



1. Project Data :	
OEDID:	C2355
Project ID:	P001995
Project Name:	Agricultural Services Project
Country:	Niger
Sector:	Agricultural Extension
L/C Number:	Cr. 2355 NIR
Partners involved :	
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2. Project Objectives, Financing, Costs and Components :
Total Project Costs: US\$19.8 m; IDA US\$18.0 m (SDR 12.9 m).
 The main *objectives* were to improve incomes and reduce rural poverty by improving the effectiveness of extension, improving linkages between research and extension, and by providing support to village populations through functional literacy training. The project was seen as a five year slice of a long -term national program. Main *components* were: (i) staffing and support for extension services; (ii) regular training; (iii) strengthened research/extension linkages with priority to research on soil and water, diversification, and ecologically adapted varieties; (iv) strengthened linkages between crops, livestock and environment extension support; (v) functional literacy and promotion of women's participation in village activities and management .

3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives :
 Given the lack of quality and coverage of evaluation data due to poor M&E, the achievement of production and income objectives is inconclusive. An impact study revealed adoption rates averaging about 15% on the leading technologies offered. However, the income impacts of these adoptions are unclear because of conflicting evidence . Achievements of project outputs, including institution building, improved operational efficiency, capacity development, and research linkages were partial at best .

4. Significant Achievements :
 There were significant achievements in capacity building, institutionalization of linkages between crop, livestock and environment; gender and audio-visual components; and, functional literacy . A retro-fitting exercise in 1997 attempted to shift emphasis from process to results with some success, but by that stage it was too late to substantially redirect the project. There was some modest achievement in technology transfer but it remains unclear what impact this had on farm incomes.

5. Significant Shortcomings :
 Project management was poor and exceptionally unstable with 8 project managers in 5 years. Bank supervision lacked decisive action, hindered by 4 Task Managers in 5 years. Lack of agreed performance indicators and weak M&E contributed to poor management. The project is not financially sustainable . Project vehicles were often requisitioned by government officials . Financial management was poor with several qualified audits .

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	
Institutional Dev .:	Partial	Modest	
Sustainability :	Uncertain	Unlikely	There is little evidence that the current lack of sustainability on the financial side can be turned around soon and it seems unlikely that privatisation of services will fill the gap. We do not find sufficient case

			in the ICR for uncertain over unlikely .
Bank Performance :	Deficient	Unsatisfactory	
Borrower Perf .:	Deficient	Highly Unsatisfactory	No highly deficient category in ICRs, but 8 project coordinators in 5 years, inadequate M&E performance due to project coordinators reluctance to support it, a number of qualified audits, requisitioning of vehicles for other purposes etc., constitutes, in our view, highly unsatisfactory performance .
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability :

1. Performance indicators and the capacity to measure them are essential for good project management .
2. Decisive action is needed early on in dealing with severe lack of continuity of project management .
3. Multi-disciplinary training of extension staff is feasible and can reduce extension costs to small farmers .
4. Participatory problem diagnosis can improve the relevance of extension services .
5. Very careful projection of future borrower financial capacity is needed at appraisal and within a CAS context (which can only realistically be done in conjunction with country economists rather than by project design Task Leaders alone).

8. Audit Recommended? Yes No

Why? (i) as an input to better understand the reasons for M&E failures as a part of OED's M&E Action Learning program; (ii) as an instructive comparison alongside the more successful yet closely related community-based Niger Small Rural Operations Project and, (iii) to better understand the emerging transition from T&V to community-based approaches .

9. Comments on Quality of ICR :

Satisfactory. But no borrower input.