

Kingdom of Cambodia
Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project in Kratie, Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri (RULIP)
(Project number 1100001350, Grant no. DSF-8005, DSF-8005-A; Loan no. 862)

Project Performance Evaluation
Approach Paper

A. Background

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) undertakes: (i) validation of project completion reports (PCRs) for all completed projects, based on a desk review of PCRs and other documents; and (ii) project performance evaluations (PPEs) involving country visits for selected projects (about 10 in a year).¹
2. The Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project in Kratie, Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri (RULIP) in the Kingdom of Cambodia (implemented between 2007 and 2014) has been selected for a PPE, among others, to feed into the planned country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) as per the 2017 IOE work programme approved by the 119th session of the IFAD Executive Board in December 2016. The RULIP PPE mission is scheduled for March 2017.
3. This document presents a brief description of RULIP, the PPE objectives, scope and methodology, and evaluation questions which would guide this PPE. A separate draft approach paper will be prepared for the CSPE.

B. Project overview²

4. **Project context.** In 2007, per capita gross national income in Cambodia was US\$590, with Myanmar being the only country in south-east Asia with a figure lower than Cambodia (at US\$350).³ According to the 2004 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, the incidence of poverty for Cambodia was estimated at 34.7 per cent: higher at 39.2 per cent in rural areas and 24.6 per cent in urban areas excluding the capital. According to the RULIP appraisal report (2007), 91 per cent of the poor lived in rural areas and thus poverty was largely a rural phenomenon.
5. The causes of poverty noted include remoteness, lack of access to sufficient land and/or draught animals and other productive assets, shortage of labour for farming, lack of income earning opportunities, and lack of access to health and education services. The RULIP appraisal report also underlined low agricultural productivity, as well as heavy reliance on rice (some 90 per cent of the total planted area under rice). It was indicated that low agricultural productivity was due to low levels of technology, poor soils and climate events like floods and droughts. For example, the average rice yield of about 2.0 t/ha in the country was compared to 2.6 t/ha in Thailand, 4.6 t/ha in Viet Nam and 6.3 t/ha in China.
6. With regard to the policy and institutional context, the Government's Agricultural and Water Strategy (2006-2010) envisaged five programmes with follows: (i) institutional capacity building and management support for the agriculture and water sectors; (ii) food security support including intensified and diversified food production by food-insecure smallholders, empowerment of community groups, food security related information and policies; (iii) agricultural and agri-business support; (iv) water resources, irrigation and land management; and (v) agricultural

¹ The selection criteria for PPE include: (i) information gaps in PCRs; (ii) projects of strategic relevance that offer enhanced opportunities for learning; (iii) a need to build evidence for forthcoming corporate level evaluations, country strategy and programme evaluations or evaluation synthesis reports; and (iv) a regional balance of IOE's evaluation programme.

² Information in this section is mostly derived from the 2007 RULIP appraisal report, financing agreement and project completion report.

³ Other countries include: Lao PDR US\$620, Viet Nam US\$850.

and water resources research, education and extension. RULIP appears to be relevant particularly to (ii) and perhaps also (i).

7. The Government was promoting "decentralization and deconcentration" (so-called "D&D") and established the National Committee for the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform (NCDD) in 2006. One component of RULIP was to support D&D - with a particular focus on the agriculture sector.
8. **Project area.** The project covered three provinces (out of 25 provinces in the country), Kratie, Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri located in the northeast of Cambodia. All of these provinces share international borders: Kratie province with Viet Nam, Ratanakiri with Viet Nam to the east and Lao PDR to the north, and Preah Vihear with Thailand and Lao PDR. According to the RULIP appraisal report of 2007, the total land area of the three provinces was reported to be 37,789 km², equivalent to 21 per cent of the country, of which nearly 88 per cent was under forest, while agricultural land accounted for only 3 per cent. The three provinces comprised 21 districts, 144 communes and 698 villages.
9. Based on the 2004 commune database⁴, according to the appraisal report, the total population of the three provinces was 551,403 living in 110,490 households, with 90 per cent of the population living in the rural areas. It was reported that all provinces had indigenous ethnic minority groups, but with a particularly high proportion in Ratanakiri (68 per cent of the population). The poverty rates in these provinces have been among the highest over the years. The 2007 data⁵ shows the poverty rates of 45.7 per cent in Preah Vihear (the highest in the country), 45 per cent in Ratanakiri (second highest), and 41.5 per cent in Kratie (6th highest).
10. **Target group and targeting approach.** According to the project design, the target group was to cover four particularly disadvantaged subgroups: (i) poor households with little land; (ii) landless households; (iii) woman-headed households with young children and many dependents; and (iv) indigenous/ethnic minority households. It was initially planned that about 22,600 poor households or 38 per cent of the population of the project area would benefit.⁶
11. The project was to target about 84 poor communes in 16 districts (out of 144 communes in 21 districts) in the three project provinces. Within the communes, the project was to target: (i) poorer villages where there is potential for increased income generation and better natural resource management; and (ii) ethnic minority communities. Within each commune, the poorest villages would be identified through available data, field visits and consultation with the commune councils. The project was then to use a community-based targeting approach within the selected villages, facilitated by commune extension workers and overseen by the village elders.
12. **Project goal and objectives.** Under the overall goal to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in the project area, the project objective was "to make a positive and sustainable impact on agricultural development"⁷ in the targeted communes.⁸ The expected project outputs⁹ were as follows: (i) farmers and communities adapt improved and sustainable farming and agricultural land management systems; (ii) improved services are delivered to the poor in a participatory and demand-

⁴ According to the Commune Database Online (accessed December 2016), the population in the three provinces in 2007 was 605,114 and 673,727 in 2010.

⁵ Ministry of Planning. 2012. Poverty Reduction by Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts, Khans and Communes, Sangkats: Based on Commune Data Base, year 2004-2012.

⁶ The financing agreement states that "the main purpose of the project is to assist approximately 60,000 poor households in the project area achieve a sustainable impact on agricultural development". The reason for this discrepancy and the basis of 60,000 households is not clear from preliminary document review. The appraisal report provided the target of 22,600 households as direct beneficiaries and 11,300 as indirect beneficiaries, with a total of 33,900 beneficiary households.

⁷ RULIP president's report, April 2007.

⁸ See footnote 5 above on how the "project purpose" was provided in the financing agreement.

⁹ According to the financing agreement and the logical framework in the RULIP president's report.

driven manner; and (iii) increased capacity for policy analysis and pro-poor policy formulation is secured for the agricultural sector and for mainstreaming gender within the sector.

13. **Project components.** According to the RULIP design, the project comprised two components as follows:
- (i) **Livelihoods improvement component.** The financing agreement presents the following two "sub-components"¹⁰: (a) livelihoods improvement groups (LIGs); and (b) farming system improvement (FSI) groups. Groups, envisaged with the membership of about 20-25, were to be identified, formed and provided with support in areas/activities such as training, inputs, grants for revolving funds, savings and credit activities, introduction of improved technologies. The component also covered what is termed "complementary support programmes" with the following activities: support to commune planning; support to village animal health workers (VAHWs) and village extension workers (VEWs); awareness raising on laws and regulations related to land, fisheries and agriculture; gender mainstreaming; support for marketing initiatives; integrated farming system demonstrations; private sector development; district fairs; establishment of Young Farmers' Clubs; and piloting of agro-processing enterprises. About 80 per cent of the project budget was allocated to this component.
 - (ii) **Support for decentralization and deconcentration in agriculture.** This component comprised the following four sub-components¹¹: (a) support for Provincial Agriculture Investment Programme (support for project implementation and coordination at different levels - national, provincial, district and commune); (b) policy analysis; (c) support for gender mainstreaming in agriculture; and (d) learning communities. The last sub-component "learning communities", to be fully financed by UNDP with the cost of US\$360,000, was to support "learning communities" selected from each province. A learning community was described as "a group composed of one village or one commune, local NGOs, the commune council and the facilitators in which knowledge is shared among all participants both horizontally and vertically"¹², supposedly with a focus on agriculture and natural resource management.
14. **Implementation arrangements.** The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) was the lead project agency, under which, a Project Support Unit (PSU) was to be established. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was another key implementing partner.
15. The implementation of the livelihoods improvement component was largely decentralized, with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDAs) leading the implementation and also the Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs (PDOWAs) implementing some activities. The PSU in the MAFF was responsible for coordinating and supporting the implementation in project provinces, coordinating and managing budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, as well as fiduciary aspects including financial management and procurement.
16. **Project financing.** The project cost was initially estimated as US\$11.51 million, including an IFAD grant (under debt sustainability framework, DSF) of US\$9.52 million (SDR 6.4 million), UNDP financing of US\$1.29 million¹³ and the Government counterpart funding of US\$0.71 million.
17. After the mid-term review, the original DSF grant of SDR 6.4 million was reallocated between the financing categories and furthermore, supplementary financing of SDR 1.7 million (US\$2.5 million, 50 per cent in loan and 50 per cent in

¹⁰ In the appraisal report, the term "sub-component" is not used in relation to the first component.

¹¹ The appraisal report present three sub-components and not four, with "policy analysis" subsumed under the first subcomponent.

¹² RULIP appraisal report, para 210 and footnote 27.

¹³ According to the appraisal report, UNDP was to finance: (i) technical assistance; and (ii) cost of the learning communities.

grant and not 100 per cent grant¹⁴) for this project was approved by the IFAD board (December 2011). The rationale for supplementary financing presented included high disbursement performance at that time due to, among other factors, "the exceptionally high inflation rates early in the project (25 per cent in 2008); the inclusion of additional, and originally unforeseen, support to assist the most vulnerable households in target villages; the non-delivery by UNDP of the level of support for agricultural technical assistance originally envisaged under the Government's Project in Support of Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration; and increases in staff numbers above appraisal levels".¹⁵

18. Actual total project cost was US\$13.64 million (over 97 per cent of the revised cost including the supplementary financing, table 1), and the disbursement of the IFAD funding - loan and grants combined - was 96 per cent.¹⁶ There is no data on the actual project cost by components/sub-components in the PCR.¹⁷ Table 2 provides actual disbursement against the allocation by financing category only for the IFAD financing parts. Table 2 shows that the financing category for which the largest proportion of the IFAD funds was disbursed was for training.

Table 1: Project financing: original estimate, revised cost and actual cost (US\$ million)

	Original	%	With supplementary financing	%	Actual cost	%
IFAD	9.52 ^a	82.6	12.02 ^b	85.7	11.99	87.9
Government	0.71	6.2	0.71	5.1	0.49	3.6
UNDP	1.29	11.2	1.29	9.2	1.16	8.5
TOTAL	11.52	100	14.02	100	13.64	100

a SDR 6.4 million in grant

b With supplementary financing of SDR1.7 million approved in 2011 (50% grant, 50% loan)

Table 2: IFAD financing allocation and disbursement by category (SDR)

	Original (SDR)	Reallocation + supplementary grant and loan 2012				Actual				Proportion	
	DSF 8005	DSF 8005	DSF 8005-A	Loan	Total	8005	8005-A	Loan	Total	Original	Actual
I. Vehicles	345 000	405 000			405 000.00	403 911.53			403 911.53	6.0%	5.2%
II. Civil works	150 000	254 000			254 000.00	268 988.54			268 988.54	2.6%	3.5%
III. Materials	1 650 000	1 303 000			1 303 000.00	1 339 453.79			1 339 453.79	28.6%	17.2%
IV. Equipment	100 000	125 000			125 000.00	124 318.49	256 031.44	255 421.69	635 771.62	1.7%	8.2%
V. Training	1 410 000	1 410 000	410 000	410 000	2 230 000.00	1 561 909.80	440 089.75	440 305.48	2 442 305.03	24.4%	31.4%
VI. Contracts and studies	320 000	320 000	440 000	440 000	1 200 000.00	289 125.41			289 125.41	5.5%	3.7%
VII. Staff allowances	1 050 000	1 553 000			1 553 000.00	1 660 882.42			1 660 882.42	18.2%	21.3%
VIII. Incremental operating costs	745 000	780 000			780 000.00	748 467.56			748 467.56	12.9%	9.6%
IX. Unallocated	630 000	250 000			250 000.00				-		
	6 400 000	6 400 000	850 000	850 000	8 100 000	6 397 057.54	696 121.19	695 727.17	7 788 905.90	100.0%	100.0%
								Disb rate	96.2%		

19. **Timeframe.** The original DSF grant in the amount of SDR 6.4 million (equivalent to US\$9.52 million) was approved on 18 April 2007. The financing agreement was signed on 28 May 2007 and it became effective on 31 August 2007. Additional financing (equivalent to US\$2.5 million, 50 per cent loan and 50 per cent grant) was approved in December 2011 and subsequently, the financing agreement was amended in its entirety dated 21 June 2012. The programme was completed on 30 September 2014 and the loan/grant closing was on 31 March 2015 as per original schedule.
20. **Supervision arrangements.** It was initially proposed that the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) would act as a cooperating institution responsible for administering the financing and supervising the programme. However, soon after the approval, with an overall corporate shift to direct supervision, it was decided that IFAD would be responsible for supervision and this necessitated the first amendment to the financing agreement (July 2008).

¹⁴ This was in light of the revision of the DSF status from "red" to "yellow".

¹⁵ RULIP president's memorandum for supplementary financing. EB2011/104/R.20/Rev.1

¹⁶ The disbursement rate of the original loan was almost 100 per cent, but that for the grant and the loan under the supplementary financing was 82 per cent for both.

¹⁷ The latest supervision mission (September 2013, one year before the completion) indicated that 80 per cent of the project expenditure then was for component 1 compared to 70 per cent per design.

21. **Amendments to the financing agreement.** The financing agreement was amended twice: (i) reflecting the change to direct supervision (July 2008); and (ii) original grant reallocation and the integration of additional financing (a loan and a grant) (June 2012).
22. **Project implementation - snapshot.** The PCR reported that 15,669 households benefited directly from the project, for most of whom (14,894 households) through participation as members of various self-help groups (i.e. livelihoods improvement groups [LIGs], farming systems improvement [FSI] groups and Most Vulnerable Family [MVF] groups¹⁸). Under the project, 358 LIGs, 48 MVF groups and 228 FSI groups were formed (a total of 634 groups). In addition to those members of self-help groups, counted as part of the beneficiaries were service providers (VAHWs, community extension workers [CEWs],¹⁹ integrated pest management [IPM] trainers), commune council members, individuals who participated in district fairs and Young Farmers Clubs. The reported number of households reached was short of the original target of 22,600 but met and surpassed the revised target of 14,800 households (revised at the mid-term review).
23. The PCR reports a number of adjustments made during the implementation, including the following: (i) measures employed to make agricultural training more relevant and effective, in terms of needs identification (demand-driven vs. supply-driven) and delivery modality (including contracting of a NGO to support VAHWs); (ii) adjustments in the implementation modality to be better suited to indigenous communities (e.g. distinct farming systems) especially in Ratanakiri; and (iii) initiatives to strengthen and upgrade viable farmer groups (for group revolving funds [GRFs]) and merge them into larger groups, e.g. agricultural cooperatives.
24. According to the self-rating on the project performance at completion, the overall project achievement was considered as satisfactory (5), with the ratings for most of the evaluation criteria being 5 or 4, except for efficiency (2, unsatisfactory).

C. PPE Objectives and Scope

25. The PPE will be undertaken in accordance with the IFAD's Evaluation Policy²⁰ and the IFAD Evaluation Manual (second edition, 2015), building on a desk review of PCR and other available data. The main objectives of the PPE are to: (i) assess the results of the project; (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in the country; and (iii) provide project-level evidence that will feed into the CSPE.
26. **Scope.** A PPE provides assessment and independent ratings on the project performance according to the standard evaluation criteria defined in the IOE Evaluation Manual (see paragraph 38). At the same time, in view of the time and resources available, the PPE is generally not expected to examine the full spectrum of project activities, achievements and drawbacks. Rather, it will focus on selected key issues of focus with consideration to the following: (i) contextual, project design and/or implementation issues that had a critical bearing on project achievements or challenge and unsatisfactory performance; and (ii) issues of importance that cut across in the IFAD Cambodia portfolio to feed into the upcoming CSPE. A theory of change for the project, which has been reconstructed by the PPE team in absence of its clear presentation in the project design, will be used to guide the identification of key issues (presented later in the section) and the evaluation approach.

¹⁸ Originally, MVF groups were not included in the RULIP design. This category was reportedly added in 2009 as a result of the study of the impact of soaring prices to the very poor families in the project areas.

¹⁹ The terminology seems to have changed from "village extension workers (VEWs)" in the design document to CEWs in PCR, also reflecting the level at which they work and the coverage (i.e. village level vs. commune level).

²⁰ <http://www.ifad.org/pub/policy/oe.pdf>

27. **RULIP theory of change.** The underlying theory of change narrative – as put together by the PPE team based on the available project documents - would be that capacity building/training of targeted poor households and the provision of demand-driven and improved extension services, combined with the provision of start-up capital and the setting up of group revolving fund would enable farming households to access agricultural inputs and adopt improved and sustainable agricultural production practices, which would lead to improved agricultural production and productivity, and then to improved livelihoods. "Improved livelihoods" would mean improved food security and nutrition, household incomes and assets. Groups of targeted beneficiaries are a main vehicle for the project service delivery. Annex I contains a schematic presentation of the reconstructed theory of change including key assumptions.
28. The PCR commented that "the design included many small, non-core activities".²¹ This means that it is complicated to present a cohesive theory of change which is comprehensive of all inputs and activities supported by the project leading to a set of outputs, outcomes and impact. Consequently, there are a number of small project activities which are not included annex I, either or both because their linkage with expected outcomes is unclear or/and because adding all small activities would make the theory of change rather too complicated. These include activities such as awareness raising on laws and regulations related to land, fisheries and agriculture, district fairs or establishment of Young Farmers' Clubs.
29. **Key issues for evaluation in PPE.** Based on a desk review of the PCR, other basic documentation and preliminary discussions during the preparatory mission, key issues for this PPE (to be covered under different evaluation criteria) have been identified as below. All issues presented here are highly relevant to the overall IFAD portfolio and will be subjected to further analysis in the CSPE covering other relevant projects.
30. Targeting and working through groups of beneficiaries. Mobilization and formation of groups of beneficiaries was central to this project. There were different types of groups, i.e. LIGs, MVF groups and FSI groups. In fact, a similar group-based approach has been employed extensively in most IFAD-financed projects in the country.
31. The project employed a combination of geographical and social targeting (use of government records/list of poor households and wealth ranking exercise). Identification of poor households and mobilizing them to form groups was at the core of the project's poverty targeting strategy. After the start-up, the project introduced a new category of beneficiary groups, i.e. "most vulnerable family (MVF)" groups, in addition to LIGs and FSI groups. The PCR assessed the project performance in terms of targeting as "satisfactory", noting that it reached out to "the intended targets, who are poor households who have little, or even no land, few livestock or other assets and often many dependents".
32. In RULIP, these groups served as a channel for delivering training and extension services, as well as for receiving inputs and grants with the expectation that the groups would promote and engage in savings and credit activities, set up and operate GRFs (in particular, LIGs and MVF groups²²). One of the lessons identified in the PCR – as also reflected in the theory of change as one of the assumptions - is about the importance of clear understanding of common purposes and value added of groups from the onset. The PCR frankly stated that "poorly mobilized groups are unlikely to ever recover – as was seen in Ratanakiri".

²¹ The "non-core activities" mentioned by the PCR included: support to Young Farmers Clubs and Women's Groups, law awareness raising, support to rice banks, agricultural market information system, and ethnic minority fund.

²² FIS groups did not receive grants for GRFs, as the members were considered to be less poor and what they lack was knowledge and access to technologies.

33. The PPE will review the roles and functions (during RULIP, current or expected), current status, activities and membership of different types of groups with the aim to draw lessons on how and in what circumstances group-based approaches are likely to be more relevant and effective – for what purposes and for whom, as well as their sustainability. The PPE will also examine the impact such groups may have had on social capital and empowerment.
34. Group revolving fund and access to finance. The use of GRFs is extensive in the IFAD-supported projects and this is also closely linked to the point above (i.e. group-based approach). The interaction with stakeholders during the preparatory mission revealed that sustainability of the GRF operations after the project is a common concern, including in other ongoing projects. The theory of change indicates that the capacity (e.g. credit management skills), group governance and the relevance of such funding mechanism to the members' needs are among the important assumptions for sustainable GRF operations. The RULIP PCR reported that out of 406 GRF groups, 283 (about 70 per cent) were expected to continue operating after the project – "with 37 continuing as standalone GRF groups and 246 merging in to 92 agricultural cooperatives created through the project". At the same time, the PCR mentioned that the efforts to enhance their sustainability were introduced at later stage of the project and therefore recognized that there were still uncertainties in this regard at project completion.
35. The PPE will follow up on a sample of the GRF groups assessed as "successful" and the agricultural cooperatives formed (which were considered to have a reasonable likelihood of continuation, according to the assessment of at project completion 2.5 years ago), to examine the relevance and effectiveness of the GRF approach and key factors influencing the likelihood of success and sustainability. A number of studies have been carried out to explore options for improving access to finance by the rural poor and for community/member-based financial services (not only linked to RULIP).²³ A review of such studies and interviews with key informants and resource persons would be an important input to complement data collection during the field visits.
36. Roles of community-level extension service providers, effectiveness and sustainability of their service provision. The project supported and worked with different types of extension service providers: CEWs, VAHWs and IPM trainers. In the 2015 Agricultural Extension Policy by MAFF, CEWs and village extension workers (VEWs) are explicitly mentioned among the "four types of agricultural extension workers". According to the PCR, CEWs in RULIP "were a critical part of the project modality but in many ways had a confused role - spending large amounts of time supporting the operation of the GRF savings and credit activities but also required to support farmer training as well as other project activities in the commune". With regard to VAHWs, the PCR indicated that "fee-based private animal health and production services are already viable in many locations in rural Cambodia", but that "to accelerate the emergence of such systems on a sustainable basis, there is a need for an improved process of selection, mobilization, training and coaching of candidate VAHW supported the development of district level associations/co-operatives of such service providers to increase the sustainability of such systems."
37. The PPE will examine the effectiveness of their services during the project and also follow up on the current status and activities of these service providers supported under RULIP - to understand how and in which cases the extension modality through commune/village-level service providers are more likely to be relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable. The assessment will need to take into

²³ Including "Community-Based Finance in Cambodia: A comparative study of savings and credit models for community development" (FAO 2015), an assessment of Cambodia's revolving credit through IFAD implementation support mission to RULIP in 2009 (still to be located), "UNDP/IFAD Joint Study on Group Revolving Fund" (UNDP/IFAD, 2007)

consideration the Government's policy position on the roles of commune/village-level extension service providers, required qualifications and financing modalities, as well as experience of other similar initiatives.

38. **Evaluation criteria.** In line with the IOE's Evaluation Manual (2015), the key evaluation criteria applied in PPEs in principle include the following:
- (i) **Rural poverty impact**, which is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a results of development interventions. Four impact domains are employed to generate a composite indication of rural poverty impact: (i) household income and assets; (ii) human and social capital and empowerment; (iii) food security and agricultural productivity; and (iv) institutions and policies. A composite rating will be provided for the criterion of "rural poverty impact" but not for each of the impact domains.
 - (ii) **Relevance**,²⁴ which is assessed both in terms of alignment of project objectives with country and IFAD policies for agriculture and rural development and the needs of the rural poor, as well as project design features geared to the achievement of project objectives.
 - (iii) **Effectiveness**, which measures the extent to which the project's immediate objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
 - (iv) **Efficiency**, which indicates how economically resources/inputs (e.g. funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
 - (v) **Sustainability of benefits**, indicating the likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life.
 - (vi) **Gender equality and women's empowerment**, indicating the extent to which IFAD's interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment, for example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making work loan balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods.
 - (vii) **Innovation and scaling up**, assessing the extent to which IFAD development interventions: (a) have introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction; and (b) have been (or are likely to be) scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies. Separate ratings will be provided for innovation and scaling up.
 - (viii) **Environment and natural resource management**, assessing the extent to which a project contributes to changes in the protection, rehabilitation or depletion of natural resource and the environment.
 - (ix) **Adaptation to climate change**, assessing the contribution of the project to increase climate resilience and increase beneficiaries' capacity to manage short- and long-term climate risks.
 - (x) **Overall project achievement** provides an overarching assessment of the intervention, drawing upon the analysis and ratings for all above-mentioned criteria.
 - (xi) **Performance of partners**, including the performance of IFAD and the Government, will be assessed on an individual basis, with a view to the partners' expected role and responsibility in the project life cycle.

²⁴ An average of the ratings for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of benefits will the project performance rating.

39. An evaluation framework has been developed (annex II), with guiding evaluation questions according to the evaluation criteria described above. The evaluation questions contained in the framework reflect the guidance in the IOE Evaluation Manual as well as key issues identified (in the next section).
40. **Rating system.** In line with the practice adopted in many other international financial institutions and UN organizations, IOE uses a six-point rating system, where 6 is the highest score (highly satisfactory) and 1 being the lowest score (highly unsatisfactory).

D. Evaluation methodology

41. The PPE will build on a desk review of PCR and other key project documents and available data (including impact assessments carried out at project completion) while taking into account the contexts and information from interviews at the IFAD headquarters and during the CSPE/PPE preparatory mission.²⁵ During the main PPE mission, additional evidence and data will be collected to verify available evidence and to reach an independent assessment of performance and results. The PPE will use a theory of change for an examination of assumed causal linkages and whether there is sufficient evidence to support these linkages, while also examining to what extent key assumptions were realistic.
42. **Data collection.** Careful review, analysis and triangulation of reported project achievements will be key. Validation of project results will be done through bringing in and cross-checking information and evidences from multiple sources and stakeholder perspectives.
43. *Prior to the PPE mission.* In the preparatory stage, relevant documents and data are gathered and reviewed to guide the evaluation design and planning and conduct of the PPE mission. Main project-related documents and data for a desk review include the following: (i) project design documents; (ii) project implementation manual; (iii) financing agreements, amendments and background documents; (iv) supervision and implementation support mission reports; (v) mid-term review report; (vi) PCR; (vii) IFAD periodical project status reports with self-assessment ratings; (viii) IFAD financial and disbursement data; (ix) annual impact survey reports and participatory impact assessment reports prepared by the project; (x) baseline, mid-term and end-line household survey reports in line with the IFAD's results and impact management system (RIMS)²⁶; and (xi) impact evaluation carried out by the IFAD Strategy and Knowledge Department.²⁷
44. Additional data, information and documents will be collected as much as possible prior to the mission - through email correspondence with the project stakeholders and during the CSPE/PPE preparatory mission. These may include project monitoring and evaluation data and reports or some technical reports produced by the project. In addition, secondary data from other sources and statistics (e.g. commune database, agricultural statistics) will also be collected where relevant to better contextualize the project results and achievements.
45. Interviews will be conducted with IFAD staff, in-country stakeholders during the preparatory mission (with a limited number of people who were involved in the project management), and possibly also main consultants who were involved in supervision and implementation support. Interactions with stakeholders would help the PPE team identify additional relevant data and reports and key issues for attention.

²⁵ The CSPE/PPE preparatory mission was undertaken from 23 January to 2 February 2017, including the participation of the IOE lead evaluator in the IFAD annual country portfolio review (24-26 January 2017).

²⁶ The RIMS end-line household survey covered a sample of 1,887 households, almost equally split by the treatment group and control group (with two subgroups). The survey questions covered a wide range of issues such as food security, nutrition, household assets, agricultural technological transfer and crop and livestock production.

²⁷ The impact evaluation by SKD covered 803 project households and 601 control households.

46. Given that two different impact assessment surveys were carried out at and after project completion both with a relatively large sample (see paragraph 43 and footnote 26 and 27), the PPE team will also seek to access data files in order to better understand the analysis and findings presented. The available data and evidence are reviewed to examine the extent of consistencies or inconsistencies while reflecting the plausible causal links and assumptions in the theory of change, and to identify gaps to refine the tools and questions to guide the field work.
47. Data collection during the mission. The PPE mission will be conducted for about 2 weeks, including visits to the project sites over 6-7 days. During the in-country work, additional primary and secondary data will be collected. Data collection methods will mostly include qualitative techniques. The methods deployed will consist of individual and group interviews, focus group discussions with project stakeholders, beneficiaries and other key informants and resource persons, and direct observations.
48. In light of the key issues for PPE identified (presented earlier), groups formed by the project would be one of the main units of analysis. In relation to GRF, groups/organizations to be assessed will be sampled from the 92 agricultural cooperatives formed during the project by merging 246 smaller groups and 37 original groups which were expected to continue with the GRF operations. During the project, an NGO was contracted to monitor the performance of the groups and to provide follow-up and training.²⁸ Their records at project end (e.g. list of cooperatives/groups with portfolio data) would provide a basis for selecting a sample of the cooperatives and groups. It is envisaged that the PPE team would interact with about 10-12 cooperatives/groups (note that a cooperative covers multiple original smaller groups). The focus would be to trace those cooperatives/groups that were considered to have good prospect for continuing, assess their current status and to understand key factors influencing sustainability.
49. Data collection on cooperatives/groups will be guided by a short institutional assessment form to be developed, as well as key guiding questions.²⁹ Data collection method also involves direct observation, mainly the financial records kept by the groups. Data collection would cover parameters such as basic data on the groups, changes over the years (e.g. membership, management structure and members, lending capital and portfolio growth), operating modality (e.g. voluntary or paid staff/services), current portfolio (savings, loan products, active borrowers, loans outstanding, repayment rates or portfolio at risk, etc.).
50. Field visit site selection. The PPE mission will conduct field visits in all three project provinces (Ratanakiri, and Kratie or Preah Vihear). Site selection for field visits will be guided by the following consideration as may be relevant: (i) coverage of areas with different characteristics (e.g. agro-ecological conditions and farming systems, access to markets and services); (ii) coverage of indigenous (mainly in Ratanakiri) and non-indigenous peoples' communities; (iv) districts and communes with varied performance (e.g. capacity of district agriculture staff and/or CEWs, involvement of commune councils); (v) where the cooperatives/groups of interest are located; (vi) in the Preah Vihear and Kratie provinces, communes and villages that are covered and not covered in the ongoing IFAD-financed project ASPIRE (unless they are *all* covered or not covered in ASPIRE); and (vii) communes and villages with or without other development assistance during or after RULIP. Balancing the consideration to these criteria with the distance and the time constraint of the PPE would be important.

²⁸ The NGO VADDHANNAK had a tool to assess the strength/maturity of LIGs and MVF groups, as well as CEWs. It is assumed that the results from the latest assessment in the project implementation period could be obtained.

²⁹ It is planned that the same approach be used for data collection on similar groups supported by other IFAD-financed projects for the purpose of the CSPE to allow consistency in data collection and analysis.

51. **Key stakeholders** to be met in Phnom Penh and in the project provinces include the following: (i) MAFF and former project staff to the extent traceable; (ii) Ministry of Women's Affairs; (iii) representatives of the Provincial Administrations, PDAs and PDOWAs; (iv) district-level agriculture staff; (v) commune council members and village chiefs; (vi) CEWs, VAHWs, IPM trainers trained under the project; (vii) management and members of groups formed; (viii) villagers who were/are not part of groups formed; (ix) main in-country partners and service providers involved in the project³⁰; and (x) other key informants.
52. **Linkage with CSPE.** In relation to the tracing of and assessment of beneficiary groups and groups, and possibly also with regard to agricultural extension services, the same data collection tools will be used for other projects in the CSPE to allow a comparative analysis, while fully taking into consideration some differences in the context and implementing modalities with factors influencing the likelihood of success.
53. **Stakeholders' participation.** In compliance with the IOE Evaluation Policy, the main project stakeholders will be involved throughout the PPE. This will ensure that the key concerns of the stakeholders are taken into account, that the evaluators fully understand the context in which the programme was implemented, and that opportunities and constraints faced by the implementing institutions are identified. Regular interaction and communication will be established with the Asia and the Pacific Division (APR) of IFAD and with the Government. Formal and informal opportunities will be explored during the process for the purpose of discussing findings, lessons and recommendations.

E. Evaluation Process

54. The PPE will involve following key steps:
- **Preparatory phase.** The preparatory phase will include the following activities: (i) desk review of PCR and main project design and implementation documents (e.g. supervision mission reports, mid-term review report, design document); (ii) collection and review of data and information (e.g. impact assessment, project monitoring data on locations and types of project investments, IFAD funds disbursement records); (iii) brief country visit to Cambodia as a preparatory mission; and (iv) preparation of the PPE approach paper. As for (iii), the lead evaluator will travel to Cambodia from 23 January to 2 February 2017, combining the participation in the country portfolio review organized by IFAD and preparatory meetings with Phnom Penh for both PPE and CSPE. During this visit, the lead evaluator met with a limited number of key persons - previous RULIP project staff, Project Support Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, to provide a briefing on the PPE methodology and approach, as well as to examine the availability of additional data and documentation, hold initial discussion on key implementation issues and PPE mission planning (e.g. in terms of field visit sites).
 - **In-country work.** The PPE mission is scheduled for 27 February to 10 March 2017. It will interact with representatives from the government and other institutions, beneficiaries and key informants, in Phnom Penh in the field. At the end of the mission, a wrap-up meeting will be held in Phnom Penh to summarize the preliminary findings and discuss emerging issues. The IFAD country programme manager and/or country programme officer for Cambodia is expected to participate in the wrap-up meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for 10 March 2017.

³⁰ Namely, VADDHANNAK (monitoring and follow-up of GRFs), Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (AVSF, training of VAHWs).

- **Report drafting and peer review.** After the field visit, a draft PPE report will be prepared and submitted to IOE internal peer review for quality assurance.
- **Comments by APR and the Government.** The draft PPE report will be shared simultaneously with APR and the Government for review and comment. IOE will finalize the report following receipt of comments by APR and the Government and prepare the audit trail.
- **Management response by APR.** A written management response on the final PPE report will be prepared by the Programme Management Department. This will be included in the PPE report, when published.
- **Communication and dissemination.** The final report will be disseminated among key stakeholders and the evaluation report published by IOE, both online and in print.

55. **Tentative timetable** for the PPE process is as follows:

Date	Activities
Jan – Feb 2017	Preparation, desk review, PPE/CSPE preparatory mission
27 Feb – 10 March 2017	Mission to Cambodia
March – May 2017	Preparation of draft report
Early June 2017	IOE internal peer review
June 2017	Draft PPE report sent to APR and Government for comments
August 2017	Finalisation of the report
October 2017	Publication and dissemination

F. Evaluation Team

56. Fumiko Nakai, IOE Senior Evaluation Officer has been designated as Lead Evaluator for this PPE and will be responsible for delivering the final report. She will be assisted by Franklina Mantila (community development and gender specialist, IOE consultant) and a national consultant. Ms Laure Vidaud, IOE Evaluation Assistant, will provide research and administrative support.

G. Background Documents

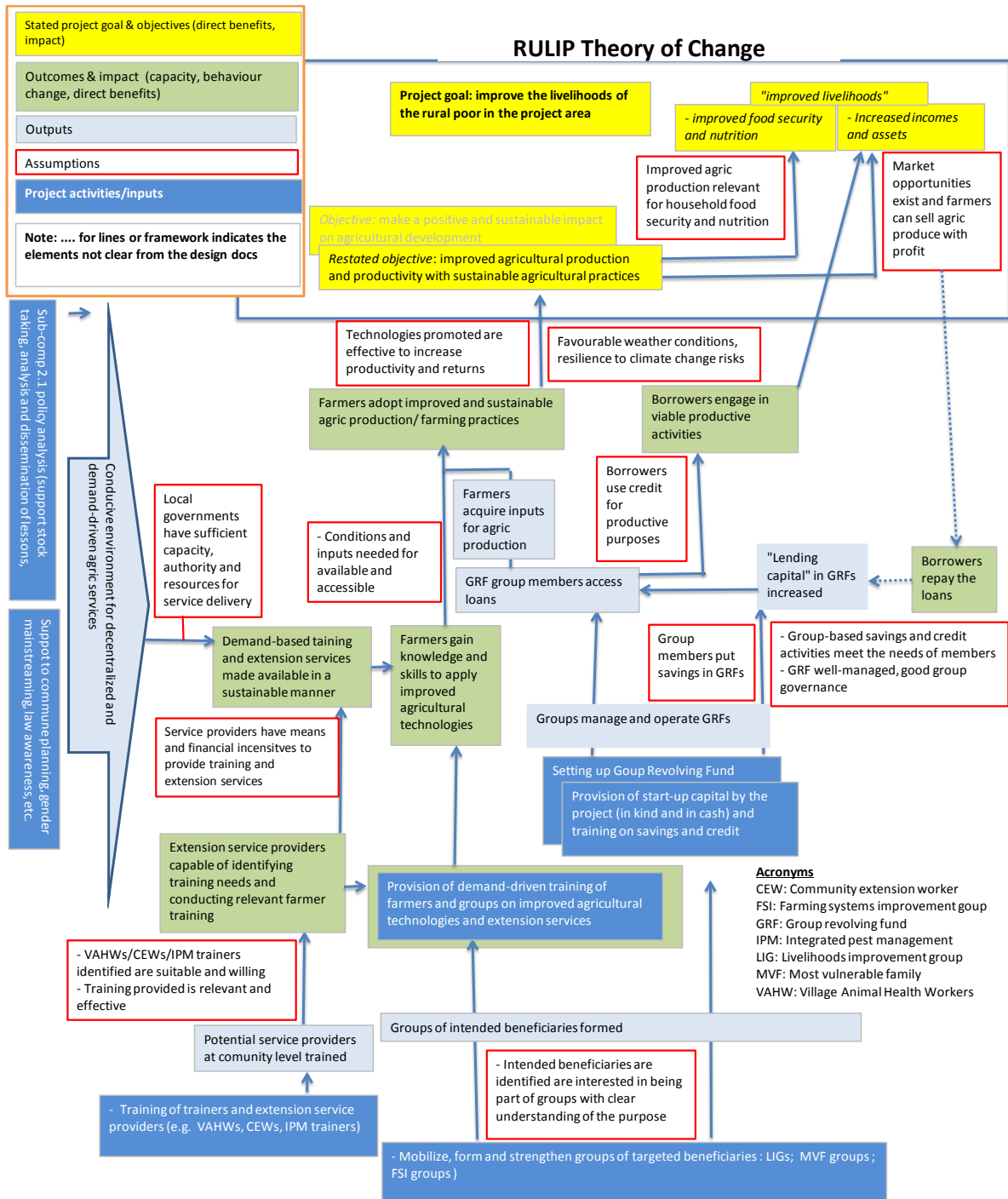
57. The key background documents for the exercise will include the following:

RULIP project specific documents

- Appraisal report (2007)
- IFAD President's Report (2007)
- Mid-term review report (2011)
- Financing Agreement (2007) and amendments
- Supervision mission aide memoire and reports
- Project status reports
- Project completion report (2015)
- Pre-MTR survey (2011)
- Results and impact management system: end-line survey (2015) (data files to be requested)
- Ex-post impact evaluation RULIP conducted by IFAD Strategy and Knowledge Department (full report and data being requested)

General and others

- IFAD (2015). Evaluation Manual – Second Edition
- IOE (2012). Guidelines for the Project Completion Report Validation (PCRv) and Project Performance Assessment
- IFAD (2011). IFAD Evaluation Policy
- Various IFAD policies and strategies, in particular, Strategic Framework (2007-2012), Targeting, Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment, Rural Finance



Kingdom of Cambodia: Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project in Kratie, Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri (RULIP)
Project Performance Evaluation
Evaluation Framework

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Data/information sources
Project Performance		
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the RULIP objectives realistic and aligned to Government's agriculture and rural development strategies/policies, the COSOP and other relevant IFAD policies? To what extent did the project respond to the development needs of the rural poor in the project area? • How was the internal coherence of the project in terms of synergies and complementarity between objectives, components, activities and inputs as described in the project design document and subsequent changes? To what extent the assumptions contained in the theory of change were realistic? • Was the project implementation approach appropriate for achieving the project's objectives, given the context in which the project was implemented? This refers, <i>inter alia</i>, to the following dimensions: (i) targeting approach (geographical and social); (ii) working through groups of beneficiaries; (iii) provision of training and extension services through CEWs, VAHWs and IPM trainers – modality and contents; (iv) provision of inputs and grants to groups of beneficiaries; (v) implementation arrangements – at national level, provincial and district levels (Provincial Administration, PDAs and PDOWAs). • To what extent the approach of forming beneficiaries' groups (LIGs, MVF groups and FSI groups) is relevant to the needs of the target group and to the context? • To what extent the group revolving fund mechanism is relevant to the needs of the target group (in general and with respect to the RULIP's operating modality) and how can the likelihoods of its effectiveness and sustainability be enhanced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal report • Supervision mission reports, MTR, PCR • Interviews with ex PSU staff, government staff at provincial and district level, commune council members • Group discussions and interviews with CEWs/VAHWs and beneficiaries • Interviews with IFAD CPM/CPO, consultants involved in RULIP supervision • Review of other relevant analytical reports (e.g. review of revolving funds) and interviews with interviews with other key informants and resource persons
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have project objectives been attained, in terms of improving agricultural production and productivity in a sustainable manner? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To what extent did farmers and communities adopt improved and sustainable farming and agricultural land management systems? What kind of improved technologies have been promoted and adopted and to what extent and how they were effective in increasing returns? What improved technologies promoted by the project were found to be less relevant and less effective and why? (ii) To what extent the quality of agricultural extension and advisory service delivery has improved and was effective? To what extent and how has it been made more participatory and responsive to demands and needs? (iii) To what extent has the capacity for policy analysis, pro-poor policy formulation and gender mainstreaming in the agricultural sector been improved? (iv) To what extent have GRFs been effective in improving access to financial services by the target group, particularly to enable them to access and adopt improved agricultural technologies, in a sustainable manner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision mission reports, MTR, PCR, PSRs • Technical reports produced by the project • Impact assessment reports • Interviews with PSU/government staff; commune council members; service providers • Group discussions with beneficiaries • Interviews with IFAD CPM/CPO and consultants involved in supervision
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much time did it take for the financing to be effective, and how does it compare with other cases in the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision mission reports, MTR, PCR, PSRs

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Data/information sources
	<p>country and region? By how much was the original closing date extended, and what were the additional administrative costs that were incurred during the extension period?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the costs per beneficiary and beneficiary group? What was the level of investments for capacity building of beneficiaries and service providers, and grant element? • What were the administrative costs per beneficiary and how do they compare to other projects? • Did the project deliver expected results in a timely manner? What factors helped or impeded the efficiency in implementation progress? • How is the economic rate of return compared to the projection at the appraisal stage, and how are the figures reported in the PCR cross-checked with other data? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project financial records, IFAD disbursement records • Interviews with in-country stakeholders, IFAD • Interviews with beneficiaries (for validation of costs and benefits)
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was a specific exit strategy or approach prepared and agreed upon by key partners to ensure post-project sustainability (e.g. beneficiaries' groups, GRFs, commune/village-level extension services)? If so, has this been effective? • What are the chances that benefits generated by the project will continue after project closure (e.g. improved technology adoption and increased agricultural productivity), and what factors militate in favour of or against maintaining benefits? • What is the current state of different beneficiaries' groups supported by the project? Do they still operate as groups, if they do, what roles do they play? Do they receive support from the Government or other development initiatives? • What is the current state of CEWs/VAHWs supported and trained by the project? Do they still provide extension services? What kind of services do they provide and what roles are they expected to play? Do they have financial incentives? If they do, at what level, and are they likely to be sustainable? • Is there a clear indication of government commitment to continuing demand-driven extension services and participatory development processes? What are the resources, and instruments provided, if any? • What is the current status of savings and lending, GRF activities, loan portfolio and financial positions, especially of those agricultural cooperatives and GRF groups which were considered to be likely to be sustainable? What are success factors and challenges? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal report, supervision reports, MTR, PCR • Data on maturity of groups at project completion • Interviews and group discussion with beneficiaries • Interviews with government staff, commune councils, IFAD CPM/CPO, consultants involved in supervision • Analytical and assessment reports related to similar or relevant initiatives, as appropriate
Rural poverty impact		
Rural poverty impact (four domains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Household income and assets] To what extent have beneficiary incomes changed as a result of the project? In what way and to what extent have household net assets changed due to the intervention? • [Human and social capital and empowerment] To what extent did the project affect the capabilities of individuals, groups and communities? What were the results achieved under various training activities supported under RULIP? How did the project improve the access to services, inputs and markets by the people in targeted villages and communes? How has such change occurred through beneficiaries' groups (i.e. LIGs, MVF groups and FSI groups)? • [Food security and agricultural productivity] What changes have taken place in household food security and nutrition and what explains such changes? How and to what extent, if any, did the project contribute to increasing agricultural productivity and diversification? Did the project support to training and extension services have any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision, MTR, PCR • Impact assessment reports, analytical reports produced by the project • Interviews and group discussions with beneficiaries • Interviews with comparison households (e.g. households in the villages covered who were not part of the groups, or in the villages not covered - as may be possible) • Statistical data (e.g. poverty assessment,

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Data/information sources
	<p>spill-over effects beyond those directly trained? If so, to what extent and how?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Institutions and policies] To what extent did the project empower the rural poor, communities and organisations vis-à-vis development actors and local and national public authorities? Do beneficiaries' groups play more effective roles in decision-making? To what extent did the project influence the modality and quality of extension service delivery (public and private) to be more responsive to the needs of the poor farmers? Has the project contributed to making the development planning and service delivery process more participatory and responsive to demands? How? If not, why not? 	<p>agricultural production and productivity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct observations Interviews with government staff, local government, IFAD, service providers
Other performance criteria		
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the innovations promoted by the project and their characteristics, if any? What makes them innovative? What were the strategies to promote innovations – in the project design and/or during the implementation? Were successfully promoted innovations, if any, documented and shared to facilitate scaling up? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision reports, MTR, PCR Knowledge products produced by the project, if any Interviews and group discussion with beneficiaries Interviews with government staff, local government, IFAD
Scaling-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has any interventions and/or innovations promoted in the project been scaled up? If so, what evidence was used to justify scaling up, and scaled up in what way and by whom? If not, what are the prospects that they can and will be scaled up by other actors/initiatives? What were/are the pathways to scaling up? Has the project implementers/managers and/or IFAD engaged in promoting partnerships and interaction with other stakeholders to facilitate the uptake of successful innovations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above Any relevant documentation by other actors
Gender equality and women's empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the project succeed in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment given the social and cultural context? To what extent did the project contribute to promoting gender mainstreaming in policy-making and service delivery in the agricultural sector? What were the project activities and approaches that effectively contributed to empowering women, if any? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision reports, MTR, PCR, PSRs (including ratings), M&E data, impact assessment reports Interviews and group discussion with beneficiaries Interviews with former project staff, government staff, local governments,
Environment and natural resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the project adopt approaches/ measures for restoration or sustainable management of natural resources (e.g. support to training and extension to foster sustainable environment and natural resource management, appropriate/new technologies)? To what extent did the project contribute to long-term environmental and social sustainability (e.g. through avoiding over exploitation of natural resources or loss of biodiversity or reduction of the community's livelihoods)? To what extent did the project follow required environmental and social risk assessment procedures, as may have been necessary? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision reports, MTR, PCR, PSRs (including ratings) Interviews and group discussion with beneficiaries Interviews with former project staff, government staff, local governments
Adaptation to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the agricultural technologies promoted contribute to reducing the vulnerability of the smallholders and building resilience to climate change risks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision reports, MTR, PCR, PSRs Interviews and group discussion with beneficiaries Interviews with former project staff, government staff, local government

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Data/information sources
Performance of partners		
IFAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well were the comments and recommendations of design review process and experience from previous projects reflected in the project design? • To what extent did IFAD monitor the project performance and provide adequate and relevant supervision and implementation support in a timely manner? How and to what extent did IFAD provide support to help address key issues identified in supervision missions and performance monitoring? How responsive was IFAD to the identified needs to adjust the project design/interventions during the implementation? • How responsive was IFAD to the request for no-objections and the processing of withdrawal applications? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical review committee documentation • Appraisal report and PCRs of previous relevant projects (if any) • Records on supervision and implementation support missions and their reports, PSRs • Interviews with government / former project staff • Interviews with IFAD CPM/CPO, consultants involved in supervision
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the government guide and support project management and implementation to be effective and efficient? • Were project's monitoring and evaluation systems properly established and operationalized? Were the M&E data generated and analysed in a timely manner and used to report on progress as well as to inform decision making? • Did the government fulfil fiduciary responsibilities in a timely manner, including sound financial management, preparation of financial reports and audit reports, and procurement processes? • Was the in-country flow of funds (between implementing partners) smooth and timely? Were the withdrawal applications prepared in a timely manner and of acceptable quality? • Were counterpart resources (funds and staffing) provided in line with the agreement at design stage? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision mission reports, PSRs, MTR and PCR • IFAD funds disbursement records • IFAD review/records on project's audit reports