1, section A).
17. Project objectives, project area, targeted beneficiaries and expected benefits are then briefly outlined, thus helping to clarify the project outline, expectations and conceptual framework (annex 1.B). This is followed by a review of evaluation criteria, as per the Evaluation Manual (annex 1.C).
18. Against each criterion, the staff member undertaking the PCRV summarizes the findings of the PCR and other related documents, giving his/her own assessment in order to arrive at a judgement and rating. Ratings are not assigned if the PCRV is conducted prior to the PPA. In such a case, the PCRV becomes an intermediate

output, .e.g. the desk review phase of the PPA process. It still presents an analysis based on available information, but does not include ratings because these are provided in the PPA and are shared with the CPM to obtain his/her feedback.

19. The staff member responsible for validating the PCR ascertains whether the most salient aspects of each criterion have been captured and identifies any gaps or omissions. Proposed ratings, and justifications for them, are given in the main text.
20. It is to be noted that PCRV ratings are based on information obtained during desk reviews of PCRs and other documentation. As a general rule, the evaluator will exercise his/her own judgement in assigning ratings, supporting his/her arguments with information contained in other documents and in the explanatory notes for PMD ratings. In other words, unlike in other evaluation offices, the PCRV does not automatically downgrade the PMD ratings even when information is scarce.
21. IOE assesses the overall quality of the PCR (robustness of analysis, consistency, quality of data, candour and inclusiveness in preparing the reports), provides a rating (annex 1, section D),¹¹ and formulates clear lessons for improving the PCR process and quality.
22. In particular, IOE's assessments of PCRs draw attention to evaluation criteria that might have been overlooked and highlight any criteria or special aspects deserving further analysis (e.g. through PPA). PCRV assessments help to pinpoint typical patterns of the strengths and weaknesses of PCRs, and signal issues needing to be addressed by IFAD, its partners and governments.
23. The next step is to highlight a number of lessons learned, drawing on those discussed in the PCR and PCRV (annex 1, section E). These lessons may include outstanding cross-cutting issues (e.g. on gender, indigenous people, targeting) of special importance to IFAD, and explain good or weak performance (the "why question"). If so required, the PCRV may also highlight issues for IOE follow-up, e.g. questions that should be raised in a PPA or when a CPE is to be undertaken in the same country.
24. PMD and independent PCRV ratings are given in a table at the end of the PCRV report. Here, differences between the PCR and PCRV ratings are shown criterion-by-criterion together with an average difference (annex 1, section F). The final rating for evaluation reporting purposes, including the ARRI, will be the PCRV rating. However, if a PPA is undertaken on the same project, the PPA rating will be the final one (see paragraph 18).
25. The PCRV should be concise (maximum 9-11 pages), and reviewers should limit their presentation to information essential both for the analysis and for the validation of ratings.

C. PCRV process

26. PMD is required to provide IOE with yearly lists of PCRs that will be available for validation. Information on forthcoming PCRVs is sent to PMD by the IOE coordinator¹² for PCRVs. IOE staff members undertaking PCRVs are responsible for maintaining contacts with other, relevant IOE staff and CPMs and for informing them, well in advance, of forthcoming drafts and review processes.
27. Drafting. As a general rule, the PCRV is prepared by an IOE staff member assigned to the task. It is his/her responsibility to review the documentation involved, with

¹¹ This is a novel feature of PCRVs at IFAD and will help the organization strengthen future PCRs.

¹² The role of the coordinator includes: the selection of projects to be subjected to a PCRV and PPA, based on an annual plan of PCRs to be provided by PMD in consultation with IOE management; planning, reviewing and budgeting a PCRV/PPA annual plan, including assigning a lead evaluator, peer reviewers and calendar with key milestones; monitoring the implementation of the plan and supporting IOE colleagues; supervising the transmission of draft PCRV and PPA reports; participating in periodic briefings with CPMs and PMD and; contributing to methodological development of the PCRVs and PPAs.

help from an evaluation assistant, as required, and to produce a draft of the PCRV report within the time frame agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator of IOE and the CPM involved.

D. Quality assurance

28. In the case of a PCRV not followed by a PPA, the peer reviewer of the quality assurance process is the supervisor of the lead evaluator. The IOE staff member undertaking the PCRV ensures that the internal IOE peer review is conducted within a reasonable period of time, which should not exceed 7-8 working days excluding the lead evaluator's revision of the draft PCRV.¹³ When difficulties arise with regard to work programmes (of the lead evaluator and peer reviewers), the internal peer review should take place within a period of time agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator in IOE. Once the quality assurance process has been completed, the PCRV/PPA coordinator forwards the document to the Deputy Director, IOE, for review in order to minimize inter-evaluator variability, ensure quality and promote consistency between analysis and ratings, after which the document is transmitted to PMD.¹⁴
29. When a project has been selected for both PCRV and PPA, the draft PCRV is reviewed by the supervisor of the lead evaluator (who also clears the draft). The IOE staff responsible for the PCRV then forwards it directly to the CPM concerned, with a copy to the PCRV/PPA coordinator in IOE, on an informal basis and without ratings. The CPM's comments are reflected in preparation for the PPA (e.g. in the terms of reference). The PCRV is not revised.

E. PMD comments and finalization of the PCRV

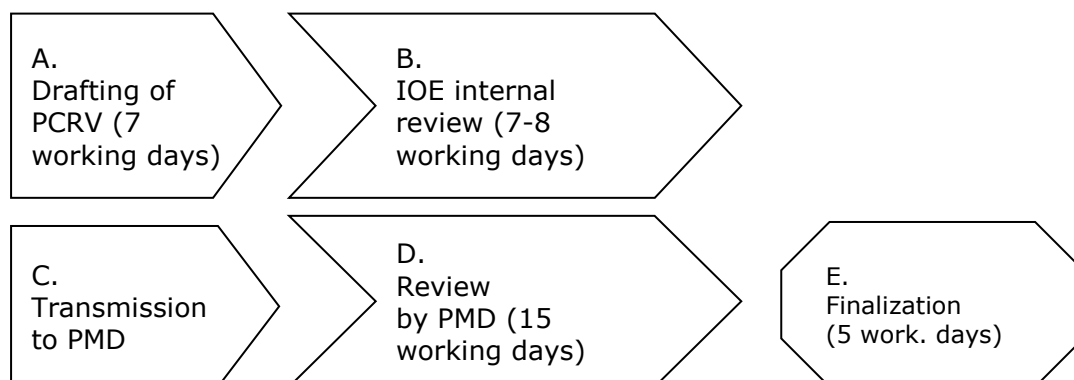
30. The relevant regional division of PMD provides feedback within 15 working days from submission of the PCRV (ten working days if it is transmitted informally and is to be followed by a PPA), or on a date agreed between the PCRV/PPA coordinator and the CPM. Upon receipt of the PMD comments, the draft is finalized and an audit trail produced within five working days or as agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator. The audit trail and the final version are cleared by the peer reviewers or, if the PCRV is to be followed by a PPA, only by the supervisor of the lead evaluator.
31. The final version of the PCRV and the audit trail are transmitted to PMD following the same procedure as per the draft PCRV (paragraph 28) and, at this stage, are considered as final. They are also considered final in the event no feedback is received from PMD within 20 working days of submission of the draft, or as agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator. Because the PCRV does not provide recommendations, no agreement at completion point is prepared. Furthermore, PMD does not report on PCRV follow-up in the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA). That applies only to PPAs.
32. Once finalized, the PCRV is forwarded to the Evaluation Communication Unit for posting on the IOE website.¹⁵

¹³ Comments may be provided in writing or verbally, or both.

¹⁴ The message is sent to the relevant CPM with a copy to the division director, IOE Director and Deputy Director, PMD senior portfolio manager and other relevant staff in the latter's office and in IOE (usually the persons helping to manage PCRs in PMD, and PCRVs and PPAs in IOE).

¹⁵ <http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/publichtml/eksyst/doc/validation/2010/index.htm>.

Figure IV.1
PCR process



F. Methodological difficulties

33. Based as it is on a desk review, the PCRV essentially relies on an analysis of documents and secondary information. This may lead to difficulties in verifying information, especially, for instance, relating to project impact. Although there is no “magic bullet” to solve the problem, the evaluation literature recognizes a set of strategies as appropriate to enhancing validity:
- (i) content analyses of PCRs; verifying logical consistency;
 - (ii) cross-checking and triangulating¹⁶ with other documents (e.g. mid-term review (MTR) and supervision reports), IFAD’s websites (e.g. loans and grants system (LGS) for disbursement rates) and other sources (e.g. a World Bank report on an IFAD project it is cofinancing); cross-checking with independent evaluation reports (when available) and, when appropriate with the CPM; and
 - (iii) adopting theory-based approaches; considering the conceptual model and logical framework of the project/programme; and verifying whether or not crucial assumptions hold up. This may help challenge unwarranted claims on project effects or impacts.¹⁷

G. Volume of documentation

34. While desk reviews of individual projects or programmes may well involve an overwhelming mass of documentation, it should be borne in mind that some documents can be simply skimmed through. The core set of documents to be perused are the PCR, complemented on a selective basis by information extracted from the appraisal and MTR reports, the last one or two supervision mission reports, the latest project status report (PSR) and other relevant documents or web-based information. Based on the evaluation criteria and questions, the simple coding of texts (e.g. in the margin of a page, see Figure IV.4) can help organize otherwise scattered material and data, and save time in retrieving information. IOE evaluation assistants may be requested to collect the documentation, and the help of CPMs or PMD programme assistants sought to ensure that such documents are available. Through time IFAD management expects to receive increasingly larger number of RIMS impact surveys and these can increasingly be used for enhancing the quality of PCRVs and PPAS. A rule of thumb, the validation starts with a perusal of the final project design report¹⁸ although there will be usually no need to read it

¹⁶ See IFAD Evaluation Manual pp. 17-19.

¹⁷ Consider, for example, a project extension component for integrated pest management. The fact that the documentation highlights serious problems of trainer absenteeism may represent a violation of a crucial assumption for the component’s effectiveness and ultimate impact.

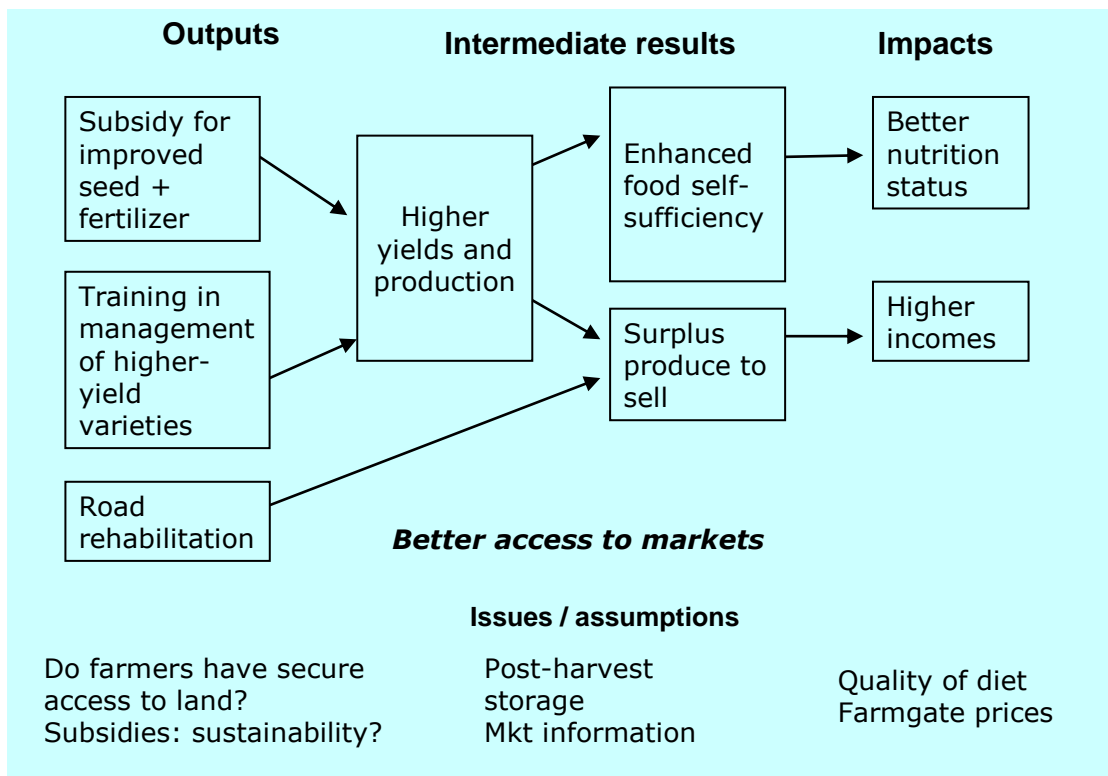
¹⁸ This was known as the “appraisal report” until 2008, when it was replaced by “final project design report”).

from cover to cover. What is more important is to understand the type of components the project seeks to support, the effects it tries to generate and how it intends to achieve them. In essence, this means disentangling the project conceptual framework.

35. It may be helpful to draw up a simple project scheme along the lines of that shown in figure IV.2, which provides a simplified framework with a number of simple assumptions. However, a project framework may be more complex and the relationships between inputs, outputs, intermediate results and impact may be non-linear, including feedback and hysteresis effects.¹⁹ For the purpose of a PCRV it may be advisable to keep the scheme short and simple. If the project seems to lack a clear and coherent logical framework, it should be noted in the PCRV, for example, under the analysis of relevance.

Figure IV.2.

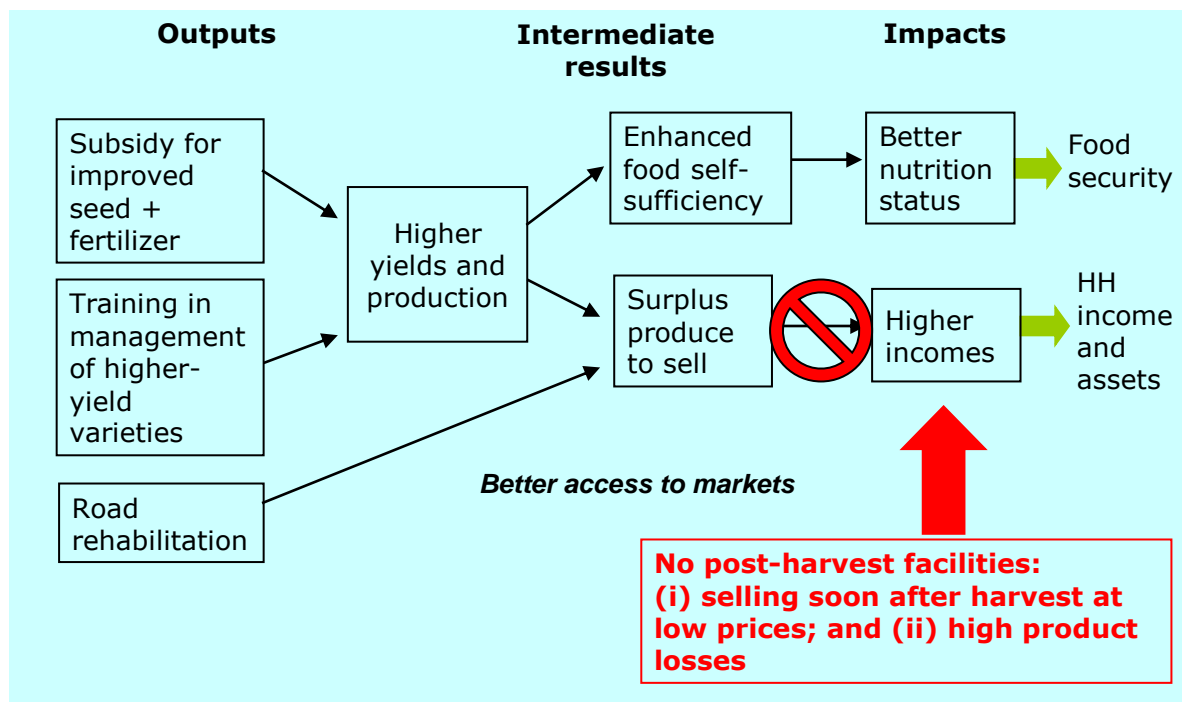
A simplified linear logical project scheme



36. With a clearer idea of the project, the PCR validation can work “forwards”, e.g. by skimming through the MTR, latest supervision mission report and the PCR. This helps to progressively build up hypotheses on performance and results for subsequent validation against the PCR findings.
37. Another option is to work “backwards”, starting with the PCR, checking internal consistency and reading earlier reports (the MTR and latest supervision reports, and the final project design report). This helps to ascertain whether the findings of earlier documents flow in the direction of the PCR.
38. These options (and others) are both legitimate and useful if they are conducive to more selective reading and improved time management. Forward or backward reading can help in assessing whether the initial project logical framework was construed in a coherent manner and whether key assumptions were validated or violated. An example of the latter is shown in Figure IV.3, where a red circle and arrow point to violation of key project assumptions and logical steps.

¹⁹ In physics and in theories of systems, hysteresis refers to effects taking place with delay in respect of inputs, as if in the presence of a systemic memory that operates with time lags.

Figure IV.3.
Confirming or invalidating crucial hypotheses in the logical framework



39. By means of this simple logical modelling, the credibility of statements, particularly in the PCR, can be assessed. Suppose, for instance, the PCR states that average farmer incomes have risen significantly thanks to project support for increasing rice yields, but without providing data to substantiate such a finding. It may be found, for example, that owing to the lack of storage facilities, farmers were selling at very low prices soon after the harvest. This argument may be used to question findings that are not sufficiently explained or documented by the PCR or other documents. Understanding and questioning the project framework is useful if data for the desk review is scarce.
40. Another typical problem found in a desk review is that the analysis does not necessarily follow the definition of criteria set out in the Evaluation Manual, or that the analysis is scattered throughout the documents. One way of addressing this problem is to code information, e.g. as shown in figure IV.4 where key information pertaining to selected impact domains is tagged in the margin of a supervision report page.
41. **Attributing impact to a given project.**²⁰ One of the ways of addressing attribution, as suggested in the evaluation literature, is by considering counterfactuals (what would have happened without the project?). Unfortunately, most IFAD projects, even those with a well-functioning M&E system, do not incorporate counterfactual observations (e.g. survey data of households that have not been assisted by a project).
42. Given the difficulty of making a robust attribution of effects to projects, some practitioners typically report on an intervention's contribution to certain development results, usually citing the work of John Mayne as rationale.²¹ However,

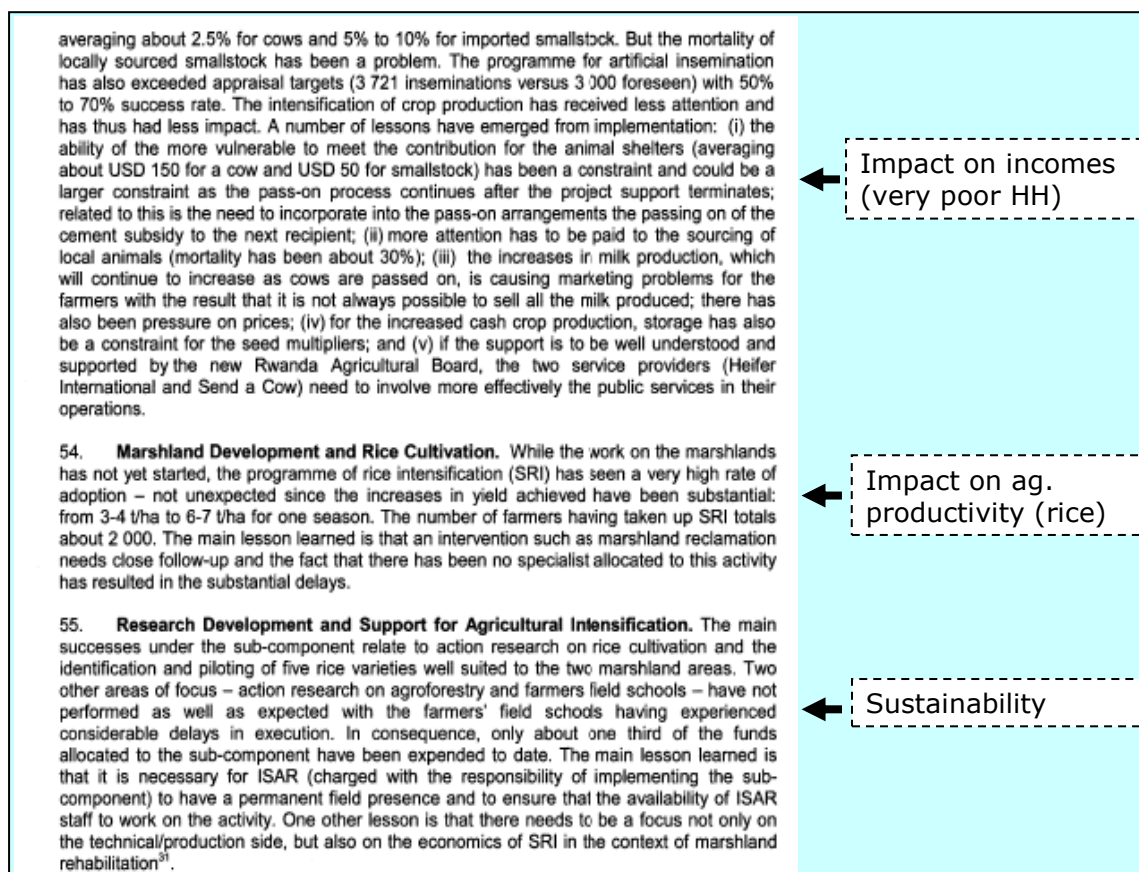
²⁰ This section benefits from exchanges with Patrick Grasso, Senior Advisor, IEG/World Bank.

²¹ Mayne argued that a contribution analysis needed to do each of the following: (i) analyse a project or programme's logic to identify assumptions and relationships; (ii) identify, measure and document expected outcomes; (iii) use performance indicators that focus on expected outcomes; (iv) track performance over time or locations, as appropriate; (v) explore alternative plausible explanations; (vi) use multiple lines of evidence, e.g. expert opinion, programme files, secondary analysis, meta-analysis, case studies. John Mayne, "Addressing attribution through contribution analysis: using performance measures sensibly," *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 16: 1-24, 2001.

Mayne's approach has specific requirements seldom met in such contribution analyses. While recognizing that these are more indicative than dispositive, other techniques can be used for analysing the potential impact of a project: for instance, one involves applying a scenario analysis to estimate the "without project" situation. While scenario analysis is usually considered to be a predictive technique, it may be also applied to simulate a counterfactual in retrospective analyses.²² In any event, short of a robust impact evaluation design, PCRVs and PPAs should be prudent and modest in their conclusions with regard to impact.

Figure IV.4.

Simple coding of information in a document by impact domain



Source: Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation 16: 1-24, 2001.

H. Useful documents/websites for PCRVs

43. Core documentation:
 - Appraisal report (for old-generation projects)/final project design document (for new-generation projects)
 - MTR report
 - Latest supervision reports (the last two)
 - Latest PSR
 - PCR
44. Additional supporting documentation:
 - Country strategic opportunities programme
 - Additional supervision reports
 - Impact assessment, or any other special reports available
 - Background documentation on country and project area (see Evaluation Manual, pp. 30-31)
 - Project, country programme and corporate-level evaluations will be consulted whenever relevant.

²² See ADB, Strengthening the Quality of Project Economic Analysis in ADB Operations, Manila: ADB, 2008, pp. 7-8.

45. Websites and databases:
 - PMD database on PCR ratings (if not available online, to be requested from PMD)
 - LGS (disbursement rates)
 - Project and portfolio management system (general information, present and past CPMs)

V. Guidance for project performance assessment

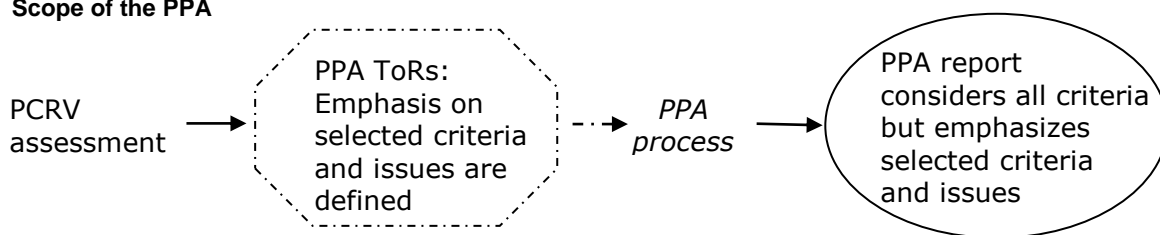
A. What is a PPA?

46. The PPA is a more concise form of the evaluations previously undertaken by IOE. A PPA entails only one mission of 7-10 days²³ (as opposed to 20-25 for past project evaluations) and two mission members²⁴ (compared with 3-4). PPAs are conducted on a sample of projects for which PCRs 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. CPEs or CLEs); (ii) major information gaps in PCRs; (iii) novel approaches; and (iv) geographic balance.
47. The objectives of the PPA are to: (i) 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 CPE, this should be reflected at the beginning of the report. The PPA is based on PCRV 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

48. An annotated table of contents for PPAs is given in annex 2 of these guidelines. Given that the PPA is undertaken with limited resources, the exercise must perforce be selective. The emphasis placed on each criterion will depend both on the PCRV 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 PCRV findings. Based on the results of the PCRV, IOE prepares brief terms of reference for the PPA in order to sharpen the focus of the exercise.²⁵
49. As in the case of PCRVs, 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 PCRV.

Figure V.1.
Scope of the PPA



50. The next sections provide examples of how the PPA may treat the different evaluation criteria. Emphasis will depend on the PCRV assessment and findings. PPA

²³ PPAs are to be conducted within a budget ceiling of US\$25,000.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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 PCRVs and comments by the CPM, and will concentrate the PPA on those areas. The terms of reference will be included as an annex to the PPA.

lead evaluators and consultants are encouraged to be creative, although reports should not exceed 21-22 pages.

51. The PPA is well suited to providing 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 (annex 2).
52. Let us take the example of a project with a major agricultural marketing component. The PPA 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.
53. 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 objectives²⁶ 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 (annex 2).
54. 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.
55. The Evaluation Manual suggests methods for assessing efficiency, such as calculating the economic internal rate of return (EIRR),²⁷ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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 (annex 3.C.3).

56. 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 productivity; (d) natural resources, the environment and climate change;²⁸ and (e) institutions and policies (annex 2).
57. 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.
58. 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).²⁹
59. When sufficient resources are available, simple data collection exercises (mini-surveys) may be conducted by a local consultant prior to the PPA mission.³⁰ 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.
60. 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 (annex 2).
61. 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 replicated 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

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ See also the discussion of attribution issues in the section on PCRVs.

³⁰ 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.

reduce sale revenues for many households unless there are other, complementary activities for the processing of raw products (annex 2).

62. 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 implementation, including the monitoring of gender-related indicators; and the results achieved (annex 2).
63. 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 (annex 2). The PPA does not assess the performance of cooperating institutions, which now has little or no learning value for IFAD.
64. Having completed the analysis, the PPA provides its own ratings in accordance with the evaluation criteria and compares them with PMD's ratings (see annex 2, table 1). PPA ratings are final for evaluation reporting purposes. The PPA also rates the quality of the PCR document (see annex 2, table 2).
65. 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.³¹

C. Methodological difficulties

66. PPA field visits are conducted under considerable time and budgetary constraints. This means, inter alia, that such missions are significantly shorter than those for past project evaluations (8-10 days compared with 20-25) and have a smaller team (1-2 members compared with 3-4). Therefore, it may be difficult to collect adequate data, particularly with regard to impact.
67. Given the PPA budget and time frame, a combination of the following strategies may be considered:
 - (i) To adopt a theory-based approach (see explanation for PCRVs above), by probing critical steps in the logical chain from outputs to impacts;
 - (ii) To concentrate field visits on components or criteria in need of verification, or that are innovative or problematic;
 - (iii) To undertake case studies in a number of sites, for example, by visiting areas not adequately covered by the PCR, MTR or supervision missions;
 - (iv) Given the usual problems of M&E systems with regard to impact assessment, to concentrate field visits on interaction with the beneficiaries and their communities. Instruments for such interaction (individual interviews, focus groups, participant observations, participatory rural assessment techniques) are designed to fill information gaps highlighted in the PCRV;
 - (v) whenever possible, to interview non-beneficiaries in comparable socio-economic environments and visit sites in similar agroecological areas. This may shed light on attribution issues, even in a qualitative manner; and
 - (vi) to consider "rival explanations", that is, alternative factors that may have generated similar results, as a way of exploring attribution issues.

³¹ Practices differ among MDBs, 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 ADB 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 ADB, PPAs are undertaken at least three years after project closure).

Telephone interviews prior to the mission

68. To save time, telephone interviews may be organized with key partners such as the former project coordinator, senior officials in ministries responsible for project oversight, and with cofinancing agencies and other relevant partners. This may help focus meetings in the capital city.³²

National self-assessment processes

69. In several countries, once closed, a project's performance is reviewed by a national authority (e.g. Ministry of Finance or of Planning, National Planning Commission). This is a national process, quite separate from IFAD's production of PCRs. Prior to the PPA mission and whenever applicable, it is good practice to obtain information on such processes and, if possible, relevant documentation.
70. Problems regarding the institutionalization of certain interventions or threats to their sustainability may be characterized by difficulties in locating former project staff and in obtaining documentation or knowledge about a project closed one or two years previously. This should be verified during the course of the PPA Mission.

D. PPA process

Management and preparation

71. The PPA is managed by an IOE staff member who may work with one (or more) consultant(s).³³ In all cases, the IOE staff member is the lead evaluator³⁴ in charge of planning and designing the exercise, based on the PCR results. In particular, he/she is responsible for summarizing issues in need of follow up, making contacts with PMD and government authorities, and for preparing a mission schedule. As and when necessary, IOE calls upon the IFAD country office for assistance.
72. The PCR/PPA coordinator in IOE provides PMD with a list of forthcoming PPAs.³⁵ The PPA lead evaluators are responsible for maintaining contacts with the CPMs involved and for keeping them informed of developments.
73. All communications with governments regarding PPA missions are sent under the signature of the Director, IOE, as are draft PPA reports and other related communications.³⁶ A fax is sent by the Director, IOE, to the government announcing the PPA exercise, describing the process and proposing dates for the field mission.
74. Briefings may be held at IFAD headquarters if an international consultant is recruited. This includes meeting(s) with the CPM and other IFAD staff concerned (e.g. technical advisors). The CPM and IFAD country office (where applicable) assist IOE by identifying contacts within governments and providing all necessary inputs

³² Interviews in the capital city are normally held with the former project director and with senior staff of relevant ministries. Depending on the project context, other interviews may be held with representatives of cofunding agencies, NGOs, research organizations, civil society, private-sector organizations involved in the project and other persons knowledgeable about the project. Regarding the organization of meetings with government officials, communications will be normally sent to the permanent secretary (or equivalent) at the ministry concerned, who will assign interlocutors. IFAD country offices may provide inputs in terms of suggestions for people to be met.

³³ Depending on the nature of the project, sectoral experience, skills and seniority of the IOE staff member involved, consultants may be selected as sectoral specialists or as team leaders. In any event, the IOE staff member is expected to participate in drafting the PPA report and improving its quality.

³⁴ As stipulated in IFAD's Evaluation Policy, the lead evaluator is fully responsible for the PPA process and deliverables.

³⁵ The message announcing the undertaking of PPAs is sent by the coordinator to the relevant CPM with copy to the Divisional Director, the Director and Deputy Director, IOE, the PMD senior portfolio manager and other related staff in IOE and PMD.

³⁶ The fax is sent to the relevant senior contact in the government, such as the Permanent Secretary (or equivalent) of the relevant ministry, as advised by the CPM, and copied to the IFAD regional director, CPM, Deputy Director, IOE, PMD senior portfolio manager and other related staff.

and documentation. However, IOE is responsible for contacting ministries and other key partners to arrange meetings.

Field mission

75. A PPA field mission generally involves about 2-3 days in the capital city (one day at the start of the mission and one day at the end for a wrap-up meeting and discussion of findings) as well as about 5-7 days in the project area. During the wrap-up session, the IOE staff member debriefs national authorities and (possibly) other stakeholders. The CPM also participates in the wrap-up meeting. No aide-mémoire is prepared, but IOE makes a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the findings of the field mission.

Report-writing

76. A draft PPA report is prepared at the end of the mission (within 20 working days or as agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator in IOE), either by the IOE lead evaluator or by the consultant, depending on the PPA modality.³⁷

Quality assurance

77. PPA quality assurance entails a two-person peer review (one of whom will be the supervisor of the IOE lead evaluator), normally completed within ten working days³⁸ or as agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator of IOE. The revised PPA draft report is cleared by both reviewers.

Transmission to PMD

78. After conducting the quality assurance, the PCRV/PPA coordinator forwards the draft PPA report to the Deputy Director, IOE, for review in order to minimize inter-evaluator variability, ensure quality and promote consistency between the analysis and ratings. The draft is subsequently forwarded to PMD by electronic mail, following the same procedure as for PCRVs with ratings. The regional division provides comments on the draft report within 15 working days or as agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator. To the extent possible, IOE seeks to accommodate PMD's workload.

PMD comments and revision

79. Once PMD's comments are received, the PPA draft report is revised within five working days or as agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator, and an audit trail is prepared. The audit trail and draft PPA report, incorporating PMD's comments, are discussed and cleared by the IOE peer reviewers. The revised draft PPA report is thereafter transmitted to PMD by the PCRV/PPA coordinator, once a last quality assurance has been made.
80. If no comments are received from PMD within 15 working days, and unless an alternative date has been agreed with the PCRV/PPA coordinator, the draft report is then forwarded to the government. IOE will follow up any comments received from PMD after the agreed deadline, together with those of the government.

Transmission to the government

81. The Director, IOE, forwards the revised draft PPA report to the government, with a copy to the relevant PMD division director, CPM, Deputy Director, IOE, PMD senior portfolio manager, IOE PCRV/PPA coordinator, lead evaluator, other related staff and the ARRI team (for ratings). The government is requested to provide comments within 15 working days. If no response is received within 20 working days, the PPA is considered as final.

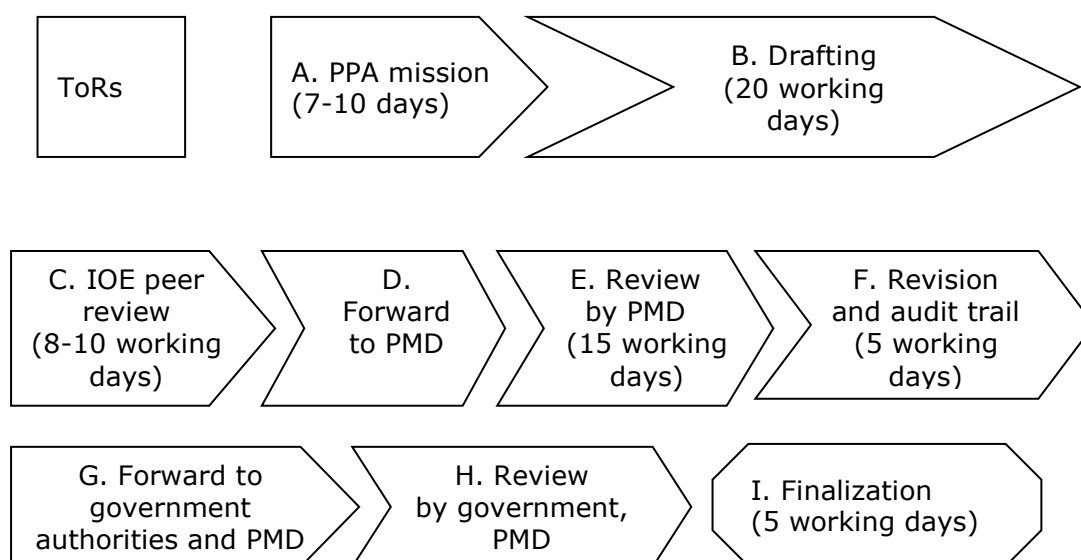
³⁷ IOE is ultimately responsible for the evaluation process and for the contents of the report. In this regard, the lead evaluator has the right to make any revisions required to the final draft report submitted by the consultant(s) in order to ensure that the presentation of analysis, conclusions and recommendations are coherent and reader-friendly.

³⁸ Reviewers may provide comments in writing or verbally, or both.

Government comments and finalization

82. Upon receipt of the government's comments, IOE finalizes the draft report and provides an audit trail within five working days or as agreed with the PCR/PPA coordinator. The audit trail and final version are reviewed and subsequently cleared by the peer reviewers. Once revised, the PPA is considered to be final and is forwarded to the government for information, together with the audit trail.
83. Ratings shown in the final PPA report are the final ratings assigned by IOE. No agreement at completion point is prepared for a PPA. However, any IOE follow-up action regarding PPA recommendations is reported in PRISMA.
84. Once finalized, the PPA is formatted and submitted to the Evaluation Communication Unit of IOE for editorial quality assurance, website publishing and dissemination (Executive Board, IFAD regional networks, etc.). The report may be used in learning events.
85. Learning is seen as an important aspect of the PPA process. In the terms of reference of a PPA, the lead evaluators are requested to indicate how they intend to factor in this important dimension. This may include a learning session at headquarters to discuss evaluation results and lessons with PMD and other stakeholders; it may also be designed in combination with other PPAs, e.g. those covering a similar theme. If appropriate, a similar "learning" meeting may be organized in the country concerned, once the PPA report is finalized. These learning activities will be designed in consultation with PMD and with the IOE Evaluation Communication Unit, and analysed on a case-by-case basis.

Figure V.2.
PPA process



Format for PCRV reports



Project Completion Report Validation

Name of project/programme

Country

Date of validation by IOE

I. Basic data

<i>Basic project data</i>			<i>Approval (US\$ m)</i>		<i>Actual (US\$ m)</i>	
Region		Total project/programme costs				
Country		IFAD loan and percentage of total				
Loan number		Borrower				
Type of project (subsector)		Cofinancier 1				
Financing type		Cofinancier 2				
Lending terms^a		Cofinancier 3				
Date of approval		Cofinancier 4				
Date of loan signature		Beneficiaries				
Date of effectiveness		Other sources:				
Loan amendments		Number of beneficiaries (if appropriate, specify if direct or indirect)				
Loan closure extensions						
Country programme managers		Loan closing date				
Date of the PCR						
Regional director(s)		Mid-term review				
PCR reviewer		IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)				
PCR quality control panel						
<i>Provide comments, if required</i>						

Quote sources of this table:

^a 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% of the variable reference interest rate and a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 5 years; (iv) loans on ordinary terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to one hundred per cent (100%) of the variable reference interest rate, and a maturity period of 15-18 years, including a grace period of three years.

II. Project outline

1. [Provide a concise account of: (i) project area; (ii) project rationale and objectives; (iii) project “target” population; (iv) project components (and per cent of total costs); and (v) significant changes/developments during project implementation. Total: 4-6 paragraphs]

III. Review of findings by criterion¹

A. Project performance

Relevance

2. [Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

Effectiveness

3. [Review original design objectives: objectives 1, 2, 3. Also consider other major achievements (if applicable) not originally contemplated in the objectives. Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

Efficiency

4. Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

B. Rural poverty impact

5. [Review impact relating to the five domains adopted by IOE (see below). Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

Household income and assets

Human and social capital and empowerment

Food security and agricultural productivity

Natural resources and the environment (including climate change issues)

Institutions and policies

C. Other performance criteria

Sustainability

6. Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

Pro-poor innovation and scaling up

7. Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE

¹ For definition of, and guidance on, the criteria, refer to the Evaluation Manual: http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/manual.pdf. Also review p. 17-20 of: <http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/ec/e/65/EC-2010-65-W-P-6.pdf>.

assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

Gender equality and women's empowerment

8. Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

Performance of partners

9. [To include IFAD and the government. Summarize the main findings of the PCR and other documents (MTR, supervision and project status reports) and provide a consolidated and independent IOE assessment. Keep this section to the point and evidence-based. Briefly explain reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

IFAD performance

Government performance

D. Overall project achievement

10. [Provide a summary based on the evidence and considerations presented above. Be sure to explain the reasons for ratings, particularly when they differ from those of PMD.]

IV. Assessment of PCR quality

11. [Provide assessments of the four dimensions below. Be sure to explain the reasons for the ratings, particularly when they differ from that of PMD.]

Scope

Quality (methods, data, participatory process)

Lessons

Candour

If overall rating for PCR quality is lower than that of PMD, briefly explain the main reasons.

V. Final remarks

Lessons learned

12. [Summarize key lessons learned from the PCR and add any salient observations from IOE, particularly regarding the "why question": what were the factors for strong or weak performance? Try to focus on two to four key points]

Issues for IOE follow-up (if any)

VI. Rating comparison

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>PMD rating^a</i>	<i>IOE rating</i>	<i>Net rating disconnect (IOE PCRV - PMD)</i>
Project performance			
Relevance			
Effectiveness			
Efficiency			
Project performance ^b			
Rural poverty impact			
Household income and assets			
Human and social capital empowerment			
Food security and agricultural productivity			
Natural resources, environment and climate change			
Institutions and policies			
Overall rural poverty impact ^c			
Other performance criteria			
Sustainability			
Innovation and scaling up			
Gender equality and women's empowerment			
Overall project achievement^d			
Performance of partners^e			
IFAD			
Government			
Average net disconnect			
Note: In the event of any discrepancy between PMD and IOE ratings, provide specific justification in the main text.			
^a Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory; n.p. = not provided; n.a. = not applicable.			
^b Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.			
^c This is not an average of ratings of individual impact domains.			
^d This is not an average of ratings of individual evaluation criteria. Calculation of the disconnect excludes project performance and overall project achievements, as they are averages of ratings.			
^e Performance of partners is not part of the overall assessment of project achievements.			
<i>Ratings of the PCR document quality</i>	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCRV rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Scope			
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)			
Lessons			
Candour			
Overall rating of PCR			

VII. List of sources used for PCR validation

IFAD ----
 UNOPS. ----
 Other

Annotated table of contents for PPA reports

<i>Table of contents</i>	<i>Examples of approaches to focus PPA analysis</i>	<i>Approximate number of pages</i>
Currency equivalent, weights and measures and abbreviations and acronyms		1-2
Map of the project area		1
Preface	1. Introduction to the evaluation's main findings (positive/negative) – one or two paragraphs; 2. Acknowledgements - one or two paragraphs.	1
Executive summary	Summarize key findings, recommendations	2
I. Background, methodology and process	Briefly outline the process from PCR validation to PPA. Indicate the area of PPA focus (and reasons), the methods and sources used (data collection tools may be shown in an annex) and limitations of sources. Include a short overview of M&E system, data, strengths and limitations (when available). Impact attribution issues may be also reviewed here.	1-1.5
II. The project		
A. The project context	Concise introduction to country and project area context. Focus on information that can help understand key project design assumptions, as well as opportunities and risks that emerged during implementation.	0.5 - 1
B. Project implementation performance	Description of key implementation items.	1
III. Review of findings by criterion		
A. Project performance		
Relevance <i>Give additional information, data, insights, arising from PPA visits and analysis. If PPA ratings differ from those of PMD, explain the reasons. If no additional findings emerge, present and confirm PCRV findings. This applies to sections C2, C3, C4, C5 and C8.</i>	The analysis may concentrate on the project's conceptual and logical framework and its validity. Review the key project design assumptions (both implicit and explicit), assess to what extent they have held up through the project life cycle. Assess soundness of the overall project concept. Take account of the status of knowledge and prevailing context (political, social, economic) at the time of design and its evolution during implementation. At the same time, assess IFAD's capacity to react and adapt (see Evaluation Manual, p. 16).	1 - 1.5
Effectiveness	Provide an assessment in accordance with the project's initial overall objectives but recognize direct achievements not initially foreseen. If objectives are achieved (or not achieved), explain why, highlighting key factors (for achievement and non-achievement).	0.5 - 1

<i>Table of contents</i>	<i>Examples of approaches to focus PPA analysis</i>	<i>Approximate number of pages</i>
Efficiency	Depending on the availability of data, the PPA may focus on technical efficiency (e.g. comparing average unit cost of building a road with a national standard), other input/output ratios (again to be compared with a "norm"), and managerial efficiency (implementation delays, cost overruns). Bear in mind that not all delays and cost overruns are unjustified and that, in some case, they may even contribute to better performance and impact. Observe any major technical or delivery inefficiencies at the field level.	0.5 – 1
B. Rural poverty impact		
Household income and assets Human and social capital and empowerment Food security and agricultural productivity Natural resources and the environment (including climate change, when relevant) Institutions and policies	While referring to major points raised in the PCR/V, this section may provide information confirming the following aspects (if such information is available or if field visits can shed light on them): (i) Can information be collected on impact size? Does it match PCR claims or project expectations? For example, did household revenues increase by 5-20% as stated in the PCR?. Ranges can be also described in quality terms (e.g. typical behaviour patterns). (ii) Insight on typical beneficiaries of project initiatives (social strata) with particular attention to categories excluded, and reasons for exclusion. (iii) Outreach, in terms of number of beneficiaries.	2-3
C. Other performance criteria		
Sustainability	Given that the PPA is conducted 1-2 years after official project closure, the evaluators may be in a good position to identify supporting factors or threats to the sustainability of benefits (e.g. political support, availability of budgets, certain essential recurrent operations or maintenance activities, technical capacity, commitment, ownership by the beneficiaries, environmental resilience).	1-1.5
Innovation and scaling up	Focus on opportunities for and risks in scaling up innovations. Discuss interest in funding innovative practices/approaches (from government, from donors).	0.5 – 1
Gender equality and women's empowerment	Identify activities devoted to gender issues, and specific indicators disaggregated by gender. List the main achievements or shortcomings.	0.5 -1
D. Performance of partners (IFAD and government)	Consider items such as responsiveness of IFAD or the cooperating institution(s) to implementation issues or problems of coordination among the project implementation unit, local and central governments and bureaucratic structures.	0.5 – 1

<i>Table of contents</i>	<i>Examples of approaches to focus PPA analysis</i>	<i>Approximate number of pages</i>
Key points	In a text box, briefly indicate key elements reviewed by the PPA thus far	
E. Overall project achievement	Brief illustration of key achievements.	1.5
V. Conclusions and recommendations		
A. Conclusions	Focus on two to four major learning topics for IFAD's future interventions; try to explain "why" certain results were achieved or not achieved. The conclusion should include a storyline (half a page) on performance of the operation evaluated.	0.5 - 1
B. Recommendations	Limit recommendations to a few important issues for future operations.	0.5 - 1
Annex 1: Rating comparison	Comparison of ratings as per PCR, PCRV and PPA, with focus on rating changes (if applicable) and motivations as per PPA. A rating table will be presented in this annex (see table 2.1)	
Annex 2: Basic project data	Insert basic data table of the PCRV.	
Annex 3: Methodology		
Annex 4: Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE		
Annex 5: List of key persons met		
Annex 6: Main bibliography		
Annex 7: Other annexes (additional data, tables/graphs - as required)		
The main text should not exceed 15-20 pages.		

Annex 2 - Table 1

PPA ratings

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>PMD rating^a</i>	<i>IOE rating</i>	<i>Disconnect PPA-PMD</i>
Project performance			
Relevance			
Effectiveness			
Efficiency			
Project performance ^b			
Rural poverty impact			
Household income and assets			
Human and social capital and empowerment			
Food security and agricultural productivity			
Natural resources, environment and climate change			
Institutions and policies			
Overall rural poverty impact ^c			
Other performance criteria			
Sustainability			
Innovation and scaling up			
Gender equality and women's empowerment			
Overall project achievement^d			
Performance of partners^e			
IFAD			
Government			
Average net disconnect			

Note: In the event of any discrepancy between PMD and IOE ratings, provide specific justification in the main text.

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

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

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

^d This is not an average of ratings of individual evaluation criteria. Calculation of the disconnect excludes project performance and overall project achievements, as they are averages of ratings.

^e Performance of partners is not part of the overall assessment of project achievements.

Annex 2 - Table 2
Ratings of PCR document

<i>Ratings of the PCR document quality</i>	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCRV rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Scope			
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)			
Lessons			
Candour			
Overall rating of PCR document			

Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Criteria	Definition ^a
Project performance	
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies. It also entails an assessment of project design in terms of achieving its objectives.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking account of their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
Rural poverty impact^b	Impact is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household income and assets 	Household income provides a means of assessing the flow of economic benefits accruing to an individual or group; assets relate to a stock of accumulated items of economic value.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human and social capital and empowerment 	Human and social capital and empowerment include an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the empowerment of individuals, the quality of grass-roots organizations and institutions, and the individual and collective capacity of the poor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security and agricultural productivity 	Changes in food security relate to the availability of and access to food and stability of access; changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resources and 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 to mitigating the negative impact of climate change or promoting adaptation measures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions and policies 	The criterion relating to institutions and policies is designed to assess changes in the quality and performance of institutions, policies and regulatory framework that influence the lives of the poor.
Other performance criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability 	The likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of pro-poor 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) scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality and women's empowerment 	Relevance of design in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. Level of project resources dedicated to these dimensions. Changes promoted by the project at the household level (workload, nutrition status, women's influence on decision-making). Adoption of gender-disaggregated indicators for monitoring, analysis of data and use of findings to correct project implementation and to disseminate lessons learned.
Overall project achievement	This provides an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the analysis made under the various evaluation criteria cited above.
Performance of partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD Government 	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation. The performance of each partner will be assessed on an individual basis with a view to their expected role and responsibility in the project life cycle.

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

^b It is important to underline that the Evaluation Manual also deals with "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, no rating (or the mention "not applicable") is assigned.

Information gathered from PCRVs and PPAs

(For information only)

1. IOE extracts information from PCRVs and PPAs with regard to cohorts of closed IFAD projects; such information can be processed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Some data, such as average ratings and percentages of satisfactory ratings, were already available from traditional project evaluations and consolidated into the ARRI report presented to the Executive Board. In past years, explanations for rating trends were given in the ARRI. PCRVs and PPAs make it possible for the ARRI analysis to be extended to the entire cohort of projects during the previous year (table 1, lines 1 and 2).
2. PCRVs will add new features, such as comparisons between PMD and IOE ratings. In the past, average ratings from project evaluations and CPEs were benchmarked against average PMD ratings from the cohort of projects closed during previous years. However, the ratings of projects evaluated by IOE were not the same as those rated by PMD. With PCRVs and PPAs, the ratings will be fully comparable and IOE will be in a position to summarize the reasons for differences in ratings and to check for statistical significance (table 1, lines 3-6).
3. IOE will be able to report on ratings for PCR quality and on main quality issues encountered during validation (table 1, lines 7-8). It will also be possible to analyse, in a qualitative manner, cross-cutting issues, explanatory factors for performance and any untreated design issues (table 1, lines 9-11).
4. Finally, through PPAs, IOE will be able to report on further discrepancies between PPA and PCR ratings and on the reasons for such discrepancies (table 1, lines 12-15).

Annex 4 - Table 1
Information available from PCRVs and PPAs

	Type of Processing		Disaggregation		Cohort Analysis
	Quant.	Qualit.	By Region	By Country classification ^a	
PREVIOUS FEATURES THAT WILL CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE					
1. Average ratings by criterion PCR/PCR/V This includes project performance, poverty impact, other performance and overall ratings	X		X	X	X
2. Storyline: explanatory factors for ratings		X			
ADDITIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE THROUGH PCRVs					
3. Differences between PCR and PCR/V ratings (percentage, average)	X		X	X	X
4. Statistical significance of differences between PMD and IOE ratings	X		X	X	X
5. Differences in ratings disaggregated by criteria	X		X	X	X
6. Reasons for discrepancy in ratings		X			
7. IOE rating of PCR analysis quality	X		X	X	X
8. Explanation for rating of PCR analysis		X			
9. Cross-cutting issues		X			
10. Explanatory factors for performance		X			
11. Non-resolved project design issues	X	X	X	X	X
ADDITIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE THROUGH PPAs					
12. Percentages/average discrepancy between PCR, PCR/V and PPA ratings	X	X	X	X	X
13. Statistical significance of differences	X	X	X	X	X
14. Key lessons learned		X			
15. Recommendations		X			

^a E.g. Low/middle-income.

Notes:

1. Disaggregation by region, country type and cohort analysis may yield statistically significant results after three or more years for PCRs and longer for PPAs.
2. Qualitative information might, in fact, be further discussed at the regional level, by country type or diachronically, but such information will not be automatically available and will require specific synthesis work.

Fax announcing a PPA to governments

The Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) of IFAD plans to undertake a project performance assessment (PPA) of the IFAD-supported [name of project/programme] in [name of country] in 2012. The assessment is expected to be completed by [month].

The main objectives of the PPA will be to: (i) assess the results of the [project/programme]; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of both ongoing and future operations in [name of country].

Subject to your kind agreement, it is proposed that the PPA mission should start with a field visit in [month] 2012. The mission will be composed of Mr/Ms [name], lead evaluator for this task, and Mr /Mrs [name], consultant in [area of expertise]

The mission will start work in [capital city] by holding meetings with relevant government staff and other partners in the country. Thereafter, the mission will travel to the [project/programme] areas to meet with local authorities, [project/programme] staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Again, subject to your agreement, we propose that a wrap-up meeting should be held on [date] with government officials and other partners to discuss the preliminary findings of the PPA and conclude the mission.

I am pleased to attach for your consideration the draft terms of reference of the PPA, outlining the evaluation objectives, methodology and time frame involved, and should be grateful if you would kindly indicate your agreement to the above proposal and dates. IOE has shared the attached terms of reference with IFAD Management and their feedback has been reflected in the draft terms of reference.

Upon the conclusion of the mission, IOE will prepare a draft report and share it with IFAD's [regional] Division and thereafter with the Government of [name of country] for review and feedback. The report will be revised in the light of comments received, and subsequently finalized by IOE.

In the meantime, your office may wish to contact either me or Mr/Mrs [name], lead evaluator, for any further information or clarification you require in this regard. Mr/Mrs [name]'s contact details are as follows, e-mail: [name]@ifad.org; telephone+39 06 5459, or fax:+39 06 5459 3....

Accept, Mr Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Proposed text of section I of the PPA report on background, methodology and process

1. A project performance assessment (PPA) is a project-level evaluation aimed at:
(i) providing an independent assessment of the overall results of projects; and
(ii) distilling lessons learned through the generation of findings and recommendations, identifying key explanatory factors of project performance and poverty reduction results, for the purpose of learning and self-evaluation. A PPA is the next step after a project completion report validation (PCRVR), with the aim of providing additional evidence on project achievements and validating the conclusions of the project completion report (PCR). Both PCRVRs and PPAs are conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE). The PCRVR consists of a desk review of the PCR and other available reports and documents. A PPA includes country visits in order to complement the PCRVR findings and to fill any knowledge and information gaps identified in the PCRVR.
2. As with the PCRVR, the PPA applies the evaluation criteria outlined in the Evaluation Manual. Given the time and resources available, the PPA is generally not expected to undertake quantitative surveys but rather to add analysis to the PCR, based on interactions with country stakeholders, direct observations in the field and information drawn from interviews with project beneficiaries and other key informants. As such, it is of necessity on the data available from the project monitoring and evaluation system, including the PCR.

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