

Cameroon: Community Development Support Project (PADC)

Item	Assessment Remarks	Rating
Country & Project Name	Cameroon: Community Development Support Project (PADC)	
Loan No.	583-CM	
Project Id.	1136	
Board Date	23 Apr 2002	
Effectiveness Date	25 May 2003	
Original Closing Date	31 Dec 2010	
Final Closing Date	31 Dec 2009	
Total Project Cost USD(M)	USD 18.29 million	
IFAD loan USD (M)	USD 11.76 million	
Cofinanciers (if any)	-	
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture	
Principal Components	The project aims to promote sustainable socio-economic development of the poorest rural populations in the country by raising their incomes and enhancing food security. More specifically it aims to: (i) strengthen the capacities of the communities and private/public support services providers; (ii) improve access by the rural poor, incl. women and the youth, to resources, assets and services; and (iii) promote income generating activities for the rural poor. Components include: (i) Capacity building; (ii) Rural infrastructure; (iii) Income generating activities (IGAs); and (iv) Project coordination.	
Project Performance		
Relevance	Project design was in line with the IFAD COSOP of 1999 and the policy priorities of the GoC as outlined in the Interim PRSP of 2000. It was designed in close collaboration with Government, GTZ (the German development agency with 3 ongoing community development projects), and the WB, who was developing a programme to support the country's decentralization process. All interventions were financed under the umbrella of the National Local Development Programme, whereby the PADC was to cover the community development aspect, in terms of approaches, strategies and direct support to the communities. The project's objectives are still found valid.	5
Effectiveness	Despite an adequate design, the project encountered major implementation problems due to conflicting views and interests of project staff. Internal governance problems led to informal suspensions by IFAD in 2007 (6 months) and 2008 (4 months) which contributed to the further demotivation of staff, beneficiaries and project partners. Frequently changing CPMs and the transition to IFAD DS have had a disruptive effect on implementation, too. Other issues concerned: (i) inadequate and late payment of counterpart funds; (ii) slow processing of WAs; (iii) falling US\$ exchange rate (from 980 FCFA at appraisal to 456 FCFA in Aug. 2009); (iv) no baseline study (planned but not done); and (v) an ill-designed M&E system which did not foresee an M&E expert at central level.	3
Efficiency	Project efficiency was affected by 2 main factors: (i) internal governance problems which led to its informal suspension by IFAD in 2007 (6 months) and 2008 (4 months); (ii) permanent shortage of funds due to: (a) the inadequate and late payment of counterpart funds (only 23% paid); and (b) slow approval processes (GoC, CI and later IFAD). As a result, the project suffered throughout from implementation delays, late payment of services providers and general lack of motivation among implementation partners. It was completed one year ahead of time with an overall disbursement rate of only 70% and important imbalances between the project coordination component (150% disbursed) and the investment components (IGAs=24%; capacity strengthening =32% and socio-economic infrastructure =84%). This situation was further aggravated by the deterioration of the US\$ exchange rate from 980 FCFA at appraisal to 456 FCFA in Aug. 2009.	3
Project Performance		4
Partner Performance		
IFAD	Project design was carried out with the participation of all major stakeholders, but the result was too ambitious and did not sufficiently anticipate future administrative and financial management problems by introducing appropriate safeguards. IFAD support during implementation was found satisfactory but was not further analysed in the PCR. It appears, however, that the frequent changes in CPM responsibility (4 CPMs in 7 years) has had a disruptive effect on the project which had to adjust to new directions every time.	4
Cooperating Institution	UNOPS/ UN Office for Project Services (2003-2006): Frequency, timeliness and quality of supervision were appropriate. The CI has however been slow and hence not sufficiently responsive in dealing with the fiduciary aspects of the project (processing of WAs, no objections, AWP&B validation).	3

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	IFAD (2006-2009): According to the PCR, the transition to IFAD direct supervision has had a negative impact on project implementation: (i) IFAD supervision methodologies and approaches being quite different from those of UNOPS, neither side (IFAD/PADC) was sufficiently prepared for this new task, and (ii) IFAD had been even slower than UNOPS in processing WAs and payment requests, leading to a serious shortage of funds. In addition, some WAs issued in 2007 had to be re-submitted by the project in 2008, following the retroactive entering into force of a new letter to the borrower.	
Government	Government has actively participated in project design and thereafter in all missions organized by either IFAD or UNOPS. Project implementation has, however, suffered from the late and inadequate payment of counterpart funds. In 2006, Government's share in operational costs was lifted from 15% to 50% (why??). This further aggravated the situation. Altogether, only 23% of the counterpart funds estimated at appraisal were effectively paid by the Government.	3
NGO/CBOs	<u>GTZ</u> : GTZ support in the area of capacity building (Participatory Rural Appraisal and community development) did not materialize, due to the changing priorities of GTZ in Cameroon. Nevertheless, an ad hoc cooperation with GTZ could be established in both regions and has in some cases improved the partnership between villages and communes (integration of village development plans into communal plan, capacity building at communal level, etc.). <u>World Bank- National Participatory Development Programme</u> : Despite similar approaches and strategies, a true synergy in the areas of intervention could not be established. <u>NGOs</u> : Difficult partnership due to: (i) weak technical and financial capacities; (ii) high fluctuation of staff; (iii) cash flow difficulties of the project. <u>Cooperation with IFAD Tubers Market-Driven Development Programme (PNDRT)</u> : A joint steering committee was established but practical cooperation between both projects never materialized, despite the identification of common villages of intervention.	3
Cofinancier(s)	n.a.	n.a.
Combined Partner Performance	Partners made a major effort to maximize benefits from cooperation, but this has not been an easy exercise in this particular country context where there are some capacities issues concerning local/Government partners.	
Rural Poverty Impact		
Household Income and Net Assets	201 Village Development Plans have led to the construction/rehabilitation of 156 drinking water facilities which have contributed to improved household hygiene. The no. of benefiting households is not known. 599 income generating activities (IGAs) have been initiated in the area of processing, petty trade and marketing of agricultural produce. 355 were self-financed by the groups. For the remaining 244, 75 Village Development Committees (CVDs) could access a MF credit, thanks to the project's financial guarantee facility (caution tournante). However, it appears that: (i) a large part of the population lives in extreme poverty and has not been able to access or to pay back their loans; and (ii) only few MFIs have accepted the financial guarantee facility as a means to access MF credit.	4
Food Security	The PCR assumes that the IGAs initiated with the support of the project must have had both a direct and an indirect impact on household food security, through an increased agricultural production or higher household incomes. The project's impact, however, has not been analysed.	n.a.
Agricultural Productivity	The project's impact on agricultural productivity is assessed as weak. The PCR mentions that IGAs directly related to agriculture were: (i) few in numbers, as most MFIs are reluctant to lend to farmers; (ii) not always successful, particularly in the Extreme North, due to the harsh climatic conditions (droughts, floods); and (iii) in direct competition with agricultural activities subsidized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (whereas the IGAs require 20% self-contribution). Furthermore, any technical training was hard to organize due to the large distances between villages and difficulties to bring interested groups together for a training activity.	3
Food Security and Agricultural Productivity		3
Natural Resources and Environment	Impact on natural resources and the environment were considered irrelevant given the small scope of the income generating activities.	n.a.
Human and Social Capital and Empowerment	Literacy training in 62 villages and access to socio-eco. infrastructure (156 drinking water facilities, 435 teaching facilities (584%), 11 health care facilities (61%), electrification of 10 villages (not foreseen)) have helped improving human assets: (i) higher school enrolment rates; (ii) higher education among school children; and (iii) lower death rates thanks to the reduction of water-borne diseases. The actual impact has however, not been assessed. Difficulties have been encountered with vocational & technical training and training in HIV/AIDS prevention. The project has	3

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	facilitated the creation of 3 different types of local level institutions: (i) 201 (=80%) Village Development Committees (established, legally recognized and trained); (ii) management committees for selected IGAs; and (iii) management committee for socio-economic infrastructure projects. These efforts have strengthened social cohesion and have helped the communities to open up to the outside world. However, many of these organizations need further strengthening in order to consolidate. Also, some of the Village Development Committees do not represent the beneficiaries but the local elite.	
Institutions and Policies	The project was supposed to help establishing a platform of exchange at national level, providing support to the progressive definition of a community development strategy for the country. This objective could not be reached, since the formal cooperation with GTZ did not materialize. However, a platform of exchange was established in the EN province. This platform provides a useful forum of exchange for local development partners. Initially, the project had two entry points: village and communes. During the mid-term review (MTR), activities were refocused and the village identified as main entry point for the project. This reorientation has however reduced the project's impact on the local democratization and decentralization processes.	3
Markets	The PCR did not assess the project's impact on market access. It can be assumed that impact on markets was weak as only 186 km of roads were rehabilitated (corresponding to only 12% of the revised target) and that only 8 marketing/storage facilities were constructed (27% of the target).	3
Rural Poverty Impact	According to the PCR, the project had a felt impact on: (i) social cohesion; (ii) increased awareness at village level; (iii) better integration of women and the youth in the decision taking and management processes; (iv) increased contact between villages and external partners; and (v) the level of economic activity. However, given the many implementation difficulties the project has faced this impact remains altogether modest.	3
Other Performance Criteria		
Innovation	The project's main innovation has been the introduction of participatory planning approaches at community level and establishing a dialogue between villages and communes. These approaches could however not be sufficiently consolidated and internalized.	3
Replicability and Scaling-up	The potential for scaling-up the participatory planning approaches and democratization processes at local level in Cameroon is very high and should be pursued in future projects/programmes. However, the experience has shown that the whole approach has to be re-thought.	4
Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up	(Additional comment: participatory planning has been introduced; and the potential for scaling up is very high)	4
Sustainability and Ownership	The participatory/community development approaches and democratization processes initiated under the project need to be further strengthened. The future of the Village Development Committees is not discussed in the PCR, but they will most likely have difficulties to function without external support. It is further mentioned that no provision was made to ensure maintenance of the infrastructure provided since the project was closed abruptly, ahead of time.	3
Targeting	The project was targeted to reach the most vulnerable sections of the population and related studies were conducted at the beginning of project implementation: (i) single mothers, (ii) jobless youth; (iii) handicapped; (iv) the sick; (v) elder people; (vi) landless farmers; (vii) immigrants. During the MTR, the sick and handicapped were excluded to narrow the focus of the project. The project's targeting approach is not further discussed in the PCR.	4
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	50% of the Village Development Committee members are women and 20% of those who were trained were women. Women representation in the various committees could be substantially improved, but their actual participation in decision making processes is still weak. Also, the project did not develop an appropriate mechanism to provide more literacy training to those who need it most, i.e. women and the youth.	4
Overall Performance	Compared to the relevance of the objectives and the activities foreseen, the project's overall performance has been modest.	3
Estimated number of beneficiaries	n.a.	
PCR Quality		
Scope	The PCR largely follows the required outline but not all sections were covered and most required annexes are missing. There is no assessment of sustainability, innovation, replicability and up-scaling and there was no stakeholder workshop.	4

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Quality	The PCR is well written and self-critical. However, it does not go into depth and the impact analysis is quasi inexistent. It is sometimes superficial, contradictory (strong contradiction between the figures mentioned in the text and the tables in the annex), important details missing and connections not made. It can be felt that the PCR was done quickly, with no time to conduct specific studies or consultations. The project can however be commended for having well presented the various implementation problems it has faced over the years.	4
Lessons	Little effort was put into the analysis of lessons learned (due also to the fact that there was no stakeholder workshop). The main and only lesson identified is the need to consolidate and further up-scale the participatory development approaches initiated by the project, as these are still highly relevant for the country's rural development and democratization process.	3
Candour	The PCR is self-critical.	5