

## Project Completion Report Validation

### Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project

#### The Republic of The Gambia

Date of validation by IOE: September 2018

## I. Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m) **		Actual (US\$ m) ***	
Region	West and Central Africa	Total project costs	17.530		18.381	
Country	The Republic of The Gambia	IFAD loan and percentage of total	7.085	40.4%	7.472	40.7%
Loan number	633-GM	Borrower (Gambian Government)	1.713	9.8%	1.799	9.8%
Type of project (subsector)	Natural Resource Management	Cofinancier 1 (AfDB)	7.081	40.4%	7.585	41.3%
Financing type	Loan	-----				
Lending terms *	Highly concessional	-----				
Date of approval	21/04/2004	-----				
Date of loan signature	15/07/2004	Beneficiaries	1.652	9.4%	1.526	8.3%
Date of effectiveness	16/05/2006	Other sources (N/A)				
Loan amendments	N/A	Number of beneficiaries	Direct: 164 310 Indirect: <i>not provided</i>		Direct: 105 405 Indirect: 66 942	
Loan closure extensions	N/A	Project completion date	30/06/2014		30/06/2014	
Country programme managers	Leopold Sarr Moses Abukari	Loan closing date	31/12/2014		31/12/2014	
Regional director(s)	Mohamed Beavogui Ides de Willebois	Mid-term review			30/03/2010	
Project completion report reviewer	Nuri Niyazi	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)			105.5% ***	
Project completion report quality control panel	Fumiko Nakai Ernst Schaltegger	Date of the project completion report			08/12/2017	

Sources: Project Completion Report (2017), Project Status Report (2011)

\* Highly concessional loan 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.

\*\* The figures for the "approved" project budget presented here are consistent with most core project documentation (Appraisal Report (2003), Mid-term Review Report (2010), Supervision Report (April 2014)), as well as with the Country Programme Evaluation (2016); the Project Completion Report (2017) indicates figures that are slightly higher (e.g. IFAD loan of US\$7.151 million against a total "approved" project budget of US\$17.555 million) – the differences are, however, marginal and might be attributed to differing currency exchange rates used; the Supervision Report of January 2014 indicates additional co-financing in the amount of US\$4.4 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), raising the total project budget to US\$21.924 million – it was determined, however, that this constituted separate funding under a project entitled "Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP)" that was intended to complement interventions related to sustainable natural resources and environmental management.

\*\*\* The higher actual amounts and loan disbursement rates have resulted from favourable currency exchange rates.

## II. Project outline

1. **Introduction.** A loan for the Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP) in The Gambia was approved by the IFAD Executive Board on 21 April 2004 and became effective on 16 May 2006, with an expected duration of eight years. The project was completed on 30 June 2014 and the loan was closed on 31 December 2014 as scheduled. Notwithstanding that the draft PCR was prepared in October 2014, significant delays occurred until its finalization in December 2017, which is understood to have resulted from the deteriorating political climate in the country. It should also be noted that an IFAD Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) was conducted in 2016, which rated PIWAMP performance as part of the country portfolio. CPE ratings are provided and relevant findings referred to in the corresponding sections in this Project Completion Report Validation (PCRV).
2. **Project area.** PIWAMP was designed to build on the experience of the previous Lowlands Agricultural Development Programme (LADEP), which ran from 1995 to 2003 and had been co-financed by IFAD and the African Development Bank (AfDB). PIWAMP could thus be viewed as “phase two” of LADEP, covering the second 8-year time slice of a 20-year programme designed under LADEP for sustainable community-led development of lowland rice production in The Gambia. PIWAMP’s geographic reach was designed to cover the entire country, similar to LADEP (with regard to lowlands), albeit expanding project interventions to cover upland areas as well.
3. At the time of project appraisal (2003), rural poverty accounted for 71 per cent of total poverty nationwide, with some 37 per cent of households and 54 per cent of the population in rural areas living below the food poverty line.<sup>1</sup> Most rural poor continued to depend on agriculture and other rural activities for subsistence and income: for about 91 per cent of the ultra-poor and 72 per cent of the poor, agriculture constituted their main source of livelihood. In its rural development strategy, the Gambian government attributed the causes of rural poverty to: (i) low and further degrading soil fertility; (ii) low agricultural and labour productivity; (iii) poor access to productive resources (land, water, capital and labour); (iv) poor functioning input and output markets; (v) low world market prices for agricultural products, particularly for groundnuts and rice; (vi) poorly-functioning rural institutions and lack of basic services; and (vii) crop yields fluctuating up to 40 per cent depending on weather conditions. Poor farmers were thus caught in the vicious cycle of poverty-related low income, risk aversion, low input use, low productivity and low income. Food insecurity was also endemic. During the decades preceding PIWAMP, the natural resource base of The Gambia had deteriorated considerably, partly as the result of declining rainfall and poor farming practices with low inputs use, causing erosion and soil degradation particularly in the uplands. In an effort to address these compounding challenges, the government prioritised an extension of the interventions of LADEP’s to upland areas, in response to the key recommendation emerging from the latter project to address issues at the level of the entire watershed.
4. **Project goal, objectives and components.** The goal of PIWAMP, as set out in the Appraisal Report, was to raise agricultural productivity of poor rural communities by empowering them to undertake and maintain integrated watershed management activities that would enhance their livelihoods and protect their natural resources. The specific objectives (referred to as “project purpose” in the Appraisal Report narrative) were to (i) strengthen the capacity of rural communities and service providers to plan, implement, manage and maintain watershed management in a sustainable manner; and (ii) establish a watershed

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<sup>1</sup> The food poverty line is determined as the level of income just sufficient to buy a minimum food basket, which yields 2,700 calories per day per adult equivalent.

development fund and effectively disburse such funds in priority watersheds, so as to enable communities to implement their watershed development activities.

5. The project had three main components: **Component 1 – Institutional strengthening/capacity building (US\$4.043 million, 23.1 per cent of total project disbursement)**: the purpose of this component was to contribute to the development of an enabling institutional, financing, and policy framework and process for community-based watershed development activities, which were to be institutionalized and extended to other communities and village development committees (VDCs) using the capacity and processes developed through the project. An emphasis was to be placed on developing the capacity of communities and VDCs to secure additional funding from the government, other local agencies (such as non-governmental organizations) and external sources to implement further community development activities. **Component 2 – Watershed development fund (US\$11.641 million, 66.4 per cent of total project disbursement)**: the purpose of this component was to support initiatives identified and developed by communities, in particular women, youth and other vulnerable groups, through the setting up of a watershed development fund (WDF). Such initiatives were to include: lowland water management schemes, swamp access works, upland land management and conservation farming, business opportunities studies, and agricultural development.<sup>2</sup> **Component 3 – Project coordination and monitoring and evaluation (US\$1.846 million, 10.5 per cent of total project disbursement)**: the purpose of this component was to establish an independent PMU attached to the project coordination unit located in the Department of State for Agriculture. Additional staffing of the PMU was to address management and implementation gaps that had been identified in the roll-out of LADEP, namely coordination at field-level, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and community mobilization.
6. It should be noted that the review of the project goals, objectives and components has brought to light several issues in the conception of the project logical framework. These are discussed below in the section entitled “Intervention Logic”.
7. **Target group.** The priority target group of the project were poor smallholders dependent on traditional lowland rice cultivation and upland crops as their main source of livelihood. For lowland development the primary target group were women, as the principal producers in the rice ecologies, whereas for upland conservation farming it was men, in view of their predominance as upland cultivators of cereals and groundnuts. Targeting was achieved by selecting communities on the basis of their demand for the support offered by the project and their willingness to contribute labour for implementing the specified intervention, thus ensuring self-targeting by eligible communities.
8. **Financing.** The total project disbursement was US\$18.381 million, accounting for 105.5 per cent of the total project budget.<sup>3</sup> IFAD loan disbursement was US\$7.472 million, corresponding to 40.7 per cent of the actual total cost. Financier contributions are shown in Table 1 and planned (approved) *versus* actual (disbursed) costs per component with disbursement rates are presented in Table 2. It should be noted that Component 3 (Project coordination and M&E) was apportioned 31.7 per cent of the total disbursement, constituting a considerable increase from the planned 10.5 per cent of total budget.

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<sup>2</sup> Agricultural development activities that were to be supported by the WDF comprised: participatory learning action research, extension follow-up, adaptive research and development, farmer-based seed multiplication, livestock management, community forestry, and village road improvements.

<sup>3</sup> This disbursement rate exceeding 100 per cent was achieved owing to favourable currency exchange rates at the time of disbursement.

Table 1  
**Project costs (in US\$ million)**

	<i>Approval (1)</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>Actual (2)</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>Disbursement rate (2/1)</i>
IFAD loan	7.085	40.4%	7.472	40.7%	105.5%
AfDB	7.081	40.4%	7.585	41.3%	105.0%
Government	1.713	9.8%	1.799	9.8%	107.1%
Beneficiaries	1.652	9.4%	1.526	8.3%	92.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.530</b>		<b>18.381</b>		<b>105.5%</b>

Sources: PCR, Appraisal Report

\*The higher actual amounts and disbursement rates have resulted from favourable currency exchange rates.

Table 2  
**Component costs (in US\$ million)**

	<i>Approval (1)</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>Actual (2)</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>Disbursement rate (2/1)</i>
Component 1	4.043	23.1%	3.665	19.9%	90.7%
Component 2	11.641	66.4%	8.902	48.4%	76.5%
Component 3	1.846	10.5%	5.828	31.7%	315.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.530</b>		<b>18.395*</b>		<b>104.9%*</b>

Sources: Source: PCR, Appraisal Report

\*The PCR indicates actual project costs by component for which the project total (and hence the total disbursement rate) is slightly inconsistent with the total (and disbursement rate) indicated for project costs by funding source (see Table 1 for reference). An explanation of this inconsistency is not provided in the PCR.

9. **Project implementation.** The political context in The Gambia during the implementation of PIWAMP resulted in frequent staffing changes and thus severely impacted project delivery, as outlined in the CPE report (see below section "Performance of partners / Government" for more detailed information). This issue must be borne in mind when assessing project performance in the subsequent sections.
10. The original logical framework appeared updated in the MTR report, the supervision reports, and the PCR; however, no mention or discussion of the changes were made in the narratives of these reports. The changes made are discussed in detail in the following section.
11. Initially, AfDB supervised the loan as a cooperating institution, but in 2009 IFAD took up the role of direct supervision and fielded a number of supervision and implementation support missions.
12. **Intervention logic.** Several issues were noted in reviewing PIWAMP's intervention logic, which rendered a coherent and clear description of the latter difficult:
  - a) The initial logical framework in the Appraisal Report shows a certain degree of conceptual weakness in defining the goal and objective(s) of PIWAMP, which was seemingly recognized and partially addressed in supervision missions and the MTR, resulting in grave inconsistencies within and between the different project documents with regard to their logical frameworks and impact pathways (see Annex IV for further details);

- b) Certain weaknesses were noted in the conceptualization of the project's Component 2, "Watershed development fund", in that its title and purpose are considered not to have been adequate and logical (see Annex IV for further details).
- 13. The updated logical framework for PIWAMP, as appended to the MTR report and the PCR, made the following assumptions: farming systems that would meet community objectives could be developed; uncontrolled grazing would not negate project benefits; water flows outside project villages would not overwhelm project works; community leadership would be flexible and open to new ideas; youth would remain in rural areas and engage in agricultural activities; the government's decentralization policy would remain in place; and that service providers would be adequately sourced by the government.
- 14. **Delivery of outputs.** A detailed table summarising PIWAMP's output delivery by component is presented in Annex III. It should be noted that numerical output targets appear to have been formulated at design mainly for infrastructure development under Component 2 (Watershed development fund), as well as the formation of farmer organizations in Component 1 (Institutional strengthening/capacity building). It should be noted that out of the 34 outputs and indicators listed in the PCR, only eight were specifically mentioned in the Appraisal Report.
- 15. The outputs enumerated in the PCR were achieved to completion rates ranging from 21.3 to 188.0 per cent of appraisal target. For three outputs, a delivery measure could not be computed, as appraisal targets were not indicated either in the PCR or the Appraisal Report. The principal project outputs were indicated to be the water and soil management infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

### III. Review of findings

#### A. Core criteria

##### Relevance

- 16. **Relevance of objectives.** The goal and objectives of PIWAMP were aligned with the Government of The Gambia's Agricultural and Natural Resources Management Sector Policy, in which communities play a central role in managing their natural resources. The project purposes also complemented decentralization efforts of the government, as well as its priority to reduce poverty and ensure food and nutrition security for urban and rural populations. PIWAMP's objectives were also in line with IFAD's 2003-2012 Country Strategy and Opportunities Paper, with specific reference to pro-poor initiatives. Further, the project rationale addressed Objectives 2 and 3 of IFAD's Strategic Framework for Western and Central Africa, as it was to enhance beneficiary participation, build on indigenous knowledge, raise agricultural and natural resource productivity, and invest in women.
- 17. **Adequacy of project design.** While the activities under Components 1 and 2 (Institutional strengthening/capacity building, and Watershed development fund, respectively) were generally appropriate for achieving agricultural productivity gains and watershed conservation, the specific type of water management infrastructure conceived had strong limitations that would impact their durability (see below section "Effectiveness"). Further, insufficient consideration was given to ensuring provisions for continued servicing and maintenance of the infrastructure once built, including requisite financing mechanisms and adequate organizational management capacity of farmer associations. The project design also underestimated land tenure complications and overestimated the communities'

<sup>4</sup> Infrastructure outputs include: 81,486 metres of dikes (106 per cent of target) were built, 3,335 meters of spillways (138 per cent of target), 1,984 metres of footbridges (66 per cent of target), 22.7 kilometers of causeways (22.7 per cent of target), 157 kilometers of contour bonds (22 per cent of target), 692 gully plugs (82 per cent of target) and 191 kilometers of inter-village roads (95.5 per cent of target).

buy-in and sense of ownership of watershed development activities, as well as labour availability, particularly in the upland. The below section titled "Sustainability of benefits" discusses these aspects further.

18. With regard to institutional arrangements, the project design did not consider sufficient government involvement in the infrastructure interventions (see below section "Sustainability of benefits"). Further, the financial and management capacities of service providers, local authorities, and farmer organizations were overestimated at design stage.
19. Rather than targeting specifically for poverty (such as structured geographical targeting based on poverty data or poverty-related mapping), targeting followed a bottom-up approach (see above section "Target groups"). While the PCR states that poorer communities were effectively self-selected by way of the requirement of providing free labour<sup>5</sup>, the CPE assessed that beneficiaries were not all from the poorest villages due to the lack of a specific targeting strategy.
20. **Project adjustments during implementation.** A recommendation had been made by the MTR that the project should downsize certain infrastructure targets<sup>6</sup> in view of the lack of demand for causeways and social and cultural difficulties of constructing a large number of bunds and guidelines on a given piece of farmland. The MTR also recommended that, instead, a complementary activity of intensifying sensitization and awareness campaigns be considered. These recommendations were not taken up by the project. It should be noted that the reason provided in the PCR for the low demand specifically for causeways were similar infrastructure interventions previously undertaken by the government and non-governmental organizations.
21. *This PCR rates the relevance of PIWAMP as moderately satisfactory (rating 4), in agreement with the rating provided in the CPE. This contrasts with the satisfactory (5) rating provided in the PCR by the Programme Management Department (PMD).*

### **Effectiveness**

22. The total number of beneficiaries reported in the PCR to have been reached during PIWAMP implementation was 172,347, among whom 105,405 were direct and 66,942 indirect beneficiaries. A comparison with corresponding appraisal targets proved to be challenging in view of the inconsistencies in the targets that were indicated in the various project documents.<sup>7</sup>
23. **Quantitative and qualitative attainment of project objectives.** As assessed by the CPE, overall project delivery against stated output targets was arguably wanting. In part, this was owing to the external, political factors affecting continuity of project management (see above section "Project implementation"). Further, the re-allocation of funds for project management (Component 3) meant a budget reduction for the capacity building and watershed development components (see above section "Financing" and below section "Efficiency"). The CPE and PCR

<sup>5</sup> Experience in implementing LADEP had shown that farmer's labour meant self-targeting by eligible communities, in that willingness to undertake hard manual labour was found to be inversely related to wealth. Thus, villages perceiving an urgent need for rice land rehabilitation were more responsive than those with income sources alternative to rice production. In consequence, the smaller and more remote villages applied for assistance from LADEP more readily than the larger settlements along the main roads.

<sup>6</sup> The MTR recommended that the targets for causeways be reduced from 100 to 30 kilometres, for contour guidelines from 1,530 to 100 kilometres, and for contour bunds from 720 to 250 kilometres. Note: the output target "contour guidelines" was not listed/reported against in the PCR.

<sup>7</sup> The inconsistencies in appraisal targets indicated in the various project documents were found to be the following: (i) the Appraisal Report makes no reference to beneficiary numbers; (ii) the President's Report expresses the target in terms of the number of households (12,000), rather than individual beneficiaries; (iii) the only appraisal target mentioned in the PCR was that of 164,310 direct beneficiaries, although it is not clear where this figure was obtained from. The CPE assessed the project's outreach performance in terms of the estimated number of households reached (namely 18,000) vis-à-vis the target of 12,000 households, which would indicate an excellent achievement on the part of PIWAMP. The PCR, on the other hand, compared the number of direct beneficiaries reached (105,405) with its stated appraisal target of 164,310, which would equate to a success rate of 64 per cent.

both determined that low achievements for infrastructure interventions under Component 2 occurred particularly for upland interventions (see below section “Adequacy of project design” for the causes of this underperformance). With respect to the key output of registered farmer organizations under Component 1 (see Annex III), a gaping discrepancy should be noted in the derived output delivery rates between the PCR narrative (210 organizations, or 165.4 per cent of the target) and the output delivery table appended to the PCR (86 organizations, or 67 per cent of the target).

24. With regard to the quality of outputs, PIWAMP mainly used community-driven water infrastructure designs realized by manual labour. This often resulted in constructions that were insufficient and lacked quality controls, thus compromising optimal functioning and durability, particularly in lowland areas. During field visits, the CPE found many of the water management structures to be incomplete, broken or needing repair.<sup>8</sup> Further, the training imparted to farmer organizations was insufficient to engender the anticipated outcome of the latter’s capacity for effective watershed management (see below sections “Sustainability of benefits” and “Rural poverty impacts”). Lastly, the sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns appeared insufficiently effective specifically among lowland communities, and their intensification following the MTR should have been considered (see below section “Project adjustments during implementation”).
25. As far as an assessment of the extent to which the project outputs translated into the desired outcomes is concerned, the lack of clarity of the intervention logic and logical framework must be borne in mind (see above section “Intervention logic” and Annex IV). For the purposes of this PCR, the amended objectives of the revised logical framework were deemed as the most suitable: “to increase land productivity and reduce soil erosion on a sustainable basis”. In this light, upland infrastructure developed by PIWAMP was found to contribute to improved water management (upland and lowland) and soil conservation (upland), and to expanding land tracts suitable for rice production (lowland), as described in more detail in the below section entitled “Environment and natural resource management”. Causeways and bridges contributed to farmers’ (in particular women’s) access to lowland cultivation areas under tidal irrigation (see below section “Gender equality and women’s empowerment”). Notwithstanding, many of these structures were found to be of limited effectiveness due to the aforementioned quality and completion issues, as well as insufficient capacity building (see below sections “Rural poverty impact” and “Sustainability of benefits”). In light of these assessments, PIWAMP can be viewed to have fulfilled its objectives only partially.
26. **Changes in the project context.** The volatile political situation during the implementation of PIWAMP severely disrupted the continuity of project delivery and impacted its effectiveness, notably owing to the high turn-over of senior project staffing (see above section “Project implementation”).
27. **Project design and implementation factors.** In addition to the project design issues mentioned in the above section entitled “Adequacy of project design” (i.e., infrastructure quality, maintenance provisions, ownership and buy-in, labour availability, and local capacities), the CPE also noted the limitations of the field-level management approach in terms of upland and low-land integration. That is to say, the dichotomy introduced within PIWAMP by field coordination activities and responsibilities divided between upland and lowland coordinators inhibited the coherent implementation of the watershed approach, which requires integration in the planning, execution and administration of activities.

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<sup>8</sup> A specialist assessment of 73 infrastructures in 64 communities determined 36 per cent of the infrastructure to be in good order, while 27 per cent was found in poor condition; 37 per cent of the infrastructure was still used by the communities at the time of the assessment, but was in need of repair or maintenance or facing problems.

28. *This PCR rates the effectiveness of PIWAMP as moderately satisfactory (rating 4), in agreement with the PMD and CPE ratings, respectively.*

### **Efficiency**

29. **Total project management costs.** Total project management costs proved to be much higher than budgeted, with actual disbursements for Component 3 (Project management and M&E) reaching a staggering 315.7 per cent of the budgeted amount (see above section "Financing"). The CPE found the high turnover of project staff to be a key factor for the dramatic increase in actual operating costs versus budgeted ones (see above section "Project implementation"). Other causes were explained to be the required intensive field presence of staff, which had been considerably underestimated at design stage, as well as the high cost of external service providers in response to a lack of availability of skilled project staff; this had also not been anticipated in the project planning.
30. As indicated in the PCR, supervision missions did not report the high expenditure rate for project management (in part because of unavailability of financial data) and no actions were attempted to reduce the operating costs. The PCR also noted that the PMU attributed a large portion of the management expenditure to the high operating cost of machinery<sup>9</sup>, in addition to the above-mentioned factors. It should be noted that the CPE states that discussions with PIWAMP management staff did not serve to corroborate the evidence shown by project data, in relation to the high management costs.
31. The CPE compared operating costs across five IFAD-funded projects in The Gambia and found that the budgeted management costs in PIWAMP (10.5 per cent of total cost) were at the lower end of the range (between 8.3 and 38.7 per cent across the project portfolio). At completion, actual operational costs versus total project costs varied from 25.0 to 52.3 per cent, with PIWAMP disbursing 31.7 per cent for management (see above section "Financing"). PIWAMP certainly stood out in terms of its exceedingly high percentage of actual vis-à-vis projected management cost (315.5 per cent of the budgeted amount) in comparison with the other projects in the country portfolio (where these percentages ranged from 76.9 to 135.1).
32. **Economic rate of return.** The economic rate of return (ERR) at completion was calculated in the PCR to be 21 per cent, at prevailing market prices and a discount rate of 12 per cent. This brings the ERR to two per cent above the appraisal target of 19 per cent, with an actual-appraisal ratio of 1.11. The PCR interprets that, therefore, the benefits from project interventions more than sufficiently compensated for the investment costs of the project. However, this PCR considers that the aforementioned high management costs imply an effective reduction in the project investment and, consequently, the ERR. The PCR further concluded that the crop enterprises supported by the project were economically viable and continuously attractive to the target beneficiaries who derived their livelihoods from the crop sales.
33. **Time lapse between approval and effectiveness.** In the CPE comparison across the five IFAD-funded projects in The Gambia, PIWAMP logged the longest time lapse between the project's approval and effectiveness dates, at 25 months or 20.5 per cent of total project duration. The average gap for all five projects stood at 11 months between approval and effectiveness, constituting an average of 12.5 per cent of the respective total project duration.
34. *This PCR rates the efficiency of PIWAMP as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3), in agreement with the PMD and CPE ratings, respectively.*

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<sup>9</sup> It is not clear what type of machinery is referred to in this context.



## Rural poverty impact

35. Although PIWAMP attempted to collect monitoring data regularly, these did not, by and large, include consistent outcome or impact data, as noted in the CPE. Impact was analysed to a minor extent in the supervision missions and most of the findings were anecdotal. The CPE assessed that the strongest and longest-lasting project impact was gained mostly in upland areas, in view of the quality issues with infrastructure in lowland areas (see above section "Effectiveness").
36. **Food security and agricultural productivity.** The PCR based the evidence of PIWAMP's productivity impacts on the National Agricultural Sample Survey reports. It thus states that the cropped area (presumably in the project's target areas) expanded from a total of 4,547 hectares (ha) in 2006 to 49,751 ha by 2013 against a target of 17,143 ha, with the cultivated area for rice increasing from 471 to 21,942 ha in that same time period. By the same token, food crops production reportedly increased from 4,504 metric tons (Mt) in 2006 to 50,481 Mt in 2013, with rice rising from 565 to 23,440 Mt, indicating a 41-fold increase. As assessed by the CPE, however, these stated impacts could not be attributed solely to project activities, since the methodology reportedly did not allow separation from general trends in increased acreage and impact of weather variations. While expanded areas of cultivation and improved production areas were confirmed during field visits by the CPE, the reported increase in upland rice yield of over fivefold from 2.1 Mt per hectare at appraisal was not. These findings by the CPE thus bring into question whether a national agricultural census constitutes a suitable source of project impact data in the face of methodological constraints. This PCR notes that the PCR did not discuss the presented results in terms of the limitations that inevitably exist with such a data extraction from a national survey, nor did it refer to the CPE's findings in relation to productivity impacts.
37. With regard to food security impacts, the PCR selectively drew on a dedicated impact evaluation survey conducted after project completion (Jammeh et al., 2014), reporting that PIWAMP had created food self-sufficiency (on the basis of three meals per day) for at least 10 months of the year for the majority of beneficiary households. However, this PCR notes that the above statement is an erroneous conclusion drawn in the impact study and upheld in the PCR, in that food security for 10 months or more was reported by similar percentages of survey respondents in the intervention and "control"<sup>10</sup> communities (85.2 and 87.7 per cent, respectively). Therefore, an impact by PIWAMP on food security cannot be deduced from these data, let alone an attribution of the food self-sufficiency levels to PIWAMP interventions.
38. In addition to the above impact claim, the PCR stated that the beneficiary households' food security levels had "significantly increased from an appraisal target<sup>11</sup> of two months to more than seven months", but no reference is made as to the source of these data. Field observations made by the CPE found self-sufficiency to be often described as roughly two months a year, which compares with appraisal levels.
39. **Household incomes and assets.** Economic impact data (including on household incomes and assets) provided in the PCR in support of PIWAMP's achievements towards the goal of poverty reduction were derived from two impact studies<sup>12</sup>, conducted in selected target regions. Firstly, according to an impact study targeting women farmers, 64.5 per cent of beneficiaries reported increased income, with the main income contributor being the sale of crops in 85.9 per cent

<sup>10</sup> "Control" communities were selected based on the following criteria: (i) location in the same district as project target communities; (ii) absence of spill-over of project benefits; (iii) absence of similar development interventions by other agencies.

<sup>11</sup> This PRCV assesses that the term "appraisal *target*" was a typing error in the PCR and should read "appraisal *levels*".

<sup>12</sup> Information on the design or methodology of these impact studies was not available.

of all cases. As stated in the PCR, this can be an indication that PIWAMP indeed had an impact on household incomes, at least to a certain extent. Secondly, a "mini impact assessment" determined an estimated average profit margin percentage of 43.8 per cent for rice cultivation among beneficiaries. However, this PCRV considers that an interpretation of this figure is difficult in the absence of an indication of appraisal levels or a counterfactual.

40. The CPE notably did not assess or discuss any economic impacts for PIWAMP, which can be understood to have resulted from the limited availability of solid impact evidence.
41. **Human and social capital and empowerment.** Capacity-building provided by PIWAMP to farmer organizations was not sufficient to ensure sustained monitoring and maintenance of the water management structures that were constructed under the project (see below section "Sustainability of benefits"). The CPE assessed that considerable capacity development and further support would have been required to enable these organizations to become functional and self-sufficient. Village farmers associations were found most successful in places where they had been operational for some time and had been established by the farmers themselves, since the members had common business interests to defend and some even work as mutual lending organizations.
42. It should be noted that project impacts on human and social capital and empowerment were not indicated or discussed in the relevant section on impact in the PCR in any way, notwithstanding that an entire project component was dedicated to it.
43. **Institutions and policies.** The PCR states that a number of government agencies within MOA—Communication Extension Education Services, Soil and Water Management Services (SWMS), and the Department of Livestock Services—were strengthened by PIWAMP; this occurred by way of provision of transport for field work, upgrading communication equipment and systems, as well as technical training. These project inputs were seen to have strengthened the agencies' capacity for outreach activities to communities. However, the PCR did not describe tangible measures of impact of this heightened capacity in terms of the agencies' delivery of services to poor communities. The exception in this regard was the development by SWMS of 52 maps together with the communities, which enhanced staff capacity not only in cartography but also in participatory rural appraisal and in identifying and prioritizing community needs. Further, it should be noted that the outputs underpinning the capacity building outcomes described above were not indicated in the relevant sections in the PCR describing or listing output delivery.
44. *This PCRV rates the overall rural poverty impact of PIWAMP as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3), in agreement with the PCE rating. This contrasts with the moderately satisfactory (4) rating provided by PMD.*

### **Sustainability of benefits**

45. **Community engagement, participation and ownership.** The CPE assessed that, as with all evaluated IFAD interventions in The Gambia, sustainability mechanisms were not sufficiently incorporated in the design of PIWAMP. The type of infrastructure provided did not encourage ownership, as it required significant labour inputs by the communities and yet the benefits were only short-lived. After the initial training, further support or capacity-building were not provided and communities were often unable to monitor and maintain the structures by themselves. The beneficiaries' capacity to sustain interventions was thus taken for granted but was not demonstrated. By the same token, organizational management capacities of farmer associations and requisite financing mechanisms for servicing and maintaining the structures were not adequately addressed from the outset. Community demand for certain infrastructure in lowland areas was found to be lower than expected, yet an adjustment to the target and a shift

towards increased sensitization and awareness raising for enhanced community engagement and participation was not made, resulting in low achievements of these targets (see above section "Project adjustments during implementation"). In upland areas, farmers' "buy-in" with regard to the benefits of upland conservation was overestimated when designing the interventions. The above section "Adequacy of project design" also highlights these issues. The PCR concurred with the CPE assessment of low levels of community engagement, participation and ownership.

46. **Government commitment towards sustainability.** The CPE determined that the capacity and to some extent the political will of the government in promoting sustainability of benefits were limited, lacking financial and human resources and sometimes also technical capacity. Notably, the government was not convinced to adopt the infrastructure as a public good to ensure its sustainability. Support beyond the end of the project was left contingent on individual officers' commitment in the absence of any funding or cost recovery system. No indication was observed that these tasks would be subsumed in the respective government departments' budgets.
47. The aforementioned findings were reiterated in the PCR, concluding that sustainability risks existed in relation to the operation and maintenance of PIWAMP-provided infrastructure, as well as the quality of the necessary support services and the sustainability of the community organizations established under the project. Considerable capacity development and further support would be required to enable these organizations to become functional and self-sufficient in the management of the watershed development interventions.
48. *This PCR rates the sustainability of the benefits of PIWAMP as unsatisfactory (rating 2)* in view of the lack of demonstrated sustainability provisions and government commitment, as well as of the risk proneness with regard to structural longevity and continuity of farmer organizations. This contrasts with the moderately unsatisfactory (3) ratings assigned by both the PMD and CPE.

## **B. Other performance criteria**

### **Innovation**

49. IFAD supported the digitizing of participatory maps under PIWAMP, which was continued in a subsequent IFAD-financed project and formed the basis for the piloting of the Earth Observation Technologies Initiative, which led to the production of national land cover baseline maps and training and certification of 22 national key technical and M&E staff.
50. The PCR also suggested that the IFAD Country Programme Approach (CPA) could be seen as an innovation for forging synergy and complementarity between IFAD-funded projects, which in the view of this PCR is questionable. At any rate, the CPE found that any linkage between the various projects was virtually absent, indicating a lack of internalization or implementation of the CPA.<sup>13</sup>
51. *This PCR rates PIWAMP innovation as unsatisfactory (rating 2)*, in view of the very limited project activities and achievements that constituted innovation. This

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<sup>13</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned aspects of innovation, the CPE found the anchorage of the Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP; see the below paragraph) of GEF, which complemented PIWAMP, to be a valuable innovation in the context of natural resource management and climate change adaptation. Pilot introduction of alternative energy sources, such as biogas and improved cooking stoves, resulting from the "Special study on fuel wood supply and demand" commissioned by the project, was seen to potentially reduce impact on the environment. However, no discussion of this pilot activity, including its results and potential for scale-up, is noted in the PCR.

GEF financing of US\$4.4 million for a 4-year implementation period (2011-2015) has been approved under the SLMP. As an incremental financing to PIWAMP, SLMP objectives were to improve livelihood through the promotion of community-based watershed/landscape management approaches, enabling resource poor communities to reverse the declining land productivity and overcome the causes and negative impacts of land degradation on the structure and functional integrity of The Gambia's lowland and upland eco-system resources.

contrasts with the moderately satisfactory (4) rating assigned by PMD. The CPE provided a combined rating for "Scaling up and innovation", which was indicated as unsatisfactory (rating 2).

### **Scaling up**

52. As noted in the PCR, PIWAMP did not plan or pursue any scaling-up of its interventions. The PMD rating for "Potential of scaling-up", however, is indicated as moderately satisfactory (rating 4), notwithstanding that no discussion of the scaling-up potential occurred in the PCR. *This PCR rates the scaling-up criterion for PIWAMP as unsatisfactory (rating 2).* The CPE provided a combined rating for "Scaling up and innovation", which was indicated as unsatisfactory (rating 2).

### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

53. **Women's access to resources, assets and services.** The PCR assessed that the impact of infrastructure in women's lives was considerable. Women reported that the previous obstacles in accessing farms were effectively overcome by the construction of footbridges in the rice fields and inter-village roads. The latter also facilitated the use of animal-drawn carts and bicycles, in turn improving women's access to rice fields, markets and social facilities. It was also found that the women legally owned 90 per cent of the gardens visited, as a result of the mandatory obtaining of land title deeds.
54. **Women's influence in decision-making.** The 173 legally registered farmer associations at village and district level had a 50-per-cent representation of women in their executive committees, leading to an increased participation of women in decision-making processes in the community.
55. **Workload distribution among household members.** The CPE assessed that, as with other IFAD projects in the Gambia country portfolio, PIWAMP's design was based on traditional gender roles and women's key roles in agricultural production. As such, by December 2013, women did 49 per cent of the cultivation in the target communities. However, PIWAMP did not consider the time constraints and workload experienced by women and overlooked the issue of drudgery. The bulk of the land developed was in lowland rice fields, which should have positively affected women as traditional lowland rice growers. However, women still continued to use basic, manual farming tools, limiting their capacity to cover larger areas. The additional tasks in rice fields and also in newly established or refurbished gardens increased their already high workloads. In addition, women had to walk farther to reach the new land allocated to them. Although the interventions supported improved access to water, for many of the gardens only limited water was available, making crop production very labour-intensive. These aspects contradict IFAD's gender policy of decreasing women's share of the production burden and an uneven workload.
56. **Women's health, skills, income and nutritional levels.** The CPE found that the aforementioned improved access by women to farmlands positively impacted the health and productivity (at least for some of them or in certain areas): women, as child bearers and caregivers, had easier access to hospitals during pregnancies and when caring for a sick family member.
57. Women reported that increasing production and resulting higher contribution to the household consumption had empowered them economically, but that the decrease in yield due to the dilapidation of infrastructure between two to six years served to erode their newly gained empowerment.
58. **Gender relations within households, groups and communities.** Although equal representation was given to women in the PIWAMP-supported farmer organizations and infrastructure committees, the CPE assessed the evidence on gender empowerment across the IFAD country portfolio to be inconclusive, with

mixed results in terms of women's leadership roles in households and communities and prevailing socio-cultural norms favouring men above women.

59. **Other aspects.** No information was found in the PCR or project documentation on the following aspects relating to gender equality and women's empowerment: (i) PIWAMP financial resources invested in activities to promote this cross-cutting issue; (ii) sex-disaggregated project results monitoring; (iii) adequacy of the project implementation structure for an effective implementation of the goals of this cross-cutting issue.
60. *This PCR rates PIWAMP performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment as moderately satisfactory (rating 4), in agreement with the PMD and CPE ratings, respectively.*

### **Environment and natural resources management**

61. **Measures for sustainable natural resource management (NRM).** PIWAMP was designed specifically as an NRM intervention that would empower farming communities to manage soil and water resources sustainably, employing an integrated, watershed-wide approach. As such, the CPE assessed that upland infrastructure (diversion bunds, gully plugs, dikes, and spillways) built under PIWAMP helped control water movement in upper catchment and lowland areas, increasing the area of land available for cultivation through enhanced water infiltration and longer retention of fresh water in the soil. In upland areas, the structures contributed to reducing soil erosion and protection of villages from flooding. However, deficient quality and lack of maintenance rendered many of the structures increasingly ineffective (see above section "Effectiveness"), compromising the intended enhancement of community resilience to environmental pressures, as well as the long-term environmental and social sustainability of the initial, positive project results.
62. **Environmental risk assessment and management.** With regard to IFAD administrative procedures for environmental assessment, the Appraisal Report states that PIWAMP was classified as belonging to category "B", as it was not expected to support activities generating significant irreversible or cumulative environmental impacts. Notwithstanding that PIWAMP's overall environmental impact was expected to be positive, potential negative impacts arising from the project interventions (mainly relating to damage to mangroves and soil acidification) were considered in the Appraisal Report; these appeared to have been neglected during project implementation, however, as no relevant information appeared in the PCR on further assessing the above aspects of environmental risk or building local capacities to avoid, manage, or mitigate them. No information was available as to whether PIWAMP complied with national environmental and social standards or norms.
63. *This PCR rates PIWAMP performance with regard to the environment and NRM criterion as moderately unsuccessful (rating 3), in view of the insufficient provisions for NRM, environmental and social sustainability, the compromised environmental resilience of communities, and the absence of documented environmental risk management procedures. This contrasts with the moderately satisfactory rating (4) assigned by PMD. The CPE provided a combined rating for "Natural resources, environment, and climate change", which was indicated as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).*

### **Adaptation to climate change**

64. **Climate risk awareness and analysis.** In its "Adaptation to climate change" section under "Project outcomes and impacts", the PCR considered much of the infrastructure constructed under PIWAMP to be climate-smart, contributing to soil conservation and protection from flooding (which are relevant climate impact mitigation measures, even if unintentional). However, by and large, the CPE noted

that climate change was not addressed in the design or roll-out of PIWAMP. Some of the dikes and spillways built by the project to prevent flooding of lowland rice fields by the river were found breached through underground seepage of salt water, leading to the land becoming unfit for cultivation, sometimes progressively. The CPE assessed that retention of water through dikes in upper catchment areas possibly impacted salt intrusion in lower catchment. The CPE further noted that these issues could have been avoided or reduced, had climate change been responded to in the project design and during implementation.

65. *This PCR rates PIWAMP performance with regard to adaptation to climate change as moderately unsuccessful (rating 3).* This contrasts with the moderately satisfactory rating (4) assigned by PMD. The CPE provided a combined rating for "Natural resources, environment, and climate change", which was indicated as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).

## **C. Overall project achievement**

66. Although the goal and objectives of PIWAMP were relevant and aligned with government and IFAD strategic priorities, the project design and implementation showed certain weaknesses with regard to the quality of project-provided water structures as well as training activities aimed at their maintenance by community organizations; the levels of buy-in, participation, and ownership by the latter were overestimated, leading to mixed levels of project achievement of outcomes and objectives. This underperformance was exacerbated by unbudgeted high management costs, impacting efficient project delivery.
67. PIWAMP infrastructure helped to control water resources, reduced soil erosion, and provided flood protection. However, environmental and social sustainability of these outcomes were found to be compromised by inadequate local capacities to maintain the low-quality infrastructure. Salt water seepage and salinization of arable land were unforeseen climate-change related issues seemingly exacerbated by the project.
68. Consistent outcome or impact data were not collected by PIWAMP. The reported increases in total crop production, productivity levels, and food self-sufficiency were not corroborated by the CPE, while it did confirm expanded and improved areas available for cultivation. Women were impacted strongly by the project, primarily by providing access to expanded production areas, but at the same time the women's additional tasks in rice fields and gardens increased their already high workloads. Limited innovation was undertaken by PIWAMP and scaling-up was not considered.
69. *This PCR rates the overall project achievement of PIWAMP as moderately unsatisfactory (3),* in agreement with the rating provided in the CPE. This contrasts with the moderately satisfactory (4) rating assigned by PMD.

## **D. Performance of partners**

### **IFAD**

70. The PCR notes that IFAD maintained consistency in supervision of PIWAMP throughout the project duration, with only one change in the Country Programme Manager. IFAD was also found to be highly responsive to project requests, including withdrawal applications. However, as assessed in the CPE, IFAD notably did not have a strategy to address the major issue of staff harassment and high staff turnover across projects, including PIWAMP (see above section "Project implementation"). Notwithstanding that this turnover was a threat to the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the interventions, as well as the integrity of project staff, IFAD's response was not found to be coherent or consistent and lacked a firm standpoint on support that should have been afforded to project staff.

71. **Supervision and implementation support.** Between 2009 until project completion IFAD fielded ten supervision missions, five implementation support missions, a timely MTR at the project mid-point (2010). The supervision missions and MTR were sufficiently detailed and informative, and included challenges, weaknesses and recommendations. However, the CPE noted that the supervisions and reviews often seemed too positive about the achievements and over-optimistic in terms of results and support that was to be provided by the project. Furthermore, limited evidence was found of adaptive measures based on lessons learned or experience during implementation. The PCR noted that the supervision missions and MTR were not instrumental in addressing the critical issue of developing an exit and sustainability-enhancing strategy. However, the IFAD CPA introduced in 2010 helped coordination and sharing across IFAD-financed projects.
72. *This PCR rates IFAD's performance on PIWAMP as moderately satisfactory (rating 4), in agreement with the PMD and CPE ratings, respectively.*

### **Government**

73. As indicated in the above section "Project implementation", the political context in The Gambia during the implementation of PIWAMP severely hampered project delivery. Discontinuity of leadership at the level of permanent secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) resulted in inconsistencies in policy dialogue and key decisions affecting project implementation. The rapid turnover and even arrest and detention of senior project staff severely hampered the continuity, effectiveness and efficiency of project delivery. Most notably, eight project coordinators had to be replaced within the eight-year project duration.
74. **Baseline survey and M&E systems.** Although a baseline survey was commissioned by the Department of State for Agriculture, it was not conducted in a timely manner but with a delay of more than two years post-inception (the date of publishing was October 2008). Notwithstanding that participatory monitoring was conducted through quarterly and annual reviews, the quality of the M&E system remained insufficient to be used as a management tool to inform planning and guiding interventions for project management and the Project Steering Committee (PSC), as noted in the CPE. Data collection and analysis were largely confined to outputs, and – although their quality improved over the evaluation period – were not strong enough to monitor actual versus planned costs and expenditures. The assessment of project outcomes and rural poverty impact was severely constrained by the weak project M&E system, which was unable to provide sufficient data. Any impact evidence remained largely circumstantial, and despite considerable provision the M&E component did not achieve collection and analysis of the necessary information (see also above section "Rural poverty impact").
75. **Progress reports and PCR.** PIWAMP produced eight annual and 32 quarterly progress reports. The CPE noted that the quality of reporting by the government was not always optimal. No information was available in the project documentation regarding the utility of the progress reports. Although the initial PCR draft was developed in a timely manner through September and October 2014, it was only finalized in December 2017 (see above section "Introduction"). The PCR was found to be sufficiently detailed and informative, and of adequate quality, albeit missing several criteria intended for PCRs as per the relevant guidelines (see section "Quality" in the below chapter "Assessment of PCR quality").
76. **Counterpart resources.** The Government contributed counterpart funding slightly exceeding the agreed level (US\$1,798.8 or 105 per cent of the planned commitment; see above section "Financing"). The Government also provided counterpart staff and office space.

77. **Audit reports.** The project submitted independent auditors' reports on the annual project financial statements for seven out of eight years, thus respecting the signed financial agreement.
78. **Funding flow and procurement procedures.** The CPE noted that considerable time and energy was spent in preparing annual procurement plans and executing them through the Procurement Committee of MOA, following guidelines of the Gambia Public Procurement Authority and ensuring that requirements of AfDB and IFAD were met. No major areas of inconsistency with IFAD procurement procedures existed, since the public procurement procedures were tailored to satisfy World Bank procurement standards. According to the PCR, the PMU ensured timely procurement of goods and services. No information was available in the project documentation regarding the flow of funds and its suitability to ensure timely implementation.
79. **Project implementation capacity.** MOA was the lead implementing agency for the IFAD country programme, including PIWAMP. The CPE noted that the capacity of MOA staff was often limited, and the number of staff and resources available were often too low to ascertain quality implementation. One of the main challenges of the interventions was weak public extension. Staff members were sometimes not available in the field or with the capacity needed and were at times heavily burdened with work that was not always project-related.
80. *This PCR rates government performance on PIWAMP as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3), in agreement with the ratings provided by both the PMD and CPE.*

## IV. Assessment of PCR quality

### Scope

81. All chapters, sections, and annexes foreseen in the Guidelines for Project Completion Review (2015) were covered in the PRC and provided largely adequate content, barring the following aspects: in the PCR chapter "Assessment of project effectiveness" the impact domain "Human and social capital and empowerment" was not covered, other than in relation to "Gender equity and women's empowerment". In the PCR section "Innovation, replication and scaling up", only innovation was discussed, while the aspects of replication and scaling up were not treated.
82. *This PCR rates the scope of the PCR as moderately satisfactory (rating 4).*

### Quality

83. **Inclusiveness of PCR process.** The PCR process was inclusive of a variety of stakeholder groups, in that a stakeholders' workshop was held in December 2014 to take stock of the views and concerns of participants regarding the conduct and results of PIWAMP, as well as garner their feedback and recommendations, and draw up lessons learned in the process. Of note, however, was the fact that farmers, and principal beneficiaries as such, were only represented through national farmers' associations; representatives from the farmer organizations formed during the project were notably not included in the workshop.
84. **Data robustness, reliability, and adequacy.** As outlined in the above sections "Rural poverty impact" and "Baseline survey and M&E systems", regular and systematic data collection was largely limited to the level of outputs. Outcome and impact data were scant, not rigorously collected or analysed, and were not considered robust or reliable, as they were largely anecdotal or circumstantial in nature. While the M&E data collected were adequate for tracking the delivery of physical outputs, they were inadequate for measuring outcome and impact indicators. The complementary impact evaluation survey of 2014 did not meet requirements for data robustness and rigour of analysis, and the additional "mini impact study of PIWAMP interventions on women farmers" was referred to in the



PCR without providing any methodological information, rendering the usability of the results of both studies very limited.

85. *This PCR rates the quality criterion for the PCR as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).*

### **Lessons**

86. Out of the eight lessons drawn in the PCR, six were considered rather obvious and essential elements of project design, implementation and results monitoring, and were thus not viewed as true lessons to be learnt from the performance of PIWAMP. The remaining two lessons (see below section "Lessons learned") drew on explicit evaluation findings and appeared to have been derived from a combination of project design and implementation, in that issues in implementing the project revealed shortcomings that should have been addressed already at design stage. It should be noted that certain other important evaluation findings were not considered in the PCR lessons learnt, notwithstanding that they would have emerged in the CPE, (which was published well before the PCR was finalized); these issues include: (a) deficient quality of community-built infrastructure; (b) the lack of demand for certain infrastructure types; (c) the weak sense of ownership and community participation; (d) negative environmental impacts (specifically salinization of lowland rice fields); (d) the mixed impacts on women, including additional workloads and drudgery resulting from the project.
87. *This PCR rates the lessons criterion for the PCR as moderately satisfactory (rating 4).*

### **Candour**

88. **Narrative objectivity.** Although the PCR narrative was largely perceived by this PCR to be objective, at times this notion was not upheld when claims were made that appeared unsubstantiated and were thus rendered unconvincing. For instance, a key achievement was stated to be the rehabilitation of an area close to 50,000 hectares into "highly productive and fertile land", without describing how the productivity and fertility was determined. Similarly, the increase in arable land area developed by the project was described as constituting a positive project impact on the lives of the communities, without indicating if and to what extent the additional land was actually used. As a matter of fact, a later section pointed out that the ability of the community to ensure land preparation and cropping had been overestimated.
89. **Candour of results reporting.** For certain result areas (e.g., the degree of delivery of infrastructure targets) this PCR found the PCR to have struck an appropriate balance between showcasing achievements and describing shortfalls. Other results, on the other hand, were arguably presented with an insufficient level of candour – for instance, when referring to statements made in the CPE only partially, effectively disregarding certain negative conclusions drawn in the CPE. An example of this is the achievement of expanded cultivation areas vis-à-vis the negative effect of increased workloads for women. Furthermore, this PCR considers that certain questionable results of impact studies drawn upon for presenting impact evidence were carried over into the PCR without sufficient critique (see above section "Rural poverty impact").
90. *This PCR rates the candour criterion for the PCR as moderately unsatisfactory (rating 3).*

## **V. Final remarks and lessons learned**

### **Final remarks**

91. The development of the PCR for PIWAMP benefited from the conduct of the IOE's CPE and availability of its report and findings well in advance of PCR finalization. This PCR considers that a stronger effort could have been made to ensure that all

CPE evaluation findings relevant to the project were duly considered and reflected in the finalized PCR.

### **Lessons learned**

92. Key lessons extracted from the PCR comprise the following (clauses in parentheses are the PCRV evaluator's addition):
- a) A strong policy dialogue should be undertaken with Government to ensure its support of community-based natural resource management and development activities (particularly in view of community infrastructure representing a public good that requires financing for continued operation and maintenance);
  - b) (Particularly in the context of farmer organizations expected to take charge of their own natural resource management), a thorough capacity needs assessment with regard to organizational management should have underpinned a comprehensive training strategy (to ensure the self-sufficiency of such groups).

## Definition and rating of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Criteria	Definition *	Mandatory	To be rated
<b>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.	X	Yes
	<i>Four impact domains</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household income and net 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. The analysis must include an assessment of trends in equality over time.</li> </ul>		No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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, the poor's individual and collective capacity, and in particular, the extent to which specific groups such as youth are included or excluded from the development process.</li> </ul>		No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food security and agricultural productivity: Changes in food security relate to availability, stability, affordability and access to food and stability of access, whereas changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields; nutrition relates to the nutritional value of food and child malnutrition.</li> </ul>		No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>		No
<b>Project performance</b>	Project performance is an average of the ratings for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of benefits.	X	Yes
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 and coherence in achieving its objectives. An assessment should also be made of whether objectives and design address inequality, for example, by assessing the relevance of targeting strategies adopted.	X	Yes
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	X	Yes
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.	X	Yes
Sustainability of benefits	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.	X	Yes
<b>Other performance criteria</b>			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment, for example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making; work load balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods.	X	Yes
Innovation	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction.	X	Yes
Scaling up	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have been (or are likely to be) scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.	X	Yes
Environment and natural resources management	The extent to which IFAD development interventions contribute to resilient livelihoods and ecosystems. The focus is on the use and management of the natural environment, including natural resources defined as raw materials used for socio-economic and cultural purposes, and ecosystems and biodiversity - with the goods and services they provide.	X	Yes
Adaptation to climate change	The contribution of the project to reducing the negative impacts of climate change through dedicated adaptation or risk reduction measures.	X	Yes

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Definition</i> *	<i>Mandatory</i>	<i>To be rated</i>
<b>Overall project achievement</b>	This provides an overarching assessment of the intervention, drawing upon the analysis and ratings for rural poverty impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of benefits, gender equality and women's empowerment, innovation, scaling up, as well as environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.	X	Yes
<b>Performance of partners</b>			
• IFAD	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 the partner's expected role and responsibility in the project life cycle.	X	Yes
• Government		X	Yes

\* These definitions build on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management; the Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation agreed with the Evaluation Committee in September 2003; the first edition of the Evaluation Manual discussed with the Evaluation Committee in December 2008; and further discussions with the Evaluation Committee in November 2010 on IOE's evaluation criteria and key questions.

## Rating comparison<sup>a</sup>

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Programme Management Department (PMD) rating</i>	<i>IOE Project Completion Report Validation (PCRVR) rating</i>	<i>Net rating disconnect (PCRVR-PMD)</i>
<b>Rural poverty impact</b>	4	3	-1
<b>Project performance</b>			
Relevance	5	4	-1
Effectiveness	4	4	0
Efficiency	3	3	0
Sustainability of benefits	3	2	-1
<b>Project performance<sup>b</sup></b>	3.75 <sup>1</sup>	3.25	-0.5
<b>Other performance criteria</b>			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	4	0
Innovation	4	2	-2
Scaling up <sup>2</sup>	4	2	-2
Environment and natural resources management	4	3	-1
Adaptation to climate change	4	3	-1
<b>Overall project achievement<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Performance of partners<sup>d</sup></b>			
IFAD	4	4	0
Government	3	3	0
<b>Average net disconnect</b>			<b>-0.75</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, efficiency and sustainability of benefits.

<sup>c</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, sustainability of benefits, rural poverty impact, gender, innovation, scaling up, environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.

<sup>d</sup> The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall project achievement rating.

<sup>1</sup> An overall project performance rating was not provided by the PMD; the arithmetic average across the four components was computed by the PCRVR evaluator.

<sup>2</sup> This criterion read as "Potential for scaling up" in the PMD rating matrix.

### Ratings of the project completion report quality

	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCRVR rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Candour		3	
Lessons		4	
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)		3	
Scope		4	
Overall rating of the project completion report		3.5	

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

## Output Delivery

<i>Output</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>% Delivery</i>
<b>Component 1: Capacity Building</b>				
Awareness campaign sessions	Number	200	200	100%
Farmer organizations registered	Number	127	86 <sup>1</sup>	67%
Study tours	Number	2	2	100%
M&E training sessions	Number	5	3	60%
Information Technology (IT) training	One-off count	Nil	1	Not applicable
Extension officers trained in seed production	Number	Nil	5	Not applicable
Yearly crop data collection	Number	5	4	80%
Environmental monitoring exercises	Number	10	9	90%
Farmer-to-farmer visits/training sessions	Number	620	468	90% <sup>2</sup>
<b>Component 2: Watershed Development Fund</b>				
<i>Infrastructure constructed/rehabilitated (and determined functional)</i>				
Bridges	Kilometers	3.01	1.98	66.0%
Causeways	Kilometers	100.0	22.7	22.7%
Dikes (new)	Kilometers	76.6	81.49	106%
Spillways (new)	Kilometers	2.43	3.34	137.5%
Dikes (rehabilitated)	Kilometers	3.22	4.20	130.4%
Spillways (rehabilitated)	Kilometers	0.54	1.02	188.0%
Gully plugs	Number	840	761	91% <sup>3</sup>
Contour bunds	Kilometers	720	195	27% <sup>4</sup>
Inter-village access roads	Kilometers	200.0	191.0	95.5%
Livestock watering points	Number	15	15	100%
<i>Planting and afforestation</i>				
Vertiver planting (in rows along bunds/dikes)	Kilometers	36	42	120%
Enrichment planting (area)	Hectares	150	150	100%
Afforestation (area)	Hectares	1000	213.5	21.3%
<b>Component 3: Project Coordination and M&amp;E</b>				
Annual audits	Number	6	5	83%
Review of Accounting Manual	One-off count	1	1	100%
MOF monitoring exercises	Number	Nil	4	Not applicable
PSC meetings	Number	32	24	75%
M&E training	One-off count	1	1	100%
National rice development strategy	Not specified	Nil	Not specified	Not applicable
Digitized site maps	Number	Nil	52	Not applicable
Improvement of M&E system	One-off count	1	1	100%
Project publicity conducted	Not specified	Nil	Not specified	Not applicable
Establishment of database	One-off count	1	1	100%
Annual consultations	Number	48	25	52%
General staff meetings	Number	48	25	52%

<sup>1</sup> A discrepancy is noted between the output delivery of 86 "farmer organizations registered" as taken from PCR Appendix VIII "Physical progress measured against appraisal targets" and the cumulative total for the break-down of farmer organization

targets mentioned in the narrative of the PCR (89 Village Farmer Associations, 55 Watershed Farmer Associations and 6 District-level farmer associations, totalling 210 farmer organizations).

<sup>2</sup> A discrepancy was noted in the specified target accomplishment for farmer-to-farmer training between the percentage determined in the PCR Appendix VIII (90 per cent of the appraisal target) and that stated in the PCR narrative (68 per cent).

<sup>3</sup> A discrepancy was noted in the specified target accomplishment for gully plugs between the figure provided in the PCR Appendix VIII (761, equalling 90.6 per cent of the appraisal target) and that stated in the PCR narrative (692, equalling 82.4 per cent of the appraisal target).

<sup>4</sup> A discrepancy was noted in the specified target accomplishment for contour bunds between the figure provided in the PCR Appendix VIII (195 kilometers, equalling 27 per cent of the appraisal target) and that stated in the PCR narrative (157 kilometers, equalling 22 per cent of the appraisal target).

## Notes on the PCR's review of PIWAMP's intervention logic

Several issues were noted in reviewing PIWAMP's intervention logic:

1. The initial logical framework in the Appraisal Report shows a certain degree of conceptual weakness in defining the goal and objective(s) of PIWAMP: the project goal of increasing agricultural productivity through watershed management does not describe impact-level benefits to beneficiaries, but rather direct outcomes expected from the project, and would thus be more suited as the project objective. By the same token, the specified two-fold project objectives seem to be similarly misplaced in the results hierarchy of the logical framework. This design flaw appears to have been recognized in the MTR report, as the updated logical framework had adjusted the results hierarchy: a new, impact-level goal of "*poverty reduction and household food security enhancement nationwide*" was formulated and the previous goal and objectives were downgraded to the next lower level in the results hierarchy. However, these adjustments were not explained or discussed in the MTR report. The updated version of the logical framework appears also in the PCR, except that an overall project goal was omitted, while the narrative of the PCR retains the original goal and objectives and does not discuss or mention the adjustments made to the logical framework. Four supervision missions<sup>14</sup> use the revised goal and objectives in their narratives.
2. Certain weaknesses were noted in the conceptualization of PIWAMP's Component 2: it is entitled "*Watershed development fund*" and its purpose was explained in the Appraisal Report and PCR narratives to be financial support of community initiatives for improved water, land and agricultural management. In the logical frameworks in the MTR report and PCR, the component purpose is specified to be "*Watershed development fund establishment and effective disbursement in priority watersheds...*". However, the project activities underpinning this component are not directly related to the establishment, management or disbursement modalities of a fund per se, but rather outline explicitly and in detail the types of natural resource management and related community initiatives that were to be funded by PIWAMP (see narrative section "Project goal, objectives and components" for details). Therefore, a conceptually more suitable title for Component 2 is deemed to be "*Establishment and support of community initiatives for watershed development*" or similar, whereby PIWAMP funding constitutes one of the ways the project intended to support such initiatives (in addition to technical and managerial support, etc.). A similar adjustment would be in order for the component purpose. It should be noted that three supervision missions<sup>15</sup> appear to have recognized this and referred to Component 2 as "*Community-based watershed/landscape management*" in their narratives.

<sup>14</sup> April 2012; September-October 2012; October 2013; and March 2014.

<sup>15</sup> April 2012; September-October 2012; and October 2013.



## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AfDB	African Development Bank
CPA	Country Programme Approach
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
ERR	Economic rate of return
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LADEP	Lowlands Agricultural Development Programme
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MTR	Mid-term review
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NRM	Natural resource management
PCR/V	Project Completion Report Validation
PIWAMP	Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project
PMD	Programme Management Department
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SLMP	Sustainable Land Management Project
VDC	Village Development Committee

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