

Syria: Coastal/Midlands Agricultural Development Project (CMADP)

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country& Project Name	Syria: Coastal/Midlands Agricultural Development Project (CMADP)	
Loan No.:	393	
Project Id.:	482-SY	
Board Date	December 1995	
Effectiveness Date	July 2006	
Original Closing Date	December 2003	
Final Closing Date	December 2007	
Total Project Cost USD(M)	USD 96.198 million	
IFAD loan USD (M)	USD 14.352 million	
Cofinanciers (if any)	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) USD 38 million; GoS USD 30 million; Agricultural Cooperative Bank (ACB) USD 3.212 million; beneficiaries USD 10.3 million; NGOs USD 95,000. WFP contributed close to USD 200,000 grant (food for work) which was not foreseen at appraisal.	
Implementing Agency	The Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) through a Directorate of Coastal/Midland Agricultural Development (CMADP), while the Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) and the Project Management Unit (PMU) are entrusted with the implementation of the project's activities. In December 2005, the Bureau of Agricultural Development of Coastal/Midland Region replaced the CMADP.	
Principal Components	The basic goal of the CMADP was to improve the living conditions of the vast majority of small farmers and rural women in the target areas by expanding arable land area through land de-rocking and terracing. At the same time, the project was seeking to enhance, on a sustainable basis, the productivity, and profitability of small farmers' holdings through the promotion of tree crop plantations and improvements in existing extension and livestock services. Efforts were made to improve the water supply situation. Special provision was made for rural women, particularly the provision of training. The project is composed of four major components: (a) agricultural development including land reclamation through de-rocking, assistance with the establishment of tree crops plantations, strengthening agricultural extension services, livestock development and support for communication development; (b) village water supplies; (c) community and women's development; and (d) project implementation and management.	
Project Performance		
Design	This was the fourth IFAD project in the country and was designed using the lessons from the previous three, except for the lessons regarding the complicated process of procurement of earth moving heavy machinery, which led to a heavy delay in the implementation of a part of the project. The major design features and the successful adjustments of the CMADP were appropriate. In fact, both IFAD and the Government of Syria scaled up most these design features and the lesson learned into the ongoing Idleb Rural Development Project (IRDP) and certainly into the new project to be started soon in the North-eastern region. Nevertheless, the problem related to delays in purchasing the necessary machinery remains, indicating that this is a lesson IFAD has yet failed to learn, in spite of the problem arising repeatedly.	3
Implementation	As described in the project design, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) was responsible for implementation. The Central Project Management Directorate (CPMD) was created by MAAR to manage the project. Provincial Project Management Units (PPMU) were formed in the four governorates. The field operations for derocking required the establishment of 22 well organized field technical units (FTU). An M&E Unit was organized at central level with subunits in each Mohafazat, but was not efficient in reporting impact. As for its predecessors, the CMADP implementation suffered from a four-year delay in the procurement of heavy machinery and equipment for land reclamation due to bureaucratic reasons, with mechanical de-rocking operations starting in 2002. The other activities were initiated earlier. The key to the success of the project was its flexibility in adjusting and developing complementarity and partnership with other partners and projects (WFP and NGOs). This led also to the identification of the need and financing of the credit subcomponent, not foreseen at design.	4
Relevance	The project rationale is in conformity with IFAD poverty alleviation strategy in Syria and the country poverty reduction approach which are both based primarily on geographic targeting. The large geographical disparities and the strong link between unemployment and rural poverty show that coastal-Midland hilly areas and the rocky lands of Homs and Hama make one of the poorest regions, thus the most recommended niche for IFAD. The PCR reports that there is no doubt that the overall and specific objectives are relevant to the Coastal Midland communities, which depend	5

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	heavily on agriculture. Indeed, the project objectives focused on the right priorities for land development based on de-rocking and productivity increase by strengthening the extension services supported by adaptive research and communication. The same is valid for women development activities and the impact assessment clearly documents this high relevance.	
Effectiveness	According to the PCR, it is evident everywhere in the project area that the livelihood of beneficiaries, rural women in particular, has been significantly improved. The PCR reports the project recording impressive results in terms of physical achievements and project capacity to deliver its output, and provides different figures to back this. The most reliable seem to be those derived from the PCR field mission, which observed that the Project had a significant, multi-component presence in most of the target villages and therefore substantive impact on an estimated 50 000 households. It also reports that about 5,000 families participated in the de-rocking (50% of appraisal target), although this is believed to be an underestimation. The Annex containing comparison between project outputs as appraised and at completion was not available for consultation. As regards the water resource development and the livestock sub-components, although these were implemented as designed, the extent of their impact was not easy to assess without a minimum of monitoring data. Given the predominance of the de-rocking component over the project, overall effectiveness seems moderate.	5
Efficiency	The PCR assesses efficiency before and after the purchase of the heavy machinery needed for de-rocking, that was the main obstacle to project implementation as foreseen at design. The four-year delay (1998-2002) had a negative impact on the delivery, and therefore the efficiency is assessed as low in term of timeliness of project execution. However, since the arrival of the heavy equipment and vehicles by the year 2002, the results were delivered with the least costly resources possible and with the maximum outcome. The Project Management introduced various changes that increased efficiency, like leveraging its resources with those of the WFP to increase outreach and impact for its activities designed for community and women's development, or those of the UNDP project. The very well-organized field units and professional maintenance and operation of the fleet helped the project reduce by 50% the unit cost for de-rocking. To increase efficiency the project also mobilised other national actors operating in the area, which resulted in more impact and benefits.	6
Partner Performance		
IFAD	IFAD process of formulation and design was measured and measurable given the socio-economic conditions in the mid-1990's, but the concept and the implementation arrangement should have been more realistic by taking into consideration the lessons learned in relation to equipment procurement from its previous project in the country. Otherwise, the Fund conducted extensive consultations with the cofinancier (AFESD) and partners, the CPCU and concerning implementing agencies from project formulation to completion. Following loan effectiveness, IFAD fielded more than 12 review and backstopping missions, conducted a Country Portfolio Evaluation in 2001, and organized one visit to the CMADP area by the IFAD President during implementation. IFAD promptly responded to the request of the GOS in coordination with AFESD (CI) relating to project implementation and provided adequate and timely advisory services. IFAD approved four extensions to help the project achieve its goals, acknowledging somehow its own design failure for the de-rocking component.	5
Cooperating Institution	AFESD undertook only five annual supervision missions to CMADP during the 10 years implementation period. The performance of AFESD was rated partially satisfactory by the PCR in guiding the project during implementation, particularly regarding financial and administrative services. After AFESD withdrew its role as CI in IFAD-financed projects in 2005, UNOPS took over as CI. No information is provided in the PCR on UNOPS performance.	6
Government	Except for the difficulties and the initial long delay that affected the procurement of the land development heavy machinery because of bureaucratic reasons the borrower performance is rated satisfactory. Support from the MAAR, the State Planning Commission and the four Governorates for the Project was considerable. The GOS commitment to the project approach is evident in the preparation and expansion of the CMADP model and experience to other parts of the country (Idleb, North Eastern regions, etc.) and perpetuating the CMADP Directorate in the new structure of Bureau of CMAD. The Government adopted constructive flexibility in the CMADP implementation by responding to the population needs in terms of rural finance and drinking water supply. Finally, the GOS showed satisfactory performance in providing counterpart funds, monitoring progress through the PSC headed by the Deputy Minister of the MAAR and coordinating with other ministries, agencies, and projects. There still lacks a system for the collection of information in relation to project results and impact.	6

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NGO/Other	The Fund for Integrated Rural Development of Syria implemented with AIDoS: Associazione Italiani Donne per lo Sviluppo, the Village Business Incubator project funded by IFAD Grant. No specific analysis of performance is made in the PCR. The project has been able to mobilize other partners working in the project area. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Health, Social Affairs, the Women's General Union and Cooperatives were all involved in the related project activities, which resulted in more impact and higher benefits. Although performance of these partners appears positive, no specific information is provided in the PCR. Not rated.	NR
Cofinancier(s)	The PCR rated performance of AFESD as a co-financier as very satisfactory, but no explanation is provided.	3
Combined Partner Performance		4
Rural Poverty Impact		
Physical Assets	The project carried out a large-scale de-rocking programme as the mechanism for expanding arable land and productivity, de-rocking and developing about 25,707 ha of land. With ACB financing, small-scale producers, especially women, were able to buy livestock such as dairy cattle, Shami dairy goats and honey bees. Raising sheep, cows, calf and hens, bee-keeping, milk processing and off-farm activities are now a common fact in the project area.	4
Financial Assets	The PCR reports that thanks to the de-rocking land fertility and income increased, and the market value of the land was multiplied by almost 20. Increased productivity also leading to increasing the household income of poor farmers. The project economic impact on the beneficiaries has been positive and substantial from agricultural productivity and surplus produce for sale, from land development, supplementary irrigation, and to a lesser extent by income diversification. The PCR provides no specific information on the impact of the rural finance component.	5
Food Security	Most of rural houses have now a tendency to be self-sufficient in most items of food production. Increased productivity and income are likely to have had an impact on beneficiaries' food security, and the PCR assesses project impact on food security as satisfactory.	5
Environment	The PCR mission's environmental assessment confirms appraisal estimate of negligible or minimal impact on the environment caused by the project. Sensitization programmes with dissemination of environmental information in relation to de-rocking, land development, moisture and land conservation and IPM were carried out by trained extension agents. Farmers interviewed reported that CMADP did not cause any major increase in agrochemicals use, although this could not be confirmed; major pollution risks to the underground water are nevertheless unlikely given hydro geological features of the area. The PCR mission confirmed the occurrence of soil erosion on slopes between 5 to 8%, considered as thresholds for surface runoff and accelerated sheet erosion. To avoid spreading, some soil erosion control measure needs to be promoted for the new lands with slopes greater than this. Soil fertility of the new lands is high but needs to be preserved. CMADP has succeeded in promoting better land husbandry with the implementation of integrated agricultural activities. Soil erosion because of dirt roads was reduced.	6
Human Assets	The extension and gender sub-components have been successful in transmitting improved agricultural techniques and services to the target groups. Farmers' training courses and the wide range of extension methods adopted have largely contributed to the achievement of such success. The training provided for rural women has contributed to improving their skills and common awareness. Literacy is now likely to prevail in an area where most of women were illiterate. The increased number of trained women-beneficiaries have been a positive factor that affected skilfulness of many other rural women in the project area. The project established 4 veterinary services centers and provided necessary training to farmers and veterinary technicians. Improved agricultural techniques and services have been transmitted to the target groups using various extension methodologies. The project improved village water supplies in 46 villages of Hama and Homs for drinking water. The project supported the construction of 75 cisterns (150 m ³) in Tartous, the rehabilitation of 73 springs and construction of 12 small dams in Lattakia for complementary irrigation. The project provided advanced training in water supplies mobilization and efficient use.	5
Social Capital and Empowerment	The project approach for implementation of the de-rocking component was based on a sensitization and extension programme that proved to be very effective in identifying priority villages, stimulating the demand and negotiation of the farmer's participation. The PCR mission focused-interviews showed that with this approach, CMADP succeeded in developing the capacity to "demand" better service from the local government institutions, thus strengthening the empowerment of the poor in the project area. Some water users associations were established for rural water points	3

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	(community irrigation water wells and drinking water points).	
Ag. Productivity	From the M&E assessment, the effects of the CMADP agronomic technology adoption have lifted the annual agricultural production by at least 15%. Land de-rocking and modern agricultural practices with adoption of new varieties for barley, wheat and lentils, apple, and olive trees have contributed to major improvements in crop and livestock productivity during the last five years. Loans, training courses and other extension activities have led to impressive changes in all aspects of agriculture, livestock and food processing. The agriculture rotation and the improved techniques have resulted in diversified cropping patterns, increase in yield and an improved quality of agricultural products. The mission at various field stops sampled cost/benefit ratio with four households/beneficiaries. Almost all farmers interviewed showed how the land productivity and household income increased three-fold during the last two years by comparing the before and after de-rocking and agricultural intensification. The project has provided the necessary support to extension and applied research.	5
Institutions and Services	The project has been able to mobilize other partners working in the project area. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Health, Social Affairs, the Women's General Union and Cooperatives were all involved in the related project activities, which resulted in more impact and higher benefits. The work of the CPCU and the 4 RPCUs during 2001-2006 strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture to deliver the required technical and community support services for rural development. This is likely to be sustainable. The project has rehabilitated 87 extension units and equipped all the 182 extension units present in the Project area. The Project had a concrete impact in transforming the relationship between government officials and the communities in the development process through the progressive adoption in costal midland region of participatory planning and implementation methods, and ensuring greater responsiveness to the need and aspirations of farmers and the communities.	5
Markets	The PCR reports the project having rehabilitated or constructed roads, but it assesses their impact only in relation to the environment. No assessment of the project impact on market access is undertaken in spite of reporting increased production and processing. Not rated.	NR
Rural Poverty Impact		5
Overarching Factors		
Innovation	An innovative implementation arrangement has been adopted by the project in the field of communication. Extension and gender activities have made a successful use of extension-communication means such as TV and video programs, radio, and the on-road mobile extension theatre. Beneficiaries have experienced these new techniques benefiting from the involved messages. IFAD included the Syrian mobile extension theatre experience in the list of innovative activities exhibited during the 29th session of the Governing Council held in Rome, February 2006. Another innovation promoted by the project was its work in Tartous, where the project worked with the mulberry farmers and local silk producers to stimulate the local natural silk industry, which is of cultural and historical importance to Syria, with an-eco-friendly activity than can improve the household income.	4
Replicability and Scaling-up	The CMADP developed an adaptive management approach that proved to be successful and allowed the project to achieve all its targets and ensure sustainability. This innovation in project management that improved CPCU capacity to address problems/opportunities faced by the Coastal-Midland poor needs to be analysed and documented. Its replication and upscaling by the GOS are already taking place. The more recent IFAD-AFESD-supported Idleb Rural Development Project and other GOS-financed projects are good examples. The cooperative experience between all IFAD supported projects in Syria and the national extension service is to be documented, contemplated and maybe replicated. The experience of the mobile extension theatre yielded valuable recommendations. Variations of extension theatre have been built into every IFAD-supported Project in Syria. The experience has been documented in a short film and a brochure for wider replication/ up scaling.	4
Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up		5
Sustainability and Ownership	The CMADP prepared an exit strategy. The upgrading of the Project to a full Directorate of MAAR indicates the acceptance and adoption of project activities into the mainstream of MAAR development activities, thus government commitment to continued local funding. The PCR reports that the great realization in the construction of the administrative building and workshops in Homs, Hama, Lattakia and Tartous and the Extension Units in the field, the outstanding maintenance of the vehicles and heavy equipment, the capacity building of what is now the Bureau of Agricultural Development of Coastal Midlands and the gained credibility and confidence of the beneficiaries regarding the objectives, the actions and the impacts of the CMADP are positive factors	4

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	of post-project sustainability. The Project has achieved all appraisal targets/outputs concerning the construction and rehabilitation of administrative buildings for regional project coordination units; this is enhancing today post project sustainability.	
Targeting	A demand driven approach to targeting was adopted but a set of technical and socio-economic criteria were established from the outset for targeting the poor villages and the most eligible farmers for land development. Such criteria were: (i) the most remote areas with high-density of rocks; (ii) the villages were selected using the poverty ranking principle; and (iii) the beneficiaries are the most disadvantaged farmers whose incomes derives mainly from agriculture. Only 511 villages in a total of 1,063 villages were selected on the basis of the above criteria. This geographic targeting approach appears adequate and in line with IFAD COSOP and, most importantly, Government of Syria's (GoS) poverty reduction approach. As women were highlighted by the appraisal mission as particularly vulnerable due to lack of resources, skills and technology, a specific targeting approach to women was developed. The PCR mission confirmed that this approach was successful in actually reaching the poor small farmers and poor rural women.	5
Gender	Particular attention has been given by the project to providing adequate services to improve the livelihoods of rural women. The PCR reports 30,586 women beneficiaries. Intensive and wide range training on income generating activities and skills has been provided. The training program has gone step by step with the credit component. Women having, for example, a loan for sheep had also been trained on animal husbandry, and wells as training in knitting and sewing. Rural women have been trained on at least twelve topics related to income generating activities. The project has also implemented many other types of courses and extension activities related to social, health, education and economic aspects of the rural livelihood. In-kind loans provided to women beneficiaries have ensured them primary or additional incomes and, as a result, have contributed to alleviate their vulnerability ensuring greater gender equality. The PCR mission reports that large proportions of the trainees for income-generating skills were young rural girls. Overall assessment is highly satisfactory.	5
Overall Performance		5
Estimated number of beneficiaries	Actual number of beneficiaries reached by the project hard to assess, as the PCR reports various figures. 1) Total of 433,000 beneficiaries, as follows: Direct: 355,000; Indirect; Women: 30,586; Others for activities extended to adjacent areas: 10,000. Nevertheless, this does not take into account overlapping among project components. 2) The PCR reports also that the project had a substantive impact on 28,000 households. 3) It also reports that the PCR mission could observe that the project had a substantive impact on 50,000 households.	
PCR Quality		
Scope	The PCR was produced in February 2008 and follows the 2006 guidelines. Nevertheless, annexes are missing, although reference to them is often made throughout the main text.	4
Quality	The PCR mission used the project results and outputs, and relied on field visits and interviews with stakeholders to build on and assume its own consideration. For the Project core development activities such as land development and the rural roads, the PCR reports that impact was easily observable. Nevertheless, although the PCR is well structured, well written and clear, the figures provided are not always consistent, which probably derives from this lack of strong quantitative data. Moreover, important aspects introduced in the executive summary are not sufficiently developed in the main text, such as provision of improved water supplies and an assessment of the rural finance component.	4
Lessons	The PCR derived very brief lessons which are closer to conclusions than to actual lessons. The few lessons provided are already well known as referred to the procurement issues in relation to the heavy machinery needed. The opportunity to develop lessons from the project gender impact or from its innovative features was missed.	2