



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 01/28/2004	
PROJ ID: P000604		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name: Comoros-pilot Agricultural Services Project	Project Costs (US\$M)	2.2	2.1
Country: Comoros	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	1.6	1.5
Sector(s): Board: RDV - Central government administration (90%), Other social services (10%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)	1.0	N/A
L/C Number: C2931; CP891			
	Board Approval (FY)		97
Partners involved : IFAD	Closing Date	06/30/2000	06/30/2003
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	Group Manager :	Group:
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2. Project Objectives and Components			
a. Objectives			
<p>'(i) To produce through actual testing on the ground, replicable <i>service systems</i> that, if successful, could be established nation-wide...[including] (a) a participation-based and results-oriented extension service, operable by either the public or private sector; and (b) the use of private sector associations and the media to collect and relay market- and farm- related information...</p> <p>(ii) To support the strengthening of the country's <i>capacity to implement its agricultural strategy</i> through (a) re-orienting the Agriculture Research Institute's (INRAPE's) role as a provider of technical information to extension agents and end-users, and a coordinator and provider of training services in the sector; and (b) the improvement of the Ministry of Agriculture's (MPEPFE's) capacity for sector planning, monitoring and coordination, as well as (c) the formulation of sub-sectoral policies and strategies to ameliorate rural finance and land tenure inadequacies ". (Staff Appraisal Report, p. 6)</p> <p>The project was restructured at mid-term: the communications and market information part of objective (i) was dropped; objective (ii) was scaled back and a third objective was added :</p> <p>'(iii) To reinforce the capacity of local communities and producers groups " (ICR, paragraph 3.2)</p>			
b. Components			
<p>(i) Agricultural services, comprising extension, research and market information (expected cost, US\$1.34 million, actual cost, US\$0.57 million);</p> <p>(ii) Planning and monitoring support, comprising implementation of agricultural strategy, projects and studies (expected US\$0.32 million, actual US\$0.26 million); and</p> <p>(iii) Farm producer-initiated activities (this was added after appraisal; actual cost, US\$ 0.85 million)</p>			
c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates			
<p>The project was inactive from August 1998 to January 2000 owing to the suspension of Bank and IFAD disbursements to Comoros. Approval for the restructuring outlined in Section 2(a) above was obtained in July 2000, together with an extension of the closing date to June 2002. A second extension pushed closing back to June 2003. IFAD's actual contribution to project cost is not indicated in the ICR .</p>			
3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:			
Both in the text and in Annex 1 of the ICR (Key Performance Indicators) the evidence adduced to support			

achievement of objectives is skimpy and inconsistent, raising doubts about project outcomes .

(i) *Partially Achieved*. The text (paragraph 4.2.1) states that "a network of sixty private extension agents has been created, equipped and trained". (The appraisal target was 50). But Annex 1 says that appraisal goals were "only partially met: agents not formally networked due to the NGO's end of contract". It is not clear to what extent private sector associations and the media were used to help disseminate information . A documentation center was rehabilitated and agricultural information is now available to extension agents and farmers .

(ii) *Not Achieved*. The original objective of increasing capacity to implement agricultural strategy was not realized . Neither was the scaled-back objective (improved coordination, monitoring and evaluation of sector projects) achieved. The Ministry of Agriculture (MPEPFE) "failed to develop sound monitoring and evaluation systems and to undertake timely and appropriate monitoring of the public sector investment program . Also, the monitoring reports were of poor quality and not delivered on time" (paragraph 4.2.3).

(iii) *Achieved*. The text (paragraph 4.1.2) says that "initial results from demand-driven productive investments ...show significantly increased revenue generating capacity of small farmers "; paragraph 4.2.4 says that "financing productive investments has increased producers' incomes by at least 25 percent".

4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

The Bank made a valiant effort to turn-around a poorly-designed project, adding a community-driven development component with satisfactory results . Sixty-one producers' organizations were established as legal entities; they received training and are functioning . Sixty private extension agents were trained . Fifty-eight subprojects were approved and financed (116 percent of the target), involving about 1,000 farmers in various crop and livestock production initiatives . The actual cost of the project was only US\$ 2.1 million, making this a cost-efficient learning exercise.

5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):

The ICR rates quality at entry as unsatisfactory, noting that the project was not ready for implementation and was based on a weak analysis of external risks . Specifically, the government's poor record on debt service and counterpart financing, and the absence of a supportive macro -economic and political environment suggests that the project should not have been approved . The government "failed to adequately prepare some technical aspects of the project, which led to one year delay in effectiveness " (paragraph 7.4).

Project objectives were too ambitious and too disparate in relation to the lending environment and the resources available. Owing to weak monitoring and evaluation, there are few data to substantiate project results .

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Institutional Dev .:	Modest	Modest	
Sustainability :	Likely	Unlikely	The ICR raises doubts whether there is much positive to be sustained . Also, it states "the most significant shortcoming was the weakness of the public institutions to ensure the sustainability of the benefits gained from the different components of the Project" (paragraph 4.1.2)
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Perf .:	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	
Quality of ICR :		Unsatisfactory	

NOTE: ICR rating values flagged with '*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

The lessons presented by the ICR are not compelling (e.g. "coordination and implementation of productive investments through micro-projects at the decentralized level can be done with little difficulty provided the local actors are empowered to act and have resources to utilize " [paragraph 8.1]). It also notes that "farmers are willing to gradually share costs providing that the services provided lead to increase in productivity and income "; but the ICR presents no evidence of the extent of cost sharing . This project suggests the lesson that objectives should be tailored to the lending environment and the resources available, and should be tightly focused rather than trying to tackle too many issues simultaneously .

8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

A more complete version of Annex 1 (Key Performance Indicators) was dropped from the final draft of the ICR; it should have been retained. There is little discussion in the ICR of the third component --yet the ICR claims (paragraph 4.2.4) that this is "the core" of the project. It is precisely this component which offered the most scope for learning; the lessons learned section does not rise to this challenge .