

Project Completion Report Validation

Commodity Value Chain Support Project

Republic of Cameroon

Date of validation by IOE: August 2019

I. Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region	West and Central Africa	Total project costs	24.3		21.9	
Country	Cameroon	IFAD loan and percentage of total	19.2	79%	17.75	81%
Loan number	805-CM	Borrower	3.6	14.8%	3.5	16%
Type of project (subsector)	Value chain development	Cofinancier 1				
Financing type	loan	Cofinancier 2				
Lending terms*	Highly concessional	Cofinancier 3				
Date of approval	22/04/2010	Cofinancier 4				
Date of loan signature	27/09/2010	Beneficiaries	1.5	6%	0.62	2%
Date of effectiveness	18/10/2010	Other sources				
Loan amendments	2016	Number of beneficiaries	134,000		78,528 ¹	
Loan closure extensions	None	Project completion date	31/12/2017		31/12/2017	
Country programme managers	Sylvie Marzin (2009-2011)- Nadine Gbossa (2011-2013) - Bernard Hien (2013-2018)	Loan closing date	30/06/2018		30/06/2018	
Regional director(s)	Lisandro Martin; Ides de Willebois; Mohammed Beavogui	Mid-term review			02/11/2015	
Project completion report reviewer	Diane Abi Khalil	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)			94.8	
Project completion report quality control panel	Fumiko Nakai	Date of the project completion report			11/06/2018	

Source: President's report, ORMS & Project completion report (PCR).

* The loan would have a term of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years, with a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75 per cent) per annum.

¹ It is not clear how this number is calculated. The PCR reported in p. vi a total number of 78,528 persons (direct: 2527 members of common initiative groups (CIGs) and 2,860 producers – indirect :13,829 households – women 21,679, in addition to service providers and NGOs)

II. Project outline

1. **Introduction.** The Commodity Value Chain Support Project (PADFA) in Cameroon was approved in April 2010 and the loan was signed in September 2010. The project entered into force in October 2010 and was expected to be implemented over a period of seven years. The key focus of the project was to improve viability of the value chains by strengthening the capacity of value chain stakeholders, namely producers' organizations.
2. **Project area.** The project covered the geographical areas of the Extreme-North, the North and the North-West, considered as the poorest area per household survey, ECAM 4.² The priority value chains (rice and onion) were identified based on potential profitability and accessibility by targeted groups.
3. **Project goal, objectives and components.** According to the President's report, the overall goal of the project was to reduce poverty, increase incomes and improve the food security of the target group through the enhanced competitiveness of locally produced rice and onions. The specific objectives of the project were to: (i) increase the production of rice and onions; (ii) improve the conservation, processing and marketing of the target commodities; and (iii) strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of smallholder farmers of rice and onions. The project was constituted of three main components:
 - (i) Support to production (63 per cent of the total estimated cost); this component aimed at increasing the production of rice and onion by strengthening the capacities of producers and developing irrigation schemes;
 - (ii) Support to marketing and organizational development (19.5 per cent of the total estimated cost) that aimed at increasing demand for agricultural products, promoting post-harvest and ensuring a more balanced distribution of benefits between stakeholders for the benefit of producers. Activities under this component included: building and rehabilitation of storage facilities, technical training, improving the access to inputs and markets, set up collaborative platforms;
 - (iii) Project coordination and knowledge management (17.5 per cent of the total estimated cost).
4. **Target group.** According to the President's report, the main target groups were composed of: (i) smallholder farmers with limited access to technologies and to input and output markets; (ii) women who were generally agricultural labourers involved in post-harvest activities; (iii) youth who were dynamic, but lacked productive activities; and (iv) vulnerable people, particularly food-insecure households.³ Women and youth were considered particularly vulnerable and a priority category for the project⁴ and the priority target producer organizations (POs) would be those in which women and youth account for at least 30 per cent of the members. The project was expected to reach 134,000 beneficiaries including 1,190 groups. The geographical targeting focused on the Extreme-North, North, North-West and West regions where rice and onions are produced.
5. **Financing.** The total estimated cost of the project at design was US\$24.39 million. The IFAD contribution through a loan amounted to US\$19.14 million. The Government contribution amounted to US\$3.6 million and the one of the beneficiaries to US\$1.4 million. The tables below show the cost of the project and its component at appraisal and the actual expenditures. Table 2 presents the data in FCFA as the equivalent in US\$ was not reported.

² Household survey, Enquête camerounaise auprès des ménages «Tendances, profil et déterminants de la pauvreté au Cameroun en 2007».

³ Vulnerable groups are defined in the design report as widows and female headed households, disabled, and young or family affected with HIV.

⁴ Design report, p. 8.

Table 1
Project cost by financier

<i>Funding source</i>	<i>Planned expenditure at appraisal</i>	<i>Actual expenditure</i>	<i>% disbursed</i>
IFAD loan	19 194 467	17 757 056	93
Government	3 630 032	3 565 874	98
Beneficiaries	1 465 565	629 900	43
Total	24 390 064	21 952 829	90.38

Source: President's report & PCR.

Table 2
Project cost by component (FCFA)

<i>Component</i>	<i>Allocation at appraisal</i>	<i>Total expenditure</i>	<i>% disbursed</i>
Support to production	7 342 069 375	5 393 310 834	72
Support to marketing and organizational development	2 269 855 763	1 642 348 658	72.35
Project coordination and knowledge management	2 047 224 336	3 861 789 631	188.64
Total	11 659 149 474	10 897 449 123	93.4

Source: PCR.

US\$1 = FCFA 551 (November 2017, as per PCR).

6. **Project implementation.** The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development was the lead agency of the project. The project coordination and management unit (PCMU) had its headquarter in Yaoundé, with two regional offices: North/Extreme-North Regions and West/North-West Regions. Key implementing partners included cooperatives, the Ministry of Commerce, public and private sector service providers, and NGOs. IFAD supervised the project through its country office based in Yaoundé.
7. The PADFA was implemented according to the approach "faire-faire" involving public and private operators based on their areas of competence and comparative advantages for the implementation of the activities. Common initiative groups (CIGs), which later became cooperatives, were the main entry point of the project.
8. **Intervention logic.** The objective of PADFA was to reduce poverty, increase incomes and improve the food security through the development of competitive value chains. In order to achieve its objectives, PADFA supported productive investments by supporting the production and improving irrigated schemes and water management, together with storage facilities and the support for processing and marketing. Strengthening the capacities of producers and their organizations was vital in order to achieve the objectives and ensure the sustainability of benefits. PADFA also supported complementary investments such as road feeder and trainings.
9. **Changes in the context and development during implementation.** The changes made to the project during its implementation period included the following:
 - a. Following the Uniform Act that is related to the legislation on cooperatives and that was adopted by the Government in May 2011, the project shifted

- its support to cooperatives instead of CIGs.⁵ Although the shift was in line with the Government orientation, it still caused delays in supporting the cooperatives and affected the implementation of some related activities;
- b. The increase in the size of the irrigation schemes from 10 ha to 250 ha each;
 - c. The increase in the size of the storage facilities, initially conceived for POs, from 40m² to 250m². The increase allowed the facilities to become multifunctional and equipped with materials for production and processing while being managed by the cooperatives.
10. In addition to these changes, the North and Extreme North were affected by recurrent drought and attacks by Boko Haram, forcing many villagers to abandon their lands and villages.
 11. **Delivery of outputs.** The number of POs reached 107.2 per cent of the initial target (1,276 POs compared to the target of 1,190 POs).⁶ Overall, the outputs for the components were delivered at different rates, exceeding in some cases the initial targets for instance for the trainings of producers and the cultivated land with improved seeds. In other cases, the delivery rates varied between 44 and 61 per cent such in the case of the irrigation schemes. The implementation of the latter was constrained by weak technical capacities and human resources. A list of outputs delivered by the project against target can be found in Annex III. However, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was not functional and could not provide information on all the indicators in the logical framework. This was also observed in supervision reports and the PCR.

III. Review of findings

A. Core criteria

Relevance

12. **Relevance of objectives.** PADFA was aligned with the Government policies and strategies in terms of rural poverty reduction and food security. The development of agricultural sector, at the centre of the project's intervention, was part of the Government strategic axes including: (i) strengthening growth through economic diversification; (ii) boosting the private sector as a driver of growth and partner in the provision of social services; and (iii) the integration of poor groups into the economic circuit. The project was in line with IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010 responding to the strategic objective of ensuring that poor rural people have better and sustainable access to technologies and to input and output markets. The objectives were also consistent with the IFAD's country strategic opportunities programme 2007-2012 that was built on two specific objectives: strengthen the organisational capacity and negotiating power of the rural poor; increase the opportunities for sustainable remunerative farm and non-farm activities for the rural poor).
13. **Relevance of design.** PADFA adopted the approach of strengthening POs and developing value chain whereby a PO would partner with different stakeholders within the value chain. This approach was significant to achieve the objectives. In general, the interventions were relevant to the needs of the target population and addressed various constraints such as low productivity, difficulties in accessing quality inputs, limited production capacities, and weak capacities and structures of producer' organisations. The constructions of multifunctional cooperatives-managed facilities that are equipped with production, processing and transport equipment are based on a value chain development approach. The selected commodities were the main crops in the covered areas. The onion was considered

⁵ The CIG is an organization of economic and social development of individual volunteers with common interests, which carry the group through joint initiatives. It can be transformed in cooperative society.

⁶ There are discrepancies in the number of beneficiaries reached and there might be a double counting.

to have the potential of increasing farmers' income while the rice had high demand also due to the possibility of storing it without any processing.

14. Despite these positive aspects, and as noted in the Country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE), the design of the project was too ambitious and the approach was too simplified and did not take into consideration the available means and capabilities. The CIGs/cooperatives were able to manage small-scale irrigation schemes but their capacities were overestimated for managing larger irrigation schemes and multifunctional warehouses. PADFA focused on improving production but made little efforts in terms of marketing, which was basically limited to storage infrastructures and some processing equipment. Moreover, the rain-fed rice cultivation is risky given the likelihood of droughts and climate hazards in the country.
15. **Relevance of targeting.** The project focused on rural areas with very high poverty rates. The selection of producers and their existing groups (CIGs) was guided by the common know-how and by the expertise of farmers. The vulnerable people were part of the intended target group but the project did not have a specific strategy to ensure their inclusion and the PCR remained silent on that category thus making it difficult to assess whether they have benefitted from the interventions.
16. In conclusion, the project was well aligned with the IFAD and Government priorities in terms of food security and poverty reduction. It was designed according to beneficiaries' needs. The interventions were relevant to the objectives, but the design was too ambitious and complex, and did not take into consideration the available means and capacities. While targeting was relevant, it lacked a clear strategy to reach the most vulnerable categories. The PCR rating for relevance is **moderately satisfactory (4)**, which is one point below the PCR rating.

Effectiveness

Objective (i) Increase the production of rice and onions

17. Increasing the production of rice and onions was largely achieved. It can be considered as the most significant result of the project. PADFA contributed to the increase in cultivated lands with improved seeds (83 per cent of the target of 700 ha for onions; 100 per cent of the target of 1,280 ha for rice) and to an increase in yields from 1.92 t/ha to 2.56 t/ha for rice and from 6.75 t/ha to 9.37 t/ha for onion (increase by 33.3 and 38.9 per cent respectively). It exceeded the mid-term review (MTR) target which was an increase of 25 per cent. The increase was possible thanks to a combination of activities. Both the PCR and the Cameroon CSPE conducted in 2018 noted that the project was very successful in terms of agricultural extension services. The know-how offered by the Ministry of Agriculture has proven to be essential at this level. Practical training combined with the provision of improved seeds, and other inputs, mainly through farmer schools and collective demonstration fields, enabled participants to fully understand the effects of the use of improved techniques on yields. The partnership with research centres such as IRAD and AVRDC⁷ contributed to the introduction of new varieties of seeds that were valued by the producers. Therefore, the combination of improved agriculture practices, farmers' field schools and access to inputs contributed to the increase in production.
18. Irrigated schemes were not fully developed. The project faced difficulties finalizing these infrastructures, reaching 46.5 per cent of the target set at MTR. Implementation took place between 2014 and 2017 whereby the infrastructures were handed over at the end of the project. The development of these schemes was hindered by the weak capacities of contractors, the lack of involvement of the

⁷ IRAD, Agriculture research centre for development – AVRDC, The world vegetable centre.

technical department in the Ministry of Agriculture and the staff turn-over, namely rural engineer in the PCMU.⁸

Objective (ii) Improve the conservation, processing and marketing of the target commodities

19. PADFA was expected to improve post-harvest handling and ensure a more balanced distribution of benefits between the different actors in the value chain. This objective was partially met and progress within its components merely reached 29 per cent in December 2016.⁹ The main reason behind the under-performance was due to significant delays in the implementation of irrigation schemes under the first objective and in the construction of storage facilities.
20. The organization of producers in cooperatives was paramount for the members to defend their interests and incomes together within the value chains. However, the cooperatives did not reach the level of maturity and autonomy to allow them to ensure these tasks (see objective iii). On the other hand, the CSPE noted that the storage facilities seemed to be effectively used for storing rice and onion, thus allowing producers to sell their production later in the year when prices were higher.¹⁰ This was also confirmed by the economic and financial analysis carried by the project.¹¹ According to the PCR, the warrantage system introduced by PADFA contributed to the extension of the storage period, to the increase of selling prices on the market and to a significant loss in the post-harvest period (a loss of 20 per cent compared to 40 per cent before the project). But the system was still at its inception and needed to be consolidated.
21. Given that processed onions did not have demands on market, processing was limited to rice-hulling.¹² The CSPE noted that, in general, the quantity of the delivered equipment was very low (almost 8 per cent of target¹³) and the quality was poor given that some rice hulling worked for few months.¹⁴ PADFA built feeder roads to facilitate the movement of the population and the goods; however, merely 4 km were built (44 per cent of target), leaving some irrigation schemes unreachable.
22. The WhatsApp created by the project contributed to an exchange of information on prices and markets linking the producers with different actors. This system, however, was unstable and was subject to internet connectivity issues. The consultative platforms created for each of the value chains were still at their inception phase and initial steps towards the establishment of links with two existing national producers' platforms only took place at the end of the project. The outcomes cannot hence be assessed.
23. Marketing and structuring of value chains were the weakest points of the project. Marketing aspects were limited to storage facilities, information on prices and warrantage. Improved access to markets was one of the expected outcomes of the project, but an effective strategy on this subject was not developed, as was also acknowledged by the PCR.¹⁵ PADFA did not develop any sustainable partnership between market operators and producers nor did it build contractual relations among actors within the value chain.

Objective (iii) Strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of smallholder farmers of rice and onions

24. Strengthening the capacity building of producers was a key element in the project, and was part of IFAD's strategy in the country. Overall, the implementation was

⁸ MTR, p. 3.

⁹ PADFA supervision report, December 2016.

¹⁰ CSPE, p. 38.

¹¹ PCR, Annex 10, p. 93.

¹² PADFA, supervision report December 2016, p.7.

¹³ PCR, Appendix 9, RIMS data.

¹⁴ CSPE, p. 35.

¹⁵ PCR, p. 39 & p. 59.

satisfactory and 92 per cent of the target was reached. Capacity building included the technical aspect of production, management, marketing and other related training activities as discussed under objective (i). The PCR highlighted that these trainings were useful for the beneficiaries; however, the majority were intensively delivered towards the end of the project. The CSPE noted that optimal conditions for knowledge transfer were not always created; for example, the training on warrantage was delivered when storage facilities were not yet available.

25. Twenty-three water management committees were created. Sixty-one per cent of the target members were trained on managing and maintaining irrigated perimeters, but merely 12 committees were functional upon completion. In terms of the cooperatives, 48 were created and registered and 25 were closely supported, benefitting from the storage facilities and equipment provided by PADFA.¹⁶ Despite the training and support received, these cooperatives remained fragile with little autonomy. These fresh institutions would still need further support to enable them to reach a certain level of maturity that would allow them to develop management capacities and negotiation skills, and to mobilize both human and financial resources for their activities.
26. **Factors that affected the effectiveness.** PADFA witnessed three stages during implementation. The first stage was marked by a slow start and delays in putting together a PCMU. Consequently, the project period was reduced to five years and the activities during this stage were limited to production. The second stage was marked by the weakness of service providers that resulted in low physical implementation (23 per cent).¹⁷ Adaptation to the new strategic approach of supporting cooperatives instead of CIGs (previously supported by other IFAD funded projects) was a long process that slowed down the implementation of certain activities. A slow recruitment process following the death of the coordinator marked the third and last stage. Many activities were implemented in the final years of the project with a weak sense of ownership by the beneficiaries (e.g. the construction of storage facilities, the registration of cooperatives, the acquisition and delivery of equipment such hulling machines, tricycles for transporting products, motor cultivators, scales, etc.).¹⁸
27. In conclusion, PADFA was able to achieve partially its objectives. The support for production was clearly the most successful achievement whereby production increased thanks to the quality of inputs and effective extension services. The support of value chain through the planned interventions was partially achieved with modest results in terms of processing, storage and marketing. The project strengthened technical and organizational capacity of smallholder farmers, but cooperatives have not yet reached a level of maturity and autonomy given the project support came late because of a new legislation. The PCRV rating for effectiveness is **moderately satisfactory (4)**, in line with the PCR rating.

Efficiency

28. PADFA became effective in October 2010, six months after its approval. The effectiveness lag was better compared to other IFAD supported projects in Cameroon where it varied between 9 and 27 months. The first disbursement occurred in January 2012, 18 months after the effectiveness date. At completion, the disbursement rate of the IFAD loan was 95 per cent.
29. The efficiency of PADFA was hindered by the delays in the start-up and in the implementation caused by different factors, including: the slow recruitment process of the management unit;¹⁹ the limited capacities of the service providers and public

¹⁶ The PCR was silent on the remaining 23 cooperatives.

¹⁷ 20.8 per cent for irrigation schemes, 29 per cent for storage facilities, and at that time, the strengthening of POs had just started. PCR, p.6.

¹⁸ PCR, p. viii.

¹⁹ It took one year to recruit key staff.

technical departments; the poor capacity of the PCMU; the high turnover of key project staff and the death of the coordinator.²⁰ These delays resulted in low physical execution rate - only 23 per cent at MTR, while the financial execution rate was much higher at 63 per cent due to over-expenditures particularly in the project coordination and knowledge management component (already 121 per cent of the budgeted component cost then). The implementation improved after MTR and mainly during the last year of the project following the recruitment of the new coordinator. Nonetheless, the physical execution rate reached only 83 per cent at completion and some activities remained under-implemented such as the irrigation schemes (46 per cent of the target).

30. The **management and coordination cost** which amounted to 15.2 per cent of the project cost at appraisal almost doubled reaching 32 per cent at completion.²¹ Consequently, component 3 *project coordination and knowledge management* was disbursed at 188 per cent. A number of factors contributed to this significant increase including delays in recruitment, in the preparation of the procedures manual, in the implementation of the technical component while operating costs were still running.
31. The estimated **internal rate of return** at completion (15.5 per cent) was less than the one estimated at appraisal (17 per cent). The PCR explained that the decrease was due to the delays in implementation mainly in establishing storage facilities and irrigation schemes that resulted in low economic advantages. An analysis carried at completion to assess the effects of the project on the economic activities of the beneficiaries showed positive results, excluding the production of the rain-fed rice.
32. In conclusion, PADFA efficiency was hindered by major factors specifically by delays in the start-up and implementation phase and by the high management and coordination cost. The PCRV rates efficiency **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**, in line with the PCR rating.

Rural poverty impact

33. The assessment of rural poverty impact in the following paragraphs builds on data taken from the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) and from the results of the final stakeholders workshop integrated in the PCR. The M&E was not operational. Despite all the efforts invested to improve the system, the project document noted that no changes were recorded and a database on beneficiaries was not established. The PCR noted that the impact on beneficiaries was the result of different combined activities but could not attribute all the positive results to one project only.²² In light of the above, it is challenging to assess the different impact domains and their attribution to PADFA.
34. **Household incomes and assets.** The PCR noted that 58.7 and 70.8 per cent of onions and rice producers, respectively, witnessed an increase in their incomes between 2011 and 2017 as compared to 51.4 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively, of non-beneficiaries (interviewed by the mission). The PCR attributed the increase to a combination of activities including training, equipment and processing. It is plausible that the introduction of a second annual crop of rice had contributed to an income increase but it is difficult to assess the magnitude of this impact due to the lack of related data. RIMS reported some modest increases in some assets and decreases in others; although there is no evidence that these results can be attributed to the intervention of PADFA.²³

²⁰ Two coordinators, three administrative and financial officers, three heads of antenna, four rural engineering specialists, PCR p. 28.

²¹ Calculation made by the CSPE on 31/07/2017, five months before the project completion, CSPE p. 40.

²² PCR, p. 19.

²³ For instance, a decrease in number of households with herds, an increase in number of households with motorbikes and with access to electricity.

35. **Food security and agricultural productivity.** A slight decrease in chronic child malnutrition was registered (33 per cent compared to 35 per cent at baseline). It is possible that the increase in production allowed an increase in food consumption for some producers but the PCR did not provide further data that would quantify the magnitude of impact on food security. The only available information was the increase in the food scarcity period that was likely due to external factors including insecurity and drought.
36. The supported interventions contributed to the increase in agricultural yields and production. The increase in production was estimated at 161 per cent for rice and 91.6 per cent for onion (22,722 tons of rice and 10,505 tons of onions compared to 8,700 tons for rice and 5,483 for onions respectively). An increase in yield was also observed; 33.3 per cent for rice and 38.9 per cent for onion.²⁴ The improvement in productivity and production, in general, could be attributed to the adoption of good agricultural practices, to access to inputs (including improved seeds) and to the increase in cultivated lands as explained under *effectiveness*-objective (i). The reported increases in yields could have positively impacted food security, as recognized by the CSPE; however, there is no clear evidence that could confirm the theory.
37. **Human and social capital and empowerment.** The project invested efforts in training producers and their cooperatives in different fields (improved agricultural techniques, management, production...). Both the PCR and the CSPE agreed on their effectiveness and impact on the beneficiaries. In fact, the majority of producers interviewed by the CSPE mission confirmed that agricultural techniques were relevant to their needs.²⁵
38. **Institutions and policies.** The creation of cooperatives and the enhancement of their capacities were major elements in the project. Cooperatives were able to satisfactorily manage their organizations, including inventory management, simple accounting, and the maintenance of small machines (e.g. tricycles, motorcycle). They also had a modest knowledge of the warrantage system. Because of all the delays that occurred and because of the Government Act related to cooperatives (that slowed down related activities), it was not possible to complete some of the trainings, particularly in terms of savings mobilization, management of inventory, marketing and links with the financial sector. Hence, their autonomy and capacities remained limited. Given the establishment of the cooperatives at a late stage of the project, it is likely that significant support to capacity development would still be needed. The project did not have any impact/influence on policies.
39. In conclusion, the available information does not allow a full accurate assessment of this criterion and the positive results cannot be attributed solely to PADFA. A significant increase in production was registered. Impact on human capital was positive, and the impact on institutions was modest given that the related activities were delivered at a late stage of the project. The PCRV rates rural poverty impact as **moderately satisfactory (4)**, in line with the PCR rating.

Sustainability of benefits

40. The PCR noted that a second phase of PADFA (PADFA II)²⁶ would consolidate the achievements; otherwise what has been acquired by producers and their organizations would be at risk.
41. PADFA appeared to be socially sustainable as it responded to the beneficiaries' needs and priorities and implemented activities to empower them. All activities were well accepted by the beneficiaries. The technical package proposed by PADFA was likely to be sustainable, given the increase in cultivated lands and production.

²⁴ An increase from 1.92 t/ha to 2.56 t/ha for rice and from 6.75 t/ha to 9.37 t/ha for onions.

²⁵ CSPE, p. 45.

²⁶ The design mission took place in 2018.

PADFA followed effective approaches in training producers, through demonstration and practice, and producers seemed to have adopted the new techniques that could sustain the increase in production. Access to inputs may be limited by the absence of sustainable mechanisms for the procurement of inputs and by the lack of finance once the project stops funding the seed programme with the IRAD. The PCR noted that infrastructures, such as irrigation schemes and storage facilities that were not fully completed at the time of the programme completion, may as well be at risk without the Government involvement.²⁷

42. Institutional sustainability could be only guaranteed in case the cooperatives were made autonomous and were able to provide services to their members, which was not the case in PADFA. At the end of the project, these cooperatives did not reach the level of functionality and autonomy that would allow them to effectively defend the interest of their members. Their likelihood to effectively carry and implement activities such as the procurement of input, storage, processing, marketing and warrantage are low. Partnerships between producers and other operators within the value chain were almost absent, thus making the value chain incomplete.
43. In conclusion, technically speaking, PADFA has a potential for sustainability. There are still some substantial risks related to the infrastructures, the autonomy of cooperatives and the structuring of value chains. The PCRV rating on sustainability of benefits is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)** in line with the PCR rating.

B. Other performance criteria

Innovation and scaling up

44. **Innovation.** PADFA introduced successful technological innovations related to production. In particular, it introduced new agricultural techniques, a new variety of seeds with higher production in collaboration with the IRAD and a second yearly season of irrigated rice. These innovations contributed to the increase in production. The creation of collaborative platforms for the value chains is another innovation that was still at inception during the completion phase of the project.
45. The PCRV rating for innovation is **satisfactory (5)**, in line with the PCR rating.
46. **Scaling up.** Given the delays in implementation, innovations introduced by PADFA were still being tested at completion and the PCR rather mentioned "the potential" of scaling these innovations. The PCRV rating for this criterion is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)** in line with the PCR rating.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

47. Women's participation in activities reached its target of 30 per cent. For instance, women represented 28 per cent of the beneficiaries; 30 per cent of producers benefitting from the interventions; 28 per cent of inputs and seeds beneficiaries; 30 per cent of beneficiaries trained on production and processing; 40 per cent of those trained on PO management and 25 per cent occupying leadership roles in their cooperatives. Information and evidence on women's economic empowerment, equitable distribution of household responsibilities and their access to lands that was highlighted as a problem in the design report,²⁸ is not available in the report. Twenty-six per cent of young people were trained in management of PO and 23.5 per cent were members of the executive boards of PO. While these numbers show that youth were included in the activities and it is likely that they have benefited from this inclusion, there is no data on their empowerment or on changes in their living conditions. No gender strategy was developed and the approaches don't take the gender aspect into consideration, as highlighted also by supervision reports.²⁹

²⁷ PCR, p. 36.

²⁸ Design report, p. 3 and 20.

²⁹ PADFA supervision report, p. 19, December 2016.

48. The CSPE noted that capacities within the PCMU were not sufficient in tackling gender issues, resulting in little attention to gender equality and women's empowerment.³⁰
49. In conclusion, the gender approach was more focused on quotas for women's and youth participation to activities. It did not tackle their empowerment and autonomy. The PCRV rating for gender equality and women's empowerment is **moderately satisfactory (4)**, one point below the PCR rating.

Environment and natural resources management

50. The proposed irrigation schemes and the expansion of the rain-fed rice cultivation were the only project investments that were likely to have negative impact on the environment. The implementation of these investments was preceded by studies to identify measures mitigating the negative effects, particularly the use of chemical fertilizers, equitable distribution and management of plots. Moreover, the varieties of seeds coupled with agricultural techniques were adapted to the environment and required a low usage of chemical products.³¹
51. The PCRV rating for this criterion is **moderately satisfactory (4)**, one point above the PCR rating.

Adaptation to climate change

52. The design of the PADFA did not include particular measures to adapt to climate change. The introduction of short-cycle rice varieties, less sensitive to rain shortage was a relevant activity for target groups and for the development of irrigation schemes that was expected to increase the resilience of producers to climate changes. However, only 46 per cent of these schemes were implemented, reducing the likelihood of increasing resilience. The PCRV rating for this criterion is **moderately satisfactory (4)**, in line with the PCR rating.

C. Overall project achievement

53. The overall objective of PADFA was to reduce poverty, increase incomes and improve the food security through the development of competitive value chains. It cannot be claimed that the results achieved at the end of the project contributed to this objective. Neither the PCR nor the PCRV can confirm that the impact on the target population were to be attributed to PADFA.
54. In general, PADFA was, to a great extent, in line with IFAD and the Government strategies, and responding to the needs of the target groups. The dissemination of agricultural production techniques, new performing varieties of seeds and a second yearly season or irrigated rice were positive and contributed to an increase in production and productivity. Strengthening the technical and organizational capacities of smallholder farmers yielded positive results, although further support is needed.
55. The performance of PADFA was nevertheless affected by many factors. The design was complex and too ambitious, given the available means and capacities. Other relevant activities supporting the value chains, including infrastructures and access to market, were not fully achieved and many were only implemented in the last two years of the project. Little attention was given to marketing and processing. The approach to gender was focused on participation, but the project did not pay much attention to women's economic empowerment. The efficiency of the project was hindered by significant delays in the start-up and implementation phases of the project, significant turnover of staff and weak capacities of service providers. The delays have often reduced the time for completion and consolidation of achievements. This obviously affected the sustainability of the benefits.

³⁰ CSPE, p. 56.

³¹ CSPE, p. 57.

56. The PCRV rates overall project achievement as **moderately satisfactory (4)**, in line with the PCR rating.

D. Performance of partners

57. **IFAD.** As mentioned under relevance, the design of PADFA was complex and ambitious. The CSPE noted that the design did not take into consideration the lessons learnt from a previous IFAD supported project in Cameroon;³² in particular, the long duration required for strengthening the capacities of POs was not considered. Supervision missions were organized on a regular basis, involving technical experts. They provided relevant recommendations mainly at the fiduciary and technical level, although these recommendations were not always implemented by the PCMU.
58. The PCRV rating for the performance of IFAD is **moderately satisfactory (4)**, one point below the PCR rating.
59. **Government.** The start-up activities carried out by the Government were delayed. The recruitment of the PCMU took almost one year and launching the project software took 15 months. The first disbursement occurred 18 months after the signature of the financial agreement. The PCR highlighted the positive engagement of the Government in the supervision missions and the MTR, mobilizing competent technical experts. The engagement of the steering committee was very limited in terms of ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of the activities and monitoring the project was almost absent. It convened one session per year and did not provide any close follow up. The involvement of the technical departments in supervising technical aspects of some activities and their interaction with others was also insufficient.³³
60. The capacity of the PCMU in terms of planning, management and M&E were weak. The PCMU faced challenges in managing fiduciary procedures and contracts, in following-up and in supervising the implementation of the works. This lack of capacities resulted in weak implementation of some activities including marketing which was a strategic element in developing value chains. The M&E system remained non-operational until the project completion, despite the several attempts to improve it. The performance of the PCMU improved following the recruitment of a new coordinator in 2016, thus resulting in higher physical and financial execution rates. However, most of the activities were implemented in 2017.
61. The PCRV rating for the Government performance is **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**, the same rating of the PCR.

IV. Assessment of PCR quality

62. **Scope.** The PCR covered all sections as per the PCR guidelines and annexes were included. Some basic information such as financial data on component and accurate data on beneficiaries' numbers were not available. The PCRV rating for PCR scope is **moderately satisfactory (4)**.
63. **Quality.** The PCR process was inclusive and a final workshop was organized with beneficiaries and various partners in order to discuss the performance of the project. Quantitative evidence provided in support of statements made was quite limited. There is limited information on the impact of the project such as on incomes and the changes that it induced on women's empowerment and youth. The information was rather on their participation in the supported activities. The PCRV rates this criterion as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

³² Community Development Support Project.

³³ PCR, p. 59.

64. **Lessons.** The lessons learned reported by the PCR were relevant and useful in summarizing the results of the project for each thematic. There were also foreseen as lessons for PADFA II to build on. The PCRV rates lessons **satisfactory (5)**.
65. **Candour.** The PCR reported positive and negative results. It clearly explained the weaknesses and shortcomings in the implementation phase. Nevertheless, the ratings were very positive given the results and not always in line with the narratives. The PCRV rating for candour is **moderately satisfactory (4)**.
66. **Overall PCR quality** is rated as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

V. Lessons learned

67. Useful and relevant lessons drawn from the PCR include the following:
 - a. Transfer of responsibility to cooperatives should be gradual and well mastered. Failing to do so could bring more problems rather than solutions.
 - b. The size of the collective equipment (such as buildings, hulling machines, etc.) provided to cooperatives should not be standardized. It should, rather, take into account the capacities of the cooperatives in production, the existence and/or proximity of similar services and the specific realities of the different basins (including total production, processing/husking needs, and market demand for finished products).
 - c. The establishment of databases of competent service providers at regional and local levels could help mitigate the risks associated with poor recruitment.
68. Additional lessons from the PCRV:
 - a. Supporting value chain stakeholders both upstream and downstream is necessary for the development of value chains. Failing to do so would limit the value chain development.
 - b. Strategic plans should be supported by an adequate analysis on resource capacities needed to implement them, and by a proper follow up of the planned activities. It is essential to ensure that systems in place are sustainable and capable of mobilizing internal resources and providing services for their members.

Definition and rating of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Criteria	Definition *	Mandatory	To be rated
Rural poverty impact	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. <i>Four impact domains</i>	X	Yes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human and social capital and empowerment: Human and social capital and empowerment include an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the empowerment of individuals, the quality of grass-roots organizations and institutions, 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. 		No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions and policies: The criterion relating to institutions and policies is designed to assess changes in the quality and performance of institutions, policies and the regulatory framework that influence the lives of the poor. 		No
Project performance	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
Other performance criteria			
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>
Overall project achievement	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 and scaling up, as well as environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.	X	Yes
Performance of partners			
• 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^a

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Programme Management Department (PMD) rating</i>	<i>IOE Project Completion Report Validation (PCR) rating</i>	<i>Net rating disconnect (PCR-PMD)</i>
Rural poverty impact	4	4	0
Project performance			
Relevance	5	4	-1
Effectiveness	4	4	0
Efficiency	3	3	0
Sustainability of benefits	3	3	0
Project performance^b	3.75	3.50	-0.25
Other performance criteria			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	5	4	-1
Innovation	5	5	0
Scaling up	3	3	0
Environment and natural resources management	3	4	+1
Adaptation to climate change	4	4	0
Overall project achievement^c	4	4	0
Performance of partners^d			
IFAD	5	4	-1
Government	3	3	0
Average net disconnect			-2/12=-0.16

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

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

^c 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 and scaling up, environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.

^d 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 PCR rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Candour		4	
Lessons		5	
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)		4	
Scope		4	
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.

Delivery of outputs

<i>Output</i>	<i>Revised targets at MTR</i>		<i>Actual</i>	<i>% delivered</i>
Organizations of supported producers	1 190		1305	109%
Members of GIC trained	2 380		2 527	106%
Members of management committees trained	358		220	61%
Increased yield of onion	25%		38.9%	155.6% *
Increased yield of rice	25%		33.3%	133%*
Trained producers on specific techniques and technologies	2860		2607	91,2%
Cultivated areas with improved seeds (ha)	1280 (rice) & 840 (onion)	more 1280 (riz) & 700 (onion)	More than 100% (rice) & 83% (onion)	
cooperatives created			48	
Irrigation schemes (ha) ³⁴	1575		733	46%
Storage facilities-rehabilitated	2		2	100%
Storage facilities – built	22		21	95%
Feeder road (km)	9		4	44%

Source: PCR.

*According to the PCRV calculation.

³⁴ The PCR observed discrepancies in the sizes of schemes reported.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIG	Common initiative group
CSPE	Country strategy and programme evaluation
IRAD	Agriculture research centre for development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MTR	Mid-term review
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PADFA	Commodity Value Chain Support Project (Projet d'Appui au Développement des Filières Agricoles)
PCMU	Project coordination and management unit
PCR	Project completion report
PCRV	Project completion report validation
PO	Producer organization
RIMS	Results and impact management system

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