



Investing in rural people

Mali

Sahelian Areas Development Fund Programme

Project Completion Report Digest

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Project No. 1089
West and Central Africa Division
Programme Management Department

Mali - Sahelian Areas Development Fund Programme

Item	Assessment Remarks	Ratings
Country & Project Name	Mali - Sahelian Areas Development Fund Programme (SADeF)	
Loan No.:	488-ML	
Project Id.	1089	
Board Date	02 December 1998	
Entry into Force	14 October 1999	
Completion Date	31 July 2013 (Original: 31 March 2009)	
Final Closing Date	31 January 2013 (Original: 30 September 2009)	
Total Project Cost US\$(M)	37.83	
IFAD loan & Grant US\$(M)	21.95 Loan	
Cofinanciers (if any)	GEF: US\$6.00; Government: US\$6.38; Beneficiaries: US\$3.50	
Cooperating Institution	IFAD Pilot (direct supervision)	
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Rural Development and Water	
Principal Components	The programme offered its participation to rural communities in carrying out their own initiatives through a number of services and funding arrangements falling within the remit of IFAD's mandate. The activities to be supported have been divided into three broad menus: (i) Village Development Support with two sub-components: (a) Training and support services; (b) Village investment fund; (ii) Decentralized Financial Services; (iii) Programme Management.	
Project Performance		
Relevance	The Sahelian Areas Development Fund (SADeF) Programme was designed under the Flexible Lending Mechanism (FLM). The PCR is focused on assessing programme performance during the third phase, incl. consolidation of the achievements of the first 2 phases. The third phase was found in line with relevant government policies and strategies, in particular with the strategic Framework for Growth and Poverty Reduction 2007-2011, which identifies agricultural intensification and social development as the main tools for rural poverty alleviation. It is also in line with the National Environmental Action Plan, the National Programme to Combat Desertification and the national policy on wetlands. It has contributed to the implementation of the Agricultural Development Master Plan, the Framework Law on Agriculture and the livestock recovery strategy. It was also designed in support of the decentralization policy. The programme was aligned with the IFAD COSOP of 2007-2011 and responded well to the needs of the beneficiaries in the Inner Niger Delta, by combining rural development with natural resource management and ecosystem / biodiversity restoration. This was confirmed by the stakeholder workshop held as part of the completion mission. The choice of the area of intervention was found highly relevant too, in particular the choice of the 19 rural communities, which are among the poorest in Mali and cover protected ecosystems of the Inner Delta Region (wetlands of international importance recognized by the Ramsar convention). By contrast, the demand-driven approach of the programme, whereby all interventions had to be initiated by the beneficiaries themselves did not enable the programme to: (i) move into a value-chain approach and achieve greater results by providing coordinated and structured support to all elements of the chain; and (ii) widen its rehabilitation and restoration measures to the entire Inner Niger Delta based on an ecosystems approach. In other words, the programme could have reached more by combining its demand-driven approach with structured investments in support of the needs expressed by the beneficiaries.	5
Effectiveness	Measurement of programme impact was hampered by a weak Logframe and the demand-driven approach of the programme, which made it difficult to pre-define impact measurement indicators. Beneficiary interviews, workshops and meetings held during the completion mission have led to conclude that: (i) the programme has satisfactorily contributed to improving the living conditions of the populations in the programme area (SO 1) by securing their incomes, access to basic social services and reducing conflicts over the use of natural resources; (ii) the programme has only partly succeeded in strengthening the capacities and participation of farmer's organizations in local development processes (SO2). While this SO was reached with regard to local farmers' organizations, the programme widely failed to establish regional apex associations providing adequate and cost effective services to their members. By contrast, local authorities were strengthened through local development plans and communal environmental action plan; and (iii) the programme significantly contributed to improving NRM and ecosystem conservation & rehabilitation in the Inner Niger Delta Region over an estimated area of 10 334 ha of wetlands, by establishing rehabilitation plans for 6 protected areas of local, national and international interest.	4
Efficiency	The IFAD disbursement rate reached 96% (PSR), which can be considered highly satisfactory, given the difficult conditions under which the project has operated since 2011. The GEF disbursement rate reached 79%. Efficiency was however affected by: (i) a strong imbalance between disbursements by component and by category. The capacity strengthening component reached 136% of the original	4

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	allocation, management & coordination reached 150% while support to local development and NRM reached only 50%. Overruns were also noted for the GEF categories "salaries" and "operating costs" (51% and 112% respectively) and the IFAD category "TA" and "salaries" (171% and 61% respectively); (ii) high programme management and coordination costs (see costs overruns for related categories); and (iii) high beneficiary and household unit costs (165 USD and 997 USD respectively compared to 69 USD and 484 USD for a comparable project). The main causes were: the political crisis, remoteness of the programme area (which required the hiring of additional staff and increased travel costs), and strong emphasis on beneficiary sensitization at the beginning of implementation. The latter caused the bulk of investments to take place towards the end of the implementation period (29% of the funds earmarked for the third phase (IFAD & GEF) were disbursed in 2013 and 43% of the funds allocated to the component "local development and natural resource management" were spent in 2013). - Aspects which have positively contributed to programme efficiency include: (i) adequate AWP&B implementation; (ii) satisfactory overall disbursement rate (87%); (iii) high profitability of the investments (between 24% and 100%); (iv) unforeseen results with high profitability, such as fish and milk production; and (v) unit costs lower than those of other comparable interventions in the region. Finally, with 39% the IRR is much higher than estimated at appraisal/3 rd phase design (12%). This is mainly due to the fact that the two IRR were not based on the same activities. Also, the final IRR has strongly benefited from various new activities (fish, milk and vegetable production) especially from "bourgou" production, without which, the IRR would be of 8% only.	
Project Performance		4
Partner Performance		
IFAD	The project was directly supervised by IFAD from the beginning, as a pilot. IFAD performed a very close follow-up of the project throughout, but could have made a better use of the FLM. This concerns in particular the inter-phase review missions, which were rather weak considering that they had to draw lessons from the phase that was being concluded and feed the results into the formulation of the next phase. It appears that the conditions (triggers) for moving from one phase to the next were not analysed closely enough. Also, given the rather complex institutional set-up of the programme, these missions failed to recommend necessary adjustments in due course, such as the revision of the implementation manual, the clarification of the respective roles of the regional/national associations and the programme implementation agencies and the legal status of the regional/national associations to enable them to become independent entities representative of the rural populations. Supervision performance and timing were adequate. The missions provided important recommendations to improve the performance of the programme which were, however, not always followed by appropriate actions on the side of the programme. Some weaknesses that were not followed up included: (i) strengthen the Logframe and the M&E system; (ii) accelerate project investments; (iii) scale down sensitization and animation of beneficiaries, and (iv) provide clear directions for the support of producer organizations. It should be noted, however, that through the SADeF programme, IFAD pioneered both, the FLM approach and the direct supervision. IFAD performance has markedly improved with the opening of a country office in Bamako in 2011. IFAD closely followed the disengagement of the programme and the gradual transfer of responsibilities to the various partners and actors involved. The early transfer of all rural finance activities to the new IFAD project was a particularly wise decision, given the absence of adequate skills within the SADeF/Mopti.	4
Cooperating Institution	This project was directly supervised by IFAD from the beginning.	
Government	Government support was partly satisfactory. Government performed better at national than at regional level. Counterpart funds were released on time and reached 119% of the estimated amount at appraisal. By contrast, Government contribution in total reached only 77%. WAs were prepared in a timely manner. Delays were however noted in the transfer of funds from the central ministry to the technical departments at regional level, which led to delays in programme implementation. Through the steering committee Government strongly contributed to overall guidance and follow-up. It also facilitated the participation of other ministerial departments, the civil society and deconcentrated technical services. Its participation in supervision and inter-phase review missions was, however, found insufficient. Local authorities have strongly supported the implementation of the programme through the development and implementation of the socio-economic and cultural development plans and the environmental action plans. Their contribution was greatly appreciated by all stakeholders. According to the beneficiaries, support provided by the technical services was significant, but the PCR does not provide details supporting this statement. Project management was entrusted to the National Management and Coordination Unit and the Regional Implementation and Management Unit of Mopti. The latter was responsible for the day-to-day management of the programme. AWP&B implementation was adequate. Financial management was, however, weak	4

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	and the main cause for liquidity problems and a slow disbursement rate at the beginning of the phase. IFAD's recommendation to change the finance and accounting staff were delayed and did not achieve the expected improvements.	
NGO/Other	The programme's main partners were the National Association for the Development of the Sahelian Areas (ANDES) and the Regional Association of Mopti (ARM), established under the programme. The fact that their legal status was never clarified has hindered them to fully play their role as representatives of the communities and farmer's organizations at national and regional level. This has substantially weakened them in their interactions with their members (and other partners of the programme) and has put their sustainability at risk. - A very positive partnership was established with ICRAF and the Institute for Rural Economy in 2 villages in the Mopti Region (and 9 in the region of Ségou) for the production and distribution of local tree seeds. ICRAF has also provided support for the integration of fruit trees and vegetable production. This has greatly contributed to improving the income of women and improving/diversifying household food security. ICRAF has also provided support to community reforestation in the Mopti region which has resulted in an innovative agro-forestry system developed specifically for the region and for the production of fuel wood. However, ICRAF's capacities of intervention were very limited so that some remote districts could not be covered.	4
Cofinancier(s)	The programme was co-financed in its 3 rd phase by the GEF. Implementation and supervision responsibility of GEF funded activities rested with IFAD as executing agency of the GEF.	n.a
Combined Partner Performance	No major issues mentioned. Cooperation was good, but rendered difficult by lack of clarity of roles of the regional/national associations and the programme's implementation agencies (national and regional).	
Rural Poverty Impact		
Household Income and Net Assets	Incomes could be increased through: (i) the development of vegetable, livestock and milk production, fish farming and community " <i>bourgou</i> " fields; (ii) improved production technologies; (iii) better use of flood field; (iv) access to organized community fields which helps keep the livestock within the grazing areas and has reduced conflicts; and (v) the drilling of boreholes, which has reduced the workload of women and the incidence of water-borne diseases among the population. Women have particularly benefited through (i) the intensification of vegetable production which enables 3 growing seasons a year, (ii) the introduction of new fruit and vegetables (integration of fruit farming with vegetable production); and (iii) the improvement of drying techniques which enables them to sell dried vegetables and leaves throughout the year. The additional income generated by the women from the production of fruits and vegetables corresponds to the national average income in 2007. Women fish smokers (80 in total) have, in addition, benefited from the introduction of the chorkor oven, which has brought about important productivity increases. These women could reach an annual income 7 times as high as the average annual income in Mali. The development of <i>bourgou</i> fields has enabled livestock producers to increase productivity, enabling them to earn higher incomes and improve their living conditions. Finally, the development of <i>bourgou</i> fields has enabled the communities to engage into the sale of stacks of <i>bourgou</i> . The PCR does not provide any figures about the extent of these income increases, but they are assumed to be significant. – Regarding assets, households could reportedly increase their access to safe water, latrines, telephones, electricity, radio and livestock (chicken, sheep, goats).	5
Food Security	The programme has contributed to improving household food security and child malnutrition. The percentage share of households affected by a food shortage period could be reduced from 65% in 2008 to 52% in 2013 and child malnutrition could be reduced from 36% to 23% (RIMS data). According to the PCR, increased fruit and vegetable production by women has improved and diversified household food security and nutrition, especially during the lean season with the availability of dried vegetables (onion, okra) and tree leaves (baobab). The development of <i>bourgou</i> production has had various indirect effects on food security and nutrition as it has enabled the development of livestock and milk production, through the availability of fodder and grazing areas. It has also enabled the rehabilitation of fisheries resources. The PCR does not provide any data, but it can be assumed that the increased production of livestock and fish has increased the beneficiaries' protein and milk intake.	4
Ag. Productivity	The programme had a visible impact on agricultural productivity. Vegetable production yields could be increased for many varieties, such as gombo and chili. A total of 1450 individuals, mainly women, have benefited. <i>Bourgou</i> production has helped develop livestock production and productivity, due to the increased availability of fodder all year round. As a result, milk production could be increased by 1-3 litres per cow, over a period of 6 months. The development of <i>Bourgou</i> production has also helped develop artisanal fisheries in the Mopti region. Beneficiaries have stated that larger fields of <i>bourgou</i> have enabled them to increase and further develop their catch. Unfortunately, the PCR provides no figures.	4

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Agricultural Productivity and Food Security		4
Natural Resources and Environment	The programme met expectation with regard to its impact on natural resource management and biodiversity conservation/restoration. It has successfully piloted different forms of conservation and restoration measures on 2000 ha of <i>bourgou</i> fields and 7300 ha of forests and forest floodplains, while at the same time promoting the sustainable use of natural resources by the beneficiaries (fodder production, livestock production, fisheries development, <i>bourgou</i> seed production, fruit tree plantation, etc.). By doing so, it has contributed to the rehabilitation of their main source of livelihoods. It has also had a major impact on biodiversity conservation and rehabilitation (fauna and flora). Several endangered animal species have reappeared thanks to the restoration of their habitat, such as migratory birds and local fish species (much appreciated by the local population for the nutritious value), but also insects and amphibians. Manatees were spotted and 32 hippopotamus registered. The programme also contributed to the recovery of traditional fruit trees (jujube, tamarind) and shrubs. Sensitization measures helped the populations understand the complex functioning of their ecosystem and agreements with the local populations led the ground for a sustainable use of natural resources over the year. Altogether, their resilience against the negative effects of climate change could be improved. The programme has also initiated the creation of an environmental information management system for the Inner Niger Delta region.	5
Human, Social Capital and Empowerment	The programme has strengthened the capacities of a large range of beneficiaries. They were trained in the areas of vegetable production, fish production, <i>bourgou</i> regeneration and development, soil protection and restoration, degraded sites restoration, etc. Women have particularly benefitted. The programme has helped them develop their capacities in different areas related to vegetable production fruit tree plantation and small livestock production. They have gained access to productive resources, which has enabled them to substantially increase their incomes and thus, their socio-economic status within the villages and the families. The programme reached good result in terms of women empowerment, but its impact was limited by the small absolute. It can be assumed that improved food security and access to safe water has improved overall health of the population in the programme area.	4
Inst. & Policies	The programme had a major impact on local institutions and policies. It has strengthened the capacities of technical departments at local level, in particular the regional departments of agriculture and forestry in Mopti which are now in a better position to support development interventions in the region. It has also strengthened the capacities of the municipalities through its support to the development and implementation of Social, Economic and Cultural Development Plans and Environmental Action Plans. Both tools have been mainstreamed into the work process of the rural communities and municipalities, and have become a major tool for the management of local development and natural resource management. Mayors and other communal staff have been trained in procurement. The programme has further piloted agreements with local communities over the use of natural resources, in particular the forest floodplains and <i>bourgou</i> fields. This has contributed to reducing tensions and conflicts over the use of these resources. SADeF was recognized as a programme which has contributed to the implementation of the Master Plan for Agricultural Development, the Framework Law on Agriculture, the livestock recovery strategy and the national policy on wetlands. The programme also provided strong support to the development of farmer's organizations. Associations were established at national and regional level with the objective to create an apex structure for farmer's organizations. However, these structures were weak and their legal status never clarified so that they remained financially and organizationally fully dependent on the programme. As a result, they were unable to play their role as representatives of farmer's organizations and could not be considered sustainable at completion. They failed to contribute to the expected empowerment of the beneficiaries.	5
Markets	The programme did not have any direct impact on the development of markets. It was stated, however, that the production of <i>bourgou</i> has increased the sale of <i>bourgou</i> seeds within the region, and across the border. There are no figures to substantiate these findings. The programme also introduced the use of stack binders for <i>bourgou</i> , enabling the beneficiaries to sell stacks on the markets.	n.a
Project Impact	Given the weakness of the Logframe and of the M&E system (no appropriate impact indicators), few impact data are available. Impact has been assessed using a combination of RIMS assessment results, beneficiary interviews and observations, discussions and meetings held by the completion mission, incl. the stakeholder workshop. Altogether, the programme has reached good results in several areas. Its impact has however been lessened by the limited outreach of its interventions (low absolute numbers).	4

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Overarching Factors		
Innovation	The programme's main innovation was its implementation set-up whereby programme activities were led by the national and regional associations, representative of the beneficiaries, while day-to-day implementation was managed and coordinated by national and regional agencies. This set-up however, showed some major weaknesses (see institutions). By contrast, the SAdEF programme has brought about a large number of activities, which were new to the region and greatly appreciated by the beneficiaries. These innovations were documented in 11 technical data sheets dealing with the development of <i>bourgou</i> production, strengthening the resilience of livestock farmers, developing local forests and village groves, integration of the environmental dimension into the local development planning process and the use of the chorkor oven. All of these innovations had a significant impact on incomes and well-being of the populations in the region.	4
Replicability and Scaling-up	Above-mentioned technical innovations hold a strong potential for replication and scaling up. The <i>bourgou</i> development techniques are sufficiently consolidated to be replicated and scaled up across the inner delta region. The potential for scaling up is high. Not only does it contribute to household incomes and food security (livestock and milk production, sale of <i>bourgou</i> stacks). It also reduces transhumance, reduces conflicts between livestock farmers and pastoralists and lessens the pressure on the natural resource base. Given the high demand for the expansion of <i>bourgou</i> fields and the availability of the right approaches and techniques, it is assumed that this activity will be replicated and scaled up. The PCR however indicates that some further studies will be necessary to enable the sound development and management of <i>bourgou</i> production at a larger scale, incl. the analysis of production models. Some institutional and policy support will also be needed. Vegetable production and fish farming are other areas that hold a strong potential for replication and scaling up. However, their development at a larger scale will require additional studies and support. Vegetable production requires access to water all year round and a larger plot sizes to enable economies of scale. It also needs to be integrated in a value-chain approach. Fish farming requires further analysis to identify the best production mode (individual or community-based) and financing mechanism. Several decades ago and before droughts, climate change and overfishing have reduced the fish stock, fish production in the area was strong enough to enable "exports" towards the cities and neighbouring countries. Possibilities should be studied to restore the fisheries resources and to develop the fisheries sector in the delta region, following the example of similar ecosystems development (such as Nigeria).	5
Innovation, Replicability and Scaling-up		5
Sustainability and Ownership	Beneficiaries have gained a good level of ownership of the programme as shown by their strong participation in the identification, planning and implementation of activities (environmental and productive micro projects) combining improved knowledge with the use of locally available resources. <i>Bourgou</i> development has reached a sustainable level, which can be further developed by the beneficiaries themselves who have learned to manage these resources independently. Additional support could however speed up the further regeneration. The same applies to soil & water conservation and soil protection & restoration measures. Activities that still need further support include: fish farming, bank protection vetiver and restoration of forest/tree resources. Vegetable production will continue to benefit women, but support will be needed for the further development and expansion. While the programme had a strong positive impact on the environment and natural resource management in the Mopti region, sustainability is threatened by the absence of a global environmental management and governance system for the Inner Delta Region. So far, activities have not gone beyond the micro project level, but a master plan approach is needed to protect and sustainably manage the resources within such a vast and complex ecosystem. Regarding the Environmental Information Management System for the Inner Niger Delta, the system has been established but is not yet operational. The Government-led Project for the Sustainable Development of the Inner Niger Delta Region will provide the necessary capacity strengthening to the regional department of agriculture and forestry in Mopti. Of major concern is the future of the National Association for the Development of Sahelian Areas and of the Regional Association of Mopti (ARM) in particular. So far, the ARM depends entirely on the financial and operational support of the SAdEF programme. It is likely to stop, as did the regional associations in Ségou and Koulikoro. This lies in the fact that their members come from different organizations, with different objectives and have come together only for the purpose of the implementation of the programme. They have not been established to provide support to the populations on a sustainable basis. Also, they have no mechanism enabling them to cover their operating costs, currently financed from the SAdEF Programme. On the positive side, some POs have succeeded to mobilize external resources through their apex organization. Some POs are showing signs of autonomy.	4

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Targeting	The SADeF Programme applied a geographical targeting (poorest and most vulnerable regions). Beneficiary households were selected based on a participatory analysis. The demand-driven approach of the programme made it participatory by definition. It is not clear, however, what mechanisms were used to reach the most vulnerable and if the programme succeeded to do so.	4
Gender	The PCR provides only few facts and data about the impact on women. Women were the main beneficiaries of all activities directed at improving vegetable and fruit production (94%). During beneficiary interviews they stated that this has helped them improve their socio-economic status as they have become financially more independent. The RIMS survey has shown that women's conditions could altogether be improved with 36% of women headed households situated in the top 2 income quintiles (compared to 19% in 2008).	5
Overall Performance		4
Estimated number of beneficiaries	Estimated at 57 000 in total with an estimated 49% women.	
PCR Quality		
Scope	The guidelines were respected.	5
Quality	The PCR was prepared by FAO/TCIA. The report reviews the 3 rd phase of this 10 years (actually 14 years) project designed under the FLM. There is no PCR for the entire programme, but the team was asked to write the PCR for the last phase considering the conclusions of the reports written for the previous phases. The main report is well written and structured, but could have gone a bit further. Analysis could have been more in-depth, but that was also difficult given the difficult context, including a complex and long project and the political crisis.	4
Lessons	One could have expected a more in depth analysis of lessons after such a long implementation period.	4
Candour	The PCR is very objective.	5