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A Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation

*Main Criteria and Key Questions for Project
Evaluation*

**Office of Evaluation and Studies
IFAD**

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A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

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A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

MAIN CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Following considerable in-house consultation, in 1999 OE introduced “A New Approach to Evaluation” which effectively changed the previous direction and methodologies used for evaluation in IFAD¹. The project evaluation process now starts with a request from PMD either for an interim evaluation (required when a second phase is to be undertaken) or a completion evaluation. In practice resource limitations mean that most project evaluations are interim. The evaluation exercise is undertaken jointly with the partners who have been concerned with implementation of the project. After acceptance by OE and inclusion in the budget, work starts to review background documentation and to prepare an Approach Paper (AP). The AP sets out the rationale for the evaluation, identifies the processes to be followed and suggests the main themes to be investigated. The AP is generally shared with PMD and the relevant Government agencies and is subject to discussions until a consensus is reached. This usually includes a country visit by the OE Officer concerned, the holding of in-country workshops and the agreement on logistical arrangements. Members of the Core Learning Partnership² (CLP) are identified during this process.

2. In the course of agreement on the AP the composition of the evaluation team will also be decided: this most often comprises a mix of national and international consultants and their counterparts with skills appropriate to address the identified issues. Data gaps are also highlighted at this stage, and decisions made on how these are to be filled. This may require separate surveys and other work to be undertaken before the evaluation mission arrives in the field: frequently prior socio-economic fieldwork will be necessary.

3. In total these approaches ensure common ownership of the evaluation, so that all partners are aware of the purposes of the exercise about to be undertaken. It is important that the participatory nature of the exercise is maintained during fieldwork, so that all partners play an active role and are fully consulted at all stages. This helps to build consensus for the Agreement at Completion Point (ACP), the final stage of the evaluation process². However, the evaluation mission remains responsible for the judgements reached and the desire to reach consensus should not be allowed to affect the independence of the evaluation.

Background

4. In 2002 the New Approach to Evaluation was further augmented by the introduction of a Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation (MFE). The objectives of the MFE are: (i) to provide a clear set of Evaluation Criteria to be used by all project evaluations; (ii) to promote the more systematic measurement of impacts at project completion; (iii) to produce a consolidated picture of the results, impact and performance of about ten completed projects evaluated during a given year; and (iv) to synthesize learning from project evaluations in a more systematic manner. The methodology consists of a set of criteria which are to be applied to all project evaluations, and which are assessed by asking a number of key questions. The criteria are consistent with the emerging consensus among IFIs and the

¹ The process summarily described here is fully documented in “A New Approach to Evaluation” and in “New Evaluation Processes”; these two papers can be found on IFAD’s web site (www.IFAD.org) in the section entitled Evaluation.

² See Annex 2 of “New Evaluation Processes”.

Development assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD on Evaluation Criteria. The evaluation criteria, chosen through discussion within OE, have their origin in IFAD's Strategic Framework 2002-2005, the current institutional need to place stronger emphasis on impact assessment, and the need to provide some measure of accountability to IFAD's governing bodies on its performance and eventually on its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals³.

5. The use of the same criteria across evaluations is intended to help reduce variations in approaches and reporting format between evaluators and between evaluations. Consistent application of the framework should ensure that project impacts are systematically assessed, results and performance are comparable across projects and project categories, generic lessons are more easily identified, and a consolidation of performance and results of a group of projects evaluated yearly is more feasibly provided. From September 2003 onwards OE will prepare such a report, entitled "Impact and Effectiveness of IFAD Operations", for presentation to IFAD's management and Executive Board. This new report will provide an independent picture of results, impacts and effectiveness drawn from the evaluations undertaken in the previous year, as well as a summary of insights and lessons learned.

6. A year after the MFE was introduced a review workshop⁴ was held to discuss the practical difficulties encountered in using the framework and to see if it could be improved. As a result of these discussions it was decided to produce a revised version of the MFE, incorporating the workshop recommendations.

B. CONTENTS OF THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

7. The MFE comprises a number of evaluation mechanisms and tools which link together to form a generalised approach to undertaking a project evaluation. The overall intention is to ensure that the key areas of concern for IFAD are assessed (and reported on) in similar ways. These are briefly described below in order to give an overview of the framework, and then described in more detail in separate sections.

1. The Standard Table of Contents (TOC) for the Evaluation Report

8. Whilst the MFE serves to define the common scope of the evaluation exercise, inevitably each evaluation will generate much more specific findings and data depending on the nature of the project. As part of the MFE and in line with the rationale for MFE thinking, **all project evaluations are now required to use a standard table of contents**; this is the guide for missions in extracting and presenting the required findings, analyses and conclusions required by OE. As part of the OE policy on disclosure and transparency this report will be published in an electronic format. Additional material not used in the evaluation report is retained in OE and is available on request.

9. The standard table of contents comprises the following nine chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Main Design Features
3. Summary Implementation Results
4. Performance of the Project

³ The seven MDG ("Pledges on Sustainable Development") are in brief: (i) reducing extreme poverty, (ii) universal primary education, (iii) gender equality, (iv) reducing infant and child mortality, (v) reducing maternal mortality, (vi) access to reproductive health services, (vii) reversal of losses of environmental resources with a strategy of sustainable development.

⁴ The workshop was held in Rome on 3rd February 2003; proceedings and recommendations available from OE.

5. Rural Poverty Impact
6. Performance of the Partners
7. Overall Assessment and Conclusions
8. Recommendations and Insights
9. Agreement at Completion Point

The first two chapters serve to introduce the project and describe the evaluation process, whilst chapters 3, 4 and 5 are given over to presentation of the findings from the three main Evaluation Criteria (see below). To assist in the preparation of these chapters OE has provided a number of support tools (see section A3).

2. The Evaluation Criteria

10. Three main Evaluation Criteria (consistent with international practice) provide the basis on which project achievements and impacts are to be assessed. These are:

- Performance of the Project (PP)
- Impact of the Project on Rural Poverty (IRP) and
- Performance of the Partners (PT)

Each main criterion is divided into a number of elements (or sub-criteria) (see Box 1). The assessment of each criteria requires a somewhat different approach.

11. The **Performance of the Project (PP)** is assessed through three criteria: relevance of the objectives, effectiveness and efficiency. Taken together these three criteria capture how well IFAD chose the means of meeting the needs of the rural poor and how well the intervention performed in delivering against objectives, as seen at the end of the implementation period. The criteria focus on the quality of the project objectives “Doing the right things” and the extent that the right objectives were achieved at reasonable cost “Doing things right”. PP answers the question – “Were the right things done right?”, and is in the nature of an accountability assessment against the needs of the rural poor, IFAD’s mandate, and the policies and intentions of the main sponsoring partners – IFAD and the government.

12. Under **Impact on Rural Poverty** six “domains of impact” have been defined systematically to cover the main factors which affect rural poverty. The six domains consider the impacts on:

- Physical and Financial Assets
- Human Assets
- Social Capital and Empowerment
- Food Security
- The Environment, and
- Institutions, Policies and the Regulatory Framework

13. The choice of these domains and their definitions are based on OE’s experience of evaluating more than 200 IFAD projects, IFAD’s 2002-2005 Strategic Framework and the Rural Poverty Report of 2000. In each domain a series of “key questions” have been identified which ask how the lives of the poor have been changed and whether this can be attributed to project activities. The twenty-nine key questions have been determined from considerations of the most important factors which constitute elements of each impact domain. The Impact on Rural Poverty assesses the changes that have occurred at project completion, using the IFAD definition of impact - this includes elements of what in other evaluation systems may be known as results, outcomes and effects. Three overarching factors are

investigated in the context of project impact, namely sustainability, innovation and replicability/scaling up and impact on gender equality and women empowerment.

14. The **Performance of the Partners (PT)** requires separate assessments of the performance of the primary partners in the project: IFAD, the Cooperating Institution, the government agencies responsible for implementing the project, the NGOs/CBOs involved in project implementation and the project cofinanciers. These criteria address how well IFAD and its partners identified, prepared and supervised the project, and the contribution each made to project success during implementation.

15. Whilst the evaluation criteria serve to clarify what has happened in the project, they are also intended logically to lead to further questions, such as “why did things go the way they did?” Or, if there were shortcomings, “how can such problems be avoided in future?” Where there are successes “what are the main ingredients responsible for the success?” and “how could it be replicated or up-scaled?” By asking these questions, lessons and insights will be generated from the evaluation exercise. The Evaluation Criteria are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1. Evaluation Criteria	
Criteria and their Elements	Comments
1 PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT (PP)	Evaluated soon after implementation completion (combines 1.1 – 1.3)
1.1 Relevance of Objectives	At time of evaluation for most important objectives primarily with respect to the needs of the poor, but also in relation to IFAD’s strategy (COSOP) and Government’s policies and strategy for poverty alleviation
1.2 Effectiveness	Extent project objectives, as understood at evaluation, were met by the intervention (See table for key evaluation questions)
1.3 Efficiency	Unit costs of main components in real terms at completion compared to expected cost and/or the cost of best practice; implementation time and returns (ex post ERR if possible) at times of the evaluation
2. IMPACT ON RURAL POVERTY (IRP)	Combines 2.1 – 2.7
2.1 Impact on Physical and Financial Assets	(See Annex 1 for key evaluation questions)
2.2 Impact on Human Assets	“
2.3 Impact on Social Capital and Empowerment	“
2.4 Impact on Food Security	“
2.5 Environmental Impact	“
2.6 Impact on Institutions, Policies and the Regulatory Framework	“
2.7 Over-arching factors	
- Sustainability	Reflects rational expectations of sustainability (see box 8)
- Innovation and Replicability/Scaling up	Reflects the Catalytic Role of IFAD (see text and box 9)
- Impact on Gender and Women Empowerment	Assessment of impacts on gender is mainstreamed into 2.1 – 2.6 above See Key questions in the text and consolidated here.
3. PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTNERS (PT)	Combines 3.1 – 3.5
3.1 IFAD	Adequacy of original design, follow up during implementation and partners selection
3.2 CI	Adequacy of the supervision function
3.3 Government and its agencies	Focuses on Government responsibility and ownership for the intervention
3.4 NGOs/CBOs	Focus on the role of these partners in capacity building and empowerment of the poor
3.5 Cofinanciers	Focus on the degree of engagement in poverty alleviation objective and flexibility during implementation

3. The Impact and Project Effectiveness Matrices

16. To assist in the evaluation of the Impact Criteria overall and the “Project Effectiveness” sub-criterion of the Project Performance Criteria, OE has constructed two matrices to facilitate and focus the work of the evaluation. These matrices provide rigorous checklists for project evaluation missions and are a convenient way of compiling the data needed. However, the matrices should be treated as supporting tools in evaluating the criteria, and not as summary assessments by the mission: at best the matrices ask “what has happened”, but do not address the question of “why has this happened” or explain the contributing circumstances. The matrices comprise (twenty-nine⁵) key questions on the vertical axis, and the considerations against which they should be assessed (for example the extent and reach of the change, who has benefited and whether the change will be sustained etc) on the horizontal axis. **It is essential that evaluators provide quantitative assessments of the numbers of households and people reached in the column “reach of change”.** The matrices can be found in Annex 1: practical approaches to completion of these matrices are considered later. In addition, to support the preparation of the Performance of the Partners criterion a table of suggested key questions has been provided (see Box 11).

4. The Ratings System

17. The MFE introduces a system of rating for the evaluation criteria. This is intended to quantify or qualify the judgement of the evaluators and facilitate aggregation both within and across projects. At present ratings should be provided for the three main Evaluation Criteria and all their elements (as listed in Box 2). The scales are symmetrical (that is there are two positive and two negative ratings), and the distance between ratings should be conceptually equal. The scales used are: High, Substantial, Modest, and Negligible; and Highly Likely, Likely, Unlikely and Highly Unlikely. In the matrices these are indicated by 4/3/2/1. In future, an overall rating given for the whole project (composed of evaluation criteria 1, 2 and 3) may be required but the weighting necessary should be provided by IFAD. Two four-point scales are used to depict project performance, to avoid “fence sitting” or what has been called the mid-point refuge.

Box 2. Expected Ratings from Evaluation Missions

All evaluation missions are requested to provide ratings for the following criteria:

- a. Performance of the Project (criterion number 1) and its elements; relevance of objectives, effectiveness and efficiency (1.1; 1.2 and 1.3).
- b. Impact of the Project on Rural Poverty (criterion number 2); its six domains (2.1 to 2.6) as well as the overarching factors of sustainability, innovation and replicability/scaling up and impact on gender (2.7)
- c. Performance of the Partners (criterion number 3), disaggregated to the various actors; IFAD; CI; Government and its agencies; NGOs/CBOs and Co-financiers,

To determine a rating for Performance of the Project (criterion #1), and that of Performance of the Partners (criterion #3) guidance should be sought from the IFAD Evaluation Officer in charge.

In arriving at a rating for the Impact of the Project on Rural Poverty (criterion #2) the question of weighting within individual domains, and between the various domains should be left to the evaluation teams as it involves balancing perceptions and making judgements based on local circumstances and design intentions.

5. Credibility of the Findings

18. It is essential that evaluation findings should be based on as rigorous data collection and analysis as possible. Without this it is difficult to convince evaluation partners of the validity of the conclusions reached and the lessons learned, especially when the evaluation is critical of project outcomes or impacts,

⁵ Not all key questions will be relevant to a particular evaluation.

or the way implementation has been undertaken. The need to obtain credible and well supported findings is a major consideration in planning the overall evaluation exercise both in terms of selecting the topics/themes and issues to be examined and deciding on the most appropriate methods of investigating them. The process of identifying factors and methods has also to be balanced with time and resource considerations.

19. Whilst the Approach Paper provides the mechanism through which the planning of the evaluation takes place, and this is guided by the designated Evaluation Officer, the mission still remains responsible for determining the ways in which the field work is to be undertaken. This often depends on the practical limitations imposed, for example, by the availability of local staff, transport provided and distances to be covered. The mission's role is to optimise the results obtainable given these constraints. Examples of good practice in organising such exercise can be found in boxes 3, 4 and 5.

Box 3. PRA Design – an Example of a good practice from Egypt

The Newlands Agricultural Services Project (NLASP) in Egypt was designed in 1991 to improve the services offered to new settlers in reclaimed desert areas. The reclamation and settlement process had been ongoing for many years and settlers were a mix of traditional farmers and new graduates. The project concentrated on improving the technical basis of farm production. The MTE included a process of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) to assess project effects and emerging impacts with a cross-section of NLASP stakeholders, especially the beneficiaries. The process was intended to maximise settler participation and to strengthen data reliability.

Village Selection Strategy. As many of the 73 project villages were settled by graduates or traditional farmers only, it was important to ensure that both were reached. The sample was further stratified (i) to facilitate learning whether the settlers' evaluation of NLASP was influenced by the number of years they had lived in the project area and (ii) on the basis of location – to ensure that settlers in each of the three disparate project areas, West Nubaria, El Bustan and Sugar Beet, were included.

Participatory Evaluation Methods. The MTE mission worked as an inter-disciplinary team within each of the selected villages. Accordingly, five different focus groups were arranged to meet simultaneously, namely: contact farmers (with the farming systems expert), borrowers (with the credit expert), WUA members (with the irrigation expert), WID beneficiaries (with the gender expert) and finally, ordinary settlers (with the rural sociologist). The experts conducted semi-structured discussions with their focus groups, followed by visits to fields, homes, extension and research stations and so forth. Meanwhile, the rural sociologist (with the assistance of a translator) conducted a series of participatory exercises to facilitate the settlers' evaluation of specific NLASP components and to explore emerging impacts. In preparation, the rural sociologist's check-list of issues to be explored during the PRAs was shared with all mission members in advance, so that mission members could add questions and use selected parts of the PRA checklist for their own focus group discussions, as appropriate.

PRA Tools. For the sake of consistency and comparability, the same set of seven PRA tools was used in all participating villages. These were: Village Mapping; Venn Diagrams; Seasonal calendars; Pie Charts for household food supply, expenditures and incomes; Ladder of Fortune; Wealth Ranking; and SWOT analysis by settlers of NLASP activities. These tools were selected because they were highly visual, so that traditional farmers (most of whom were illiterate) could participate fully. Following the PRA process in each village – of one entire day each – team members cross-checked their findings. A total of 27 focus group meetings – ranging from 5 to 50 settlers each – were organised in 10 different villages throughout the project area, in addition to four in-depth PRAs, which included 30 to 40 participants each. Altogether about 400 settlers participated in the participatory fieldwork, which was carried out over a three-week period.

The PRA produced very significant findings for the MTE in terms of understanding household food supply and cash incomes, annual income levels and expenditures and emerging social patterns. In addition the PRA demonstrated to field staff how such an approach could be useful not only for project M&E purposes, but also to provide rapid feedback to management. This approach can be used whether projects have been designed/implemented in a participatory way or not. In the latter case it would be an opportunity to introduce stakeholders to more participatory methods. The key to the success of the PRA was careful planning: the rural sociologist and the gender specialist preceded the rest of the mission members by one week to hold initial focus group discussions with beneficiaries, to prepare questionnaires and to train local staff.

Box 4. Popular Evaluations in a Joint Evaluation Process: an Example of a good practice from Senegal

Popular evaluations are intended to be a part of a process of learning and empowerment for project primary stakeholders (intended beneficiaries). They use the need to develop participatory evaluation techniques to introduce a more formal (and credible) arrangement for beneficiary representatives to interact with other project partners and decision makers. Once developed, this mechanism can remain in place as the project continues (hence the popular evaluation process is particularly applicable to Interim Evaluations).

Popular evaluations add a few extra steps to a participatory project evaluation, but require very little additional resources. The first additional step is that the results of the initial beneficiary surveys (e.g. PRAs or household surveys) are reported back and discussed with the primary stakeholders in local forums. This means the results may have to be translated into the local language and a means found to present and discuss the findings. The participants are encouraged to give their own assessments of the project, in terms of impact, stakeholder performance etc, including recommendations for appropriate changes and identification of emerging lessons. The outcome of the forums are recorded, and participants appoint their own representative(s). A number of forums are held in the project area (e.g. wherever a PRA has taken place). The second additional step is to bring together the forum representatives to achieve consensus on what has worked in the project overall, the level of impacts, the project performance etc. This creates a formal beneficiary viewpoint on impacts and other aspects of the project. This is followed by a project-wide stakeholder workshop (this is not an additional step) to discuss the findings of the evaluation, which brings together the beneficiary representatives, the independent evaluation mission and all the other stakeholders, including officials of the borrowing government and funding agencies and all members of the CLP. The workshop is held in the project area and entirely conducted in the local language(s) of the primary stakeholders with translation for the outsiders. Beneficiary representatives should account for at least a third of workshop participants, and they are now in a position, because of the popular evaluation process, to make a significant contribution to the proceedings and the evaluation results.

In 2002 this process was used for the interim evaluation of PRODAM in Senegal. In this case groupings were arranged according to the type of intervention adopted (small-scale irrigation, rangeland, agriculture etc) and eventually 41 representatives for the whole project area were chosen. The discussions held were detailed and resulted in comprehensive beneficiary perceptions for the project interventions as well as analysis of impacts by the six domains and detailed recommendations for the second phase of the project – including ways for the primary stakeholders to participate in the design process. The conclusion was that the popular evaluation process had greatly enhanced the effectiveness and credibility of the overall evaluation and had strengthened the capacity of the beneficiaries to be major players in the design and implementation of the second phase.

Box 5. The Philippines: an Example of Authentication through Triangulation

In recent years there has been increasing consensus on the need to overlap different evaluation techniques in order to improve the confidence attached to results and to by-pass the weaknesses of respective methodologies. This overlapping has been undertaken practically in recent project evaluations by splitting the tasks between different mission members. Typically the need may be to undertake: (i) classical household surveys; (ii) PRA & focus group discussions; and (iii) standardised case studies. This combination was applied in the evaluation of the Rural Microenterprise Finance Project in the Philippines in 2002. The combination of these three approaches does not mean that all three methodologies need to be actually undertaken during the fieldwork stage. For example, secondary data from other institutions' surveys (or from existing PRAs) can be included: in the Philippines, a large survey conducted by the Asian Development Bank three months before the IFAD evaluation was used as a basis and focus group discussions and case studies added. Key features of the techniques used were as follows:

Household Surveys. Households were selected through random sampling and included project dropouts and control groups. The main purpose was to obtain hard quantitative data on microfinance services. The experience showed that, although not always possible, it is useful if household surveys can be conducted before the full evaluation mission takes place: the survey size also needs to be adequate to ensure statistical significance (probably not less than 80-100 households). Although the ADB survey did not include anthropometric indicators, past experiences in OE suggest that these are relevant and low-cost measures of poverty reduction which can be conveniently collected through household surveys.

Pra & Focus Group Discussions. PRAs provided the format for discussion of beneficiary perceptions of project activities and effects (see Box 3 for more on use of PRAs).

Standardised Case Studies (of Institutions). In the Philippines standardized case studies were used to compare different types of MFIs (banks, cooperatives, NGOs etc.) in terms of financial viability, sustainability and poverty impact. The case studies were useful for illustrative purposes and helped formulate hypotheses to explain the different performance of institutions and households.

From these overlapping results evaluators were able to make more credible and balanced judgments of project effects and impacts than would have been possible using any one approach. Key factors in the success of this exercise were that (i) the generalised areas of overlap had been identified at an early stage, and included in the planning of the surveys etc undertaken, and (ii) the evaluation officer and the mission members had carefully coordinated their respective inputs and the questions to be asked.

C. PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT (PP)

20. Project performance is assessed on the basis of:

- relevance of its objectives;
- effectiveness (the extent to which the objectives have been achieved); and
- efficiency (how economically resources have been converted into results).

Taken together, these three criteria capture how well IFAD selected the means of meeting the needs of the rural poor and how well the project performed in delivering against objectives, as seen at the end of the implementation period. Relevance focuses on the quality of project objectives: “have we done the right things?” whilst effectiveness and efficiency focus on the extent the right objectives were achieved at reasonable cost, asking “have we done things right?” The performance of the project, therefore, answers the question: “were the right things done right?” These are described further below.

21. The experience of evaluation missions has been that the statements of project objectives in the designs have often been in general terms only and have been inadequate for examination using the much more specific demands posed by the key questions. In such instances the evaluation mission, together with other project partners, is expected either to re-construct or deduce the intentions of the project from the design documentation in total, as far as possible. For example, this can mean examining the resource allocations to determine whether designers did allow for funding to go to activities specified in the key questions. This problem is made easier where projects have log frames. Although the key questions emanate from recent thinking in IFAD, many of the objectives they are seeking to assess were actually inherent in older project designs. However, it is recognised that this can be a difficult and challenging exercise.

1.1 Relevance of Objectives

22. **Definition:** *The extent to which the project objectives are consistent with the rural poor’s perceptions of their needs and potential at the time of the evaluation, with the economic, social and policy environment, with IFAD’s mandate and its Strategic Framework and policies, with the current IFAD’s Country Strategy as formulated in COSOP (if still relevant), and with the country’s current poverty alleviation policies and strategy (when applicable).*

The relevance factor determines whether the project was worth doing. It assesses whether project objectives were focused on the right priorities when designed, and if they were adjusted to suit changing circumstances during implementation. It gives weight to the continual updating of project design during implementation to reflect emerging needs and perceptions of the poor. With the gradual movement to greater use of the Flexible Lending Mechanism in IFAD, and the increasing departure from a blue print type design, continuing relevance should become more assured in future.

23. IFAD’s common vision on how to address the needs of the rural poor should be reflected in the project strategy. This includes, for example, strengthening grassroots organizations, the use of NGOs and civil society as partners, participation of the poor during design and implementation, mainstreaming of gender issues, and promotion of replicable innovations. See Box 9 for an example of assessment of relevance.

Box 6. Reporting on the Relevance of Objectives – an Example of a good practice from Tanzania

The Kagera Agricultural and Environmental Management Project (KAEMP) was designed to supplement emergency assistance being provided to address the problems of the influx of 600,000 refugees into a remote area of north western Tanzania. In particular, the project aimed speedily to improve food security and halt or reverse land degradation, as well as supporting local services, especially health, which had come under extreme pressure as a result of the vast numbers of refugees.

The goal of the project, which was revised during implementation, was to improve the living standards of the people in the Kagera region by “rehabilitating the region following the adverse effects of refugee encroachment and reversing the long term decline in agricultural production”. The evaluation undertaken in 2002 found that the goal and objectives continued to be very relevant to the project situation. On the goal, the evaluation concluded that...“the living standards of the Kagera population are crucially dependent upon agricultural productivity, since a predominant - estimated at 85% - proportion of the population is made up of small farm families for whom food sufficiency and farm income are key drivers of household livelihood and welfare. Thus the relevance of the goal or overall objective of the project was and is, high, 4”

The evaluation went on to provide ratings for the objectives of each component. For the rural infrastructure component the stated objective had been broken down by sub-components and the evaluation reported as follows:

(i) **Health.** Objective was that health service delivery improved. The evaluation reported that: “The implied main aims of the health sub-component...are all highly relevant to the Kagera situation. However the relevance of the objectives as stated - and in the context of the severity of the diverse problems of health service provision and the need for far more intensive community sensitisation and involvement, is assessed at a modest 2.”

(ii) **Water Supply.** The objective was that farmers access to safe drinking water was improved. The evaluation found that: “the appraisal correctly identified the key factors to achieve this aim as renovation or construction of low cost schemes, enhancement of institutional capacity for their management at District and village levels. The relevance of these objectives, then as now, is high, 4.”

For the project management component the objectives were stated as strengthening implementation and service delivery capacity and assisting development of a participatory approach to resource management. The evaluation concluded that: “the impetus of the component was directed to sound coordination and management of Project operations and endowing the local government development partner agencies with the necessary learning and first hand experience to raise their functional capacities. The relevance of these objectives was, and is, high, 4.”

1.2 Effectiveness

24. Definition: *The extent to which the project's major objectives as understood and documented at the time of evaluation were achieved at project completion, or are expected to be achieved.*

Some confusion may arise over the understanding of what project objectives are being assessed here. The objectives given in the project design refer often to the specific targets of the project and its components (sometimes expressed in quantitative terms, e.g. irrigation or land development, credit outreach ... etc.). Meanwhile the project goal will more likely be defined as poverty reduction. In essence the impact domains detail what is summarily meant by poverty reduction. The effectiveness of the project is measured with respect to expectations of designers regarding project impact on poverty as it is defined in the impact domains (this is illustrated in the project effectiveness matrix, Annex I2) as well as to other project objectives of lower level (e.g. component objectives). The latter can be assessed within the effectiveness sub-criterion if the evaluators deem it necessarily (e.g. when impact is expected over a longer term, cannot be easily assessed or similar reasons). In all cases the effectiveness sub-criterion compares the expectations given in the design and expressed in project objectives (or as redesigned and approved by IFAD, CI and the government) to the actual achievements found at completion. Project design objectives have to be re-cast as much as possible in terms of the six domains of impact (2.1 to 2.6) and the way in which project objectives are formally understood at the time of the evaluation. This is facilitated by the project effectiveness matrix (Annex I-2), which guides and assists evaluators to re-arrange the project activities so that they are placed as far as possible into the domains most affected⁶. The ratings of the effectiveness sub-criterion should be

⁶ The Project Effectiveness Matrix based on “expectations of impact” can be filled in only after the Project Impact Matrix (Annex I - 1) has been completed.

agreed upon within the evaluation mission and in relation to percentages achieved of the objectives (e.g. 80% or more high, 60-80% substantial, 30-60% modest, less than 30% negligible).

1.3 Efficiency

25. Definition: *The extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, benefits commensurate with inputs, based on economic and financial analysis or unit costs compared to alternative options and good practices (how economically resources have been converted into results).*

Conventional project economics indicators (NPV/ERR) provide well recognised tests of efficient resource use, but the well known data gaps and the specific nature of IFAD's supported intervention may often restrict use of these analytical tools in the Fund's projects. For some projects, qualitative judgments by the evaluators are necessary to assess efficiency, but always relying on an appreciation of the underlying concepts of cost/benefit analysis, together with good practice in similar situations and any other suitable indicators. As with all evaluation, a good basis for assessments where objective standards are not available for comparison is informed evaluator judgment, especially using experience from similar projects.

See box 7 for an example of good practice in assessing project efficiency quantitatively.

Box 7. Project Implementation Efficiency - an Example of a good practice from Yemen

One objective of the Tihama Environmental Protection Project (TEPP) in Yemen was to investigate the most economical method of stabilising sand dunes in the Tihama. Hence it was important that the project should keep adequate records for the different stabilisation methods tried. Unfortunately, the Interim Evaluation which took place in 2001 found that this had not been done, and the absence of project records and accounts that showed the actual costs by component prevented any assessment of the cost effectiveness of the various project activities. However, the mission did manage to re-estimate the potential rate of return from the sand dune stabilisation component using data for costs obtained from various project sources and recent estimates of the rate of sand dune encroachment in the project area. The analysis used the same approach as that used at appraisal, which gave an internal rate of return of 9.6% for the land conservation component.

Two scenarios were developed by the evaluation mission: in the first it was assumed that the sand dune stabilisation belts would continue to be adequately managed and maintained, whilst in the second it was assumed that the stabilised belts would not be managed or maintained by the local communities. Based on these two scenarios the mission re-worked the ERR calculations for different cropping options. These showed that where the sand dunes had been stabilised and were adequately maintained, i.e. where the improvement was sustainable, a rate of return of as much as 20% was possible. This applied where the belts protected fruit tree plantations (e.g. dates, bananas and mangoes), and applied to relatively well off farmers in the area. Where the belts protected land that was irrigated and grew field and vegetable crops, typical of the situation of poor farmers, the rate of return was just similar to or in excess of the opportunity cost of capital (10%). However, in the second scenario where the communities did not manage and maintain the belts after the end of the project, then the investment was found not to be worthwhile. This was particularly the case for mixed farming, when the ERR became negative.

Based on their estimates the mission allocated a rating of 2 for project efficiency, reflecting the failure of the project to collect hard data. However, they had also shown that if the sand dune stabilisation could be managed effectively and sustainably by the communities, a factor which was being poorly addressed at the time of the evaluation, then the efficiency could have been much higher.

26. Qualitative assessments of efficiency (in the absence of NPV/ERR/FRR estimates) should take into account, inter alia, the following factors:

- actual costs compared with appraisal estimates and any revisions;
- implementation delays and any redesign which may have increased costs;
- the level of benefits and their growth curve compared with expectations (if feasible);
- utilization rates for project facilities and services;
- whether services and facilities meet good practice standards; and
- whether the benefits stream appears adequate compared with the costs.

D. IMPACT ON RURAL POVERTY

27. The following section provides definitions of the main Evaluation Criteria and their elements, with suggestions on how they might be applied. However, it is not possible to cover every possible situation that may arise, nor is it appropriate to do so. The Guiding Framework has some flexibility, to allow individual evaluations to tailor it to specific circumstances.

28. For IFAD's purposes "Impact" is determined at the end of project implementation and not some time later when secondary and indirect effects may be observed, but does include expectations of future events (see definition below). Impact on Rural Poverty (IRP) seeks to answer the question – "What has IFAD and its partners achieved with this development project in terms of results on the ground affecting the lives of the rural poor and their environment?"

Definition: For the purposes of evaluation, impact for IFAD is defined as:

"The changes in the lives of the rural poor, as they and their partners perceive them at the time of the evaluation, to which IFAD's intervention has contributed and the likely sustainability of these changes. Changes can be positive or negative intended or unintended".

The six Domains of Impact and the overarching factors of sustainability, innovation, replicability and gender, have all been identified as the main contributing factors for assessing impact. Evaluators are asked to determine what has changed in the lives of the rural poor and what contribution project activities have made to this change. Having assessed what has changed, the evaluation then needs to decide who has benefited, the likelihood that the changes are sustainable, and whether the project has set in motion dynamic processes which will lead to further developments. Individual domains and the overarching factors are further described below.

29. A basic requirement, stemming from the definition, is that evaluation missions should work with the rural poor to obtain their perceptions of how their circumstances have or have not changed, and the extent to which the project was responsible. However, it is essential that these perceptions are supported and strengthened by other objective data and by consultations with other partners.

2.1 Physical and Financial Assets

30. For sustainable poverty alleviation, the rural poor must have legally secure entitlement to physical and financial assets – land, water, , livestock, tools, equipment, infrastructure, technology and knowledge and savings and credit. An asset, also called "capital stock" or "endowment" is anything that can be used, without being used up, to increase regular returns above receipts from labour, whether hired or self-employed, and thus helps to enhance production, income and consumption.

2.2 Human Assets

31. These are capital "embodied" in people. They are conventionally classified as nutritional status, health and education, but their nature is changing radically with the development process. Human assets have intrinsic value in raising capabilities and instrumental value in raising income and improving livelihoods. These values can be realized directly, by applying improved skill or health to initial endowment of labour and natural and physical assets; and indirectly, by using improved health, education and nutrition to control more assets that raise income and consumption.

2.3 Social Capital and People Empowerment

32. Building the collective capacity of the poor (their social capital) is essential for poverty alleviation. Strengthening local level self help organizations will increase their capacity to exploit potential economic opportunities and to develop stronger link with the markets and external partners. A strong social capital

base will empower the poor and enable them to interact with those wielding social power on a more equitable and informed basis and negotiate more effectively to improve their livelihoods. In the absence of strong social capital of the poor, investment in human and physical assets will fail to deliver sustainable benefits.

2.4 Food Security (production, income and consumption)

33. This domain is of major importance to IFAD's mandate. In an open economy a food secure household (or community) is one which has enough food available at all times to ensure a minimum necessary intake by all members. Key elements of food security is availability (production and trade), access (income, markets and prices) and stability (storage and other marketing arrangement at household and local level).

2.5 Environment and Communal Resource Base

34. Environmental degradation is very often a manifestation of poverty and the struggle for survival by the rural poor. The extent to which a project contributes to rehabilitation of the environment (particularly of the agricultural resource base) in areas affected by natural resource degradation is strongly associated with poverty impact. This domain concentrates on the local level environmental impacts of the project, as that is where IFAD projects are most likely to have environmental consequences. It is also concerned especially with those environmental aspects, which are under the control of, or are influenced by, the rural poor. Environmental impacts may be negative as well as positive intended or unintended.

2.6 Institutions, Policies and Regulatory Framework

35. Existing institutions, policies and regulatory frameworks significantly influence the lives of the rural poor. Supporting the capabilities of existing local public institutions in servicing the rural poor and reorienting the existing policies of institutions in favour of the poor is an increasingly expected result of IFAD's operations. This encompasses the change brought about in sectoral and national policies affecting the rural poor, the "rules of the game", namely, laws, statutes and regulations that constitute the enabling environment for economic and social activity. In addition, the degree of decentralization, which allows decision making to be taken at the local level, is also a relevant consideration.

36. Typical "rules of the game" affecting IFAD projects include land titles, credit regulations, statutory interest rates, marketing regulations, cooperative laws, user association regulations, and input and product prices/subsidies as determined by government. In addition, traditional and social practices may also serve to restrict the equitable access to benefits, for example inter-tribal and ethnic divisions, social restrictions on women's activities, traditional allocation by gender of rural tasks and income from different crops and livestock, etc.

2.7 Overarching Factors

Sustainability

37. Assessing sustainability involves making a judgement that the net benefits generated by the project will be maintained in the longer term. The sustainability concept focuses on the features that contribute to, or threaten, the maintenance of net positive changes over the long term, as well as any arrangements to insulate these changes from unforeseen events and changing circumstances. There are ten factors which can be considered in arriving at this judgement, these are outlined in Box 8. Sustainability is an overarching criterion in that it is considered as one factor when determining the overall rating for IRP.

Box 8. Factors Affecting Sustainability

Sustainability is assessed by reviewing the risks and uncertainties faced by a project, and whether adequate steps have been taken to avoid or mitigate these risks. Ten factors affecting sustainability are generally recognized in the literature:

- **social** support (including continued participation of beneficiaries and local communities, robustness of grassroots organisations);
- **technical** soundness;
- **government commitment** (including of key central and local agencies and availability of operating funds);
- commitment of other **stakeholders** (including NGOs, local organizations, civil society and the private sector);
- **economic viability** (especially subsidy reliance/independence, and agricultural prices);
- **financial viability** (including funding of rural organizations, role of cost recovery, operational and financial self-sufficiency, and positive cash flows in marketing schemes);
- **institutional support** (including the legal/regulatory framework and organisational and management effectiveness);
- **environmental** impact and protection;
- resilience to **exogenous factors** such as price variability and market access, natural disasters and unstable security in the project area, and
- **replication** of a project approach as an indicator of sustainability.

In assessing sustainability the evaluator may use these ten factors to make a judgment on sustainability prospects. Sustainability is not intended to apply to negative impact.

Innovation and Replicability/Scaling up

38. Definition: *“Innovation for IFAD is the development of improved and cost effective ways to address problems/opportunities faced by the rural poor through the projects and programmes it supports. These encompass institutional and technological approaches, as well as pro-poor policies and partnerships. IFAD directly supports innovation and, together with its partners, facilitates its processes and promotes its replication and scaling up.”*⁷

39. IFAD’s total impact on rural poverty using its own resources is limited by the Fund’s relatively small size as an IFI. IFAD policy is therefore to increase the outreach of its development activities by playing a catalytic role, seeking to influence other partners in the international community by promoting the scaling up of successful and replicable innovations aimed at reaching the rural poor more effectively. These innovations may be in technology or development approaches and strategies. IFAD’s current Strategic Framework refers to the scaling up of innovation as an important dimension of IFAD’s Catalytic Role, one that allows the impact of IFAD projects to multiply or expand, going beyond the changes attributed to one single project. Evaluation findings point out that for innovations to have a high potential for scaling up it should have certain characteristics (see Box 9).

Box 9. Characteristics of Replicable Innovations

The Evaluation of IFAD’s Capacity as a Promoter of Replicable Innovations (2002) concluded that the innovations that succeeded in IFAD’s operations have the following characteristics:

- build on and improve existing local technologies or approaches;
- address a widely shared need or problem of the rural poor;
- simple to understand and to implement;
- culturally and socially acceptable;
- affordable to the rural poor in terms of financial and time constraints;
- low risk, and does not endanger the basic survival of the poor;
- can be reversed if it does not work out.

⁷ One of the agreements reached by the CLP following the Evaluation of IFAD’s Capacity as a Promoter of Replicable Innovations and Cooperation with other Partners, November 2002.

40. These factors should therefore be considered by the evaluation mission in coming to an assessment of the likelihood that the innovation will be replicated and scaled up. Innovation and scaling up are considered jointly and given a single rating in the IRP. Evaluators are also asked to record the replication which has occurred. This is a factual matter: if a particular innovation in technology or approaches has been replicated or scaled up in the region or country, then the extent of replication should be recorded.

Impacts on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

41. Gender is a cross-cutting theme in the Impact on Rural Poverty Matrix, hence in assessing impacts in all the domains it is necessary to estimate the effects on gender equality and women's empowerment in some detail. Where information/data is not readily available from project sources, missions should ensure that field surveys etc try to fill the gaps or at least provide some guidance as to relative gender impacts⁸.

42. In relation to gender equality and women's empowerment the evaluation should identify the extent to which there has been gender differentiated participation in project activities and the actual and/or relative benefits that have flowed to women as compared to men. This assessment needs to start from considerations of the way that gender issues were approached in the design document, and the realities encountered in the implementation environment. A major consideration for evaluators is then whether poverty impacts could have been enhanced if more emphasis had been placed on ensuring gender-equitable access to project benefits and services, and specifically on empowering women during the implementation stage.

43. Key questions which should be addressed in the evaluation report are:

- Did the project design correctly identify gender differentiated development opportunities?
- Were adequate operational measures included in the design to realise this potential?
- Has the implementation environment been supportive/conducive to such development?
- Have women and men had equal opportunities to participate in overall project activities and in individual components?
- Have women and men benefited equitably from the overall project impact?
- Has the project been innovative in creating gender-equal opportunities and in empowering women?
- Has the project facilitated progress in gender sensitive policies or government actions?

In addition, the role of the CI should also be considered as it pertained to (i) supporting gender differentiated participation; (ii) reporting on gender differentiated impacts and (iii) advising the project on how to improve its performance in these areas.

2.8 Completing the Matrices

44. Mission experience with the original IRP matrix has underlined its importance to the evaluation process, but it must be emphasised that the matrix remains only a support tool to the evaluation report. Whilst the matrices summarily help to analyse "what" has been achieved, they do not describe the "how" or "why" of these achievements, and as such cannot contribute much on their own to the learning process. The conclusions in the evaluation reports, which balance all these factors and are mostly the inherent judgement of the missions, remain the key outputs sought. The matrices are tools which help the analysis of data collected in the field by asking a series of key questions which serve to keep the evaluation centred on the beneficiary groups. The questions asked examine "who has benefited?" and "how and to what extent have they benefited?".

45. The matrices require inputs from all evaluation mission members to complete, but not all boxes are expected to be filled – only those relevant to the specific project being evaluated. Missions need to decide

⁸ Some of the key questions in the Impact Matrix relate more to strategic goals, for example expressed in the MDGs, and will probably require information from published statistics from the project area or other donor surveys.

what parts of the matrices are going to be used early on, how the mission will approach completing the matrices and who will be assigned the task of completing them. It is helpful if sufficient time is allocated to discussing the key questions as a team at the beginning of an evaluation, to ensure there is a common understanding of what is required and to allow each mission member to determine exactly what will be needed from them.

46. A useful approach has been to use the key questions as checklists to develop field questionnaires (for the impact matrix) and as a basis for discussion with implementing partners and beneficiaries (the project effectiveness matrix). Experience has shown that the matrices are best treated as mission tools only, not to be given to other partners for direct completion.

47. Determining specific values for each cell will frequently require balancing the different perceptions given to mission members from, for example, users and implementers. This requires consideration of the rigour of the methodology used to collect the data and consideration of the way that informants may be influenced by the information provided. In general, IFAD's stance would be to give more weight to the perceptions of the rural poor.

The determination of an overall rating for a domain is a judgement of the mission alone, and needs to take account of the picture emerging from the matrices and the other factors reported in the text, including the rated criteria of innovation, up scaling and replication. The mission may choose to assign weightings to ratings in the matrices (either the key questions or the column headings) in order to reflect project circumstances and hence influence the decision on overall domain ratings. However, to determine an overall rating for the Performance of the Project, and the Performance of the Partners (discussed above), guidance should be sought from the IFAD Evaluator in charge. If a single rating is to be given to Overall Project Achievements (i.e. the combined rating of Impact on Rural Poverty, Performance of the Project and Performance of the Partners), guidance should be sought from IFAD as to the weights to be applied, as these are influenced by IFAD strategy and policy.

E. PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTNERS (PT)

This criterion is concerned with assessing how well each partner fulfilled the role expected of them. The performance of each partner has to be examined and reported on separately, but it is their coordinated and composite performance which influences the success or otherwise of the project. The criteria for judgement vary in each case, as described below. Box 11 contains a set of suggested key questions as a starting point for evaluation missions and to guide assessments of this criterion.

3.1 IFAD Performance

48. Definition: *The extent to which services provided by the Fund and the CI ensured a sound project design; facilitated participation by the rural poor and other partners; resulted in a realistic appraisal proposal with an appropriate strategy and component mix; supported implementation effectively; ensured that arrangements were adequate for the operational phase of the project, and provided for participatory evaluation, learning partnerships and adoption of lessons.*

This criterion rates the quality of the services provided by IFAD in assisting the government to prepare a project for IFAD funding, implement it, and, most importantly, to facilitate the transition to regular operation of the project developed activities after the implementation stage is over. The criterion also measures the success of the Fund in learning lessons during implementation and applying them to the project. Evaluation of the criterion is complicated by the mixture of responsibility for these types of assistance between IFAD and the CI. In reality IFAD is ultimately responsible for the quality of its assistance, whether by proxy or not. The criterion is built up from a number of factors:

- the quality of the upstream services (prior to approval), as assessed by the final design approved for funding;

- the selection and engagement of effective partners during design and implementation;
- the quality of the MTR undertaken by IFAD; and
- the implementation assistance services (i.e. supervision by CI/IFAD and implementation follow up by IFAD).

49. In assessing upstream services, the Fund's mandate and strategic framework require five design parameters to be considered in all projects, viz:

- Targeting of the poor;
- Gender equity/mainstreaming;
- Participation by the poor in design and implementation;
- Partners selection/engagement; and
- Innovation and replicability.

IFAD projects must include these elements as means of achieving the main goal of poverty reduction. Thus the target groups, the poor, should be clearly defined at design stage, and targeting mechanisms clearly described. The project design should have introduced effective participatory approaches that allowed for target group involvement in design and decision-making concerning project activities, and continued during implementation, leading to enhancement of project benefits reaching the group. The project should be able to select and engage national and local level partners that can facilitate addressing poverty issues. This can also be judged by assessing the extent to which clear criteria are used for selecting NGOs and other partners. The project should have introduced one or more innovative (technical, institutional or organizational) approaches that proved instrumental in increasing the access of the rural poor to essential resources and/or financial and social services and that lend themselves to replication and scaling up. Such access would not have been possible otherwise. See Box 10 for an example of reporting on IFAD's performance.

Box 10. Reporting Performance of the Partners – an Example from IFAD's Performance in Yemen

The purpose of the Tihama Environment Protection Project (TEPP) in Yemen was to find economically viable ways of preventing the further encroachment of sand dunes onto farming land, which was seriously undermining the livelihoods of the sharecroppers and casual labourers that comprised the majority of the agricultural population. Although designed in the early 1990s, the project only became effective in 1995. The interim evaluation, which was the first to apply the MFE, took place in early 2002. In reviewing the design the evaluation was critical of a number of aspects in which the detailed arrangements necessary for implementation had been insufficiently addressed and which undermined the potential for sustainability. The evaluation correctly saw these as failures in the design process which had subsequently not been corrected through supervision, even when they emerged as major issues. The evaluation came to the following conclusions on IFAD performance, in this case assessed separately for the design and implementation phases:

“While the project design was well targeted, innovative and identified key issues that were essential for sustainability it failed to provide guidance as to the approach and procedures that would help to ensure that sustainability would be achieved. In addition, insufficient attention was given to other key implementation issues e.g. procurement ceilings and auditing requirements. Overall IFAD's performance during the design phase was 2 on a scale of 1 to 4.”

“As UNOPS was the Cooperating Institution, IFAD's direct role during implementation was limited to following up and taking action on the issues that required its attention. IFAD also carried out a MTR. There is no evidence from the supervision reports of IFAD taking action in respect of key failures to comply with the Loan Agreement or to address other implementation issues. Finally, IFAD agreed to the Government's request to use USD 300 000 from the IFAD loan for the disposal of toxic waste in an area outside the project area (i.e. *Wadi Surdud*) and amended the loan agreement accordingly. This expenditure cannot contribute to the achievement of the project objectives and means that the project now lacks funds when belatedly it is endeavouring to develop a mechanism for the sustainable management of the sand dune stabilisation belts. IFAD's performance during the implementation phase was 2 on a scale of 1 to 4.”

3.2 Cooperating Institution Performance

50. The Performance of the Cooperating Institution (CI), which is also in the final analysis IFAD Performance, is a key factor in influencing the success of the implementation stage. A CI which provides adequate and informed support can be an important influence in helping to overcome the numerous difficulties which can be expected during implementation. Whilst one important function of the CI is to provide an ongoing check on financial accountability, in practice much more is required in terms of guiding the implementation process so that project managers, steering committees, other development partners etc, are kept aware of IFAD's development approach and the need to maintain the focus on progressively moving towards the achievement of project goals. This means the evaluation of the performance of the CI has to be seen as a comprehensive exercise in its own right, and requires the examination of a number of inter-linking factors: some suggested key questions which evaluators need to consider are included in Box 11.

3.3 Government and Agencies Performance

51. **Definition:** *The extent to which the government promoted rural poverty reduction, assumed ownership and responsibility for the project, ensured quality of preparation and implementation, fostered stakeholder participation to promote achievement of development objectives and sustainability, and complied with covenants and agreements.*

This criteria is based on assessment of the four performance factors in the definition, i.e. promotion of rural poverty reduction; preparation of the project; project implementation, and compliance with covenants and agreements. These are described below:

- **Promotion of Rural Poverty Reduction.** This factor assesses the extent that the government promoted and supported rural poverty reduction through its policies, regulatory framework and allocation of resources, so as to provide an enabling environment for the rural poor to overcome their poverty and for project activities to achieve their goals. This is to be assessed by the evaluation as the existence (or non existence) of this environment would have influenced project implementation and achievements.
 - **Formulation.** This factor assesses the government/implementing agencies performance/ influence during the preparation of the project, (to the extent it is evident for the evaluators) specifically whether they adequately targeted the rural poor, considered economic, financial, technical, policy, and resource allocation aspects in favour of the poor, and encouraged their participation in design.
 - **Implementation.** The extent to which the government and its implementing agencies facilitated project implementation and demonstrated commitment to the project.
 - **Government compliance with covenants and agreements.** Assessment of the government's compliance with loan covenants and major agreements, based on formal records, implementation reports and as verified by the evaluation.

3.4 Performance of NGOs (and CBOs)

52. **Definition:** *The extent to which the NGOs involved in the project facilitated or hampered project implementation and influenced project achievements.*

Four factors, inter alia, should be assessed with respect to the performance of NGOs and CBOs; these fall into the following areas:

- Whether, at the time of the evaluation, NGOs and CBOs had implemented the project activities as agreed;
- Whether NGOs and CBOs had contributed to strengthening the capacity of the rural poor and their organizations;

- Whether NGOs and CBOs had used resources made available to them under the project efficiently to support the rural poor, and
- Whether NGOs and CBOs had contributed/ or were likely to contribute to the sustainability of the project's impact.

Box: 11 Suggested Key Questions to assess Performance of the Partners	
IFAD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did the project design illustrate the connection with the country and regional strategies? 2. Was the design process participatory? 3. Has the design adequately defined and addressed the project goals and objectives? 4. Did the design adequately address targeting, participation and gender issues? 5. Was the design suitably modified if necessary (e.g through an MTR or learning process) 6. Did resource allocations accord with project objectives/goals? 7. Are objectives currently relevant to target group aspirations/needs? 8. Did IFAD support the CI by taking prompt action whenever required? 9. Has the project been innovative? 10. Has IFAD promoted the replication or scaling-up of the project or components thereof? 11. Did IFAD help to enforce CI recommendations? 12. Was the project designed to be sustainable? 13. Has IFAD been active in creating an effective partnership for implementation? 14. Has IFAD sought to influence poverty policies (by being an advocate for the rural poor)?
CI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the supervision programme been well arranged (frequency, composition, continuity)? 2. Has the CI followed compliance with loan covenants? 3. Has the CI been effective in financial management? 4. Has the CI sought to monitor project impacts and IFAD concerns, e.g. targeting, participation, empowerment of the poor and gender aspects. 5. Have implementation problems been highlighted and appropriate remedies suggested? 6. Has the CI promoted or encouraged self-assessment and learning processes? 7. Has the supervision process enhanced implementation and poverty impacts?
Government and agencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has government correctly assumed ownership and responsibility for the project? 2. By its actions and policies has government been fully supportive of project goals? 3. Did government contribute adequately to the project preparation process? 4. Has adequate staffing and project management been assured? 5. Has TA been contracted and used well when needed? 6. Has appropriate staff training been arranged and funded? 7. Have the appropriate levels of counterpart funds been provided on time? 8. Have administrative arrangements (especially procurement) been suitable for implementation needs? 9. Have participatory approaches included in the design been encouraged and/or adopted? 10. Have loan covenants and the spirit of the loan agreement been followed? 11. Has coordination of the implementing agencies been well arranged? 12. Has policy guidance been provided to the project management where necessary? 13. Has the project management discharged its functions adequately? 14. Has government facilitated the work of NGOs and civil society where appropriate? 15. Has adequate reporting and auditing been arranged? 16. Has the government planned an exit strategy and/or made arrangements for the continuation of project activities?
NGOs/CBOs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have NGOs/CBOs been involved in the project as envisaged? 2. How effectively have NGOs fulfilled their contractual service agreements? 3. Have the NGOs/CBOs acted to strengthen the capacity of rural poor organisations? 4. Will NGOs/CBOs contribute to the sustainability of project activities?
Co-financiers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Were co-financiers well chosen in terms of congruence of mandates? 2. Have adequate and timely resources been made available as agreed? 3. Have administrative arrangements worked well? 4. Have co-financiers been active in encouraging project implementation? 5. Has there been adequate coordination with the co-financiers? 6. Is there potential for up-scaling or continuation of co-financier contributions/actions?

3.5 Performance of Co-financiers

53. Definition: *The extent to which co-financing facilitated or hampered the implementation of the project and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact.*

The scope and potential for co-financing is an important consideration during the design process. However, in practice effective and efficient co-financing can be difficult to arrange and undertake as it involves trying to harmonise different development ambitions, financing mechanisms and timetables. An important consideration is that the co-financing arrangements should not be allowed to obstruct implementation activities or slow down the achievement of agreed project goals. Difficulties which have arisen with co-financing are usually clear by the time an evaluation takes place. To assess these aspects evaluators have to begin by looking at the compatibility of the development agendas of the funding partners and the specific objectives for each expressed in the project design, and then consider the practical arrangements established for the project. See Box 11 for suggested key questions to be considered in arriving at an overall judgment of co-financier performance.

F. THE EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluation report facilitates the ordered presentation of the overall findings and conclusions of the project evaluation. The section headings have been decided to allow for the systematic coverage of all the major evaluation determinants as described in this methodological framework, and hence are also the common features required for all project evaluations. The report is intended to be a succinct but complete summary of the evaluation findings, and the maximum length, without the Appendices, is 40 pages. The detailed table of contents including required sub-sections and appendices is provided in annex 2

54. From 2003 onwards a new section on “gender” has been added to the evaluation report, on the recommendation of the review workshop. Whilst the format of the main report is not intended to “straitjacket” the reporting of evaluation findings, it does require an approach which prioritises the selection of material. Hence only a summary descriptions of the design and implementation history are expected, with more emphasis placed on findings, conclusions, ratings and recommendations. Where evaluations wish to provide more details or explanations of findings, these should be placed in annexes and referred to in the report. This material is retained in OE for reference. . If circumstances arise where the evaluation report needs to include further analyses (for example where the borrowing government or a member of the CLP has requested a specific issue is included) then another section may be added, but without increasing the length of the report.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Matrices

1. Impact Matrix
2. Project Effectiveness Matrix

Annex II: Table of Contents For Project Evaluation.

ANNEX I-1: IMPACT MATRIX

MAIN DOMAINS OF IMPACT	Key Questions for Impact Assessment in Rural Communities Affected by the project (changes to which the project has contributed)	Assessment of Change (1)				Reach of Change (3)				Dynamic Processes ** (4)	Sus. Pot. *** (5)
		Presence and Direction of change (+) (0) (-)	What has changed (Indicators)	Extent of Change:		How Many (households and people)	Who (1) (Poor/ poorest/b etter of)	Who (2) M/F	Project contrib ution 4/3/2/1	4/3/2/1	4/3/2/1
				How much	(Rating)* 4/3/2/1						
I. Physical and financial assets	1.1 Did farm households physical assets change (i.e. farmland, water, livestock, trees, equipment, etc.)?										
	1.2 Did other household assets change (houses, bicycles, radios, etc.)										
	1.3 Did infrastructure and people access to markets change? (transport, roads, storage, communication facilities, etc.)										
	1.4 Did households' financial assets change? (savings etc)										
	1.5 Did rural people access to financial services change? (credit, saving, insurances, etc.)										
II. Human assets	2.1 Did people access to potable water change?										
	2.2 Did access to basic health and disease prevention services change?										
	2.3 Did the incidence of HIV infection change?										
	2.4 Did maternal mortality change?										
	2.5 Did access to primary education change?										
	2.6 Did primary school enrolment for girls change?										
	2.7 Did women and children workload change?										
	2.8 Did adult literacy rate and/or access to information change?										
III. Social capital and people empowerment	3.1 Did rural people organisations and institutions change?										
	3.2 Did social cohesion and local self-help capacity of rural communities change?										
	3.3 Did gender equity and/or womens' conditions change?										
	3.4 Did rural people feel empowered vis a vis local and national public authorities and development partners? (Do they play more effective role in decision making?)										
	3.5 Did rural producers feel empowered vis a vis the market place? Are they in better control of inputs supply and marketing of their products?										
IV. Food Security (Production, Income and Consumption)	4.1 Did children nutritional status change?										
	4.2 Did household food security change?										
	4.3 Did farming technology and practices change?										
	4.4 Did the frequency of food shortage change?										
	4.5 Did agricultural production change (area, yield, production mix, etc.)?										
V. Env't & common resources	5.1 Did the natural resource base status change (land, water, forest, pasture, fish stocks...)?										
	5.2 Did exposure to environmental risks change?										
VI. Institutions, policies, and regulatory framework	6.1 Did rural financial institutions change?										
	6.2 Did local public institutions and service provision change?										
	6.3 Did national/sectoral policies affecting the rural poor change?										
	6.4 Did the regulatory framework affecting the rural poor change?										

* Rating: 4= High; 3= Substantial; 2= Modest; 1= Negligible. The rating here is based on the rural poor (and their partners) perspective in relation to the situation in the base year. *** Rating: 4= Highly likely, 3= Likely; 2= Unlikely; 1= Highly Unlikely.** This refers to cases where even though impact achievement is modest or negligible, the project in question has set in motion dynamic positive processes that will eventually lead to substantial impact achievement. The identification of the existence of these processes is left to the evaluators judgement on a case by case basis.

ANNEX 1-2: PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS MATRIX*

MAIN DOMAINS OF IMPACT	Key Questions for Impact Assessment in Rural Communities Affected by the project (changes to which the project has contributed)	Expectation of Impact (Project Stated Objectives)				Effectiveness Rating (Achievement Against Stated Objectives) 4/3/2/1			
		Reach Who?	Change What?	Change How Much?	Reach how Many?	Reach Who?	Change What?	Change How Much?	Reach how Many?
I. Physical and financial assets	1.1 Did farm households physical assets change (i.e. farmland, water, livestock, trees, equipment, etc.)?								
	1.2 Did other household assets change (houses, bicycles, radios other durables, etc.)								
	1.3 Did infrastructure and people access to markets change? (transport, roads, storage, communication facilities, etc.)								
	1.4 Did households' financial assets change? (savings etc)								
	1.5 Did rural people access to financial services change? (credit, saving, insurances, etc.)								
II. Human assets	2.1 Did people access to potable water change?								
	2.2 Did access to basic health and disease prevention services change?								
	2.3 Did the incidence of HIV infection change?								
	2.4 Did maternal mortality change?								
	2.5 Did access to primary education change?								
	2.6 Did primary school enrolment for girls change?								
	2.7 Did women and children workload change?								
	2.8 Did adult literacy rate and/or access to information and knowledge change?								
III Social capital and people empowerment	3.1 Did rural people organisations and institutions change?								
	3.2 Did social cohesion and local self-help capacity of rural communities change?								
	3.3 Did gender equity and/or womens' conditions change?								
	3.4 Did rural people feel empowered vis a vis local and national public authorities and development partners? (Do they play more effective role in decision making?)								
	3.5 Did rural producers feel empowered vis a vis the market place? Are they in better control of inputs supply and marketing of their products?								
IV. Food Security (Production, Income and Consumption)	4.1 Did children nutritional status change								
	4.2 Did household food security change?								
	4.2 Did farming technology and practices change?								
	4.3 Did the frequency of food shortage change?								
V. Env't and common resources	4.4 Did agricultural production change (area, yield, production mix, etc.)?								
	5.1 Did the natural resource base status change (land, water, forest, pasture, fish stocks...)?								
VI. Institutions, policies, and regulatory framework	5.2 Did exposure to environmental risks change?								
	6.1 Did rural financial institutions change?								
	6.2 Did local public institutions and service provision change?								
	6.3 Did national/sectoral policies affecting the rural poor change?								
	6.4 Did the regulatory framework affecting the rural poor change?								

* See paragraph 37 of the text.

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