



1. Project Data

Project ID P122694	Project Name Env Land Mgt and Rural Livelihoods-GEF	
Country Tajikistan	Practice Area(Lead) Environment & Natural Resources	Additional Financing P153709
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-D0850,TF-14521,TF-14523,TF-A0431	Closing Date (Original) 31-May-2018	Total Project Cost (USD) 17,628,154.66
Bank Approval Date 29-Mar-2013	Closing Date (Actual) 31-May-2018	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	16,850,000.00	16,850,000.00
Revised Commitment	16,803,210.31	16,803,210.31
Actual	16,803,209.16	16,803,209.16

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) and the Grant Agreements (Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) Grant Agreement and Global Environment Facility (GEF) Grant Agreement) (June 2013), the Project Development Objective (PDO) was **“to enable rural people to increase their productive assets in ways that improve natural resource management and resilience to climate change in selected climate vulnerable sites”** (page 8). The Global Environmental Objective (GEO) was the same as the PDO.



The objective remained unchanged when the project received Additional Financing (June 2015) and underwent Level 2 Restructuring following a partial cancellation of IDA grant financing (December 2015).

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?
Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
Yes

Date of Board Approval
30-Jun-2015

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
No

d. Components

Component 1. Rural Production and Land Resource Management Investments

At appraisal: US\$10.14 million; At closing: US\$11.32 million (112% of appraisal amount – additional funds from AF)

This component provided grant financing to communities in selected climate vulnerable sites to implement rural production and sustainable land and water management (SLWM) investments. It comprised two subcomponents: (i) village-level investments to help groups of households (Common Interest Groups - CIGs) improve their livelihoods; and (ii) larger-scale initiatives in sustainable community land management beyond the village, particularly pasture management and on-farm water management. A community-driven development approach was used to ensure participants took responsibility for the choice, design and management of rural investments and resource management plans.

Component 2. Knowledge Management and Institutional Support

At appraisal: US\$4.74 million; Actual: US\$6.44 million (136% of appraisal amount – additional funds from AF)

This component provided facilitation and institutional support for rural populations to plan, implement and manage rural investments. Relevant local agencies and NGOs facilitated participatory planning and resource assessments, mobilized target communities, and assisted groups in implementing and managing their rural investments and pasture and on-farm water management plans. Knowledge management and information exchange for wider adoption of SLM was also supported through training courses, workshops, study tours and other activities.

Component 3. Project Management and Coordination

At appraisal: US\$2.00 million; Actual: US\$1.84 million (92% of appraisal amount)

This component financed the operating costs of an Implementation Group (IG) within the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) to carry out project management functions for both Components 1 and 2. Support was for procurement, financial management, coordination, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. The IG was responsible for coordinating with the country PPCR Secretariat, participation in



PPCR program-level activities and ensuring project reporting was in line with the overall program/SPCR process.

Additional Financing

An Additional Financing (AF) of US\$3.8 million (US\$1.8 million from IDA and US\$2.0 million from PPCR) was approved in June 2015. No changes were made to the PDO or project components, but AF sought to: (i) expand the geographic coverage of support for village-level rural production and SLM investments (IDA resources); and (ii) improve access to knowledge on adopting SLM and climate resilient practices among the rural population (PPCR resources). Notably, the AF sought to expand networking activities and the dissemination of best practices, including through ICT tools and regional SLM information platforms.

Restructuring

In December 2015 a Project Restructuring included a partial cancelation of the IDA Grant proceeds in the amount of US\$970,000 to balance the FY15 country portfolio towards the required 45% Grant to 55% Credit allocation ratio. As a result, it was no longer feasible to support the scale-up of village-level rural production and land management investments in a new district as planned in the AF. Instead, the project utilized the remaining IDA Grant financing to scale up support for: (i) larger-scale, sustainable, community-managed pasture/fodder-based livestock production systems in up to three selected *jamoats*; and (iii) three Water User Associations in introducing sustainable on-farm water management practices.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project Cost: At appraisal, the total cost of the project was estimated at US\$16.88 million (PAD, Data Sheet). The actual disbursement at the end of the project, including AF, was US\$17.63 million (ICR, page 2). The difference is due to Additional Financing and subsequent Restructuring that included partial cancelation of the IDA Grant proceeds to balance the FY15 country portfolio towards the required 45% Grant to 55% Credit allocation ratio.

Financing: The sources of financing were as follows (ICR, pages 2 and 45):

Strategic Climate Fund Grant (PPCR): US\$9.45 million at appraisal, with an additional US\$2.00 million at Restructuring. The actual amount at project closing was US\$11.34 million.

GEF: US\$5.40 million at appraisal, with no Additional Financing. The actual amount at project close was US\$5.35 million.

IDA: No financing at appraisal, however, US\$1.80 million was committed at Restructuring. The actual amount at project closing was US\$0.82 million. This partial cancellation of US\$970,000 in IDA Grant proceeds was to balance the FY15 portfolio towards the overall 45% Grant to 55% Credit allocation ratio (Restructuring Paper, page 2).

Local communities: US\$2.03 million at appraisal, with an additional US\$0.43 at Restructuring. The actual amount at project closing was US\$2.03 million.

Borrower Contribution: None.



Dates: The original project (P122694) was approved by the Board of Directors on March 29, 2013 and the PPCR and GEF Grant Agreements were signed on June 11, 2013. The project became effective on October 3, 2013 and underwent a mid-term review between April 18-29, 2016. The expected closing date was May 31, 2018. Additional Financing from IDA and PPCR (P153709/P122694) was approved on June 30, 2015. However, a Level 2 Restructuring occurred shortly after in December 2015. Neither the AF nor the Restructuring changed the original closing date: May 31, 2018.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Alignment with strategy. At appraisal, the project was aligned the FY13-14 Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), which emphasized: “achieving inclusive, sustainable growth, and in particular, supporting the country-level priority of increasing agricultural productivity and food security, as well as the greater priority placed on gender” (PAD, page 5). At completion, the project remained highly relevant to the Climate Change Cross-Cutting Theme in the FY15-18 CPS, specifically the second pillar: “social inclusion—sustainable land and water practices in rural areas e.g., improved efficiency and resilience of irrigation systems and management, reduced erosion and flood/mudflow risk” (World Bank Group Country Partnership Strategy for Tajikistan for the Period FY15-18, page 28). The project is consistent with the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the period FY19-23, which includes an Objective to “Improv[e] the Resilience of Residents in Local Communities” through interventions that “address environmental vulnerabilities (land degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources) that have posed considerable constraints for rural development” (Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Tajikistan FY19–FY23, page 16).

Country Context. The 2018 Tajikistan Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) underscores the Project’s relevance in the context of climate change and its impact on livelihoods since Tajikistan is considered the most vulnerable country to climate change in the ECA region. “Climate change is expected to increase the intensity and frequency of extreme climate events. Agriculture, the main employer in the economy, depends on water resources and is therefore exposed to climatic variability. Adverse effects on agriculture and, in turn, food production may increase relative prices and reduce agricultural wages, affecting the poor dependent on agriculture” (Tajikistan SCD 2018, page xiv). The project therefore relevantly responded to the need to address environmental challenges that are increasing the vulnerability of people and their livelihoods to climatic and socio-economic shocks and stresses.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)



Objective 1

Objective

To enable rural people to increase their productive assets in ways that improve natural resource management and resilience to climate change

Rationale

While the ICR separated the PDO into three outcomes, this review recognizes the causal linkages between them and therefore validates the full causal theory embedded in the PDO. The project sought to provide financing for productive assets (inputs) to improve the management of natural resources (interim outcomes) in order to enhance resilience to climate change (outcome/impact).

OUTPUTS

Institutional and Planning

- Formed 2,349 Common Interest Groups (CIGs), 8 Pasture User Unions (PUUs) and supported 16 existing Water User Associations (WUAs) to access grants to implement sub-projects.
- Supported 323,393 direct beneficiaries, of which 224,967 were CIG members, 48,930 PUU beneficiaries and 49,496 WUA beneficiaries. 48% were women (155,228).
- Supported 53,390 households to adopt sustainable land management (SLM) and climate change practices in climate-vulnerable areas.
- Developed 8 pasture management plans under implementation by PUUs.
- Developed 16 on-farm water management plans under implementation by WUAs in lowland areas.

Village Level Investments

- Activities in this area financed income generating activities as well as basic services and infrastructure to support the enabling environment.
- Grants were disbursed through 2,349 sub-projects for agriculture and irrigation systems, horticulture and gardening, livestock breeding, poultry and beekeeping. Productive assets purchased through grants included beehives, improved breed cattle and sheep, horses, poultry, rabbits, fish, fruit trees, nonfruit trees, wool processing tools, incubators, generators, high quality seeds, yoghurt processing equipment, solar panels, sewing machines, briquets, small agricultural machinery, pipes, irrigation pumps, water gates, etc.
- Grants also financed public and private services and infrastructure including drinking water, bridge and road rehabilitation, veterinary clinics and pharmacies, livestock watering points, *kashars* (resting places for herders and animals), butcher shops and greenhouses.

Larger Scale Community Land Management Investments



- Covered 44,235 hectares with sustainable land management (SLM). This included planting trees, bushes, grasses on 736 hectares of slope land; afforesting 12 hectares of land; establishing or improving 15,459 hectares of pasture; decreasing stoniness, salinization and/or waterlogging and improved soil structure/fertility on 28,028 hectares; and substituting biological pesticides (for chemicals) on 110 hectares. These interventions also included the protection of 12,485 meters of rivers banks and canals.
- Specific interventions also designed to achieve SLM goals included by selective breeding and reducing heads of livestock by 11,559 animals that was designed to reduce pasture pressure.

Training and Knowledge Exchange

- 36,836 client days of training were provided to enhance knowledge of SLM and climate resilient practices, and build capacity of farmers to implement sub-projects.
- 132 good practice videos were produced to share knowledge on SLM.
- 3 exchange visits were organized to share lessons with other projects (by ADB, DFID/GIZ, USAID), as well as 3 study tours and 9 conferences/seminars.
- Booklets, guidelines and other knowledge products were developed and disseminated covering diverse topics including: drip irrigation, environmental monitoring of pastures, developing pasture and livestock management plans, preparing and applying biological compost, disease management in vegetable growing, improvement of grassland, and restoration of degraded lands.
- A Knowledge Management Platform for Sustainable Land Management (www.slmtj.net) was established with active membership of organizations working on SLM issues in Tajikistan. The platform shares project-generated knowledge products (e.g., 102 videos, 75 case studies and best practices on SLM, 44 project stories) on climate change adaptation, SLM investment opportunities, and best practices for learning and knowledge exchange.

OUTCOMES

The project *substantially* enabled rural people to increase their productive assets to improve natural resource management and there is evidence that this is leading improved resilience to climate change impacts.

Project outcomes were measured mainly through a participatory wellbeing index. This index captured perceptions of 829 households at two points during the project period (2015, 2017) across three geographic zones (low, middle hills and highlands). Roughly 50 percent of the participants were women. The index included indicators aligned with four dimensions of climate change resilience – “diversity of economy/livelihoods, sustainable infrastructure and technology, self-organization, and learning” – and included aspects on health, money, workplace, living conditions, food, leisure, social connections, safety and subjective well-being (ICR, page 30).

The index reported that 53% of participating households increased their wellbeing by 25% on average, compared to 46% of non-participating households. The explanatory factors are not elucidated



in the ICR and require further interrogation as part of a project assessment. An analysis of purchasing power suggests that beneficiary households were better able to withstand the banking crisis as well as other reported consumption effects in 2015-2016.

The links to the natural resource management interventions are somewhat tenuous however given the short time frame of the project intervention. There is some data available in the ICR that shows that practices such as using biological compost, or planting more resilient plant varieties, increased production by up to 24% for fodder crops. Additionally, upland degraded areas benefited from the planting of orchards and the planting of high value potato varieties suited to local conditions. While there is no data available to support this claim, anecdotal evidence suggests that the incidence of pests, animal disease, and mortality of cattle was reduced.

The wellbeing reported by the index is captured through several features. It is in part measured by employment creation enabled through the project finance, however exact figures are not available in the ICR. Employment (temporary and permanent) was created in sectors such as infrastructure rehabilitation and agricultural processing. Wellbeing was also explained by the index's reporting on improved health conditions, which were made possible by improved access to drinking water and production of more nutritious foodstuffs, among other factors. Project participants reporting a "very poor or poor health" status declined from 30% in 2015 to less than 20% in 2017, while respondents reporting a "fair health" condition increased from around 25% to over 30%.

The project reportedly had positive gender effects according to the wellbeing index. Women experienced a higher increase in well-being than men, and the project created work opportunities for rural women: "We [women in the CIG Laziz, Khovaling] did not have a job...now there is an opportunity to earn money and support my family" (ICR, page 14).

Resilience was also improved through increased awareness about environmental threats and vulnerabilities to disasters and climate change. Importantly, Resource Assessments (RAs) implemented by the project helped to link citizens identification of resilience-related priorities to investment planning as reflected in the Community Action Plans (CAPs). The project helped create a common sense of purpose amongst participating communities, with greater cohesion between neighbors, CIG group members and villages.

At project close, an active network of 16 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) was promoting SLM through a knowledge platform (www.slmtj.net). Project assessments indicate that knowledge and skills are being embedded in beneficiary households, and that there has been replication among non-project households. Furthermore, increased management effectiveness scores of PUUs and WUAs demonstrated improvements in institutional arrangements and governance.

Other issues that deserve further analysis include the link between land rights and resilience. For example, there is a reference to the enhanced capacity that was achieved by one PUU that acquired land rights, and inference that this would be improve fee collection and grazing management.



Global Environmental Benefits

The project also contributed to global climate change mitigation through enhanced carbon sequestration. Specifically, the overall carbon balance – defined as the net balance from all greenhouse gases expressed in CO₂ equivalents that were emitted or sequestered due to project implementation as compared to a business-as-usual scenario – amounts to -976,460.80 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e) over 20 years (-262,490.58 tCO₂-e for CIG investments and -713,970.12 tCO₂-e for PUU and WUA investments) (ICR, page 16).

Rating

Substantial

Rationale

The project provided sufficient productive assets to achieve improvements to NRM and resilience to climate change.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Financial analysis was conducted at appraisal, AF and completion. At appraisal and at AF, the financial internal rate of return, based only on quantifiable benefits, was estimated at 47%. At closing, the internal rate of return was estimated at 56%. The NPV (at 12% discount rate) was \$14 million at appraisal, \$15 million at AF, and \$28 million at completion (covering farm productivity, land management and rural infrastructure). This was primarily due to a higher number of beneficiaries overall, and related uptake of investment in farm productivity and management.

Savings in **project expenditures** allowed funds to be allocated to an additional 63 rural investments under sub-component 1.1. thereby increasing the number of beneficiaries. The Implementation Group's (IGs) costs were estimated at 10% of total project funding (excluding beneficiary contributions), which is comparable to similar CDD projects that require significant implementation support. There was very low staff turnover during the project, with only one technical consultant replaced. At project closure, approximately \$45,000 was returned.

Carbon sequestration from project-supported land-use changes were also quantified. The project enhanced global carbon stocks by 976,460.80 tCO₂-e over 20 years from rural production investments. With a low shadow price starting at \$34 per ton of CO₂-e, the NPV is estimated at about \$4 million (discount rate of 12%). Using the higher shadow price range starting at \$78 per ton of CO₂-e, the NPV is estimated at about \$8 million.



It is possible that the values are underestimated since they do not consider expansion and replication by participants and non-participants with independent financing. No ex-ante analysis was conducted, but ex-post analysis was carried out with the Ex-ACT tool. Carbon accounting was conducted for the first time in Tajikistan, thereby: (i) providing valuable insight into the effectiveness of various interventions; (ii) raising awareness of sequestration impacts of agriculture and land management; and (iii) building in-country capacity to assess such parameters.

Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal	✓	47.00	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	56.00	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

On account of high Relevance, substantial Efficacy, and substantial Efficiency, the project outcome is rated as Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Contextual and Institutional Risks

Insecure land tenure and acquisition rights present challenges, particularly relating to the self-sustainability of PUUs who face difficulties in collecting membership fees to cover costs of implementing pasture management plans. In addition, lagging development of the agricultural marketing sector – including limited market access, storage facilities, processing, and food safety considerations – may limit the generation of economic benefits. The CDD approach helped to foster ownership, and project benefits are expected to motivate sustained adoption of



improved practices and technologies. However, the aforementioned land tenure risks may undermine achieving long term resilience goals.

The knowledge management platform – an active source of information on SLM and climate adaptation supported by the project – is at risk of being underfunded following project close. While local IT professionals and a private internet provider were engaged to ensure the Platform’s sustainability (ICR, page 19), there is a risk that, without further funding, the platform may not be maintained and/or regularly updated with new knowledge products.

Exogenous Risks

The effects of climate change and extreme weather events could undermine development outcomes because, despite project contributions to building climate resilience, this is a global effort that requires a long-term, multi-faceted approach that incorporates the complexities of resilience. However, the Government is committed to combating climate change. There is evidence that Tajikistan is committed to land-based interventions to improve climate resilience by adhering to its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement. Capacity of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) has also been strengthened, which will help to achieve this goal. Limited resources somewhat hinder full implementation and there is continued dependence on external financing.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

This project effectively built on previous World Bank interventions in Tajikistan. The overall bottom-up, CDD approach was highly innovative and relevant, as was the focus on improving rural livelihoods, sustainable land management and climate change resilience-building. The targeting was appropriate, and organizing beneficiaries into CIGs was effective. It strengthened capacity and ownership for SLM by providing training, disseminating knowledge, supporting farmers with small-scale grants, and incentivizing rural investment.

The innovative wellbeing index is a positive contribution to measuring the NRM and climate resilience nexus, linked to the M&E framework. With that said, the results framework could have benefited from more concise and simple indicators and more thoughtful use of proxy indicators to measure interim NRM outcomes could have yielded more information (given the time it takes to achieve NRM outcome).

Institutional capacity risks and the capacity of Facilitating Organizations (FOs) were not fully accurately calculated. Early on this affected the preparation of TORs, and the roll out of sub-projects and the M&E system. Some institutional setbacks were beyond the control of the project. For example, although the Implementation Group (IG) had been selected during project preparation to avoid delays, institutional changes following the November 2013 election delayed project start-up by 12-15 months.



Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The World Bank proactively supervised the project by carrying out 10 implementation support missions throughout the project lifetime. These missions assessed progress and identified issues requiring management response. Fiduciary and safeguard requirements were regularly supervised, and corrective steps were swiftly taken when non-compliant practices were observed (see safeguards and fiduciary compliance section). M&E did not initially receive the attention it required, however, after the MTR more efforts were expended, although these could have been more prompt (see M&E section). Performance reporting – including aid memoirs, ISRs and the ICR – were candid, actionable (where relevant) and of high quality. Adequate handover arrangements were made when the TTL-ship changed.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

M&E design was challenged by hard-to-measure concepts and long-term outcomes in the PDO. Some indicators contained several results and could have been more focused.

M&E design for **improved natural resource management** (NRM) focused heavily on measuring outputs e.g., number of farmers reached, number of land users adopting improved practices, number of hectares under improved management, and number of management plans under implementation. While these corporate indicators are appropriate, more emphasis could have been placed on capturing proxy indicators capable of showing progress towards NRM further down the results chain. Examples include increased soil quality and fertility, species diversity, vegetative cover, and water conservation, among others. Many of the NRM indicators contained too many variables to be reliably measured. For example, Outcome Indicator 4 encapsulated three concepts: “Number of hectares in project area covered by effective agricultural, land and water management practices suited to local agro-ecological conditions and climate change resilience” (ICR, page 31).

While critically important, **resilience to climate change** is a complex and long-term outcome. Nevertheless, the project was innovative in developing an innovative and participatory well-being index, which included (i) comparative assessments in 2015 and 2017; and (ii) several proxies for improved



resilience i.e., relating to “health, money, workplace, living conditions, food, leisure and social connections, safety, and subjective wellbeing” (ICR, page 14). However, the associated outcome indicator – “Proportion of population by household in target villages reporting at least 20% increase in well-being or household/livelihood assets (Target: 50%)” – could have been improved. It lacked clarity by including: (i) two percentages i.e., the “proportion of population” and “20% increase”; and (ii) two variables i.e. “increase in well-being or household/livelihood assets”. Furthermore, the PAD did not specify the benchmark at appraisal, stating “at least XX% increase in wellbeing” (PAD, page 23). This begs the question when the “20% increase” was proposed, and on what basis. Also, by setting a target of 50%, the wellbeing of the remaining households remains unknown. Including one or more standalone proxy indicators capturing all households could have added value e.g., increased employment, productivity, income, etc.

b. M&E Implementation

Initial attention to M&E implementation could have been stronger. The ICR acknowledges that limited experience of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) and the Implementation Group (IG) within to implement CDD projects contributed to “uneven performance” in M&E early on (ICR, page 22). Efforts were made to improve M&E after the Mid Term Review (MTR) in April 2016. Targets were revised, and the meaning and measurement of indicators were clarified. The IG addressed weaknesses in line with MTR recommendations, which resulted in improvements to data collection, quality control (including verification in the field) and analysis.

A comprehensive M&E database was developed in March 2017 to collect data on investments until project closing. The database included district, type of activities, gender, environmental categories, carbon balance accounting, and environmental indicators. However, considering the project closed in May 2018, this was relatively near project closing, and significantly after M&E issues were flagged during the MTR. While substantial measures were taken to improve M&E quality in the later stages of the project, and earlier shortcomings do not appear to have significantly impacted project outcomes, more proactivity from the beginning would have been useful. Ultimately, the project built the M&E capacity of the CEP, which is the National Focal Point for GEF and the Global Climate Fund (GCF).

In the PAD, several of the NRM-related indicators listed satellite imagery as a means of verification for improved practices, however, no information on this was provided in the ICR.

c. M&E Utilization

Based on M&E data, the project was able to assess performance, make informed judgements and initiate course corrections, including:

- Determining eligibility of rural grants – i.e., alignment with project objectives and district development strategies – through environmental, economic, and social data from sub-project screenings and Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs).



- Revising the number of households supported by the project, which were found to exceed the initial (conservative) estimate of 21,500.
- Adjusting end targets in the results framework following the MTR, to reflect increases in: households supported (40,500); the number of direct project beneficiaries; and area covered by project interventions.
- Identifying an initially low participation of women, after which concerted efforts were undertaken to: (i) better understand the underlying reasons e.g., through focus groups and project outreach; and (ii) actively engage women in project activities.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as environmental category B and triggered the following safeguard policies: Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01), Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04), Pest Management (OP 4.09) and Projects on International Waterways (OP 7.50). A Partial Assessment and Environmental Management Framework (EMF) were prepared, which included screening procedures for rural investments under Component 1 to prevent and mitigate adverse environmental impacts (PAD, page 21). Investments were also reviewed to avoid social risks such as involuntary settlement or livelihood displacement (PAD, page 20).

Safeguard compliance was rated Satisfactory throughout implementation, except for a period in 2017 when it was downgraded to Moderately Satisfactory. This was due to the observance of non-compliant practices such as lacking fencing at subproject sites, insufficient use of personal protective gear, and the absence of information boards on construction sites (November 2017 ISR, page 5). These shortcomings were addressed by the following reporting period.

The PAD flagged the potential risk of increased agrochemical use (including pesticides) because of project support for agricultural intensification. The ICR indicated that biological pesticides were substituted for chemicals on 110 hectares of land, however, this is only about 0.2% of the 44,235 hectares that were covered with SLWM practices under the project. Furthermore, while Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was mentioned several times in the ICR, more information could have been provided on how this risk was mitigated as a whole, especially within the broader context of SLM.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management (FM) was rated Satisfactory throughout implementation, except for a period in 2014-15 when it was downgraded to Moderately Satisfactory. An action plan was developed and implemented to rectify accounting and reporting, internal control procedures, planning and budgeting,



external audits, funds flow, organization and staffing arrangements. The latest project audit for the year ended December 31, 2017 resulted in an unmodified opinion on financial statements. The ICR rightfully commends the Implementation Group (IG) for maintaining satisfactory FM throughout the 2015-17 banking sector crisis, during which Designated Accounts for the project had to be transferred from Tajik to international banks.

Procurement was rated Satisfactory throughout project implementation, and the procurement risk rating reduced from High under the parent project, to Substantial under the AF. The project took effective measures to strengthen the institutional capacity of the IG given its low procurement capacity and limited CDD operational experience at project inception.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ICR provided examples of project actors exceeding expectations, and an instance where project-supported knowledge is contributing towards a global repository of SLM best practices (page 66):

Access to Finance and Land Rights

Some Pasture User Unions (PUUs) built on project support to achieve outcomes beyond the scope of the project. For example, PUU “Sorkho” applied their new skills and knowledge to secure external funding to implement additional activities under their Pasture Management Plans. In addition, PUU “Ozod” leveraged their institutional legitimacy to secure land rights for pasture areas, which bolstered their financial viability and contribution towards SLM.

Global Recognition for SLM Best Practices

At the time of review, selected project-financed knowledge products on SLM were being submitted to the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). In 2014, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) selected WOCAT as the “primary recommended database” for best practices in SLM technologies, including adaptation.

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	---
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	---
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	---
Quality of ICR		High	---



12. Lessons

Lessons provided in the ICR (pages 26-27) are appropriate and synthesized as follows:

- 1 . **Support to beneficiaries through direct investments is most effective when complemented with facilitation support and capacity building.** This builds commitment, engagement and ownership throughout the project cycle, including: active participation in community-based planning and decision-making; transparent and informed prioritization of local needs; and sustained adoption of sustainable practices. Institutional capacity of the implementing body and facilitating organizations is equally important to ensure well-prepared sub-projects and effective project oversight.
- 2 . **Establishing mechanisms to engage with local government helps gain buy-in and support from decision-makers, who can elevate critical project issues and interventions within the local development agenda.** Strengthening relationships between communities and local government reinforces commitment, builds ownership and contributes to the sustainability of project outcomes.
- 3 . **Local representation within project implementation units is critical to encouraging community buy-in, maintaining dialogue between beneficiaries and other stakeholders, and ultimately, achieving success in community-driven development (CDD).**
- 4 . **Creating a strategic knowledge management and dissemination system at project inception can support, and broaden, the outreach of effective project tools and approaches.** Curating and disseminating information helps raise interest, awareness and understanding of project activities. Knowledge platforms also help facilitate coordinated, multi-stakeholder dialogue and learning across local, regional and national levels for greater impact. Ensuring the sustainability of such knowledge platforms requires a well-defined vision, mandate and financial strategy.
- 5 . **Building resilience to climate change, and measuring a projects' contribution to this aim, is complex and challenging.** Yet, innovative methods – such as a participatory well-being index – can help build the evidence-base for project outcomes. Combining innovative metrics with robust M&E based on guiding principles of resilience operations, strengthens evidence-based evaluation and learning.

13. Assessment Recommended?

Yes

Please explain

Potential to generate lessons on SLWM interventions in climate vulnerable regions, including their longer-term outcomes with regard to resilience building.

14. Comments on Quality of ICR



The ICR was very well written owing to its candid, detailed and coherent assessment of the projects' implementation and outcomes. Ratings were well justified in line with the evidence. The efficacy section could have benefitted from a more detailed examination of project outcomes given the extensive list of supporting documents and project assessments listed in the ICR annex (page 67). Reflections on design and implementation were presented with candor and clarity.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
High