

Project Completion Report Validation

Hilly Areas Sustainable Agriculture Development Project (HASAD)

Republic of Lebanon

Date of validation by IOE: April 2020

I. Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region	Near East North Africa and Europe	Total project costs	16.64		17.02	
Country	Republic of Lebanon	IFAD loan and percentage of total	4.00	24%	3.45 ¹	20%
IFAD Loan number	791-LB	IFAD grant and percentage of total	0.60	4%	0.6	4%
IFAD Grant number	1195-LB					
IFAD project ID	1100001421	OPEC Fund for International Development ²	8.41	51%	4.54	27%
Type of project (subsector)	Agricultural Development	Government of Lebanon	1.75	11%	2.44	14%
Financing type	Loan and grant	Beneficiaries	1.88	11%	3.80	22%
Lending terms	Ordinary	WFP and AgriCAL			2.19	13%
Date of approval	15 September 2009					
Date of signature	17 June 2010					
Date of effectiveness	19 April 2012					
Amendment	None ³					
Project closure extension	One-year extension (from 30 June 2018 to 30 June 2019)	Number of beneficiaries	23,890 at appraisal reduced to 3,925 at midterm		6,170	
Country programme managers	S. Akroush (current) ⁴	Project closing date			31/12/2019	
Regional director(s)	K. Bouzar (current) ⁵	Mid-term review			5 – 18 September 2015	
Project completion report reviewer	Chiara Calvosa	IFAD disbursement at project completion (%)			Loan: 92.5% Grant: 100%	
PCRV quality control panel	Eoghan Molloy Fabrizio Felloni	Date of the project completion report			12 February 2020	

Source: HASAD Project Completion Report (PCR), 2020.

¹ Actual disbursement reported in the IFAD's Financial Management Dashboard is SDR2.406 million or 92.5 per cent of the approved amount of SDR2.600 million. The difference with the amount reported in IFAD's Operational Results Management System (ORMS) in US\$ is due to exchange rate.

² Figure for actual disbursement as reported in the PCR and IFAD's ORMS.

³ As reported in the PCR.

⁴ Previous Country Programme Managers: T. Selim, A. Hanafi, A. Merzouk, T. Kotb, A. Abdouli (Country Programme Manager *ad interim*).

⁵ Previous directors: N. Khouri.

II. Project outline

Country & Project Name	Republic of Lebanon, Hilly Areas Sustainable Agricultural Development Project (HASAD).
Project duration	Total project duration: nearly 10 years; Executive Board Approval: 15 September 2009; Date of Effectiveness: 19 April 2012; 31 months effectiveness lag; Actual completion date: 30 June 2019. One-year no-cost extension granted.
Project goal, objectives and components	The overall goal of the project was to reduce rural poverty by substantially increasing the agricultural productivity and income of the targeted households in the project area. The project objectives were: (i) improvements in soil and water management and development of small and medium-size water harvesting and soil and water conservation measures; (ii) improvements in agricultural productivity and market linkages for small farmers by provision of technical support services; and (iii) strengthened capacities of the project implementing agencies and farmer organizations. The project had the following three components: (i) water and soil conservation development; (ii) technical support to farmers; and (iii) project coordination and management.
Project area and target group	The target group comprised poor smallholders of hilly areas and communities directly or indirectly affected by the July 2006 war in the following zones: Akkar-Dannieh, North Baalbeck and Hermel, South and Lower Litani below Lake Karaoun.
Project implementation	The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) of the Government of Lebanon was the Lead Programme Agency with the responsibility of overseeing project implementation and coordinating with other relevant ministries and agencies for project implementation. The coordination was delegated by MoA to Green Plan and the Project Management Unit (PMU), established under Green Plan. A national project steering committee, chaired by the MoA, was set-up including representatives from the Council for Development and Reconstruction, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Energy and Water, and the President of Green Plan's Executive Committee. At regional level, three committees chaired by Green Plan's head of the regional office were established with representatives of MoA's regional service offices, the Green Plan regional offices and Farmer Service Centers (FSCs). Farmers' organisations were intended to be involved during the implementation also through the Water Users Groups.
Changes during implementation	Following mid-term review (MTR): the logical framework was revised (additional quantitative targets included and total number of logframe indicators considerably reduced); and target number of beneficiaries was downscaled. The activity related to existing hill lakes (subcomponent 1.2) was dropped following 2012 supervision mission.
Financing	Total approved budget was US\$16.64 million. The project was financed by an IFAD loan of SDR2.406 million (US\$4 million) and a grant of SDR389,623 (US\$598,010). Total Government counterpart financing was estimated at US\$1.75 million at appraisal and co-financing from beneficiaries was estimated at US\$1.88 million. Actual disbursement was slightly higher than anticipated mainly due to cofinancing by WFP and AgriCAL ⁶ not foreseen at appraisal and increased contributions from the Government and beneficiaries (see Tables 1 and 2).

⁶ Enhancing Adaptive Capacity of the Rural Communities in Lebanon (AgriCAL) financed by the Adaptation Fund and implemented by IFAD.

Table 1
Project costs (US\$ millions)

Source of Funding	Appraisal	% of appraisal costs	Actual	% of actual costs	% disbursed
IFAD grant	4.00	24%	3.45	20%	86%
IFAD loan	0.60	4%	0.60	4%	101% ⁷
OFID ⁸	8.41	51%	4.54	27%	54%
Government	1.75	11%	2.44	14%	139%
Beneficiaries	1.88	11%	3.80	22%	202%
WFP & AgriCAL			2.19	13%	
Total	16.64	100%	17.02	100%	102%

Source: IFAD's Operational Results Management System (ORMS); HASAD Project Completion Report, 2020.

Table 2
Component costs (US\$ millions)

Components	Appraisal	% of appraisal costs	Actual	% of actual costs	% disbursed
Water and soil conservation development	10.91	66%	11.99	70%	110%
Technical support to farmers	3.33	20%	3.03	18%	91%
Project coordination and management	2.40	14%	1.99	12%	83%
Total	16.64	100%	17.02	100%	102%

Source: HASAD Project Completion Report, 2020.

III. Review of findings

PCRVR finding	PCRVR Rating
A. Core Criteria	
Relevance	
<p>1. At design, the project objectives were broadly aligned with the development objectives of IFAD and the Government. Specifically, they were aligned with IFAD's strategy for Lebanon as outlined in the 2000 Country strategic opportunities programme, and the MoA 2005 Agriculture Strategy.⁹ However, as highlighted in the 2015-2019 Agricultural Strategy, the Government's priorities shifted.¹⁰ In this context, the 2016 IFAD Country Strategy Note was approved identifying livestock and dairy sectors as key priorities for interventions in the country.</p> <p>2. HASAD's objectives were to some degree in line with the needs of rural poor in the target areas which comprised the poorest villages in Lebanon where agriculture accounted for 80 per cent of local GDP. However, the project's design did not</p>	3

⁷ Actual disbursement reported in the Financial Management Dashboard of IFAD is SDR389,623 or 100 per cent of the approved amount. The difference with the amount reported in ORMS in US\$ and the related percentage is due to the exchange rate.

⁸ The actual disbursement figure for the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) financing is taken from paragraph 71 and Table 2 of the PCR and matches the figure in ORMS. In finalising this PCRVR, an audit report dated 10 January 2020 was provided which estimated total OFID disbursement of US\$5.96 million.

⁹ The following three main constraints to agricultural development were identified in the strategy: insufficient mobilization of water, inadequate extension services and weak marketing systems.

¹⁰ The following priorities were stated: (i) increasing productivity; (ii) upgrading sanitation; (iii) enhancing food security; and, (iv) reducing rural-urban youth migration.

PCR finding	PCR Rating
<p>explicitly target the youth and rural-urban youth migration which became priorities for the government during project implementation. In addition, as reported in the PCR, the preliminary economic studies undertaken in the project areas focused on the technical feasibility of the selected sites rather than the conditions of the youth, thus missing the chance to better understand their needs and eventually address them.</p> <p>3. HASAD's design did not explicitly outline its theory of change. However, the key factors hampering agricultural productivity increases were identified and the design focused on tackling certain critical issues with a sound logic among components. Several weaknesses of the design are identified by the PCR which were adjusted during implementation (i.e. revision of the logframe, reduction in the number indicators and the inclusion of new quantitative indicators, dropping of a water management activity under component 1 and reallocation of funds). Yet, some issues persisted, such as: (i) lack of adequate indicators to track project achievements in terms of agricultural productivity, food security, and environment and natural resource management; (ii) no specific indicators were defined to measure the rural poverty impacts; and (iii) the design did not take into account "the potential impact of fragility on implementation and supervision"¹¹ in Lebanon which is part of IFAD's portfolio of fragile countries.</p> <p>4. Overall, while the project's objectives were relevant to the Government's priorities and smallholders' needs at design, the project failed to adequately adapt its priorities and focus to the evolving context and the emerging needs and objectives of the Government and the target populations (especially with regard to the youth). The changes introduced during implementation could have been more radical to help the project retain continued relevance. The following changes could have been introduced: better harmonisation among OFID's and IFAD's funded activities, more attention to needs of the youth, adoption of a fragility lens in planning project interventions (with specific regard to required infrastructure and capacity building), inclusion of clear indicators to measure rural poverty impacts (particularly agricultural productivity in line with the second project objective) as well as management of natural resources (in line with the first project objective). Also, as reported by the PCR, a proper assessment of the results to be realistically achieved through the one-year extension was not undertaken and, if done, might have entailed a more adequate revision of project activities and targets. Based on the above, the PCRV rates the relevance criterion as <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i>, one point lower than the PCR rating (<i>4, moderately satisfactory</i>).</p>	
Effectiveness	
<p>5. As acknowledged in the PCR, the effectiveness assessment was hampered by: (i) the lack of annual and midterm outcome surveys; (ii) a weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system¹²; and, (iii) inadequate evidence-based analysis carried out by the completion mission due to security issues and the related unexpected evacuation.</p> <p>6. Under objective 1, the reported results were generally below the targets set at appraisal for civil works. The number of hill lakes constructed was 14 against the target of 20 (equal to 70 per cent achievement rate) and the hectares of land under water-related infrastructure constructed or rehabilitated were 134 against the target of 283 hectares (equivalent to 47 per cent achievement rate). The only significant exception was the number of earth and concrete reservoirs constructed which were 266 at completion against the target of 100. The approach put in place by the project for downstream water distribution was reported to be effective in ensuring equitable water distribution. Yet, according to the PCR, most lakes were not fully operational at completion due to the missing outlet infrastructure.</p> <p>7. With regard to the second objective, positive results were achieved in terms of market linkages developed through the establishment of three FSCs and 20 Water User Groups (100 per cent achievement rate). Improvements in agricultural</p>	3

¹¹ Source: PCR.

¹² Especially from 2018 when the M&E officer resigned and was never replaced.

PCR finding	PCR Rating
<p>productivity are reported in the economic and financial analysis for all targeted crops mainly due to better water management techniques and capacity built among farmers. Unfortunately, the logframe lacked adequate indicators to measure achievements in terms of increased yield, improved agricultural productivity or adoption rates of the proposed approaches.¹³</p> <p>8. With reference to the objective of strengthening farmers' organisations, all output figures show achievement rates above 84 per cent. At outcome level, the impact assessment report confirmed that the beneficiaries were interested in the topics covered and the information provided.</p> <p>9. Based on the above, the effectiveness criterion is rated <i>moderately unsatisfactory</i> (3) by the PCRV in agreement with the PCR rating.</p>	
Efficiency	
<p>10. HASAD effectiveness lag was 31 months due to protracted approval process by the Lebanese parliament of the two loans (IFAD and OFID).</p> <p>11. Upon completion, the disbursement rates of IFAD's financing are satisfactory: 92.5 per cent of the IFAD loan and 100 per cent of the grant. Although disbursement trends are not reported in the PCR, the supervision mission reports show that the <i>disbursement</i> of the IFAD loan was slow during the first years, picked up at MTR (40 per cent from previous 28 per cent) and reached the level of 92.5 per cent at completion. According to the PCR, the low level of disbursement in the first years of project's life was due to the lack of support provided by IFAD to the PMU given the security constraints in the country and the related deferment of field missions. Utilization of funds from OFID at completion was reported at 54 per cent due to the significant initial delays. It is worth noting that the OFID funds represented 51 per cent of total appraisal costs and their low disbursement had a significant impact on the entire project implementation. On the contrary, government's and beneficiaries' contributions were higher than appraisal level (140 per cent and 202 per cent respectively) showing their sense of ownership vis-à-vis the project's interventions.</p> <p>12. All financial crop and farm models show good profitability levels, with their internal rates of return higher than those in the without-project scenarios. FSCs' profitability results are also promising. Returns on investments in irrigation infrastructure are positive for the medium hill lakes, while small water reservoirs are not considered economically viable. This could be due to a reduced outreach and/or the costly designing features of the infrastructure, which overrun the benefits. Key indicators of the economic and financial analysis show the project's lack of viability with a negative net present value (- US\$533,000) and the economic internal rate of return of 8.5 per cent, which is lower than the opportunity cost of capital (10 per cent) and the economic rate of return estimated by the ex-ante economic analysis (15 per cent). This is explicable by the significant delays in undertaking the investments which, in turn, negatively affected the realisation of benefits. In light of the above, it is likely that a longer time frame for the economic analysis could have shown better results, although not as profitable as those formerly expected by the economic and financial analysis carried out at design.</p> <p>13. Project management costs at completion were 12 per cent, lower than the estimate at design (14 per cent). This is considered an improvement in the project efficiency.</p> <p>14. Based on the above, the PCRV rates the efficiency criterion as <i>moderately unsatisfactory</i> (3), in agreement with the PCR rating.</p>	3
Rural poverty impact	
<p>15. The PCR assessment of this criterion is mainly qualitative and limited by the lack of impact data. This is due to the weak M&E system, lack of annual and mid-term outcome surveys and significant delays in project implementation which did not allow for the measuring of the rural poverty impact in the project area.</p>	3

¹³ The only available indicator refers to the number of households reporting an increase in production (1,295 versus 1,257 targeted) without any indication of the actual increase achieved.

PCR finding	PCR Rating
<p>16. With regard to the project's impact on beneficiaries' income, one logframe indicator was foreseen to measure the number of beneficiaries reporting an increased income by 20 per cent or more due to better water or market services. Unfortunately, while the target is provided (3,200 farmers), the achievement at completion is missing. According to the impact survey, beneficiaries' purchasing powers increased by 25 per cent.¹⁴ While some improvements in beneficiaries' income are reported, the PCRV agrees with the PCR, that it is not possible to clearly attribute the above to HASAD's interventions.</p> <p>17. HASAD's contribution to human capital development is reported in the PCR with reference to improved knowledge and skills of targeted beneficiaries in the domain of agricultural production, water management as well as capacities built for regular maintenance of infrastructure developed. In terms of social capital, support was provided for the establishment of the FSCs and water user groups.</p> <p>18. With regard to food security, no data are reported in the PCR.¹⁵ Regarding agricultural productivity, the logframe did not have any indicator to measure the project's impacts in this domain. According to the impact survey, a better diversification of the crops produced in the target area is reported along with increased production of vegetables, cereal crops and fruit trees. It could be that HASAD positively contributed to a more diversified diet and improved food security of project's beneficiaries, but a direct link cannot be attributed given the lack of data. The impact survey reported a 47 per cent increase in beneficiaries' access to irrigated water (vis-à-vis the baseline) and some beneficiary households reported that they were able to adequately irrigate their parcels. Unfortunately, no data are provided on the number of beneficiaries to assess the magnitude of the achievement.</p> <p>19. Overall, given the lack of plausible evidence across the different domains of impact, rural poverty impact is rated by this PCRV as <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i>, in agreement with the PCR rating.</p>	
Sustainability of benefits	
<p>20. The PCRV is in agreement with the assessment of the PCR, noting that certain HASAD interventions are more likely to be sustained than others.</p> <p>21. Overall, it is worth underlining that significant efforts were put in place in favour of capacity building and institutional strengthening especially with regard to the management of the infrastructure built. Yet, considering that most of the lakes were not fully operational at completion, there is a degree of uncertainty on whether the committees will be able to provide regular maintenance and ensure the sustainable use of the infrastructure.¹⁶</p> <p>22. Sustainability of HASAD's activities based on private sector involvement and market-based agreement are reported to be satisfactory as in the case of FSCs serving the European Union market for olive oil. FSCs are reported to be generally sustainable by the PCR due to training and equipment received and new market opportunities created. However, as highlighted by the PCR, the formalisation of the FSCs as a corporate body is required for their long-term sustainability.</p> <p>23. Based on the above, the PCRV rates this criterion as <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i>, in agreement with the PCR rating.</p>	3
B. Other performance criteria	
Innovation	
24. The establishment of FSCs and their related institutional arrangement were the project's main innovations described in the design document. As already highlighted	4

¹⁴ Income increases are not clearly quantified or reported vis-à-vis the control group. The contribution of agricultural activities to beneficiaries' income increases at completion is estimated at 17 per cent.

¹⁵ No specific indicators were defined in the logframe and the beneficiaries' impact assessment did not cover the topic.

¹⁶ Also, there is no evidence on whether the water tariff paid by end users would fully cover the operation and maintenance costs or subsidies by the government would be required.

PCR finding	PCR Rating
<p>by the MTR “the proposal to set up FSCs under the management of institutions representing rural communities and farmers is potentially innovative whereas so far most nongovernment agencies involved in market development have opted to keep the few centres they established under their own management”. The importance of this innovative approach was also confirmed by the PCR which assessed the FSCs an innovative fully commercialised service that proved to be more effective and efficient than the public extension service. The use of SMS within the FSC members was also a novelty in the project area and its adaptation to the local context has reportedly led to positive results allowing members to access services more efficiently.</p> <p>25. The other innovations foreseen at design related to the change in the Green Plan’s approach to local development and sustainable land management, in terms of targeting, delivering and implementing integrated sustainable land management packages, and results-based M&E. The significant delays at start-up hampered the proper testing and implementation of the above. However, it is worth noting that, given the fragile context, also from an institutional and political point of view, the feasibility of considerably changing Green Plan’s approach could have been better assessed, particularly during the initial phase of the implementation and, perhaps, more realistic target sets.</p> <p>26. On balance, taking into account the innovations described above, this criterion is rated as <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i>, one point higher than the PCR rating.</p>	
Scaling up	
<p>27. According to the design document, scaling-up was envisaged for the integrated system of small hill lakes, the micro-irrigation schemes and the FSC model. At completion, the PCR reported actual scaling-up only for the FSC model which had been replicated in a FAO-initiated project in the country. The PCR mentions that actions for replicating the process for developing hill lakes in other parts of the country were taken by the Government and Green Plan.</p> <p>28. The PCRV recognises that scaling-up was hampered by the weak national extension services as well as the complex socio-political scenario of Lebanon with deteriorating security levels during the project life. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the project did not put in place a systematic mechanism to share knowledge and lessons learned with relevant stakeholders which would have supported the scaling-up of project practices. This was also due to the lack of a knowledge management strategy.</p> <p>29. Based on the above, the PCRV rates the scaling up criterion as <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i>, in agreement with the PCR.</p>	3
Gender equality and women’s empowerment	
<p>30. Overall, the number of female beneficiaries was generally lower than male beneficiaries (1,519 women benefitted from project services versus 5,094 men, equal to 97 per cent and 216 per cent of the respective targets estimated at appraisal). More precisely, participation by women in training activities was 11 per cent for crop production and 16 per cent for infrastructure, while it was higher for income generating activities and business management (31 per cent).</p> <p>31. According to the PCR, women’s involvement in decision-making processes improved at the household level with specific reference to decisions regarding land use. Also, it estimated that women’s participation, especially in FSC activities, have contributed to a 4 per cent income increase deriving from agricultural activities. However, given the weaknesses of the project’s M&E system, there is no solid basis to support the above estimation.</p> <p>32. Overall, very limited data are available regarding the outcomes for gender equality and women’s empowerment, including changes in the distribution of workload between women and men. In addition, the PCR notes that better achievements would have been possible if there had been a dedicated gender expert in the PMU and if the M&E system had allowed for adequate feedback during implementation.</p>	3

PCR finding	PCR Rating
For these reasons, the PCR rating of this criterion is <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i> , in agreement with the PCR.	
Environment and natural resources management	
<p>33. The rapid environmental assessment recommended by the IFAD Guidelines for Project Completion Review was not undertaken due to security issues in the country. According to the PCR, "<i>the development of hill lakes and the on-farm improvements to soil and water management constituted an improvement of the natural resources base in the intervention areas</i>". This assessment is supported by the following: (i) at completion several farmers were in process of obtaining organic certifications and establishing organic value chains (unfortunately, numbers are not provided); (ii) increased knowledge was generated regarding negative environmental effects deriving from incorrect use of fertilizers and pesticides; (iii) water use efficiency was promoted also through the adoption of water harvesting techniques; and (iv) the construction of terraces and stone walls contributed to improved soil conservation.</p> <p>34. The PCR rates this criterion as <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i>, in agreement with the PCR.</p>	4
Adaptation to Climate Change	
<p>35. Adaptation to climate change was not included in HASAD's objectives, but, certain project interventions de-facto contributed to climate change adaptation. These activities included sustainable water harvesting, efficient use of excess runoff and spring flows as well as soil and water conservation measures.</p> <p>36. Given the importance of adaptation to climate change, the logframe was revised during implementation to include some measurable targets. Achievements reported in the PCR are positive in terms of hectares of land brought under climate-resilient practices (287 hectares equivalent to 77 per cent of the target) and earth and concrete reservoirs constructed (266, more than 2.6 times the appraisal target).</p> <p>37. The above interventions, along with the training provided, contributed to increased beneficiary awareness of climate change and the enhanced resilience of local agricultural production systems vis-à-vis climatic changes. For these reasons, adaptation to climate change is rated <i>moderately satisfactory (4)</i> by the PCR, in agreement with the PCR.</p>	4
C. Overall Project Achievement	
<p>38. HASAD was conceived to be implemented in some of the poorest areas of Lebanon, heavily affected by the 2006 war. The design aimed at addressing three major constraints of agricultural development in the country: (i) limited access to irrigation water; (ii) weak agricultural extension and rural advisory services; and (iii) weak marketing systems and poor access to market. However, two external factors negatively affected the overall project achievements, namely the 31-month effectiveness lag due to protracted approval process by the Lebanese parliament of the loans and the security issues at country level which hampered the timely execution of IFAD supervision and implementation support missions at start-up as well as the completion mission.</p> <p>39. Notwithstanding the above, positive results were achieved with regard to improved irrigation for agricultural land, provision of extension services through the FSCs, improved access to markets as well as provision of storage and processing facilities. Significant efforts were also made to build farmers capacities on how to improve agricultural production, create awareness of inappropriate use of pesticides as well as develop general knowledge of key principles of good agricultural practice. The water harvesting techniques introduced by the project along with the promotion of soil conservation measures positively contributed to enhance beneficiaries' resilience to climate change.</p> <p>40. Unfortunately, limited data are available with regard to project's achievements. This is due to the weak M&E system, the lack of adequate logframe indicators, difficulties in collecting data during the completion mission as well as impossibility of organising</p>	3

PCR finding	PCR Rating
<p>the final wrap-up/stakeholder workshop for security reasons. Significant implementation delays negatively affected project's effectiveness, efficiency as well as sustainability prospects. Finally, the lack of a gender expert in the PMU negatively affected project's impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. All the above reasons contributed to making HASAD a problem project according to the internal IFAD assessment.</p> <p>41. Based on the above, this PCR rates overall project achievement as <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i>, in line with the PCR rating for this criterion.</p>	
D. Performance of Partners	
IFAD	
<p>42. The PCR highlights the relevance of IFAD's supervision missions which were undertaken whenever the domestic security conditions allowed. At the same time, the report points to the "unrealistically long" list of actions and recommendations "not-well prioritized" foreseen by most of the IFAD's missions. The PCR also highlights delays in providing responses to the no objections requests and criticizes the high turnover of country programme managers over the years (six in total). Finally, the PCR highlights IFAD's weaknesses in understanding and providing the specific support required by the PMU in financial management, procurement and reporting. Based on the above, the PCR rates this criterion as <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i>, in agreement with the PCR rating.</p>	3
Government	
<p>43. The PCR rates the Government's performance as moderately unsatisfactory for the following reasons: (i) significant delays in ratifying the two loans and general delays in issuing necessary permits for project implementation; (ii) limited participation of the MoA Extension Department which was not adequately involved in the planning process; (iii) weak guidance provided by the Project Steering Committee; and (iv) weak coordination among the different ministries involved in the project's implementation. However, the PCR states that "<i>the Minister of Agriculture, in his individual capacity, was always helpful whenever approached for help/guidance</i>". Also, it is worth highlighting that Governments' contribution was higher than appraisal commitments and directly covered some costs under component 1, which were supposed to be financed by OFID. With regard to PMU performance, some issues of understaffing were highlighted due to vacancies never filled for reasons not specified. Based on the above, Government performance is rated <i>moderately unsatisfactory (3)</i> in the PCR, in agreement with the PCR.</p>	3

IV. Assessment of PCR Quality

PCR finding	Rating
Scope	
<p>44. The PCR contains all chapters, sections, and annexes as per the Guidelines for Project Completion Review (2015). This PCR rates the scope of the PCR as <i>satisfactory (5)</i>.</p>	5
Quality	
<p>45. The PCR process was inclusive of a variety of stakeholders, male and female, including PMU, Government staff from MoA and other relevant ministries as well as beneficiaries. The stakeholders' workshop was not held because the PCR Team was evacuated on 19th October 2019 for security reasons emerged from the nationwide demonstrations that called for the resignation of the Government.</p>	4
<p>46. The quality of the PCR was affected by the lack of data and difficulties in the process of in-country data collection and verification which was interrupted for security concerns. Significant efforts were made to continue the process of data collection remotely and the related verification, also through exchanges with the PMU. Based</p>	

PCR finding	Rating
on the above and in consideration of the challenges faced by the mission, the PCR rates the quality of the PCR as <i>moderately satisfactory</i> (4).	
Lessons	
47. Lessons presented in the PCR (ref. Section H) have been drawn from the review of the cofinancing with OFID, other arrangements set at project design as well as from the project implementation. Valid reflections are made on challenges experienced in Lebanon which can be useful for future projects in fragile countries. The lessons appear reasonable and presented in a coherent manner and paved the way to multiple recommendations presented in the PCR (see Section I). The rating by the PCR is <i>satisfactory</i> (5).	5
Candour	
48. PCR narrative is objective and reports both positive as well as less positive results. Ratings are generally in line with the narrative. Concerns were raised in the PCR also in clear disagreement with the PMU (ref. Appendix 9) and the assessment of the overall project's performance appears balanced. This PCR rates the candour for the PCR as <i>highly satisfactory</i> (6).	6

V. Final Remarks

Issues for IOE follow up (if any)
49. 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
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.	X	Yes
	<i>Four impact domains</i>		
	<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. 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. 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. 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 other 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, 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 (PCRVR) rating</i>	<i>Net rating disconnect (PCRVR-PMD)</i>
Rural poverty impact	3	3	0
Project performance			
Relevance	4	3	-1
Effectiveness	3	3	0
Efficiency	3	3	0
Sustainability of benefits	3	3	0
Project performance^b	3.25	3	-0.25
Other performance criteria			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	3	3	0
Innovation	3	4	+1
Scaling up	3	3	0
Environment and natural resources management	4	4	0
Adaptation to climate change	4	4	0
Overall project achievement^c	3	3	0

Performance of partners^d			
IFAD	3	3	0
Government	3	3	0
Average net disconnect			0

^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, 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 PCRVR rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Candour	n.a.	6	n.a.
Lessons	n.a.	5	n.a.
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)	n.a.	4	n.a.
Scope	n.a.	5	n.a.

Overall rating of the project completion report

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

AgriCAL	Enhancing Adaptive Capacity of the Rural Communities in Lebanon
FSC	Farmer Service Centers
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOE	IFAD Independent Office of Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
OFID	OPEC Fund for International Development
ORMS	Operational Results Management System
PCR	Project Completion Report
PCRV	Project Completion Report Validation
PMU	Programme management unit
SDR	Special drawing rights

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