

Project Completion Report Validation

Rural Development Programme in the Mountain Zones – Phase I

Morocco

Date of validation by IOE: March 2023

I. Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region	Near East and North Africa	Total project costs	40.55		38.79	
Country	Morocco	IFAD loan and percentage of total	19.28	47%	18.34	47%
Loan number		Borrower	12.1	30%	12.1	31%
IFAD project ID	1100001727	IFAD grant	0.5	1%	0.5	1%
Type of project (subsector)	Rural development	ASAP grant	1.86	5%	1.44	4%
Financing type	Loan and grants	GEF grant	6.51	16%	6.11	16%
Lending terms*	Ordinary term loan	Beneficiaries	0.3	1%	0.3	1%
Date of approval	17/09/2014	Other sources				
Date of loan signature	10/11/2014					
Date of effectiveness	23/02/2015					
Loan amendments	1	Number of beneficiaries (if appropriate, specify if direct or indirect)	31,573 direct beneficiary households			
Loan closure extensions	1					
Country programme managers	Naoufel Telahigue Abdelhamid Abdouli	Loan closing date			30/09/2022	
Regional director(s)	Dina Saleh Khalida Bouzar	Mid-term review			13/11/2017	
Project completion report reviewer	Maria Donnat	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)			95%	
Project completion report quality control panel	Ernst Schaltegger Fabrizio Felloni	Date of the project completion report			4/09/2022	

Source: .Project Completion Report (PCR) 2022.

* There are four types of lending terms: (i) special loans on highly concessional terms, free of interest but bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75 per cent) per annum and having a maturity period of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (ii) loans on hardened terms, bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75 per cent) per annum and having a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (iii) loans on intermediate terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to 50 per cent of the variable reference interest rate and a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of five years; (iv) loans on ordinary terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to one hundred per cent (100 per cent) of the variable reference interest rate, and a maturity period of 15-18 years, including a grace period of three years..

II. Project outline

Country & Project Name	Morocco Rural Development Programme in the Mountain Zones - Phase I (PDRZM-Phase1)
Project duration	Total project duration: seven years; Board approval: 17/09/2014; Loan/grant signing: 10/11/2014; Original completion date: 31/03/2020; Actual completion date: 31/03/2022; Original loan closure: 30/06/2020; Actual loan closure: 30/09/2022; Extensions: One; Effectiveness lag: three months.
Project goal, objectives and components	The global objective of the Program was to contribute to reducing poverty (by 30 per cent by 2030) and improving the conditions of the rural populations in mountain areas. The specific objective was to strengthen target populations' capacities to improve their income and resilience towards the effects of climate change, through value chains' enhancement and based on the sustainable management of natural resources and the diversification of the local economy.
Project area and target group	The project was to operate in 32 rural communes characterized by a high incidence of poverty and vulnerability and significant soil degradation, and where climate change had the highest effects on the productive capital of disadvantaged populations. The target group comprised: (i) small and medium-sized farmers with up to 3 hectares of irrigated crops or 20 hectares of rainfed crops; (ii) small and medium-sized livestock breeders with up to 50 heads of sheep or goat; (iii) beekeepers possessing knowhow but no hives, or fewer than 30 hives, who belong to a group of at least 15 members; and (iv) landless young people and women with the required qualifications to carry out small-scale projects in the form of small and medium-sized enterprises and income-generating activities.
Project implementation	Project implementation was managed by a dedicated, central Project Coordination Unit and two provincial offices. The agency for agricultural development of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Waters and Forests was the implementing agency. In total, 11 supervision or implementation support missions were organized by IFAD.
Changes during implementation	Minor changes in project design were recommended by the mid-term review (MTR) and subsequent supervision missions. A two-year extension of the project completion date was approved in 2020.
Financing	At appraisal, total approved budget was US\$45 million. This amount was reduced to US\$40.5 million in 2020. The project was financed by an IFAD loan of SDR 13.39 million (US\$34.70 million), an IFAD grant of US\$0.5 million, a Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant of US\$6.51 million and an Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) grant of US\$1.81 million. The Government of Morocco counterpart financing was estimated at design at US\$12.05million. Co-financing was also foreseen from beneficiaries for a total of US\$0.3 million. Overall, actual disbursement was 96 per cent of total appraisal costs.

Table 1
Project costs (US\$ '000)

<i>Funding source</i>	<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>per cent of appraisal costs</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>per cent of actual costs</i>	<i>per cent disbursed</i>
IFAD (loan)	19 280	47%	18 340	47%	95%
IFAD (grant)	500	1%	500	1%	100%
ASAP grant	1860	5%	1 440	4%	80%
GEF grant	6 510	16%	6 110	16%	94%
Government	12100	30%	12 100	31%	97%
Beneficiaries	300	1%	3003	1%	100%
Total	40 550¹	100%	38 790	100%	96%

Source: Project Completion Report (PCR) (2022).

¹ The total of US\$40.55 million corresponds to the adjusted IFAD loan amount of 2020.

Table 2
Component costs (MAD '000)

Component	Appraisal	per cent of appraisal costs	Actual	per cent of actual costs	per cent disbursed
C1.1. Fruit trees value chains (Amont)	59 400	20%	55 240	20%	93%
C1.2 Fruit trees value chains (Aval)	27 150	9%	23 200	8%	86%
C1.3 Animal value chains (Amont)	25 960	8%	18 430	6%	71%
C1.4 Animal value chains (Aval)	16 500	5%	17 800	6%	108%
C1.5 Infrastructure and irrigation schemes	87 830	29%	76 780	27%	87%
C2.1 Natural resources management and environmental restoration	17 250	6%	3 450	1%	20%
C2.2 Climate change adaptation	41 250	14%	54 090	19%	131%
C3. Project management and coordination	29 050	9%	37 690	13%	130%
Total	304 390	100%	286 720	100%	94%

Source: Project Completion Report (2022). Per component costs are not displayed in US\$ but in Moroccan Dinars (MAD). The discrepancy in terms of total project costs between Table 1 and Table 2 may be due to exchange rate fluctuations.

III. Review of findings

A. Evaluation criteria

Relevance

1. Project objectives and strategies were fully consistent with national priorities, in particular the Plan Maroc Vert, which focused on the development of smallholders' agriculture in poor and remote areas. They were also fully in line with IFAD global objectives, the priorities of IFAD Country strategic opportunities programme 2008-2020 and the objectives of GEF and ASAP. Proposed activities were broadly relevant to the needs, aspirations and capacities of targeted beneficiaries (small rural producers, unemployed women and youth) and their organizations. However, although poor access to rural finance by poor rural producers was considered a key development constraint at the time of project design, the project had no strategy to alleviate the issue. The project design had also underestimated certain risks, in particular those linked to the establishment of implementation partnerships and the timely completion of important studies. The institutional set up proposed at design involved many co-financers or implementation partners, and caused initial implementation delays, while the mitigation measures envisaged to ensure a prompt project start proved insufficient. Owing to the accrued implementation delays, some changes in priority interventions were recommended by the MTR and subsequent supervision missions, and the decision taken in 2020 to extend project duration proved relevant to ensure the full completion of all key project activities.
2. Although project interventions are fully relevant to the needs of targeted beneficiaries, the design did not address a key aspect (access to credit), and proposed implementation modalities were not commensurate with the project implementation timeframe, which caused a two-year implementation delay. Based on this, the PCRV suggests a rating of **moderately satisfactory (4)** for relevance, a rating that is one point lower than provided in the PCR.

Effectiveness

3. The two-year extension approved in 2020 has allowed the project to catch up with its initial implementation delays and achieve, or exceed, most of its physical and outreach targets. The overall physical execution rate is estimated at 101 per cent. Under **Component 1**, the objective of developing and enhancing selected value chains with a high potential of value addition and job creation was reasonably well achieved through the development of 3,097 hectares of climate-resilient fruit trees (prunes, apples, almond,

walnut and carob tree)² benefitting 6,810 producers. There is however only one mention in the PCR referring to value addition of fruits by drying. In the livestock sector, key achievements include the construction of six milk collection centres, the distribution of rams and sheep to some 5,726 producers and vaccination/prophylaxis campaigns. Under **Component 2**, key achievements contributing to the objectives of improved management of natural resources, adaptation to climate change and diversification were in line with expectations. These included the training of some 4,000 rural producers and implementation partners in improved production practices and better use of natural resources, the equipment of five wells with solar energy, and the rehabilitation of 25 km of irrigation canals. To diversify production and sources of revenues, the project also developed 17 ha of saffron and supported 203 groups of beekeepers with beehives distribution and the construction or rehabilitation of seven honey houses. At completion, the total project outreach was estimated between 25,942 (86 per cent of design target) and 31,573 households³ (105 per cent), representing half of the households in the 32 targeted "communes". Available impact data suggest that the project has made a positive contribution to the overall objective of reducing their poverty and vulnerability and improving their living conditions.

4. **Innovation.** As designed, the project included several technologies already tested and promoted elsewhere by other IFAD-funded projects, but new to the project area and its mountain context. These include the introduction of new agricultural crops (saffron, walnut, carob tree) and of modern beekeeping; the production of "briquettes" for heating from agricultural residues; and the introduction of "work teams" for orchard maintenance. The project has also successfully experimented new green and eco-efficient technologies, such as agricultural waste management and recycling techniques, and early warning systems to inform farmers of meteorological conditions.
5. Given that the project has achieved most of its objectives, sometimes exceeding design targets, and even though a two-year extension was required, the PCRV concurs with the PCR rating of **satisfactory (5)** for the effectiveness criterion. For the innovation criterion, the PCRV concurs with the rating of **satisfactory (5)**, given that the project has both managed to transfer some of the approaches already taken by other IFAD-funded projects in the project target area and introduced several genuine technical and social innovations.

Efficiency

6. At completion date, the disbursement rate of IFAD's financing (95 per cent) and the budget execution rate (96 per cent) were both highly satisfactory, notwithstanding the 3,1 million SDR (4,24 million US\$) reduction in IFAD loan amount approved in September 2021. 100 per cent of the expected government contribution was duly mobilized.
7. The long, 27-month lag between loan effectiveness and first disbursement caused by the complex institutional set up, the delays in recruiting project staff, a cumbersome procurement process and the difficult partnership with UNIDO⁴ led to a significant implementation delay until the MTR, particularly under Component 2. Project management performance, as well as implementation pace and performance, steadily improved after the MTR. The two-year extension led, among others, to the inflation of project management costs which were significantly higher than design expectations (13 per cent vs. 9 per cent), but most other costs, including for infrastructure construction, were contained within original design estimates.

² Two of the eight value chains initially selected at design were abandoned for lack of relevance to the context, as recommended by the MTR (namely cherries and potatoes). These were replaced with walnut and carob tree.

³ In the PCR: Paragraph 207 reports 31,573 direct beneficiary households; Paragraph 316 of the financial analysis mentions 25,942 beneficiary households; the Logframe in Appendix 1 of the PCR reports 26,950 persons receiving project services, but 31,573 households (which is not possible).

⁴ UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) was responsible for the provision of technical assistance for the implementation of Component 2 "Natural resources management, climate change adaptation and diversification".

8. The average cost per beneficiary recorded at completion (US\$1,228) is in the range of the averages of other IFAD projects in the country,⁵ and is lower than expected at design (US\$1,661) due to the higher number of beneficiaries reached using a lesser budget. At project completion, the ex-post financial and economic analysis shows a positive economic internal rate of return (+15.4 per cent), only slightly lower than the one estimated at design stage (+16.9 per cent).
9. Given the high rate of budget utilization, the satisfactory economic internal rate of return, and that the extension of the implementation period has allowed the achievement of all physical targets albeit at a reduced budget, the PCRV concurs with the **satisfactory (5)** rating provided in the PCR.

Rural poverty impact

10. Despite the fact that the newly developed orchards are not yet fully mature and that some value-adding infrastructures have just begun operating, the final impact survey has measured a positive impact on **beneficiaries' incomes**, living conditions and vulnerability. Thus, amid the COVID pandemic, the average annual income of beneficiary farmers has increased by 23 per cent to reach MAD 45,400, compared with a 5 per cent increase for the control group. This increase seems largely attributable to the increase in the average irrigated areas⁶ cultivated of beneficiary households and an increase in the production of all supported vegetal and animal commodities, except for carob trees⁷. The increase in production was particularly important for honey (+34 per cent). Collected data also show that beneficiary households tend to own more **households' goods and productive assets** than the control group, and that their housing conditions are better. Overall, the final impact survey measures a reduction of 18 per cent of the poverty rate among targeted beneficiaries, compared with the 30 per cent decrease expected at project design.
11. Further, and in a local context of persisting droughts and rising **food insecurity**, the increase in the proportion of households reporting periods of food insecurity was smaller among beneficiary households (from 14 per cent to 22 per cent) compared with the control group (from 20 per cent to 35 per cent), which underscores again the positive project impact.
12. There is a lack of data on project impact on **human and social capital**, other than the rate of adoption on production of improved pruning and fertilization techniques (36 per cent), which is below design expectations (50 per cent). The likely project impact on **policies and institutions**, including on supported rural producers' organizations, is also insufficiently documented.
13. There is clear evidence of positive project impact on beneficiary households' incomes, assets, food security and living conditions, but that this impact is sometimes slightly below expectations or not properly documented. Considering the possible bias against very small landholders, as noted in Footnote 6, this PCRV concurs with the PCR rating of **moderately satisfactory (4)** for the impact criterion.

Sustainability of benefits

14. **Sustainability.** Several elements contribute favorably to the prospects that project achievements will be sustained. Thus, the various infrastructure (seven sales points, four processing buildings and six storage facilities) constructed by the project are reportedly of good quality and respond to producers' and market needs. All local public actors have been closely associated to project planning and implementation, which has ensured a high level of ownership of the approaches promoted by the project. The various producers' groups created or supported have received sufficient technical and governance training to ensure the continuation of their operations. On the negative side, the exit strategy was only

⁵ According to the IOE-led evaluation of IFAD's strategy and country programme in Morocco completed in 2021, the average per beneficiary costs in IFAD projects in the country are within a range of US\$ 1,000 to 3,700.

⁶ From 1.96 ha to 2.7 ha for project beneficiaries, while it remained much lower for the control group (0.38 ha) also possibly showing the bias of the irrigation development activities against smallest land holders.

⁷ According to the final impact survey, the decrease in the productivity of carob tree is due to several years of drought.

developed and implemented during the last year of implementation, and the irrigation and value-addition groups still require further technical support. Moreover, most groups still need to build their management capacities, while their access to required finance or investment capital is still problematic and weakens their financial sustainability. Arrangements were taken by the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that a specific institution⁸ continues to provide technical assistance to all the producers' groups supported by the project after its completion, but it is unclear how the infrastructure management groups may be further supported to build their management capacities and develop sustainable linkages with the market and financial institutions.

15. **Scaling-up.** The PCR provides some examples of project approaches that hold a upscaling potential in the two target provinces, but many of which had already been tested or implemented elsewhere in the country by prior IFAD-funded projects. The only documented evidence of upscaling concerns saffron cultivation, with the financing by the provincial authority in Azilal of the plantation of 300 ha of saffron after the successful introduction by the project of this high-value crop on 17 ha. Overall, however, and despite project efforts to analyze and document its innovations,⁹ the inadequate documentation of project outcomes and impact until the final completion survey appears to have been an impediment for the effective promotion of upscaling opportunities on a wider plane¹⁰ and upscaling results remain limited.
16. **Natural resource management and climate change adaptation.** Component 2 was entirely dedicated to enhancing beneficiaries' climate resilience and promote the rational management and use of natural resources using GEF and ASAP resources. Achievements include the successful introduction of climate resilient tree varieties, the building of beneficiaries' capacities on climate resilient production techniques and the rehabilitation of degraded irrigation schemes to reduce water wastage. On a smaller scale, the project has successfully introduced solar energy systems for the operation of irrigation pumps or value-adding infrastructure, the use of agro-meteorological stations and weather information for orchard management, and the use of anti-hail generators. While the final completion survey shows that only 28 per cent of sample beneficiaries have received specific training on environment issues and climate risk management, some 55 per cent have claimed the adoption of sustainable management practices.
17. In view of this, the PCRV suggests a rating of ***moderately satisfactory (4)*** for the sustainability criterion, which is one point lower than the rating suggested in the PCR. Related to scaling-up, the PCRV does not concur with the rating of *satisfactory (5)* proposed in the PCR and suggests a rating of ***moderately satisfactory (4)*** instead. Overall results are in line with the PCR rating of ***satisfactory (5)*** for the natural resources management and climate adaptation criterion.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

18. Women accounted for 21 per cent of all beneficiaries, short of the 30 per cent target. Women's participation has been higher in the value chains selected specifically for them (beekeeping: 34 per cent, red meat: 100 per cent; saffron: 50 per cent), while their inequitable access to land has represented an obstacle for their integration in the other vegetal value chains. While women represent at least 50 per cent of the membership of 23 per cent of supported producers' organizations, only 9 per cent to 16 per cent of these organizations are led by a woman, highlighting persisting cultural gender bias. The final impact study did not evaluate changes in women beneficiaries' economic and social empowerment.
19. Given these conclusions, the PCRV concurs with the score of ***moderately satisfactory (4)*** provided to the gender equality criteria in the PCR.

⁸ Office National du Conseil Agricole

⁹ The document "Élaboration et Mise en Oeuvre d'une Stratégie de Communication et Élaboration d'un Rapport Récapitulatif des Expériences et des Innovations" prepared in 2020 was a useful attempt to document project innovations, but it lacked a presentation of the outcomes and impact of the innovations discussed.

¹⁰ This conclusion is documented in the last supervision report of 2022.

Overall project performance summary

20. Given the long, initial delay in project start and subsequent irruption of the COVID19 pandemic, the results and impacts measured at completion are rather impressive and are a testimony of the proactivity of the Government, the Project Management Unit (PMU), local implementers and IFAD in overcoming the initial implementation challenges. The project design seems to have benefitted from useful lessons learned from past IFAD projects, and some of the new approaches or high-value crops introduced in the particular project area – a mountainous terrain – seem to have been highly appreciated by beneficiaries and local stakeholders. The implementation period was however too short to ensure that the beneficiaries have the financial capacity to maintain, in the long run, the infrastructure constructed, and it will be important that the exit strategy developed at project completion is taken over by the Government.

Performance of Partners

21. **IFAD.** IFAD's proactive support through bi-annual supervision and implementation missions, and the training of PCU staff, have been instrumental in steering project implementation and improving performance after the MTR. Key decisions or actions made included the approval of a two-year extension period and the timely reallocation of project funds.¹¹ Additional support was provided for the preparation of the project gender strategy and, towards project completion, for the organization of provincial- and national-level workshops to exchange and capitalize on project achievements and lessons learned.
22. In view of these findings, the PCRV concurs with the **satisfactory (5)** score provided in the PCR for this criterion.
23. **Government.** The initial start-up delay of 27 months caused by lengthy procurement processes and delays in staffing the PMU and its provincial offices were overcome after the MTR through the proactiveness and commitment of national and provincial counterparts, albeit amid a challenging external context (the COVID pandemic and its adverse consequences). Local counterparts and implementation partners have ensured adequate consultation of targeted beneficiaries to foster full ownership and sustainability of project activities. Project management, including monitoring/evaluation and financial management, has improved steadily since the mid-term review, notably thanks to the recruitment of a team of technical advisors to back-up PMU and province-level staff.
24. These conclusions are in line with the **satisfactory (5)** score provided in the PCR for this criterion.

B. Assessment of PCR quality

Scope

25. The report is comprehensive and covers all required issues and sections, including mandatory annexes, in line with standard IFAD PCR Guidelines. However, the chapter on sustainability does not present an in-depth analysis of all necessary dimensions. A table of contents would make the document more user-friendly. The PCRV rates the scope of the PCR as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Quality

26. The PCR process appears to have been inclusive, as shown by the categories of stakeholders met by the PCR mission. A stakeholders' workshop was organized by the PCR mission in the two project provinces and at national level to get feedback from local and national stakeholders on findings and lessons learned. The PCR report presents what appears to be solid quantitative data on outcomes and impact, although these data are derived from a single source (i.e., the final impact assessment survey), due to the deficiencies of the monitoring and evaluation system. It would have been useful for the

¹¹ Following the MTR recommendation, it was decided to decrease the overall project budget.

PCR report to discuss the quality of the latter document, in particular the validity of the control group selected.¹²

27. The PCRV rates the quality of the PCR as ***satisfactory (5)***.

Lessons

28. The lessons learned presented are clearly formulated in relation with well-described problems or opportunities. Several lessons learned from project implementation appear highly relevant and useful to improve the design of future, similar interventions, in particular those related to implementing arrangements and partnerships.
29. For lessons criterion, the PCRV rating is ***satisfactory (5)***.

Candour

30. Overall, the assessment of project implementation performance and results appears well balanced, highlighting both positive and negative aspects. The assessment also takes into account the perceptions or opinions of a wide range of stakeholders, and it seems coherent with the findings of the impact assessment report. The ratings provided to the various evaluation criteria are largely in line with the narratives provided. However, a few problems described in the lessons learned section should have deserved a more in-depth analysis in other sections (effectiveness, efficiency or relevance) for a more balanced assessment and a better understanding of the root causes of certain issues.
31. The PCRV rates the candour criteria for the PCR as ***moderately satisfactory (4)***.

IV. Final remarks

Issues for IOE follow up (if any)

¹² The final impact survey does not provide details on the methods of sampling and selection of control group households. Some of the characteristics of the control group used, for example the area of irrigated land owned, show significant deviations from the treatment group. While recognizing the inherent difficulties in finding the perfect control group within the available study budget, one may question the validity of the control group as a valid comparison for the treatment group for at least certain variables.

Definition and rating of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Criteria	Definition	Mandatory	To be rated
Relevance	The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies; (ii) the design of the interventions, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the intervention has been (re-) adapted to address changes in the context.	X	Yes
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention/country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups. A specific sub-domain of effectiveness relates to:	X	Yes
• Innovation	Innovation, the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product, or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction. ¹³	X	Yes
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (e.g., funds, expertise, natural resources, time) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).	X	Yes
Impact	The extent to which an intervention/country strategy has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. The criterion includes the following domains: -changes in incomes, assets and productive capacities -changes in social / human capital -changes in household food security and nutrition -changes in institution and policies The analysis of impact will seek to determine whether changes have been transformational, generating changes that can lead societies onto fundamentally different development pathways (e.g., due to the size or distributional effects of changes to poor and marginalized groups)	X NO	Yes NO
Sustainability	The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and be scaled-up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.	X	Yes
• Environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation	Note: This entails an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. It involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs.	X	Yes
• Scaling-up	<u>Specific domain of sustainability:</u> <u>Environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation.</u> The extent to which the development	X	Yes

¹³ Conditions that qualify an innovation: newness to the context, to the intended users and the intended purpose of improving performance. Furthermore, the 2020 Corporate-level Evaluation on IFAD's support to Innovation defined transformational innovations as "those that are able to lift poor farmers above a threshold, where they cannot easily fall back after a shock". Those innovations tackle simultaneously multiple challenges faced by smallholder farmers. In IFAD operation contexts, this happens by packaging / bundling together several small innovations. They are most of the time holistic solutions or approaches applied or implemented by IFAD supported operations.

Criteria	Definition	Mandatory	To be rated
	<p>interventions/strategy contribute to enhancing the environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change in small-scale agriculture.</p> <p><u>Scaling-up</u>* takes place when: (i) bi- and multi laterals partners, private sector, communities) adopt and diffuse the solution tested by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invested resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested by IFAD (from practice to policy).</p> <p>*Note that scaling up does not only relate to innovations</p>		
Gender equality and women's empowerment	<p>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; workload balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods; and in promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs underpinning gender inequality.</p> <p>Evaluations will assess to what extent interventions and strategies have been gender transformational, relative to the context, by: (i) addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (ii) acting upon gender roles, norms and power relations; (iii) promoting broader processes of social change (beyond the immediate intervention).</p>	X	Yes
Performance of Partners	The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) supported design, implementation and the achievement of results, conducive policy environment, and impact and the sustainability of the intervention/country programme	X	Yes
• IFAD			
• Gouvernement	The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government and implementing agency, in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, supporting a conducive policy environment and establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.	X	Yes

Table of the ratings

Criterion	PCR rating	PCRV Rating	Disconnect (=PCRV rating - PCR rating)
Relevance	5	4	-1
Effectiveness	5	5	0
• <i>Innovation</i>	5	5	0
Efficiency	5	5	0
Impact ¹⁴	4	4	0
Gender	4	4	0
Sustainability of benefits	5	4	-1
• <i>Scaling up</i>	5	4	-1
• <i>NRM and CCA</i> ¹⁵	5	5	0
Overall Project achievement ¹⁶	4.78	4.33	-0.45
Partner performance	5	5	0
IFAD	5	5	0
Government	5	5	0
Average rating disconnect			-3/11 = -0.27

Table 3

Ratings of the project completion report quality

Quality Criterion	IOE PCRV rating
Scope	4
Quality	5
Lessons	5
Candour	4
Overall rating of the project completion report	4.75

¹⁴ Note that, in the future, Management may opt to not rate impact

¹⁵ Management may keep ratings for NRM and climate change adaptation separate. IOE will provide a single rating

¹⁶ This is a simple arithmetic average of the above ratings (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, innovation, impact, sustainability, scaling up, NRM and climate change adaptation, gender equality).

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASAP	Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
MTR	Mid-term review
PCR	Project completion report
PCRV	Project Completion Report Validation
PMU	Project management unit
SDR	Special drawing rights

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