

## Project Completion Report Validation

### Butana Integrated Rural Development Project

#### Republic of the Sudan

Date of validation by IOE: June 2020

## I. Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m) <sup>1</sup>		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region	Near East, North Africa and Europe	Total project costs <sup>2</sup>	46.68		-	
Country	Republic of the Sudan	IFAD loan and grant Additional Financing - % of total	24.8 10.3	53.12 22.10	24.71 10.25	64.45 26.72
Loan number	L-I-717 200000163400	ASAP (AF)	3.0	6.43	3.0	7.83
IFAD project ID	1100001332	Italian grant	0.38	0.81	0.37	0.98
Type of project (subsector)	Integrated rural development (multi- sector)	Government of Sudan Government of Sudan (additional financing)	4.29 2.17	13.87		
Financing type	IFAD-initiated and cofinanced	Beneficiaries Beneficiaries (AF)	0.76 0.97	3.74		
Lending terms <sup>*</sup>	- Loan under highly concessional term - Grant under debt sustainability framework (DSF)					
Date of approval	14/12/2006					
Date of signature:	(loan) 16/02/2007 (grant) 01/2017					
Date of effectiveness	(loan) 07/07/2008 (grant) 01/2017	Number of beneficiaries	540,000 (direct and indirect)		436,000 (direct and indirect) <sup>3</sup>	80.74
Loan amendments	18/10/2013; 08/08/2016 24/01/2017 (new agreement for AF)					
Loan closure extensions	Twice (Aug 2016 and Jan 2017 at the time of AF )	Project completion date	30/09/2016		30/09/2019	
Country programme managers	Tarek Ahmed (Jul 2017-present) <sup>4</sup>	Financing closing date	Original		31/03/2020	
Regional director(s)	Khalida Bouzar <sup>5</sup>	Mid-term review			01/09/2012	
Project completion report reviewer	Diane Abi Khalil	IFAD financing disbursement at project completion (%)			100 <sup>6</sup>	
Project completion report quality control panel	Eoghan Molloy; Fumiko Nakai; Fabrizio Felloni	Date of the project completion report			October 2019	

Source: President's report, Project Completion Report (PCR), IFAD's Operational Results Management System (ORMS).

<sup>1</sup> The data includes the funding at approval and the ones following the additional financing (AF) approved in 2016. More details are included in the following section (Project outline).

<sup>2</sup> The actual cost excludes the government and beneficiaries disbursement rates that were not reported in the PCR. See Project outline/Financing.

<sup>3</sup> The PCR reported that the project reached directly 48,264 households.

<sup>4</sup> Former country programme managers: Mohamed Abdelgadir (Jun 2016-Jul 2017), Hani Abdelkader Elsadani Salem (Jan 2013-May 2016), Mohamed Abdelgadir (2012-2013), Rasha Omar (2004-2012).

<sup>5</sup> Former regional directors: Mohamed Abdelgadir (Jun 2016-Jul 2017), Hani Abdelkader Elsadani Salem (Jan 2013-May 2016), Mohamed Abdelgadir (2012-2013), Rasha Omar (2004-2012).

<sup>6</sup> Based on XDR values.

## II. Project outline<sup>7</sup>

<b>Country &amp; Project Name</b>	Republic of the Sudan. Butana Integrated Rural Development Project.
<b>Project duration</b>	Project duration: 11 years.  <b>Original financing:</b> Board approval: 14 December 2006; date of effectiveness: 7 July 2008; effectiveness lag: 19 months; time from entry into force to first disbursement: 4.7 months; original completion date: 30 September 2016; completion date: 30 September 2019; date of financial closure: 31 March 2020.  <b>Additional financing (AF):</b> Date of approval: 17 September 2016; Date of effectiveness: January 2017.
<b>Project goal, objectives and components</b>	Project goal: to improve in a sustainable manner the livelihoods and resilience to drought of the poor rural households.  Project objectives: (i) establish a coherent and cost-effective governance framework that ensures regulated access to land and water resources of the Butana; (ii) improve the access and bargaining position of women and men in the marketing of livestock; (iii) develop the capacity of community-based organizations to engage in environmentally sound, socially and gender equitable development initiatives.  Project components: (i) institutional support and project management (policy and institutional support under AF); (ii) agricultural, range and water development (natural resource management under AF); (iii) livestock and marketing development; (iv) community development (community development and business options under AF).  The AF put more emphasis on: (i) strengthening the natural resources governance in Butana; and (ii) enhancing the resilience of the communities to the climate change impact through the development of water infrastructure. It also supported the completion of rural roads networks that started under BIRDP and under the Rural Access Project (an IFAD supported project in Butana). <sup>8</sup>
<b>Project area and target group</b>	The project was implemented in the five states, each of which is partially covered in the Butana region: <sup>9</sup> River Nile, Khartoum, Al Jazeera, Gadaref, and Kassala. The target population comprised smallholder agro-pastoralists in the sand and clay zones and the smallholder irrigated sector as well as the smallholder transhumant.
<b>Project implementation</b>	The Butana Development Agency was the leading agency. <sup>10</sup> A project coordination unit supported by five State Coordination Units and their development teams were responsible of the project implementation. The project coordination unit was assisted at the federal level, by a central coordination unit. The IFAD's Operational Results Management System (ORMS) indicates 24 supervision and implementation support missions.
<b>Changes during implementation</b>	The project duration was extended for another three years, following the approval of the AF that included IFAD and an Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme <sup>11</sup> (ASAP) grants, increasing significantly the targeted communities (400 additional communities compared to the original target of 140 communities). Moreover, components were restructured in line with the new emphasis as discussed previously under "project goals, objectives and components". An Italian grant was approved in 2015 and aimed to improve food security and access to markets through improved post-harvest storage systems and community access to residue detection systems for 300 households of BIRDP and non-BIRDP communities in Kassala State. A loan reallocation was approved in 2013 whereby the categories "operation and maintenance" and "technical assistance, training and inputs" increased by 187.5 per cent and 76.6 per cent, respectively.
<b>Financing</b>	The project was initially financed by: i) an IFAD's loan US\$24.79 million; a government contribution of US\$4.29 million and a beneficiaries' contribution of US\$0.76 million.

<sup>7</sup> A project completion report validation (PCRv) is normally prepared based on a desk review, but this specific PCRv has been also informed by a field mission in the context of a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) conducted in September and October 2019; evidence of the CSPE has been used to complement the Project Completion Report (PCR), when necessary.

<sup>8</sup> BIRDP proposal for additional financing 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Butana grazing area used to be one socio-economic and political unit for centuries but now cuts across five states.

<sup>10</sup> The establishment of this agency was one of the effectiveness conditions for IFAD's financing for BIRDP. The Butana Development Agency was later replaced by the Butana Development Fund.

<sup>11</sup> The Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) was launched by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 2012 to make climate and environmental finance work for smallholder farmers (source: IFAD website accessed on May 2020).

	Following the AF approved in 2016 and the Italian grant, the estimated project cost of US\$29.85 million considerably increased to US\$46.68 million (56.3 per cent increase) enabling a larger coverage of beneficiaries as discussed in the previous section. The IFAD loan and grant and the Italian grant were fully disbursed. The Project Completion Report (PCR) remained silent on the disbursement rates of the Government and beneficiaries and the components costs. <sup>12</sup> The estimated components costs indicated that component 2 Agricultural, range and water development (renamed natural resources management under AF) is the largest investment of the project, amounting to 49 per cent of the original estimated cost of the project and 57 per cent under the AF. The tables below show the revised project costs following the AF by financier and by component and the actual costs where available.
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Table 1  
Project costs (US\$ '000) <sup>13</sup>

<i>Funding source</i>	<i>Appraisal &amp; additional financing</i>	<i>% of total cost</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>% disbursed</i>
IFAD (loan)	24 799	53.12	24 718	100*
IFAD (grant)	10 300	22.10	10 250	100*
IFAD ASAP	3 000	6.43	3 005	99.9*
Italian grant	381	0.81	379	99.5*
Government of Sudan	6 465	13.87	n.a.**	n.a.
Beneficiaries	1 744	3.74	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 689</b>	<b>100</b>	-	-

Source: IFAD's ORMS; BIRDP PCR.

\*Amount disbursed in US\$ according to IFAD system.

\*\*na=not available

Table 2  
Component costs (INR '000)

<i>Component</i>	<i>Appraisal &amp; additional financing</i>	<i>% of total cost</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>% disbursed</i>
Institutional support and project management	12 483	27	n.a.*	n.a.
Agricultural, range and water development	22 675	49	n.a.	n.a.
Livestock and marketing development	5 243	11	n.a.	n.a.
Community development	6 286	13	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 687</b>	<b>100</b>	-	-

Source: IFAD's ORMS.

\*n.a.=not available

### III. Review of findings

<i>PCR finding</i>	<i>Rating</i>
<b>A. Core Criteria</b>	
<b>Relevance</b>	
1. The project was aligned with the national policy frameworks, precisely the National Poverty Eradication Strategy (2004) and the Agricultural Revival Programme 2008-2014 which gave priority to issues relating to water and natural resources	5

<sup>12</sup> The Programme Management Department of IFAD shared the data with IOE at a later stage. However, the data showed discrepancies precisely, in terms of the estimated project costs, beneficiaries and Government approved contribution, the latter almost double the amount reported in the design reports, the PCR and ORMS (US\$12.2 million vs US\$6.4). Therefore, the actual funding and component costs were not incorporated in tables 1 & 2.

<sup>13</sup> Given the unavailability of the relevant data, the percentage of actual costs is not calculated in tables 1 and 2.

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>management. The project objectives are in line with IFAD strategy outlined in the 2009 Country strategic opportunities programme precisely in terms of building technical, financial and social asset base for poor rural people, empowering women and promoting optimal use of natural resources. The project is in line with IFAD’s gender policy whereby it promotes economic empowerment of both women and men, including equal voice and influence in rural institutions.</p> <p>2. The focus on natural resources governance and sustainable management is very relevant to the need of the target group in a rainfed area affected adversely by climate change and environmental degradation. The inclusion of basic infrastructure facilitating access to water and to local markets and services (such as roads, water points) are important to meet the basic needs of rural population. The focus on developing the capacity of the communities is relevant in an area where Government of Sudan extension services are very limited.</p> <p>3. The design mainstreamed gender through its objectives, targeting and operational measures that were highly appropriate to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.<sup>14</sup> While the original design did not address youth, this was adjusted following the MTR with the introduction of the Young Professional Programme.</p> <p>4. In conclusion, the PCRV acknowledges the project’s alignment to the Government of Sudan and IFAD strategies and the relevance of the design to the needs of the target group. The PCRV rates the relevance as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR rating.</p>	
<b>Effectiveness</b>	
<p>5. Effectiveness is assessed in the following paragraphs against the four expected outcomes of the project components (revised under the AF phase).</p> <p>6. The PCR reported that the major outcome of the project was the development of a natural resource governance framework (NRGF), which sets out how communities can sustainably manage natural resources and reduce conflicts among end users. The framework was finalised and validated through different workshops at community, locality, state and ultimately at inter-state level but still awaiting the Government official endorsement. Institutional capacity building targeting young professionals, development teams, community based officers and project staff proved instrumental in promoting and implementing supported interventions and in mobilizing the target communities. This finding also strongly emerged during the Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE) mission. While the project contributed to the establishment of the Butana Development Fund, its human and financial capacities remained limited.</p> <p>7. With regard to its second outcome “improved natural resources management”<sup>15</sup> the project contributed to the improvement of range and forestry resources and their management by the community, including 13,872 ha of individual range reserves (compared to a target of 15,000 ha) and 41,750 ha of community forests (compared to a target of 30,500 ha). Water related interventions contributed to improved production and resilience to climate change.</p> <p>8. Access to advisory services and bargaining position of men and women in marketing improved under component three. The project helped extension teams and livestock keepers analyse fodder requirements around the year and develop a strategy accordingly that enabled them to adapt their conservation practices. Improved animal feeding introduced by the project, such as use of guar and hay bailing, turned out to be effective.<sup>16</sup> The construction of vaccination centres and the training of community-level agents (including 431 community animal health workers) contributed to the improvement of animal health services. These agents became active in vaccination campaign, mobilising livestock keepers and creating</p>	5

<sup>14</sup> The second specific objective tackled gender issues. Measures included a participation quota, activities tailored specifically to women’s need and the adoption of the Gender Action Learning System approach.

<sup>15</sup> Supported interventions included: (i) construction and rehabilitation of 318 water sources exceeding significantly its target; (ii) improvement of land terracing (covering 42,620 ha against the target of 40,000 ha); and (iii) irrigation from river using pumps.

<sup>16</sup> The hay bailing proved to be popular among women as it allowed them to adequately feed their goats and obtain milk.

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>awareness. The PCR underlined that the construction of markets, combined with other activities (including the feeder roads, and skills improvement) raised the bargaining power of the target group to obtain higher prices and created a spirit of competition between the markets. The construction of the rural road enabled some markets to grow into a business hub.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>9. In line with its fourth expected outcome (community-based groups are empowered and business-oriented), the project organized and empowered target communities<sup>18</sup> through access to multi-disciplinary extension services and trainings (focusing on home gardening, nutrition, microfinance, forestry, and gender awareness). Some of these trainings contributed to generating livelihood opportunities. For instance, youth groups supported by BIRDP were able to establish 33 small-scale enterprises that the project funded (including blacksmith centres, gas refilling centres, agriculture service centres; brick making production amongst others). The support to rural finance through the establishment of the community initiative fund, the creation of saving and credit groups mainly for women and the linkage with financial institutions<sup>19</sup> enabled the target population (more than 11,500 persons or 96 per cent of target)<sup>20</sup> to access finance for various purposes, including animal restocking, fodder storage, gas units, poultry production, and electric motors. The PCR underlines that saving and credit groups demonstrated a high repayment rate of 95 per cent.</p> <p>10. The PCRV agrees with the PCR assessment and recognizes the achievement of the project in terms of establishing a natural resource governance framework, developing the capacities at the institutional and community level and improving access of target group to markets and other services. The PCRV rates effectiveness as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR.</p>	
<b>Efficiency</b>	
<p>11. At completion, the IFAD loan, IFAD grant and ASAP were disbursed at 100 per cent.<sup>21</sup> The project suffered from disbursement delays in the initial period, which is the case of many projects in the Sudan portfolio. Time from approval to entry into force was 19 months, above the average for the Sudan portfolio (13 months) and the average for the Near East and North Africa sub region (14 months), due to the time it took to fulfil the effectiveness conditions. The PCR does not present actual costs of components; hence, it is not possible to assess the management cost or final cost per beneficiary.</p> <p>12. According to the PCR the economic internal rate of return (EIRR) calculated at completion (17.15 per cent) is higher than the opportunity cost of capital (10 per cent) and the EIRR estimated at appraisal (15.8 per cent). A review of the reported EIRR and economic and financial analysis by the 2019 CSPE confirms the positive economic return.</p> <p>13. The PCRV agrees with the PCR assessment and rates the efficiency of the project as <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i>, in line with the PCR rating.</p>	4
<b>Rural poverty impact</b>	
<p>14. The impact data provided in the PCR is drawn from a final impact assessment. While the reported data can be questioned given that it is based on beneficiaries' perception and no control groups, the findings are consistent with the qualitative data collected by the 2019 CSPE and suggesting that IFAD supported activities had positive effects on rural communities.</p>	5

<sup>17</sup> An example reported by the PCR is the upgraded livestock market in Subagh as the most successful, where the intake of animals was reported to be up to 0.5 million heads of animals per year while it had previously been a seasonal small primary market.

<sup>18</sup> The project established community development committees, community networks, farmer's interest groups. The PCR underlined that the major achievement of BIRDP was empowering individuals, building quality grassroots institutions, skilling local agents for development work, and nurturing networks of interest groups and community organisations.

<sup>19</sup> The Agricultural Bank of Sudan Microfinance Initiative-ABSUMI and Sudan Rural Development Finance Company.

<sup>20</sup> The data in the PCR text is different than the data in the log frame (Appendix 1 of the PCR) and reported as follow: 11,399 beneficiaries accessing rural finance against a target of 10,000.

<sup>21</sup> Based on XDR values.

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>15. <i>Household incomes and assets.</i> The impact assessment indicated an increase in income and assets of the surveyed beneficiaries.<sup>22</sup> While the data can't be confirmed, it is plausible that the project interventions reported by the PCR (including improved agriculture and animal husbandry, water infrastructure, as well as revolving funds and access to finance) have contributed to an increase in household incomes.</p> <p>16. <i>Food security and agricultural productivity.</i> Merely fourteen per cent of respondents reported that they experienced a food shortage during the project compared to 63 per cent before the project. They attributed this improvement to increase in productivity, to improved household economy and economic opportunities. A combination of interventions such as <i>jubraka</i>, diversification of production, food processing, water supply, training and community-based mid-wives (providing attention to feeding mother and child) had plausibly an impact on nutrition. The water harvesting, the fodder conservation, the irrigated communal farms and improved animal health services likely contributed to improved productivity.</p> <p>17. <i>Human and social capital and empowerment.</i> Various capacity building and training contributed to improved knowledge and skills, ranging from productive (agriculture/livestock) activities, business skills, literacy training to nutritional cooking. A major achievement of the project was in empowering groups (women, youth, agro-pastoralists, and marginalised communities). The introduction of Young Professional Programme is another intervention contributing to mobilising communities, and raising awareness on gender inclusion.</p> <p>18. <i>Institutions and policies.</i> The project fostered a network of communities that connect neighbouring villages together around natural resources. Some of these networks were engaged in establishing community range reserves, operationalizing health centre and primary livestock market. Achievement in terms of strengthening the Butana Development Agency did not meet the expected results as a leading agency in charge of promoting natural resources management in the Butana area. In terms of policies, the NRGF was finalised and validated through different workshops at community, locality and state level.</p> <p>19. It is likely that a combination of various activities supported by the project had a positive on rural poverty. While the data could be questionable as discussed earlier, the 2019 CSPE reported similar observations in terms of impact on rural poverty, prompting the PCRV to agree with the PCR assessment. The PCRV rates this criterion as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR rating.</p>	
<b>Sustainability of benefits</b>	
<p>20. The main factor to ensure the sustainability of the activities was the heavy involvement of the community organizations in the project planning and implementation that enhanced their sense of ownership of the various activities. They have organised themselves into networks which provide a more effective platform to voice concerns and issues that affect their constituencies; the CSPE mission witnessed how these networks advocate at state and federal level on behalf of poor rural communities. They were actively engaged in the establishment of the natural resources management framework and in the protection of the forests and range reserves.</p> <p>21. Moreover, the communities assumed the responsibility for running markets,<sup>23</sup> and for building water infrastructures to which they often applied user fees to ensure that they continue to be managed and maintained. These findings were also evident during the 2019 CSPE mission.</p> <p>22. With regard to the exit strategy, the PCR reported that it was established by the project with a clear time frame and definition of the role of the concerned actors and agreed upon by various stakeholders including communities, and government</p>	5

<sup>22</sup> The PCR noted that 92.3 per cent of the respondents to the impact assessment reported an increase in their household's income. It also noted an average increase of 100 per cent of household owned durable assets and 40 per cent increase of household owned economic assets.

<sup>23</sup> One of the community network managed to get funds from government, NGOs and charity organizations and to run an office in the Shendi town, and to operationalize a health centre and primary livestock market among others.

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>authorities.<sup>24</sup> The strategy referred to the Butana development fund as the leading agency in charge of promoting natural resource management, yet the agency did not reach its full human and financial capacity to perform its mandate, at the time of the project completion.</p> <p>23. The saving and credit groups demonstrated high repayment rates of 95 per cent and therefore securing funds for continued lending to their members as highlighted by the PCR.</p> <p>24. While the rural road was functional and resisted the heavy rain, the PCR clearly stated that a commitment by the State Ministry of Infrastructure for its yearly maintenance would be necessary for its sustainable use. Such commitment had not been made at the time of the PCR.</p> <p>25. In conclusion, the benefits of interventions dependent on community engagement and ownership are highly likely to be sustained; a clear theme from the 2019 CSPE mission. An exit strategy was established, involving the various stakeholders. The rural road sustainability would depend on the commitment of the authorities. The PCRV rates this criterion as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR.</p>	
<b>B. Other performance criteria</b>	
<b>Innovation</b>	
<p>26. The PCR highlights different innovative features introduced by BIRDP and having positive results such as: (i) the NRGF that was the result of an inclusive consultative process around natural resources management; (ii) the establishment of community networks, which provided an effective platform for communities to voice concerns and issues; (iii) the Young Professional Programme that proved to be instrumental in community mobilization and skills development by deploying young people with the education and skills to engage at field level; (iv) the introduction of solar system for water stations in women's group and the introduction of the Guar as a drought tolerant fodder plant.</p> <p>27. The PCRV rates innovation as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR.</p>	5
<b>Scaling up</b>	
<p>28. The PCR assessment of this criterion is solely based on the potential for BIRDP results to be scaled up. In the finalisation of this PCRV, additional evidence came to light that the Kassala State Government has extended the Arab6-Subagh road using its own resources, to link the Butana communities to the National Export Road to Port Sudan.<sup>25</sup> On the one hand, the PCRV acknowledges that a continuation of investment in road infrastructure is critical for the development of the area and could lead to greater results.</p> <p>29. On the other hand, beyond the extension of the road, there is no actual evidence that innovations introduced by BIRDP have been taken up by the Government of Sudan or other actors, nor have pathways been identified for ensuring BIRDP approaches are scaled up. Rather, the PCR mentions that BIRDP experiences "deserve to be considered when designing new programmes". Generally, as observed by the 2019 CSPE mission, the institutional resources and capacities of the government line ministries in Sudan at a decentralized level (state and locality) present challenges to scaling up.</p> <p>30. Moreover, the PCR refers to 'scaling up' within the project itself, precisely through expansion of the original project under the additional financing. It also refers to scaling up of BIRDP activities by the Sustainable Natural Resources and Livelihoods Programme (an IFAD-financed project). The PCRV notes that replication of practices through further IFAD financing does not necessarily constitute scaling up, which should instead involve the leveraging of external resources and partners to deliver</p>	4

<sup>24</sup> The strategy involves the establishment of more community networks as well as strengthen linkages between networks and Local Extension the Workers with potential partners and relevant government institutions as important sustainability measures, as reported by the PCR.

<sup>25</sup> The extension work took place after the project completion. The information was not included in the PCR but was communicated by the Programme Management Department of IFAD.

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>larger results, while the 2015 IFAD Operational Framework clearly states that “<i>scaling up results does not mean transforming small IFAD projects into larger projects</i>”.</p> <p>31. While, on the one hand, the PCRV recognises that BIRDP investment in road infrastructure is critical for the development of the area, on the other hand, the PCRV notes the lack of actual scaling up having yet taken place and the capacity and resource constraints that might limit future scaling up, as observed by the 2019 CSPE. On balance, the PCRV rates this criterion <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i>, one point below the PCR rating.</p>	
<b>Gender equality and women’s empowerment</b>	
<p>32. The project contributed to the social and economic empowerment of women through capacity building, community development and access to productive activities. These findings were also reported by the 2019 CSPE.</p> <p>33. According to the PCR, women became engaged in public life and increased their voice in community decision-making. They represented 33 per cent of office bearers in the development communities. Women have taken leadership positions in the natural resources management committees and played a role at the policy level, in relation to the consultations for the NRGF. Women’s participation in productive activities (such as women’s garden, home garden) and their increased access to microfinance and associated trainings enabled them to play a central role in increasing the economic benefits and the well-being of the entire household. Credit from village saving and credit groups enabled women to run petty trade (in bakery, vegetables, hay bales, goat milk cheese). Activities such as drinking water installation and gas stoves introduced by the projects were crucial in reducing the time women spent to fetch water and collect firewood.<sup>26</sup> It is evident from the 2019 CSPE mission that there is a notable transformation in gender roles amongst beneficiary households changing the image and position of women at the household and community level and an increase in the level of respecting women.<sup>27</sup></p> <p>34. The following approaches adapted by the project were instrumental: the participatory approach at the community level; the presence of women extension teams and female “young professionals”;<sup>28</sup> the awareness-raising on gender; and the Gender Action Learning System approach which had made a major contribution to improving household food and nutrition security and boosting the self-dignity of women.</p> <p>35. BIRDP made a significant contribution to women’s empowerment at the community level and achieved a transformative change in terms of norms and exclusionary practices and attitudes to gender at both the household and community levels in the project areas. The PCRV rates this criterion <i>highly satisfactory (6)</i>, in line with the PCR rating.</p>	6
<b>Environment and natural resources management</b>	
<p>36. The PCR reports that BIRDP introduced soil and water conservation practices such as terrace improvement under water harvesting practices (covering 42,620 ha compared to a target of 40,000 ha) that have enhanced the resilience of communities to drought. It contributed to the improvement of range reserves and forests, as discussed under <i>effectiveness</i>.</p> <p>37. In addition, the project supported the preparation of the natural resource governance framework, that helps communities manage sustainably natural resources and reduce conflicts among end users (settled farmers and transhumant pastoralists). Forums and conferences held together with the networks around natural resources brought people together for the protection and improved management of their resources, as noted by the PCR. The commitment of the</p>	5

<sup>26</sup> BIRDP supervision report indicated that access to drinking water is a prerequisite to ensure that women had time to participate in project activities (supervision report August 2019, page 25).

<sup>27</sup> BIRDP PCR and impact assessment. The household impact assessment surveys conducted for BIRDP showed that 89 per cent of the respondents perceived an increase in the level of respecting women and their role in society, while 89 per cent noted their active participation in community affairs.

<sup>28</sup> Women represented 90 per cent of the young professionals and 54 per cent in project teams.



<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>communities is reflected by the voluntary forest guards and youth groups organized to protect and manage natural resources.</p> <p>38. The PCRV rates this criterion as <i>satisfactory (5)</i> in line with the PCR.</p>	
<b>Adaptation to Climate Change</b>	
<p>39. The PCR observed that the project recognized the high levels of vulnerability and risks to the impacts of climate change among the Butana population and accordingly included various techniques to strengthen the resilience of the communities to climate change. The introduction of soil and water conservation such as terracing, related also to environment and natural resources management discussed in the previous section, and the introduction of <i>guar</i> cultivation as a drought tolerant fodder plant (discussed under innovation) have strengthened resilience to drought and were suitable to local environment conditions. The project also introduced solar units to operate water facilities. The development of Climate Resilient Communities Village Plans contributed, according to the PCR, to enhance the awareness of communities about their natural resources and the importance of their protection.</p> <p>40. The PCRV rates this criterion as <i>satisfactory (5)</i> in line with the PCR.</p>	5
<b>C. Overall Project Achievement</b>	
<p>41. In responding to the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, to the lack of basic infrastructures and to the limited extension services, the project design was relevant to the needs of the target population and to the related policies of the Government and IFAD. The project has made notable achievements in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, strengthening natural resources governance through the NRGF and, community mobilisation and empowerment; the latter has contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the project. The construction of rural roads improved access to markets and other services. The project had plausibly positive impact on food security, household incomes and assets, and agricultural productivity and diversification and in line with the 2019 CSPE observations. There are positive indicators of the sustainability of the project's benefits, including the engagement of the communities and their ownership of the various interventions. Innovations introduced such as community networks, natural resource governance and Young Professional Programme strongly contributed to achieving the project objectives.</p> <p>42. This PCRV rates the overall project achievement as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR rating for this criterion.</p>	5
<b>D. Performance of Partners</b>	
<b>IFAD</b>	
<p>43. While the design was relevant, it presented some issues that were all addressed as part of the MTR. The supervision and follow up missions have adequately supported the implementation process on a continuous basis. The MTR, timely undertaken, contributed to the improvement of the project implementation and addressed issues with the project design.<sup>29</sup> IFAD supported the project to improve the flows of funds; it was proactive in pre-funding the counterpart fund, ensuring a smoother implementation process. Requests for no-objections and withdrawal applications were timely processed.</p> <p>44. The PCRV rates the performance of IFAD as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>, in line with the PCR.</p>	5
<b>Government of Sudan</b>	
<p>45. The project coordination unit and the five states coordination units (including extension teams at locality level) were adequately staffed with capacitated and committed staff members and prompting the achieved results. These findings were also confirmed by the CSPE mission. The federal ministries (agriculture and finance)</p>	4

<sup>29</sup> Such as institutional setting, project compartmentalisation (components and sub components/activity line), limited funding for knowledge management etc.

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>were regularly part of IFAD-Government of Sudan joint supervision missions. The Central Coordination Unit has served as an important conduit between IFAD and the project.</p> <p>46. Notwithstanding, there were shortcomings in the Government of Sudan performance. The PCR notes that the implementation could have been better had the project coordinator played a better leading and proactive role, particularly in engaging the Butana Development Fund and coordinating with the Agricultural Bank of Sudan Microfinance Initiative and the Integrated Carbon Sequestration Project in the Sudan (another IFAD supported project).<sup>30</sup> As a result, the implementation progress of the related activities was affected.</p> <p>47. The role of the Butana Development Fund was rather limited; its human and financial capacities and its strategic guidance remained limited hindering it from performing its mandate.</p> <p>48. The PCR observed weaknesses in financial management (such as timing and availability of counterpart fund). These weaknesses have prompted the project to use IFAD funding to pre-finance the Government of Sudan's contribution, which is not allowed.</p> <p>49. In light of the above, the PCRV agrees with the PCR assessment and rates the Government of Sudan performance as <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i>.</p>	

#### IV. Assessment of PCR quality

<b>PCR finding</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Scope</b>	
50. The PCR adequately covered all the chapters and annexes foreseen in the PCR Guidelines, except for the actual costs of the project and by component/financial source. The PCRV rates the scope of the PCR as <i>satisfactory (5)</i> .	5
<b>Quality</b>	
51. A final meeting to validate the PCR findings was held in March 2020 (six months after the completion mission). While major stakeholders at the Federal and State levels were present, beneficiaries could not be included, following the measures imposed by the Government of Sudan in relation to the COVID-19 epidemic. The findings presented in the PCR were in general in line with the 2019 CSPE mission findings. The monitoring and evaluation system was supplemented by studies and impact assessment. The reliability of the impact assessment can be questioned given that the exercise lacked control groups and triangulation of beneficiaries' perceptions. Key financial data such as actual costs of components and disbursements of all financiers were not included in the report. The PCRV rates the quality of the PCR as <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i> .	4
<b>Lessons</b>	
52. The PCR included several lessons based on concrete findings. While they were relevant to the project implementation and based on explicit evaluation, they could be rather read as conclusion/recommendations. The PCRV rates the lessons of the PCR as <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i> .	4
<b>Candour</b>	
53. The narrative of the PCR is objective, presenting both positive and negative results. The ratings are, for the most part, in line with the narrative. Exceptions are made to the criterion: (i) scaling up, where the "potential" of scaling up has been rated; and (ii) gender equality and women's empowerment where the narrative does not	5

<sup>30</sup> The Integrated Carbon Sequestration Project is financed by the Global Environmental Facility to promote a climate friendly rural path in Central and Eastern Sudan. It is considered as sister project of BIRD, complementing it through series of activities and addressing the gaps related to the forest and natural resources development.

justify a "highly satisfactory" rating. The PCRV rates the candour of the PCR as <i>satisfactory</i> (5).	
<b>Overall rating of the PCR</b>	
54. The PCR followed the project completion guidelines, validated its findings through a stakeholder workshop and supplemented its monitoring and evaluation system with additional assessment. Nevertheless, it did not include all the key financial data and the reliability of the impact data can be questioned. The overall rating for the PCR is <i>moderately satisfactory</i> (4).	4

## V. Final remarks

<b>Issues for IOE follow up (if any)</b>
No issues have been identified for follow up by IOE.

## 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 the government's 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 of Sudan		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>	5	5	0
<b>Project performance</b>			
Relevance	5	5	0
Effectiveness	5	5	0
Efficiency	4	4	0
Sustainability of benefits	5	5	0
<b>Project performance<sup>b</sup></b>	4.75	4.75	0
<b>Other performance criteria</b>			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	6	6	0
Innovation	5	5	0
Scaling up	5	4	-1
Environment and natural resources management	5	5	0
Adaptation to climate change	5	5	0
<b>Overall project achievement<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Performance of partners<sup>d</sup></b>			
IFAD	5	5	0
Government of Sudan	4	4	0
<b>Average net disconnect</b>			<b>-1/12= -0.08</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.

### Ratings of the project completion report quality

	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCRVR rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Candour		5	
Lessons		4	
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)		4	
Scope		5	
Overall rating of the project completion report		4	

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.

## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AF	Additional financing
ASAP	Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme
BIRD	Butana Integrated Rural Development Project
CSPE	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
NRGF	Natural resource governance framework
ORMS	Operational Results Management System
PCR	Project Completion Report
PCR	Project Completion Report Validation

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