

Republic of Rwanda

Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the
Transformation of Agriculture

PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT



Republic of Rwanda

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Transformation of Agriculture**

Project Performance Assessment

Photos of activities supported by the Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture

Front cover: As part of the watershed management, this structure in Ngorero District shows one of the small water holding dams. ©IFAD/Patient Maganya

Back cover: Kitchen gardens in Gakenke District. (left); Terraces in the Ngorero District (right). ©IFAD/Marina Izzo

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Preface

In 2014, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) undertook a project performance assessment of the recently completed Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (Projet d'appui au Plan stratégique de transformation de l'agriculture – PAPSTA) in the Republic of Rwanda. In addition to assessing the result of the project, the evaluation also sought to generate lessons and recommendations for the design and implementation of other IFAD-financed projects in the country.

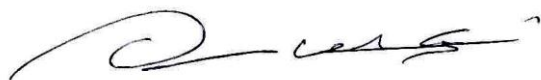
PAPSTA proved to be an interesting project. It was implemented within a framework of strong Government leadership, a culture of results, accountability and learning, as well as a strong drive for Rwanda to be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.

The project responded to the priorities and strategies established by the Government, resulting in successes around a number of critical factors: policy and strategy development; innovating and replicating watershed management and new agricultural technologies; and re-organizing the institutional arrangements for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness by introducing Single Project Implementation Units. The target group was effectively reached, providing opportunities to improve the lives of poor rural people, including vulnerable groups such as women- and child-headed households, young people and widows. IFAD responded to a changing environment and provided the necessary technical support, in a timely manner. The project could however had greater achievements in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as in the sustainability of benefits.

This project performance assessment was conducted by Louise McDonald, Evaluation Officer, with contributions from Sabine Hausler, consultant - natural resource and evaluation specialist; and Marina Izzo, research analyst. Internal peer reviewers from IOE – Ashwani Muthoo, Deputy Director and Cecile Berthaud, Evaluation Officer – provided comments on the draft report. Lucy Ariano and Ximena Novoa Cleves, former Evaluation Assistants, and Maria Cristina Spagnolo, Evaluation Assistant, provided administrative support.

IOE is grateful to IFAD's East and Southern Africa Division and to the Government of the Republic of Rwanda, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, for the support provided during the evaluation process.

I hope the results of this evaluation will help improve ongoing and future IFAD operations in Rwanda.



Oscar A. Garcia
Director
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

Pass on the Gift activities included livestock breeding and milk production in Ngorero District.

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Currency equivalent, weights and measures

Currency equivalent

Currency = Rwanda Francs (RWF)

US\$1.0 = 630 RWF (March 2014)

Weights and measures

1 kilogram	=	1,000 g
1,000 kg	=	2.204 lb
1 kilometre (km)	=	0.62 mile
1 metre	=	1.09 yards
1 square metre	=	10.76 square feet
1 acre	=	0.405 hectare
1 hectare	=	2.47 acres

Abbreviations and acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
CCI	Community Innovation Centre <i>Centre communautaire d'innovation</i>
CLGS	Local Management and Supervision Committee <i>Comité local de gestion et de supervision)</i>
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
DFID	Department for International Development - United Kingdom
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
IRR	Internal rate of return
KWAMP	Kirehe Community-based Watershed Management Project (IFAD)
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PAPSTA	Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture <i>Projet d'appui au Plan stratégique de transformation de l'agriculture</i>
PCR	project completion report
PCRV	project completion report validation
PPA	project performance assessment
POG	Pass on the Gift
PR/RV	resource person/village contact person <i>personne ressource/relais villageois</i>
PSTA	Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture <i>Plan stratégique de transformation de l'agriculture</i>
RAB	Rwanda Agriculture Board
SPIU	Single Project Implementation Unit
SRI	Intensive Rice Cultivation System <i>Système de riziculture intensive</i>
SWC	soil and water conservation
SWAp	sector-wide approach
WFP	World Food Programme
WSM	watershed management

Map of the project area

Rwanda

Support Project to the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PAPSTA)

Project performance assessment



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.
 Map compiled by IFAD | 12-08-2014

Executive summary

1. This project performance assessment (PPA) was carried out in 2014 by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) for the Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (*Projet d'Appui au Plan Stratégique de la Transformation de l'Agriculture - PAPSTA*).
2. **Objectives.** The PPA objectives are to: (i) assess the results and impact of the project; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design of new projects and the implementation of ongoing IFAD-financed projects in Rwanda.
3. **Methodology and process.** The evaluation process involved five phases: desk work; country work (including meetings with stakeholders, field visits and a wrap-up meeting with Government and IFAD staff); report drafting and peer review; receipt of comments on the draft PPA report from the East and Southern Africa Division and the Government; and the final phase of communication and dissemination.
4. The PPA took into account the preliminary findings of the project completion report validation (PCRv), a standard desk review and issues emerging from interviews at IFAD headquarters to identify key issues and lessons learned from the implementation of PAPSTA for the PPA mission to focus on.
5. Interviews with Government and relevant stakeholders, and a field visit to two districts (Ngorero and Nyanza), contributed to the findings of the PPA. Data collection methods applied included individual and focus group interviews with beneficiaries, as well as direct observations. The PPA team also collected additional data through the programme's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Triangulation was applied to verify findings emerging from different information sources. Further details on the methodology can be found in annex III.
6. The PPA report considers all standard evaluation criteria used by IOE (as noted in annex V). However the report places emphasis on the selected criteria and issues that the PCRv identified. In this regard, the key focus of the PPA was to:
 - (i) evaluate to what extent results obtained in terms of institutional development (at the local level) are likely to exert a long-term impact on the agricultural policy-making in Rwanda;
 - (ii) apply a deeper level of critical assessment of piloting and replication to assess the extent to which the watershed planning approach and the promotion of hedging practices as soil protection measures have been successful; and
 - (iii) assess project coordination and management, including the implementation mechanism, for the effectiveness of their support, taking into consideration the high complexity of PAPSTA's design and approach.
7. **Limitations.** Not all major stakeholders were available to meet with the PPA team. During the field work, the team visited two districts, noting that time and resource constraints did not allow for in depth field-level analysis or comprehensive coverage of all stakeholders at the local level.
8. **Project background.** Since 1994 Rwanda has made impressive progress in the promotion of both economic growth and social development. The poverty rate dropped from 59 per cent in 2001 to 45 per cent in 2011. The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) set the overarching framework for the Strategic Plans for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA I, II and III), guiding all activities and investments in the agricultural sector.

9. The goal of PAPSTA was to contribute to achieving the EDPRS 2¹ objective (to improve income and nutrition of the poor rural population) by supporting the implementation of PSTA I and II. PSTA focuses on those interventions aimed to increase agricultural production and productivity.
10. More specifically, the project objectives were to: (i) strengthen the technical, managerial and institutional capacity of the major stakeholders associated with the implementation of the PSTA; (ii) undertake innovative agricultural pilot action programmes and strengthen the research and extension system; and (iii) improve the overall management information system, communications, and the participatory M&E system.
11. The objectives were to be achieved through three components: institutional strengthening; piloting and replication; and project coordination and management.
12. PAPSTA had a total project cost of US\$30.6 million at closure which was made up of a highly concessional IFAD loan of US\$9.45 million, and a Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) grant and Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) of US\$4.45 million. The Government of Rwanda contributed US\$1.35 million, and beneficiaries contributed a significant US\$5.2 million. Other contributors included: the German Development Service (US\$0.02 million); the Department for International Development (US\$3.4 million); and the World Food Programme (US\$1.5 million). At completion the project had fully disbursed the IFAD loan and DSF and TAG grants.
13. The project was approved by IFAD's Executive Board in September 2005 and was under the direct supervision of IFAD from 2006 (during the first year of implementation, the cooperating institution was the United Nations Office for Project Services, UNOPS). The project completion report was received seven weeks before the loan closing date of 30 September 2013. The lead executing agency for PAPSTA was the Ministry of Agricultural and Animal Resources (MINAGRI).

Project performance

14. **Relevance.** Even though the project was complex (but not complicated²) and challenging to manage, its design responded to the needs and interests of the beneficiaries and it remained relevant to the context throughout implementation, while adapting to the evolving environment. The lessons learned from the IFAD portfolio were incorporated into the project design. PAPSTA simultaneously tested and replicated innovations in watershed management in addition to introducing new agricultural technologies. It responded to critical needs of MINAGRI at the right time and played a substantial role in assisting MINAGRI with high-level policy input. In this way, the project played a strategic role in the transformation of the agricultural sector through the development of PSTA II and III as well as through improvements in sector coordination and a sectoral M&E system. This transformation was achieved through the introduction of the Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) per financier, which had a positive impact on a number of areas (noted below).
15. The various innovations in agriculture and livestock management, watershed management (WSM), soil and water conservation (SWC), and uphill and marshland irrigation are highly relevant to the Rwandan context and responded well to the needs of smallholder farmers. The self-targeting strategy that PAPSTA applied proved relevant and feasible in terms of reaching the most vulnerable households.

¹ Specifically, EPDRS had five priorities: i) to improve access to productive inputs; ii) to promote soil conservation and water management (including irrigation); iii) to increase access to improved breeds of small and large livestock; iv) to deliver extension services and research for development; and v) to promote commodity chain and agribusiness development.

² *Complex* refers to the number of functions and steps within each task, while *complicated* refers to the processes involved. In this instance the project was not complicated, as the tasks were correctly assigned to the relevant mandated body.

16. **Effectiveness.** PAPSTA contributed to achieving the project goal of improving the income and nutrition levels of the rural population in the target areas. PAPSTA's policy-level support to MINAGRI provided the framework through the drafting of numerous key national policies and strategies; for example: Agriculture Mechanization, the Knowledge Management, the Small Animal Strategic Investment Plan, Change Management, Public Financial Management, the Public Expenditure Review Strategy, the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, and the Decentralization Action Plan.
17. Local capacity-building resulted in 11 Local Management and Supervision Committees (CLGSs) being created. The committees assumed a central role in project implementation, serving as the major decision-making, planning and monitoring body, and representing all stakeholders in the watershed. Altogether 11 cooperatives were established and were used as the vehicle for training on SWC.
18. The SWC interventions promoted by PAPSTA included: constructing full and half terraces, anti-erosion ditches/cut-off drains and soil-bunding; planting living hedges on the earth bunds with various fodder/agro-forestry tree species and grasses; fixing ravines with different soil and vegetative improvement measures; excavating water-retention basins; rehabilitating and protecting rural roads; and tree planting.
19. Some of the innovative practices for improved seeds and cultivation of cuttings have been taken up beyond the borders of the watersheds and thus spread spontaneously. Promoting the improved rice cultivation system proved to be one of the most successful innovations that PAPSTA introduced. Other innovations introduced were the Irrigation Water Users Associations (WUAs), the animal health insurance scheme and the Farmer Field Schools.
20. One collective M&E system for all IFAD projects was established within the SPIU as a result of the implementation of PAPSTA. The project also assisted MINAGRI in setting up a simplified sector-wide M&E system directly linked to the M&E systems used by the three SPIUs (IFAD, World Bank and the African Development Bank. This in turn stimulated learning in IFAD, MINAGRI and the sector at large. The large number of knowledge products developed has helped to capture innovations and success stories for replication and scaling up.
21. **Efficiency.** PAPSTA was implemented within the foreseen timeline and budget framework and achieved all targets including an overall disbursement of 100 per cent for all IFAD financing.
22. The SPIU was conducive to better coordination, reduction of transaction costs, preservation of expertise and retention of staff. In fact, this new institutional structure resulted in both PAPSTA and the Kirehe Community-based Watershed Management Project (KWAMP) receiving prizes for financial management and procurement in the East and Southern Africa Region of IFAD in 2010.
23. The project's performance can be attributed to the following key aspects: (i) the institutional arrangements through the establishment of the SPIU and its ability to increase the likelihood of successfully delivering a complex project; (ii) development of the sectoral M&E framework; (iii) consistent practices across all projects for financial matters, procurement and audits; (iv) knowledge of staff retained and transferred to new projects; and (v) the use of results-based contracts for local and national staff.
24. Project performance would have received a higher score had achievements been greater in the development of farmer/producer apex organizations. In addition it would be beneficial to differentiate the level of technical support required for different target groups, particularly for vulnerable groups – in this case child-headed households, young people and widows. Other issues insufficiently

addressed during the life span of PAPSTA include: limited inputs into marketing, post-harvesting technologies and value addition; the lack of construction of (all weather) feeder roads; and access to rural credit facilities. Although these had not been included in the project design, once they were identified they were incorporated into projects which followed – for example KWAMP and the Project for Rural Income through Exports.

Rural poverty impact

25. PAPSTA contributed to the improvement of the small farming systems operated by subsistence farmers in the 11 pilot areas of 6 districts. The project increased agricultural productivity by introducing improved livestock and crops and through an overall improvement in the traditional farming systems, which had a very positive overall impact on food security and increased household cash incomes, as well as on increased social capital because of strengthened community cohesion. Crop yields of the main staple foods increased – upland maize from 1.5 to 4.0-5.0 tons/ha; beans from 0.6-0.8 to 1.1 – 1.2 tons/ha; cassava from 15-20 to 30-40 tons/ha; sweet potatoes from 15-17 to 25-30 tons/ha; and rice from 3-4 to 6-7 tons/ha. Post-harvest storage facilities helped the cooperatives to sell produce at better prices. The farmers who have been very successful now also provide full time-employment opportunities, primarily to those who have small or no land holdings.
26. PAPSTA achieved significantly in the areas of natural resources and environmental management practices. The approach applied by PAPSTA is in essence a "community based approach to SWC measures within the framework of a watershed". The SWC interventions promoted by PAPSTA are noted in paragraph 18.
27. Under PAPSTA a total of over 44,000 ha of degraded land was hedged, and some 32 million agro-forestry trees (which is about 10 times the amount of the seedling production envisaged at design stage) and 33 million Pennisetum grass cuttings were locally produced in family and group nurseries and planted on the earth bunds. Over 100 ha of degraded soil have been developed in the six districts and altogether 1,400 ha of progressive terraces have been established.
28. PAPSTA has had a significant impact on the structure and direction of the entire agricultural sector in Rwanda (refer to paragraph 47 to 54). In turn the policies and institutional arrangements have had a significant impact on increased efficiency and effectiveness of the agriculture sector from local to national levels. The introduction of bottom-up participatory processes for the development of district plans and budgets has increased learning at the local level while also increasing knowledge at the national level for higher-level planning and budgetary processes. In addition, responsibilities at the local level for participatory processes have been taken seriously and costs for these processes are now included in district-level budgets. The notion of "volunteer extension workers" could more appropriately be viewed as knowledge/skills transfer at the local level - so as an "institutional" process it provides immediate support to small-scale farmers on a range of agricultural technologies.

Other performance criteria

29. Sustainability appears to be well covered as at the mid-term review the project did develop an exit strategy which has been implemented. Approaches have been well documented and handed over to mandated bodies to continue their implementation in other districts. In addition the inclusion of costs for local institutions have been built into district budgets to ensure that local-level participation in decision making continues. Part of the exit and scaling up strategy was to encourage farmers in the first six watersheds to take over tree and grass propagation by reducing support to the nurseries.

30. Innovations (additional to those noted in paragraphs 15 and 19) in the Rwandan context included: Community Innovation Centres (CCIs); community competitions; resource person/village contact person (*personne ressource/relais villageois*); Pass on the Gift (POG) schemes for livestock (mainly cows for land holder of more than ½ ha; goats for land holders with less than 0.5 ha); Cow Health Insurance Scheme; and milk collection centers.
31. A direct link was established between farmer's participation in the establishment of the various SWC measures on their own and public land through granting them access to the livestock POG schemes. The participating farmers directly use the new earth structures for the production of fodder from agro-forest trees and fodder grasses. Such linkages established a suitable incentive system for SWC. The landless also plant fodder grasses on public space which they now sell to those with livestock for income.
32. The innovative practices were tested in the field and were subsequently documented by PAPSTA. Most of them are now disseminated through the national agricultural extension service under the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB).
33. PAPSTA assisted MINAGRI in drafting the National Agriculture Gender Strategy and adopted a gender-integrated approach to implementation. The approach included a number of measures geared to specifically benefit women – for example: a participation quota in all project activities; equal pay; and bank accounts in the names of all project beneficiaries, to ensure that women have full control over their own funds. Women (including young women) in general have benefited from the various project activities, building social capacity, greater access to decision making opportunities and most importantly decision making on resources.
34. Challenges that remain for gender equality are for those that fall into the highly vulnerable groups, specifically: widows, young people and child headed households. There is a pervading social stigma that widows in particular face in addition to which they and young people command less respect by some, thus lessening benefits from the project.

Overall project achievement

35. IFAD has become a reliable and valued partner of the MINAGRI. For example, when a key cofinancier withdrew support after approval of the PAPSTA, IFAD identified new partners to fill the cofinancing gap to ensure the project could continue as proposed. IFAD provided timely technical support and supervision while quickly processing of withdrawal applications to ensure the flow of funds. Likewise, the Government of Rwanda has responded quickly and efficiently to all the recommendations from the Country Programme Evaluation. In addition, by the time the PPA mission happened they had already incorporated lessons from PAPSTA into the next project design. A key feature of their work is that appropriate lessons from ongoing projects are transferred to other projects as they are learned. The Government also provided counterpart financing as agreed.
36. As noted earlier, gaps in ongoing projects (that cannot be responded to immediately) are built into the design of the next project so that challenges are addressed as quickly as possible.

Conclusion

37. The PAPSTA project design remained highly relevant to government priorities and adapted in response to the evolving environment. It simultaneously tested and replicated innovations. PAPSTA has played a strategic role in the transformation of the agricultural sector through the provision of high-level policy inputs thus responding to critical needs of MINAGRI at the right time. IFAD has become a reliable and valued partner of the MINAGRI in the process. Most importantly the design was sound and directly catered to the needs and interests of the rural target population. It has also shown that complexity can be managed successfully. The

prevailing environment in Rwanda thus provides for some opportunities to pilot new ways of working.

Key recommendations

Sustainability

38. In order to strengthen the likelihood of sustainability, the seven-year period of implementation cannot be considered a reasonable time frame to ensure the sustainability of all the results produced by the project. To avoid the dissipation of the development achievements, the PPA suggests formulating future capacity-building activities to be carried out at local level as long-term interventions (especially for the most vulnerable groups). This could either be built into the MINAGRI's ongoing work plans or addressed through the proposal in paragraphs 43 and 44 below.
39. Another aspect related to sustainability is the capacity to continue the delivery of services such as the ones provided by the resource person and village contact person. One option may be to consider the adoption of a fee-for-service approach in this context.

Targeting

40. PASPTA has reached the rural target population, including vulnerable groups (women, youth and child-headed households). As already noted, these groups still face specific challenges and should receive greater support for skills development (e.g. technology transfers, business skills) – for example by facilitating access to high-level training opportunities (e.g. establishment of national scholarship programme for secondary and tertiary education). Youth training centres could also offer new opportunities to youth to become technical specialists.

Partnership with the Government

41. Government structures and performance are conducive to piloting new financing partnerships with donors. In this context IFAD could undertake different actions such as the production of a single five-year-period design document and the adoption of a programmatic financing approach.
42. As far as the involvement of the private sector is concerned, it would be useful for the Government to develop a set of "principles of engagement" between the parties (Government, private sector entity and the target group). In this respect, IFAD could act as broker, ensuring equitable risk mechanisms, capacity-building and technology transfer.

Financing mechanisms

43. Rwanda provides a unique opportunity to pilot a new mechanism for financing – programmatic financing – which would also provide increased efficiencies and effectiveness for both the Government and IFAD over a country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) period (approximately five years).
44. The PPA proposes to pilot a "programmatic financing" approach. Such an approach would provide flexibility to respond to unforeseen emergencies, allow for follow-up support to critical target groups (women and child-headed households) and in the long run reduce costs associated with design. This proposal would require having an "in-depth" COSOP along the lines of a single five-year-period design document and thus identifying clearly differentiated target groups, thematic focuses, geographical priorities, etc., in priority order – for which full criteria would need to be developed and agreed. Through the process a full list of key criteria for other countries to engage with IFAD on this basis could also be further developed following an assessment of the pilot.

Scaling up

45. Scaling up requires thorough preparation which would include environmental and social impact assessment studies to ensure long-term environmental and social

impacts using appropriate mitigation strategies for interventions. Such measures could include leaving some marshland areas uncultivated and ensuring ecological corridors between such remaining wetlands for the migration of plant and animal species and the preservation of biodiversity.

46. The introduction of environmentally friendly cooking and heating devices – for example improved stoves (or biogas digesters) – should be a standard feature of any agriculture package to save more than 30 per cent of firewood and trees. Moreover, such a measure can promote local employment and business opportunities, especially for the young people.

Partnerships

47. The partnership between Government, World Food Programme and IFAD has resulted in significant achievements. Where appropriate such a partnership should be actively sought for better outcomes and sustainability.

Maize drying was promoted under the agricultural technology component, Ngorero District.

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Republic of Rwanda

Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture

Project Performance Assessment

I. Objectives, methodology and process

Objectives

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) has undertaken a project performance assessment (PPA) of the Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (*Projet d'Appui au Plan Stratégique de la Transformation de l'Agriculture - PAPSTA*). The PPA is a project-level evaluation with the overall **objectives** to: (i) provide an independent assessment of the overall results of projects; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations within the country.
2. The PPA report considers all criteria however specific emphasis is on the selected criteria and issues which were identified through the project completion report validation (PCRv).¹ The issues selected for analysis were from three components: (i) institutional-building; (ii) the piloting and replication; and (iii) project coordination and management. In particular the PPA was to:
 - (i) evaluate to what extent results obtained in terms of institutional development (at the local level) are likely to exert a long term impact on the agricultural policy making in Rwanda. The project completion report (PCR) reported briefly on the process and strategies put in place as a consequence of PAPSTA's implementation and only a few qualitative indicators are provided to give reasons for the achievements obtained in this sector.
 - (ii) apply a deeper level of critical assessment of piloting and replication to assess to what extent the watershed planning approach and the promotion of hedging practices as soil protections measures have been successful; and
 - (iii) assess the project coordination and management including the implementation mechanism, for its effectiveness in supporting the achievement of the development objectives of the project taking into consideration the high complexity of PAPSTA's design and approach.

Methodology

3. The PPA took into account the preliminary findings of the PCRv and a standard desk review, issues emerging from interviews at IFAD headquarters, while the mission focussed on selected key issues and lessons learnt from the implementation of PAPSTA.
4. The standard evaluation criteria (noted in appendix V) were to be assessed as well as the following key issues identified for further investigation.
5. **Relevance.** Identification of the key features of PAPSTA that made the project relevant to the establishment of an agricultural sector-wide approach (SWAp). Also, it was assessed if the PAPSTA approach could be adopted by other IFAD-funded initiatives and by projects financed by other donors in the country and in the region at large. The targeting approach was analysed, in particular it was assessed to what extent PAPSTA was successful in targeting vulnerable groups such as people with HIV and women-headed households.
6. **Effectiveness.** The PPA analyzed the achievements produced in the domains of institution building, piloting and replication, as well as in project coordination and

¹ A project completion report validation is undertaken for each project completion report received in IFAD and if a project performance assessment is undertaken serves to identify the issues for follow-up in country.

management (establishment of a Single Project Implementation Unit [SPIU] within the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources [MINAGRI]). It also examined the results of institutional development activities and their long term impact on the agricultural policy making of Rwanda and the strengthening of the local bodies in the districts. The PPA also assessed to what extent these organizations (cooperatives, local authorities, Community and Innovation Centres (*Centre communautaire d'innovation* [CCIs]), Local Management and Supervision Committees (*Comité local de gestion et de supervision* [CLGS]) have benefitted from PAPSTA's activities and if they are sustainable. Particular emphasis was given to assess to what extent the watershed planning approach and the promotion of hedging practices (*embocagements*) as soil protections measures have been successful.

7. **Sustainability.** The PPA team also focused on assessing the sustainability of the institutional structures, technologies and innovations introduced by PAPSTA beyond the completion of the project, including their assimilation into the local and governmental structures. Furthermore, the team assessed their potential for scaling up.
8. **Data collection and stakeholders' participation.** Building on the PCRV findings and a desk review of relevant documents fact finding also covered interviews with Government, relevant stakeholders and a field visit to two districts (Ngorero and Nyanza). Data collection methods deployed consisted of individual and focus group interviews with beneficiaries and direct observations. The PPA also collected additional data available through the programme's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Triangulation was applied to verify findings emerging from different information sources.

Process

9. The **evaluation process** involves five phases: desk work; country work; report drafting and peer review; receipt of comments on the draft PPA report from the East and Southern Africa Division and the Government; as well as the final phase of communication and dissemination.
10. The PPA mission to Rwanda took place in March 2014, and was composed of Ms Louise McDonald, Evaluation Officer and lead evaluator, Ms Sabine Häusler, IOE consultant (natural resource management and forestry specialist) and Ms Marina Izzo, IOE consultant. At the end of the mission, a **wrap-up meeting** was held at MINAGRI to provide IFAD and MINAGRI staff the opportunity to discuss the preliminary findings of the mission team, and key strategic and operational issues.
11. **Limitations.** Due to time and logistical constraints the PPA team were not able meet all major stakeholders in the sector at national level due to conflicting appointments. During the field trip the team visited two districts, noting that time and resource constraints did not allow for in depth field-level analysis or comprehensive coverage of all stakeholders at the local level.

II. The project

A. The project context

12. **Country context.**² Since 1994 Rwanda has made impressive progress in the promotion of both economic growth and social development. Between 2001 and 2012, real GDP growth averaged 8.1 per cent per annum. The poverty rate dropped from 59 per cent in 2001 to 45 per cent in 2011. Moreover, considerable efforts are being devoted to ensure that such achievements can be broadly shared to mitigate risks of erosion of the country's hard-won political and social stability. Specifically, Rwanda's long-term development goals are embedded in its Vision 2020, a broad national strategy aiming to transform the country from a low-income

² World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/rwanda/overview>

agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based, service-oriented economy by 2020.

13. In order to achieve these long-term development goals, the government of Rwanda has formulated a medium-term strategy, namely the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) which identified the agricultural sector as the basis for economic growth of Rwanda. The EDPRS 2 aims to achieve the following goals by 2018: (i) to increase GDP per capita to US\$1,000; (ii) to decrease the poverty rate to below 30 per cent; and (iii) to reduce extreme poverty rate to below 9 per cent. Macroeconomic growth shall accelerate at an annual GDP growth rate of up to 10 per cent over the period 2013-2018.
14. Among the major fragilities identified in the Rwandan economy there is the significant weakness of the private sector which is still largely informal. The latter has to play a bigger role in ensuring economic growth. Poor infrastructure can be considered among the major constraints to private investment. Despite this situation, some reforms have been successfully implemented to improve the business environment and to reduce the cost of doing business: according to the World Bank, Rwanda is now ranked as the third easiest place to do business in Sub-Saharan Africa.
15. The Strategic Plans for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA I, II and III) guide all activities and investments in the agricultural sector. With the active assistance of PAPSTA the Government of Rwanda has drafted two consecutive PSTAs in Rwanda (PSTA II and the new PSTA III 2013 to 2017). PSTA III places particular emphasis on an increase in export crop production and more involvement of the private sector.
16. With an agricultural sector that is the mainstay of the national economy and 90 per cent of domestic cropland situated on slopes ranging from 5 per cent to 55 per cent, improving upland agriculture, including upland irrigation, in combination with systematic marshland development under irrigation are core strategies for improving agricultural productivity in Rwanda. In order to ensure sustainability substantial investments in soil and water conservation (SWC) measures are crucial to accompany any technical improvements in agriculture like crop and livestock intensification.
17. During the implementation of PSTA I progressive and radical terracing, accompanied by soil fertility management and soil erosion control were identified as a priority action. Due to more substantial investment in soil erosion protection under PSTA II, by 2012, 73 per cent of land was covered by various types of soil erosion protection infrastructure. For less steep slopes progressive terracing and agro-forestry have now proven successful in reducing erosion and increasing soil fertility. Lessons learnt to date have been incorporated into the new PSTA III that stipulates that watershed management and agro-forestry interventions should be scaled up and become an integral part of crop intensification while hillside terracing efforts with particular emphasis on soil protection including living barriers (hedging and progressive terraces) and leaving crop residues on the fields. By 2017, soil conservation infrastructure should cover 91 per cent of the relevant land area (PSTA III, SP 4.6.1.). Best practices developed from experiences in infrastructure development, working with farmers' cooperatives, marketing information and crop selection will be applied.
18. Other important interventions in soil conservation and watershed management under PSTA II, besides IFAD's PAPSTA and Kirehe Community-based Watershed Management Project (KWAMP), include two large World Bank-funded projects: the World Bank Land Husbandry, Water Harvesting and Hillside Irrigation Program (LWH) (current phase 2010-2015), the World Bank Rural Sector Support Program (RSSP III) (current phase 2012-2017); and a project funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB): Bugesera Agriculture Development Project (2007-2013). Each of these projects applied/applies slightly different approaches to

physical works and the involvement of local farmers. They all contributed to the establishment of the technical packages now available to the national extension service of the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB). The biannual Joint Sector Reviews have stimulated an active exchange of experiences and sector wide learning.

19. The major assumptions/risks identified at the design stage of PAPSTA included the continued social and economic stability in the county; debt management and support by donors; an effective implementation of the PSTA; continued financial flows into the agriculture sector; sufficient finance, human resources and institutional capacity in place commensurate with the requirements for the decentralization policy at sector and district levels; the availability of capable service providers; and the willingness of local communities to participate in watershed management activities. All of these assumptions could be verified during implementation, while the risks originally identified did not hamper implementation.

B. Project design and implementation arrangements

20. The **overall project goal of PAPSTA** was to contribute to achieving EPDRS 2³ objective (namely, to improve income and nutrition of the poor rural population) through support to the implementation of PSTA I and II. The main objective of both PSTA I and II is the change of approach (from subsistence to trade) in the Rwanda`s agricultural policy. Consequently, PSTA focuses on those interventions aimed to increase agricultural production and productivity.
21. The **project objectives** were to: (i) to strengthen the technical, managerial and institutional capacity of the major stakeholders associated with PSTA implementation, to improve their performance in delivering priority services to the target group; (ii) to undertake innovative agricultural pilot action programmes (watershed protection, livestock development, crop production in marshland) and to strengthen the research and extension system; and (iii) to improve the overall management information system and the communications arrangements as well as the participatory monitoring and evaluation system to accelerate dissemination and adoption of farming technologies.
22. The objectives were to be achieved through the interventions within three components: institutional strengthening, piloting and replication and project coordination and management.

Component 1: Institutional strengthening

23. The main objectives of this component were: (i) to develop a sector wide approach drawing on indications put forward in the framework of PSTA (provision of a high-level advisor to MINAGRI, financing four programme supervisors, one for each PASTA programme, who were to support the SWAp development, set up of an Integrated Financial Management System); (ii) to raise the capacities of MINAGRI and its technical agencies (RAB and National Agricultural Export Development Board) staff as well as of apex farmers` organizations personnel; (iii) to support MINAGRI in the establishment of a management and communication system and of a common M&E system and database; (iv) to enhance the capacity of local institutions to support planning , implementation, monitoring and sustainability of the integrated agriculture model supported under the project; (v) supporting farmers in building up market linkages through the setup of milk collection centres, drying/storage centres for maize, rice and provision of assistance in the establishment of market committees.⁴

³ Specifically, EPDRS 2 had five priorities: i) to improve the access to productive inputs; ii) to promote soil conservation and water management (including irrigation); iii) to increase access and to improve breeds of small and large livestock; iv) to deliver extension services and research for development; vi) to promote commodities chains and agribusiness development through the support to the implementation of PSTA I & II whose aim is to improve income and nutrition of poor rural population.

⁴ It is worth mentioning here that this subcomponent was not initially envisaged in the original design document but was introduced as a result of the incorporation of the recommendations made during the Mid-term Review in 2009.

24. Four sub-components were envisaged to achieve this objective: strategic-level support to MINAGRI and to the agricultural sector, central-level capacity-building, local-level capacity-building and market support.
25. PAPSTA's **policy-level support** included direct contribution to the arrangement of the SWAp process, such as assistance in organizing meetings and in recruiting short term consultants to support MINAGRI.
26. PAPSTA also assisted MINAGRI in the development of its overall monitoring sector system that is fully harmonized with the IFAD SPIU M&E system.
27. As far as the **central-level capacity-building** is concerned, it concentrated on activities such employment of experts in MINAGRI-run projects and agencies and provision of high-level training in favour of Ministry staff.
28. Regarding **local-level capacity-building**, the latter included the establishment of the CLGSs, namely communitarian bodies in charge of the management of watersheds and set up of the CCIs, namely platforms providing information exchange and learning tools for farmers, staff, resource person/village contact person (PR/RV, as per the acronyms in French), Farmer Field Schools (FFS).
29. These activities were mainly carried out though the support by service providers. Also they were directly linked to the introduction of several technological innovations.
30. Under sub-component 1.4, Market Support to cooperatives in Kirehe benefitted from purchase agreements and capacity-building support under the World Food Programme (WFP) Purchase for Progress Project. WFP also provided training services on post-harvest handling for cooperatives operating drying and storage facilities for maize and beans.
31. Finally in relation to the **creation of linkages among producers and market**, the latter was encouraged through the establishment of information bases, the performance of market baseline information surveys as well as commodity value chain mapping and analysis was performed as well as market analysis. Also, actions plans were formulated and training workshops were held to enhance the access into the markets.

Component 2: Piloting and replication

32. This component aimed to test an integrated model of watershed protection/management, linked to livestock and crop intensification interventions, marshland development and research work in support of agricultural intensification.
33. In relation to the subcomponent related to the **provision of watershed protection**, the project piloted a protection/management approach which combined the employment of soil husbandry techniques together with the promotion of community participation through the local supervision committees and a network of volunteer extension workers.
34. In relation to **agriculture and livestock integration** and intensification, the subcomponent revolved around the livestock Pass on the Gift (POG) scheme, elaborated by Heifer International: according to the latter, poor households received a cow from local authorities while service providers were recruited for technical assistance (preparation of farmers before they receive livestock, provision of veterinary services and follow up of the POG scheme). Once the cow had a calf the latter was passed on as a gift to other families in need, allowing them to help others as they have been helped. The aim of this method was to establish a solidarity chain in the community.
35. With reference to **marshland development and crop intensification**, the project interventions focused on the establishment of irrigation and drainage system for the intensification of crop production and on the support to the development and adoption rainwater harvesting water ponds, hill-side small

irrigation and rice intensification using the intensive rice cultivation (*système de riziculture intensive* [SRI]) system.

36. Finally, regarding **research in support of agricultural intensification**, the planned activities revolved around the test of new varieties of rice, the improvement in paddy soil fertility, seed multiplication and dissemination of results.

Component 3: Project coordination and management

37. During the first years of PAPSTA's life, the project coordination unit and management comprised the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), its staffing, equipment, and operation with limited amount of technical assistance and a weak M&E supporting it.
38. The SPIU was set up as a strategy by the Government to mainstream implementation mechanisms within Ministries. In MINAGRI one SPIU was established for each donor (AfDB, World Bank, IFAD) to carry out the planning, implementation, financial management, monitoring of projects activities in joint collaboration with respective donors.

Key points

Project objectives:* (i) to strengthen the technical, managerial and institutional capacity of the major stakeholders associated with PSTA implementation, to improve their performance in delivering priority services to the target group; (ii) to undertake innovative agricultural pilot action programmes (watershed protection, livestock development, crop production in marshland) and to strengthen the research and extension system; and (iii) to improve the overall management information system; and the communications arrangements as well as the participatory monitoring and evaluation system to accelerate dissemination and adoption of farming technologies.

Component 1. Institutional strengthening:

- development of a Sector Wide Approach in the Agricultural Sector;
- enhancement of the capacities of MINAGRI staff, of MINAGRI technical agencies personnel and of the staff of apex farmers` organizations;
- establishment of a common M&E system and database between SPIU and MINAGRI;
- enhancement of the capacity of local institutions in integrated agriculture planning;
- provision of market access to the target group.

Component 2. Piloting and replication: test an integrated model including:

- watershed protection/management,
- livestock and crop intensification,
- marshland development
- research in support of agricultural intensification.

Component 3. Project management

- Establishment of SPIUs for each donor (World Bank, AfDB, IFAD) within MINAGRI as a strategy to mainstream implementation mechanisms

* As approved by the Executive Board of IFAD at the 85th Session, 6 – 8 September 2005

III. Review of findings

A. Project performance

Relevance of objectives

39. The framework of the IFAD country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP, December, 2002) guided the design of PAPSTA which was well aligned to the Government's, at that time, interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper following a comprehensive national consultation, identified six priority areas for development: (i) rural development and agricultural transformation; (ii) human development; (iii) economic infrastructure; (iv) governance; (v) private-sector development; and (vi) institutional capacity-building. The COSOP had identified three strategic guidelines for operations in country being: (i) emphasis on institutional development, supporting GOR's decentralization process and ensure that IFAD's target group could exploit opportunities offered by the new approach; (ii) increasing the income of the rural poor through agricultural and non-agricultural activities, generating and disseminating technology innovations and on developing sustainable rural financial services; and (iii) focus on potential synergies among IFAD projects, fewer operations by designing projects with complementary activities with support to project implementation units. Thus it would appear that the project objectives are well aligned to the country context at the time of design.

Relevance of design

40. The lessons learnt from the IFAD portfolio up to the design of PAPSTA were incorporated into the project design in 2005. These lessons included (i) the importance of directly responding to the needs of the rural small farmers and to provide tangible financial benefits for them; (ii) to move from a top-down to a bottom up approach to implementation; (iii) to include multi-level capacity-building components in project designs; and (iv) to define a clear exit strategy from the onset of any new project. With the introduction of local-level institutions playing a role in local planning and implementation the needs of poor rural people and smallholders are being addressed. In the districts visited these institutions are ongoing and have been budgeted for in the district work plans and budget.
41. PAPSTA was also **fully aligned with the overall national policy framework** at the time of its design, and remained flexible to the institutional and policy changes that occurred during PAPSTAs implementation period from 2006 to 2013, including the reorganization of the MINAGRI, decentralization, and the establishment of an Agriculture SWAp. PAPSTA was designed to support these changes and stayed flexible, responding well to external changes. PAPSTA thus managed to remain relevant to its context. Even though the design of PAPSTA was complex, it was a strategically important, well designed project, implemented at the right point in time. While the design was complex the institutional arrangements, i.e. both at the local level and through the SPIU made implementation both efficient and effective and able to deal with complexity.
42. PAPSTA was designed to and significantly contribute to the establishment of the agriculture **SWAp**. In order to improve donor coordination and harmonization the Government had initiated the establishment of **SPIUs** for the donor projects in several ministries (the Ministries of Infrastructure, Health, Education, Agriculture and Local Affairs) in 2011. A SWAp is generally defined as follows: "...all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure, under government leadership, adopting approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to distribute and account for all funds".⁵ There are different types of funding arrangements for the donors within SWAps: (i) direct budget support whereby the donors channel all funds for the sector through the Ministry of Finance; (ii) basket-funding or pooled funding where the donors channel their funds to a dedicated fund within the Ministry of Finance earmarked for agreed investment activities in the sector; and (iii) non-pooled funding where either specific activities or donor projects fall under the overall SWAp umbrella. In the case of the Rwanda agriculture SWAp donors have chosen for a mixed form of funding: most donors provide non-pooled funding with specific projects (implemented under the three SPIUs of IFAD, World Bank and AfDB within

⁵ A. Brown et al, The Status of Sector Wide Approaches, ODI Working Paper 142 (January 2001), cited after the IFAD SWAp policy (2006).

MINAGRI), while two donors have chosen to also provide direct budget support to the agriculture sector (World Bank and European Commission). The IFAD SPIU has enabled the various projects to benefit from streamlining fiduciary aspects to enhancing implementation through cross learning and application during implementation.

43. The Government seeks to achieve the following objectives with the SPIUs: to further enhance harmonization and simplification of project implementation procedures, including reporting, better information flows, reduction of transaction costs, and safeguarding of the institutional memory and expertise. In addition there are shared functions like sector wide monitoring and evaluation and procurement. The salary scales of all SPIU staff are harmonised with, but higher than those of other government staff (noting that their salaries are fixed and they do not receive all the benefits provided to the Government staff).
44. The project objectives⁶ have a good strategic fit with the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the IFAD COSOP and respond to the needs of the rural poor. While the components and sub components of PAPSTA focussed on activities to implement the above noted strategies (refer paragraph). For example Component 1 (institutional strengthening) included capacity development from local to national levels in the public, private and community spheres which resulted in: a SWAp for agriculture; SPIU's in MINAGRI and thus common systems for the IFAD portfolio e.g. M&E, procurement and so forth; access to markets; and skills development for a broad cross section of stakeholders which included the rural poor. Component 2 resulted in: good research for environmental management (watersheds, terracing, etc.), which lead to crop intensification, managing an increase in livestock (especially dairy), increased agricultural production and most importantly increased food security, better nutrition and increased incomes. Finally the benefits from Component 3 (project management) through the establishment of the SWAp and SPIU's processes are now streamlined, lessons incorporated across projects as they are learned and skills are now transferred across districts as was noted for kitchen garden development, terracing and watershed management.
45. Resources for the project across the components were spread, institutional strengthening US\$6,738,923 (21 per cent), to piloting and replication US\$19,735,166 (64 per cent) and US\$5,027,539 (15 per cent) to project coordination and management. The spread of resources used seems appropriate to the tasks undertaken thus the design can be considered relevant.
46. The various **innovations in agriculture and livestock management, watershed management (WSM)**, SWC measures, uphill and marshland irrigation, etc. are highly relevant to the Rwandan context in general and responded well to the specific needs of small farmers. Most of these technical packages have been well documented and are now used by the national agricultural extension service of the RAB.
47. The **self-targeting strategy** applied by PAPSTA proved relevant and feasible to reach the most vulnerable households. Based on the government poverty classification and local knowledge of vulnerable households the communities identified the most vulnerable individuals and households themselves. Such self-targeting ensured that the most vulnerable, including women and child head of

⁶ "... (i) to strengthen the technical, managerial and institutional capacity of the major stakeholders associated with PSTA implementation, to improve their performance in delivering priority services to the target group; (ii) to undertake innovative agricultural pilot action programmes (watershed protection, livestock development, crop production in marshland) and to strengthen the research and extension system; and (iii) to improve the overall management information system; and the communications arrangements as well as the participatory monitoring and evaluation system to accelerate dissemination and adoption of farming technologies." as approved by the Executive Board of IFAD, 6 – 8 September 2005.

households, families affected by HIV/AIDS⁷ and the landless benefitted as much as possible from the various interventions (food for work/cash for work, livestock and seed distribution, training, etc.).

48. **Relevance (of both objectives and design) is rated as 6 (highly satisfactory)** for its positioning within Government strategies and policies, being country driven, was in line with the strategic guidelines in the COSOP (at design), used (bottom-up) participatory processes, met the needs of poor and vulnerable groups as well as the institutional arrangements for supporting implementation, adapting to the changing environment and achieving objectives through the SPIU.

Effectiveness

49. PAPSTA has effectively contributed to achieving the project objectives, the improvement of income and nutrition of the rural population in the target areas in 11 watersheds in 6 districts.
50. **Objective 1:** to strengthen the technical, managerial and institutional capacity of the major stakeholders associated with PSTA implementation, to improve their performance in delivering priority services to the target group.
51. **At central-level, PAPSTA** actively supported MINAGRI in the organization of the **SWAp** through assisting in organizing meetings and recruiting short term consultants for various types of support. In late 2008 all donors active in the agriculture sector at the time (World Bank, European Commission, AfDB, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Department for International Development - United Kingdom [DFID], CIDA, Belgian Technical Cooperation, IFAD, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands [DGIS], United States Agency for International Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the agriculture SWAp. Full sector coordination was established, including Working Groups, ad-hoc sub-groups, and biannual joint sector reviews (MINAGRI and key stakeholders) under the direct and active leadership of the Minister of Agriculture, all working towards the achievement of the overall PSTA objectives. The SWAp process has effectively stimulated sector coordination and cross learning between all major stakeholders in the sector.
52. PAPSTA assisted RAB in the temporary recruitment of an irrigation specialist. Another important feature of PAPSTA's strategic support was that it directly represented the interests of the small farmers in the policy making process.
- PAPSTA significantly contributed to the following Agricultural Sector Policies:

 - Drafting of PSTA II and III
 - M&E Sector Framework
 - Agricultural Sector SWAp
53. PAPSTA's **policy-level support** to MINAGRI also encompassed the drafting of a substantial number of policies and strategies, including: PSTA II and III, the SWAp Memorandum of Understanding, the Agriculture Mechanization Strategy, the Knowledge Management Strategy, the Small Animal Strategic Investment Plan, the National Dairy Strategy, the Change Management Strategy, the Public Financial Management Strategy, the Public Expenditure Review Strategy, the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, the Decentralization Action Plan, etc. PAPSTA played a key role in supporting MINAGRI in the reorganization and decentralization of the national agricultural institutional framework.
54. The assignment of four high-level advisers, one for each of the four major components of the PSTA - (i) intensification of the farming system; (ii) professionalization of the agricultural producers; (iii) agri-business; and (iv) capacity-building - was a core strategy of central-level capacity-building. Unfortunately this activity never materialized due to a two-year delay in funding from DFID. Instead, PAPSTA concentrated on capacity-building of MINAGRI staff. It

⁷ Due to the social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS in Rwandan society the project has been highly discrete about publicly associating affected families and individuals with the disease, while they were effectively targeted as vulnerable groups.

sent 49 persons on Master's degree courses in agriculture. Five staff members of MINAGRI went to South Africa for training in project planning, M&E using Microsoft Project, Finance & Procurement, and another software package for data analysis. 30 young experts from MINAGRI also received various short courses. Reportedly, many of the returning Master's students could not be absorbed into MINAGRI but are still working in various other functions within the sector.

55. The fact that many of the returning scholarship students could not be absorbed by MINAGRI gives rise to the question of why no systematic demand and goal oriented central-level capacity-building strategy had been drafted and implemented. However, the PSTA III (drafted with the support of PAPSTA) *does* contain such a well thought out capacity-building strategy. Despite the support provided to central-level capacity-building MINAGRI's still appears to prefer consultants to draft policy documents which raises a query on internal capacity in this area.
56. **Local capacity-building** activities have been implemented at the level of the pilot areas in the 6 districts, in altogether 11 watersheds. The 11 CLGSs, one per watershed, assumed a central role in project implementation. The CLGSs were established as the "parliament" or the major decision making, planning and monitoring body, representing all stakeholders in the watershed, and presided over by the vice mayor of the district in charge of Finance and Economic Development. Also one CCI per district was established as the "executive body" and local resource center from which to organize all local interventions, for farmers to attend meetings and receive information and training. Altogether 11 cooperatives of PR/RV volunteers for soil conservation (one per watershed) were established and trained in all techniques of SWC. They were also used as volunteer extension workers by all service providers.
57. Another important institution established at local level were the FFS that provide hands on training on different learning routes and continue now under the national agricultural extension system. The project also helped to establish and train 197 cooperatives in the 11 watersheds. The establishment of cooperatives has been an important means to organise and support marketing of milk and grains. However, despite significant improvements in the living standards of their members the cooperatives appear not to be financially self-sufficient today, especially those in the five extension areas.
58. Despite the various local capacity-building activities no strong farmer's apex organizations have been formed that could actively participate in policy dialogue in any of the six districts, let alone at national level have emerged.
59. **Objective 2:** to undertake innovative agricultural pilot action programmes (watershed protection, livestock development, crop production in marshland) and to strengthen the research and extension system
60. The component designated to achieve this objective was the second one, namely piloting and replication.⁸
61. During the first phase of PAPSTA a number of hitherto unknown innovative models and practices in Rwanda were **piloted** in the main agro-ecological zones of Rwanda. After mid-term **exit strategies** were devised and **replication** of the experiences gained in the first six watersheds concentrated on an additional number of five watersheds within the same six districts. These innovations included: an Integrated Participatory Approach to Watershed Management with WSM plans; "bocage" or hedge planting of fodder trees and grasses on bunds,

⁸ The original log frame is not instrumental in the evaluation of PAPSTA's performance in the framework of this component since objectives to be achieved are not clearly defined. For instance -in the case of watershed plans- the log frame only requires to specify the number of watershed plans developed but it does not set up a specific target expressed in numbers. To assess the extent to which results have been produced in this sector, reference should be made to the logical framework reported in the annex 1 of the Mid-term Review dated 2009. However, also in this case, only some targets are expressed in measurable indicators such as the ones referring to subcomponent on watershed management and livestock and agricultural intensification.

CLGSs; CCIs; community competitions; PR/RV, SRI system, water users groups (WUG), POG schemes for livestock (mainly cows for land holder of more than ½ ha; goats for land holders with less than ½ ha), cow health insurance scheme, milk collection centers and FFS.

62. All of the innovative practices have been tested in the field and were subsequently documented by PAPSTA. Most of them (with the exception of PR/RV) are now disseminated through the national agricultural extension service under the RAB.
63. The **watershed management** approach applied by PAPSTA seeks to improve the small holder farming system by establishing a direct link between farmer's participation in the establishment of the various SWC measures on their own and public land with granting them access to the livestock POG schemes. The participating farmers directly use the new earth structures for the production of fodder from agro-forest trees and fodder grasses. Such linkages established a suitable incentive system for SWC.
64. The CLGSs were supported to draft watershed management plans in a participatory bottom up approach. One PR/RV network per watershed was trained specifically in SWC techniques to assist *Association pour la protection de l'environnement et la promotion de l'agriculture au Rwanda* (APEPARWA), the service provider in charge of all WSM activities in overseeing earth works and ensuring maintenance. The teaming up of PAPSTA with the WFP food-for-work programme has proven to be an excellent means to tackle the problem of very high labor costs for SWC measures. WFP has signaled to be very interested in continuing this kind of work together with IFAD on possible future projects.
65. The approach promoted by PAPSTA is generally in line with international practices (see FAO 2006,⁹ World Bank 2008¹⁰). However, conceptually, PAPSTA's interventions in WSM could be better characterized as a modified approach to WSM because not all elements of a typical WSM approach have been applied, like for example establishing direct upstream-downstream linkages through compensation systems. Also, the PPA team observed that in the pilot watersheds some substantial soil erosion is still taking place because the entire watersheds could not actually be covered with SWC measures. The approach applied by PAPSTA is in essence a "community based approach to SWC measures within the framework of a watershed".
66. The SWC interventions promoted by PAPSTA included: the construction of full and half terraces, the digging of anti-erosion ditches/cut off drains and soil bunding, the planting of living hedges (bocage) on the earth bunds with various fodder/agro-forestry tree species and grasses, the fixing of ravines with different earth and vegetative measures, excavating water retention basins, rehabilitation and protection of rural roads and tree planting. The planting of the earth bunds with fodder trees and grasses fulfils two objectives: the fixation of the soil and the production of fodder for livestock.
67. Under PAPSTA a total of over 44,000 ha of degraded land was hedged, some 32 million agro-forestry trees (which is about 10 times the amount of the seedling production envisaged at design stage) and 33 million *Pennisetum* grass cuttings were locally produced in family and group nurseries and planted on the earth bunds. Over 100 ha of degraded soil have been developed in the six districts and altogether 1,400 ha of progressive terraces has been established. Part of the exit and scaling up strategy was to encourage farmers in the first six watersheds to take over tree and grass propagation by reducing support to the nurseries.

⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2006. *The New Generation of Watershed Management Programmes and Projects*. Forestry Department. Economics and Policy Division. www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0644e/a0644e00.htm.

¹⁰ World Bank. 2008. *Watershed Management Approaches, Policies, and Operations : Lessons for Scaling Up*: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2008/05/9608907/watershed-management-approaches-policies-operations-lessons-scaling-up>

68. The PPA team observed that even after the end of the project farmers in the two districts visited still propagate the most common fodder species (mainly *Calliandra* and *Pennisetum* grass). Some of the innovative practices, improved seeds, cuttings, etc. have been copied or passed on between neighbors beyond the borders of the watersheds and thus spread spontaneously.
69. The various erosion control and soils conservation works in combination with hedge planting are an appropriate and locally manageable technology that is widely applied in other countries. Such measures will become standard practice in all agricultural development activities in the country. The PSTA III reflects this: "The watershed management (SP 1.2.4) and agro-forestry (SP 1.1.3) interventions should be an integral part of crop intensification and hillside terracing efforts. Soil protection should be emphasised and implemented, including living barriers (progressive terraces) and leaving crop residues on the fields" (Government PSTA III).
70. In **agriculture and livestock integration and intensification** the entry point has been the distribution of high breed livestock through POG schemes organized by Heifer International, a highly specialized service provider that implemented a well thought out complete package, including all support services: the organization of veterinary care through para-vets, the construction of sheds and stall feeding, artificial insemination and livestock insemination. The support provided for the construction of milk collection centers enabled the cooperatives to establish access to markets for their milk. The households with too small plots of land to feed a cow (under ½ ha) received small livestock (goats, pigs, rabbits). The landless benefited from increased income opportunities from labor in food-for-work programs in SWC, the operation of family nurseries and kitchen gardens in their homesteads. The POG system works well and is now a well-established practice in Rwanda.
71. Improvements of agricultural crops have been the matching element of the PAPSTA strategy to improve small farming systems. Crop improvements have been achieved by a combination of soil fertility management through the systematic introduction of fertilizing practices (cow dung and other fertilizers), the use of improved inputs like seeds and better cultivation methods. The crops covered by this component activity have been the main staple foods maize, beans, cassava and sweet potatoes. Post-harvest storage facilities helped the cooperatives to market access produce at better prices. All of these have been successful in increasing crop yields (upland maize from 1.5 to 4.0-5.0 tons/ha, beans from 0.6 – 0.8 to 1.1 – 1.2 tons/ha, cassava from 15-20 to 30-40 tons/ha, sweet potatoes from 15-17 to 25-30 tons/ha, and rice from 3-4 to 6-7 tons/ha).

Table 1
2010 project production figures against national standards

Crops	National highest standards ^a	Average production in project area ^b	Districts
Beans	From 15 to 20	16	Bugesera, Ngororero, Nyamagabe, Nyanza and Gakenke
Maize	From 20 to 50	25	Kirehe and Gakenke
Cassava	From 150 to 250	195	Bugesera and Nyanza
Sweet potatoes	From 200 to 300	131	Ngororero and Nyamagabe
Banana	From 250 to 350	178	Kirehe

Source: Periodical survey on agricultural innovation, 2010

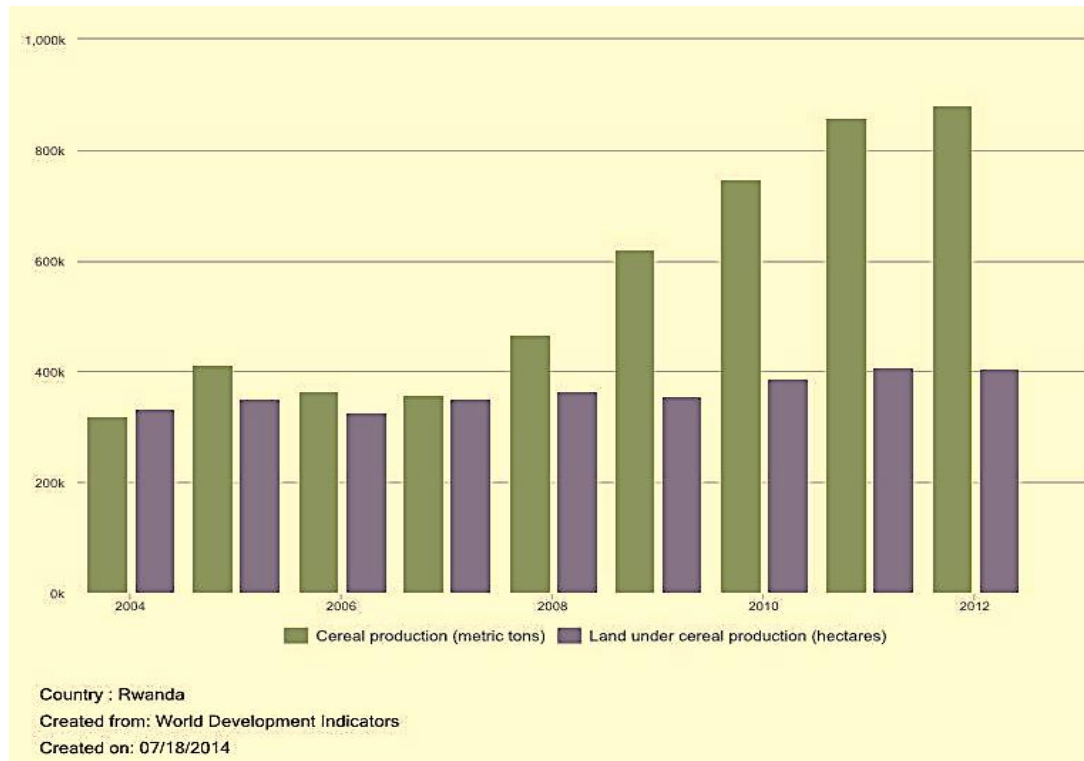
^a Kgs/100 square metres

^b Kgs/100 square metres

72. Under **marshland development**, an activity that only started two years into the project, promoting the introduction of the improved rice cultivation system (SRI) from Madagascar into Rwanda, in two pilot marshlands (Rwabutaza and Kibaza). This proved to be one of the most successful innovations introduced by PAPSTA.

Others were the Irrigation Water Users Associations (WUAs), the animal health insurance scheme, the FFS, POG, PR & RV, CLGS, CCI, Inteko y'Imihigo and the community competitions.

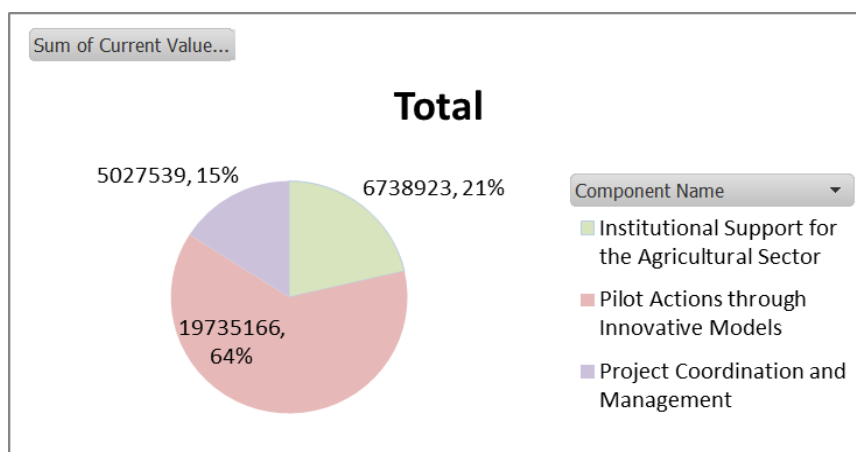
Figure 1
Cereal production



73. Even though PAPSTA has assisted the cooperatives in constructing post-harvest storage facilities and marketing, including supply chain development, especially after mid-term, the project's impact on marketing has been limited. These activities have not matured enough to be sustainable without further support.
74. **Community competitions**, another innovative practice piloted by PAPSTA were organized for the best business plans. This helped to mobilize entrepreneurial creativity and local problem solving skills. 17 cooperatives got their business plans accepted and financed. Noteworthy is also the fact that four cooperatives supported by PAPSTA have acquired business contracts directly with the WFP for the operation of drying and store facilities for maize, beans and rice in their areas under the WFP Purchase for Progress Project.
75. **Agriculture research** within PAPSTA has not taken place to the extent originally envisaged as it mainly concentrated on SRI. However, given the success of the overall piloting efforts, PAPSTA's strength has to be seen in the organization of the combination of all the different local technical, institutional and capacity-building interventions that are a feasible model for improving the small farming system of the rural hill areas of Rwanda.
76. **Objective 3:** to improve the overall management information system and the communications arrangements as well as the participatory monitoring and evaluation system to accelerate dissemination and adoption of farming technologies
77. One collective M&E system was established within the SPIU as a result of the implementation of PAPSTA. In particular, PAPSTA assisted MINAGRI in setting up a simplified **sector-wide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system** directly linked to the three SPIUs M&E systems (IFAD, World Bank and AfDB).

78. Such a mechanism further stimulated learning in IFAD, MINAGRI and the sector at large. The significant number of knowledge products developed has helped to capture innovations and success stories for replication and scaling up.
79. It is important to point out that such a positive result is due to the overall implementation architecture of PAPSTA, especially to the establishment of a SPIU.
80. According to the Appraisal Report, initially a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) - situated within MINAGRI - was established to take the lead in PAPSTA implementation. Several service providers (*Association pour la protection de l'environnement et la promotion de l'agriculture au Rwanda* [APEPARWA], Heifer International, German Development Service [DED]) were to carry out field-level work in the districts and the CLGSs were to act as the local implementation bodies, representing the local stakeholders in the watersheds. They were to eventually also form apex farmer's organizations.
81. However some managerial problems (managerial disparities between the management of the central and local-level interventions, high staff turnover due to short term contracting, staff shortages, etc.) arose during the first years of implementation. Late in the project's lifespan (February 2012) all IFAD projects started to be implemented under one IFAD Single Project Implementation Unit situated within MINAGRI. The latter was conducive to better coordination, reduction of transaction costs, preservation of expertise and retention of staff.
82. By virtue of the institutional structure (i.e. the SPIU) both PAPSTA and KWAMP have received prizes for financial management and procurement in the East and Southern Africa Region of IFAD in 2010 (see paragraph on efficiency).
83. The following chart shows that the per cent of management/coordination costs comes in at 15 per cent of the total actual expenditure of the project. Had the SPIU been fully operational at the start of the project this cost could have been reduced.

Chart: Actual expenditure by component



84. The overall **effectiveness of the project is rated at 5 (satisfactory)**. While most of the planned targets have been achieved by the end of the project, some of these targets have even been overachieved, like the tenfold production of the amount of agro-forest tree seedling (32 million instead of an envisaged 3.9 million). Most notably, local beneficiaries' in-kind contributions far exceeded expectations by achieving 484 per cent of the originally forecasted contribution by the end of the project period. This is a high rating and in addition to meeting objectives, the SPIU structure has enabled the project to deliver on a complex design as noted in paragraph 38. Had the delivery on local institutions, for example farmer apex bodies and financial management by Federations been better, the PAPSTA would have got a higher score.

Efficiency

85. PAPSTA was implemented within the foreseen timeline and budget framework and achieved all targets. The overall disbursement reached a highly satisfactory total amount of 100 per cent: IFAD resources (two loans and three grants) were fully disbursed, while WFP and DFID failed to provide the full amount committed (43.5 per cent and 63 per cent). However, this lack of fulfillment of the established financial commitments did not affect the final achievements of the project (original closing date was not extended).
86. Total financing at appraisal was US\$20.1 million. Following a shift in cofinancing (withdrawal of DGIS and BSF; new contributions from WFP, German Development Service [DED] and DFID), total financing reached US\$31.25 million. Following some changes in design and implementation, in 2008 and 2010 loan amendments were approved and funds were reallocated accordingly.
87. For an assessment of efficiency of the field interventions (e.g. agricultural production) the PPA team had to rely on the PCR Assessment of appendix 6 - Financial and Economic Analysis. According to that, for the resources spent the number/quality of outcomes resulted to be an appropriate investment: according to the PCR, after ten years of operations, an investment of one Rwandan Franc in PAPSTA's activities would have produced a return of 4.96/5.05 Rwandan Francs.
88. Moreover, the Executive Summary of appendix 6 states (pp xii) *"The internal rate of return of the project (calculated for project duration of 10 years) was between 34 and 38 per cent and was sufficient to justify the investment in the project and the cash flow generated by beneficiaries could cover the repayment of external financing. At appraisal, the expected IRR for the project was 26 per cent."* Although a positive IRR is in line with the positive effectiveness and quality assessments, it is not possible, from appendix 6, to endorse this statement or the IRRs given.
89. Appendix 6 offers two cost-benefit analyses: milk production in one cooperative, and income from a mix of irrigated paddy and milk, apparently by one widow, in another cooperative. Unfortunately, in neither case is it clear how the very sparse 'basic data' reported for each case is adopted into the two spreadsheets used to calculate the Net Present Value, IRR and Return Monetary Unit.
90. There is an absence of any financial units on the spreadsheets. What is included under 'Other income' and how this is estimated is not clear. The two spreadsheets use four very similar discount rates (34 per cent to 38 per cent). There is no note as to why such high and similar discount rates were chosen. (Had lower, more normal discount rates been chosen, Net Present Value returns would have been higher, of course). The milk-production data-sheet reports high, low and average incomes, but it is not clear if or where these appear in the spreadsheets. Overall, the presentation of data and analysis in appendix 6 is non-transparent and therefore unsatisfactory.
91. There is no discussion in appendix 6 about how the milk cooperative and the widow were chosen, or of how typical they may be. Lacking any evidence of the representativeness of the two cases presented, it is not possible to base any conclusions for these components or for the project upon them.
92. The Executive Summary paragraph refers to the "IRR of the project". An apportionment of the total cost of the project must therefore appear on the cost-side of the IRR. Although it is not possible to understand the spreadsheets clearly, for the reasons mentioned, the main cost elements ("investments/renewals", and possibly "working capital") appear to be the direct investment costs (of cattle, irrigation, etc.) rather than total project costs. If this is indeed the case, it is wrong - and misleading - to then refer to the "IRR of the project" in the conclusions. If, for example, the cost rows of the spreadsheets are only estimators for the "civil engineering" and "investment" budget lines (rows 1 and 2, table 8, page 60), the

cost side is only capturing about 40 per cent of the actual project cost (US\$12.3 million out of a total project cost of US\$30.5 million).

93. Overall, the project IRR as calculated by the PCR team is not based on clear data or analysis, and may therefore be potentially misleading.
94. Last but not the least the role played by the SPIU in maximizing the efficiency of the Programme was crucial. The very structure of this implementation unit, provides consistency and knowledge transfer through staffing (e.g. Project coordinator and financial manager) as well as through the performance of "back office" functions (accounting, treasury, financial reporting, and internal audit). Overall, SPIU demonstrated to be conducive to the smooth implementation of the project. This fostered a fruitful relation with the IFAD's Rome-based Controllers' and Financial Services Division. A tangible result of this effective collaboration was the high quality of the Annual Financial Statements provided by the SPIU to IFAD. These records fully met the requirements laid down by the Fund, thus representing a good practice to be adopted by other Project Management Unit PMUs.
95. **Efficiency is rated at 5 (satisfactory)** given the results from the resources and inputs. While there is room for improvement, the gains from the SPIU alone have been significant in timely and responsive delivery.

B. Rural poverty impact

96. PAPSTA contributed to the improvement of the small farming systems operated by subsistence farmers in the 11 pilot areas of 6 districts. By linking SWC measures to increasing agricultural productivity through the introduction of improved livestock and crops the project has seen an overall improvement of the traditional subsistence farming system. This approach has had a very positive overall impact on food security, increased household cash incomes as well as increased social capital through better community cohesion. Those farmers who have been very successful now also provide full time employment opportunities primarily to those who have small or no land holdings.

Household income and assets

97. The 2011 Impact Assessment¹¹ carried out for PAPSTA had already shown significant improvements in household incomes and assets in the 6 pilot watersheds. Most beneficiaries confirmed an increase in household assets like TVs, radios, livestock, land, means of transportation, clothes, etc. The data collected point to a reduction of the poorest households from 52-17 per cent, while medium households went up from 46-77 per cent.
98. The PPA mission observed economic situation of the households that had received a cow has significantly improved. The construction of milk collection centers and support to cooperatives in marketing milk greatly improved the cash incomes of the participating households (noting that some markets are more reliable than others). All cooperative members now have savings accounts and, due to the cooperative they have health insurances for their families. The households that had a too small plot of land to feed a cow (under ½ ha) had received small livestock (goats, pigs, rabbits). The latter group's cash income did also improve but not to the same degree as that of the former group. As these groups tend to be the more vulnerable this needs to be monitored closely in the future to look at possible value adding options for them, for example using the rabbit skins for products.
99. The landless benefited from increased income opportunities from labor in food-for-work programs in SWC, the operation of family nurseries and kitchen gardens in their homesteads. Increase in the productivity of the farming system in general has also created additional unforeseen local income opportunities: as paid labor for those farmers that have bought additional plots from the increased cash incomes;

¹¹ Rapport D' Impact Projet D'appui Au Plan Strategique De Transformation De L'agriculture: Rapport D' Impact, Janvier 2011, Cléophas Bazihizina & Désiré Nkezabahizi

from the sale of seedlings from family and group nurseries, the sale of vegetables, or from the sale of fodder to neighbors who do not produce enough fodder on their own land, etc.

100. The project performance on household income and assets is **rated as 5 (satisfactory)** particularly as all target groups benefitted.

Human and social capital and empowerment

101. The various support measures introduced for the improvement of: a) the farming systems; b) the institutions established (CLGSs, CCIs, cooperatives, PR/RV networks, FFS, etc.); and c) the training and exchange visits organised, all have helped to improve the economic situation of local farmers. They also increased human and social capital through new levels of cooperation and bottom up planning procedures instituted at WS level and thus certainly empowered local communities especially through the establishment of the institutions noted above. However, due to the dispersed nature of the interventions (one-two watersheds per district) during the life span of PAPSTA no strong farmers apex organizations have evolved that could represent farmer's interests at district, let alone national levels.
102. It must be also noted here, that income differentiation and capital accumulation is underway whereby farmers with larger land holdings that own cows are now able to save more cash and are buying additional plots of land. Even though the larger farmers are providing additional employment opportunities for their neighbours, the landless and other vulnerable groups (women and child headed households) are left behind in reaping increasing incomes. This could be a cause for future conflict.
103. Human and social capital and empowerment is **rated as a 5 (satisfactory)** as all target groups exhibited confidence in what they had learned, expressed clearly what their opportunities were as well as a commitment to share skills and to take on responsibility for sharing even on a voluntary basis.

Food security and agricultural productivity

104. PAPSTA has significantly improved food security and nutritional status. Especially the households of beneficiaries of the cow distribution scheme now consume more milk daily (according to the PCR 75 per cent of their produce, which seems rather high). In addition, beneficiaries of the small animal distribution scheme and the landless through other income opportunities certainly improved their household food security. Increases in yields of agricultural crops have been significant (see figures above in section III A).
105. The project performance on food security and agricultural productivity is **rated as 5 (satisfactory)** as all households have increased their food security (including the landless through kitchen gardens).

Natural resources, the environment and climate change

106. The WSM activities have had a considerable positive environmental impact. Through the construction of various SWC measures, accompanied by the planting of fodder trees and grasses PAPSTA has contributed to the reduction of soil erosion and the loss of valuable top soil. Tree planting on public and private land has contributed to the provision of timber and firewood. Hedgerow planting with nitrogen fixing trees and the application of manure has improved soil fertility, while mulching of fields fixates soils and further improves soil water retention capacity.
107. In one of PAPSTA's pilot zones in Nyanza District, the introduction of biogas digesters enabled some beneficiaries there to reduce their consumption of fire wood; they now use biogas for cooking and lighting, thereby significantly reducing the use of firewood. The slurry from the biogas digesters is also excellent manure for the fields. This would be worthy of consideration for scaling up.
108. The development of marshlands into irrigated rice fields may pose a number of environmental risks due to the inherent loss of biodiversity brought about by the

area reduction of the natural habitat of animal and plant species. In addition, a number of risks associated with changes in the water tables may pose a threat: possible increased drainage of upstream areas and reduction of water availability in downstream areas; possible contamination of the water with pesticides and chemical fertilizers, etc. Therefore, in the future, marshland development should be preceded by Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Studies that contain mitigation strategies, like leaving some areas uncultivated and ensuring ecological corridors between such remaining wetlands, thus ensuring the availability of habitats for endemic plant and animal species.

109. The project performance on natural resources, the environment and climate change is **rated as 5 (satisfactory)** as beneficiaries demonstrated knowledge on the watershed management and use of terracing for increased production in a sustainable manner.

Institutions and policies

110. The project has had a significant impact on the structure and direction of the entire agricultural sector in Rwanda (refer to paras 47 to 54). In turn the policies and institutional arrangements have had a significant impact on increased efficiency and effectiveness from local to national levels. This has allowed for participatory processes and learning to be effective at the local level while producing increased knowledge at the national level for planning and budgetary processes. In addition, responsibilities at the local level for participatory processes have been taken seriously and included in district-level budgets. The notion of "volunteer extension workers" could more appropriately be viewed as knowledge/skills transfer at the local level so as an 'institutional' the process provides immediate support to small farmers.
111. The project performance on institutions and policies is **rated as 6 (highly satisfactory)**.
112. **Overall the rating for rural poverty impact is 5 (satisfactory)**. While there are areas for improvement as noted above, the achievements in: food security and nutrition; climate related issues; social empowerment; and institutional processes and policies are commendable.

C. Other performance criteria

Sustainability

113. All activities and institutional structures (CLGSs, CCIs) have been formally handed over to all of the six the districts at the end of the project in 2013. The maintenance of the SWC measures has also been incorporated into the district Handover Documents. The CLGSs and WSM Plans have been incorporated into the district-level structure under whose mandate they fall, namely the Joint Action Development Forum (JDAF).
114. The CCIs continue to serve as venues for local gatherings, as a training venue and as meeting places for the local farmers. Despite the initial doubt if the CCIs could be incorporated into the district infrastructure, the CCI in Nyanza District for example has been identified as a potential business development center under a new government initiative that seeks to promote local business development and provide internet connections to all rural areas. This appears to be a valid role for all CCIs constructed.

Table 2

Natural resource management

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>% of target</i>
Degraded land – hedged and protected	683 ha	443
Agro- forestry trees – produced and transplanted	44 180 ha	92
Private nurseries	20 million	
Household nurseries	12.95 million	
Progressive terraces	683 ha	105
Forestry seedlings distributed	9 696 000	31

115. After hand over to the districts, the networks of local volunteer extension workers, the PR/RV, even though highly useful and appreciated in their neighborhoods, have not found a formal place in the district structures. However, they continue to informally spread their knowledge and skills. Some of the PR's educated by PAPSTA as kitchen garden trainers in Nyanza District for example have been hired by the district Agriculturalist to train 40 new kitchen garden trainers. The para-vets and kitchen garden trainers, many of whom have also been acting as PR/RV during the project do have a place in the district structure, but have to rely on payment by the clients to keep up their services in the long run.
116. The sustainability of 197 cooperatives established in the 11 watersheds, especially those in the replication watersheds is a cause for concern. Even though they did receive business development, book keeping and other types of management training, many of them do not yet have the necessary management capacity to continue operations without outside assistance. Despite some support in post-harvest storage and marketing, many still grapple with financial sustainability, marketing issues, access to main roads, etc. Community competitions that helped to unleash the cooperative's creativity and mobilized their problem solving skills are a step in the right direction. The fact that the cooperatives can become independent is further illustrated by the fact that two of them have managed to close contracts directly with the WFP for the operation of drying and store facilities for maize, beans and rice under the WFP Purchase for Progress Project.
117. It remains to be seen how the districts will manage to raise the human and financial resources to maintain the **SWC structures**. In cases of erratic rainfalls and possible damage to existing larger SWC structures, local farmers will not be able to repair these without outside support. To date no mechanism is in place for payment of usage thereby collecting funds towards operation and maintenance costs. While districts have agreed to cover these costs and include them in their five-year District Development Plans there is evidence to show that when users contribute to these costs greater care is taken and maintenance/operational costs are reduced.
118. In the first six watersheds cuttings and seedlings for hedge planting are still available and planted. In the five replication watershed where PAPSTA intervened half way through the implementation period (after year 3) the impact of hedging was much more limited by the lack of planting material and maintenance of SWC structures by the beneficiaries. These areas may also need more support and follow up.
119. The issue of sustainability of benefits for the target groups looks promising for basics such as access to water, improved nutrition and opportunities for income generation at a variety of levels. Some of these could be increased with better marketing/business skills and development of some apex organizations. For example the milk federation the team met with clearly needed support to ensure better returns by engaging in small processing activities, contracts for milk

collection with more than one buyer (especially as the access road is not always accessible).

120. Having said this many of the poorest now have an income from continued propagation of the most common fodder species (mainly Calliandra and Pennisetum grass). Some of the innovative practices, improved seeds, cuttings, etc. have been copied or passed on between neighbors beyond the borders of the watersheds and thus spread spontaneously.
121. The various erosion control and soils conservation works in combination with hedge planting are an appropriate and locally manageable technology that is widely applied in other countries. Such measures will become standard practice in all agricultural development activities in the country. Napier grass that will continue with the milk industry that has been established. Home gardens are not only improving nutrition but for some also providing an income. Many of these could still be improved but it is fair to say they have had a significant impact even at this level.
122. Sustainability of the project is **rated as 4 (moderately satisfactory)**. Two concerns reduced this rating. Firstly, while the most vulnerable clearly benefitted there is a need to provide greater support for learning for these groups which are predominantly women headed household and young people / child headed households – they do not have the support that family households can provide to each other. Secondly, a greater variety of options for value adding at the village needs to be addressed especially if the village does not have all year road access and nor should they rely on one buyer.

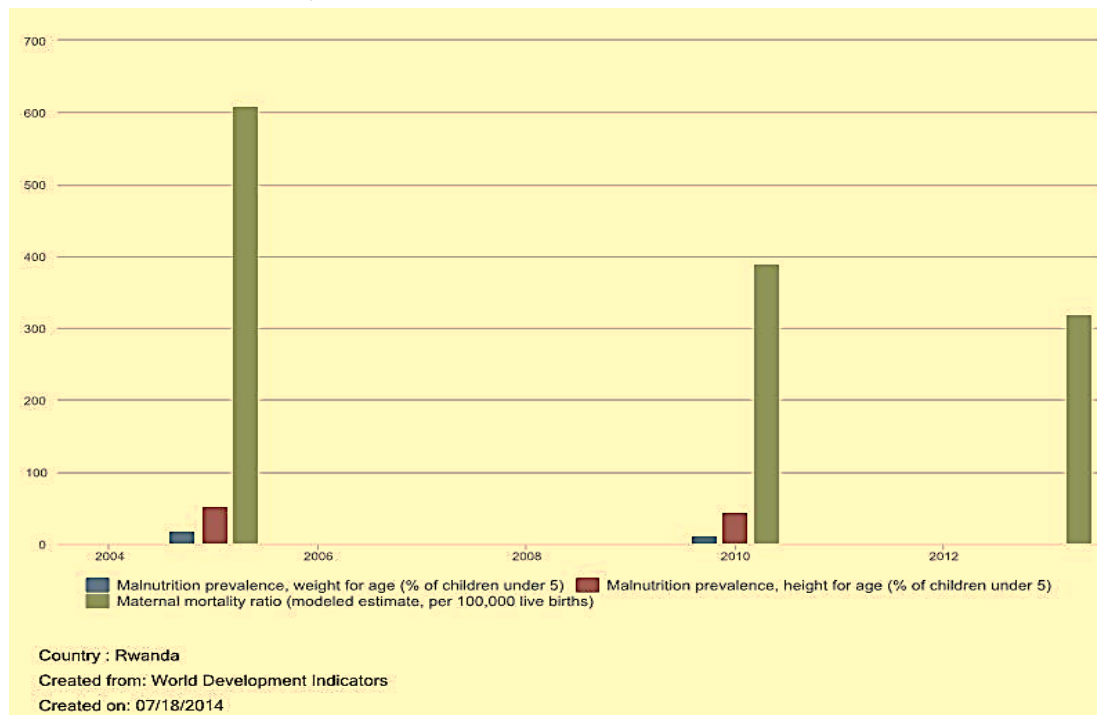
Gender equality and women's empowerment

123. PAPSTA adopted a gender inter-grated approach to implementation. The project has assisted MINAGRI in drafting the national Agriculture Gender Strategy. PAPSTA also put in place a number of measures geared to specifically benefit women, like women quota in all project activities, including training (30 per cent women beneficiaries); equal pay for men and women for the daily labour doing earth works; bank accounts in the names of all project beneficiaries, both men and women, so as to ensure that women have full control over their own funds, etc.
124. Not only widows, but women in general have benefited from the various activities. However, gender disparities are still prevalent. According to the PAPSTA Baseline Survey 33 per cent of the households in the project areas are female headed. Even though many of these most vulnerable women are now members of cooperatives that provide them with a minimal social safety net, they still experience particular problems, including: shortage of labor in the household, shortage of fodder for their livestock due to the limited size of their land; a limited ability to raise cash for secondary (and tertiary) schooling of their children (in Rwanda only primary schooling and the first year of secondary schooling are free); unforeseen expenses, etc. Due to the social stigma of widowhood many of them also suffer from low self-esteem and a lack of an entrepreneurial mindset. Both widows and young people appear to command less respect by some and therefore their benefits from the project are not as great as they could be.
125. Another issue brought up by a women's group during the PPA mission was the problem of smoke in the kitchens. The newly constructed houses all over Rwanda since 2012 have tiled roofs or corrugated iron sheets as roofing. However, none of the new houses have chimneys. The open fires in the kitchens produce a large amount of smoke that is particularly harmful for women and children who spend more time in the kitchens which leads to widespread respiratory diseases.
126. Some biogas digesters had been already introduced by PAPSTA in Nyanza. The introduction of improved stoves like the Canarumwe model (promoted by Netherlands Development Organization in Rwanda) and the introduction of domestic biogas digesters in combination with the POG cow distribution schemes

should become a standard practice in Rwanda. Improved stoves can reduce firewood consumption by more than 30 per cent as compared to open stoves. Biogas digesters provide gas for cooking and lighting the slurry from the digesters are an excellent fertilizer. In addition, the large scale promotion of stoves and biogas digesters could create additional local income opportunities.

Figure 2

Rwanda. Maternal mortality rates and child malnutrition



127. On the positive side as can be seen from figure 2 there have been significant improvements in women's health in Rwanda for example the reduction in maternal mortality, and as noted earlier a decline in child malnutrition. Noting that these results are not wholly attributable to PAPSTA the project will have contributed towards these outcomes.

128. Gender equality and women's empowerment in the project is **rated as a 4 (moderately satisfactory)**. As for sustainability women headed households have a more challenges and in particular widows appear to suffer more bias within the local-level context.

Innovation and scaling up

129. As far as **innovation** is concerned, PAPSTA has made a commendable contribution towards the development of locally manageable appropriate pro-poor technologies to improve the farming systems in the major agro-ecological zones of the country. It has been a deliberate strategy to cover all agro-ecological zones with these pilot areas and to test and replicate the various innovations, but due to the limited density of interventions (in just one-two watersheds per district) local impact was limited. The implementation, testing, and systematic documentation of the various innovations have led to the publication of a number of standard technical packages that are now used as extension materials by the national extension service and other development partners all over the country. This can be seen as one venue for scaling up beyond the project areas.

130. An exit strategy and **scaling up** had been central in the design features of PAPSTA. The pilot activities in six districts in the first six watersheds were repeated in five additional watersheds in the same districts after mid-term. The scaling up was facilitated by the use of exchange visits and farmer-to-farmer extension methods between the startup watersheds and the extension areas.

131. By the end of the project the districts were asked to take charge of the achievements and incorporate them into the district-level planning process, which has happened. Should current institutional and governance arrangements in country change the following aspects would need to be addressed.
132. PAPSTA drafted an exhaustive enumeration of all interventions in the district that were handed over in a formal ceremony. However, even though scaling up has been a design feature, the scaling up strategy developed by PAPSTA does not contain a thorough analysis of drivers and spaces governing human and financial resources of the districts.
133. The challenge of scaling up of PAPSTA's achievement is to develop a suitable institutional and capacity-building model for the decentralized district administrations, including realistic financial models for implementation. In the medium to long term any scaling up strategy will hinge on the districts' leadership, financial and administrative capacities. With the limited staff numbers working in the district administrations it may well be necessary for the districts to continue to utilize the support of service providers.
134. The project performance on innovation and scaling up is **rated as a 5 (satisfactory)**. The concern expressed above regarding district-level capacity and resources (human and financial – which is outside of the mandate of MINAGRI) may benefit from discussions with the Ministries of Finance and Local Government to agree on a strategy.

D. Performance of partners

135. **IFAD.** IFAD's performance has been satisfactory from design using a participatory process, one that was driven by the Government and responded to lessons learned as well as in supervision and implementation of the project. IFAD provided technical assistance appropriate to the needs of the project while responding to the changing environment with suitable adjustments to implementation. PAPSTA was under the direct supervision of IFAD who carried out its fiduciary and compliance responsibilities in a timely and useful manner.
136. In addition, IFAD provided support for: a good quality Mid-term Review, training on the Results and Impact Management System which the SPIU commented that IFAD is the only agency even attempting to address third-level indicators which the Government appreciates; and clearly informed/supported the SPIU to deliver a comprehensive PCR.
137. **Government.** The Government's performance was satisfactory. Loan covenants and financial agreements were well respected and the agreed counterpart funds were released in a timely manner. Despite initial management problems, PAPSTA was been able to redress some challenges at mid-term and managed to achieve all targets both timely and within the budget framework originally foreseen. In addition, the Government quickly incorporated lessons (as well as into other ongoing projects) and provided good coordination to support implementation. PAPSTA fund disbursement was on target (100 per cent) and timely. The Government followed procurement rules and ensured audits of good quality in a timely manner. The establishment and performance of the SPIU (for IFAD) was satisfactory noting that they SPIU received two awards for good performance.
138. With regard to the PCR the Government appears to have treated the process as one for learning. It has been on the whole realistic in its assessment of achievements and reported with a critical view. The report is comprehensive and mostly can be validated. With further improvements to the M&E system this should improve the quality immensely (here data for recalculation of IRR was not available nor was it comprehensive enough across all production areas).
139. **Donors.** During PAPSTA implementation, some changes took place in relation to the participation of initial cofinancers. Some intended donors withdrew however

new ones joined the project, thus ensuring adequate cofinancing for the project. In particular, the contribution by WFP (in the form of food- for -work) proved to be strategically significant since it enabled the successful implementation of watershed management activities and soil protection measures, by providing access to food for the target group prior their land being productive as well as opportunities for the purchasing of produce and post-harvest handling. Broadly speaking, the donors which performed better in the framework of PAPSTA implementation were the ones whose engagement was consistent with government policies, strategies and actions.

140. Following the 2005 Paris Declaration, the Government approved an Aid Policy which established the framework for Rwanda's aid management.¹² This strategy has assisted government in holding donors to account for the pledges made within the above mentioned Declaration.
141. In this respect, it can be noted that only those donors which are ready to provide both demand-driven assistance (thus supporting country's priorities) and to work within budget "type" support options can effectively cooperate and engage with the Government.
142. **Rating of all partners stands at 5 (satisfactory)** as Government (rated as a 5) clearly took responsibility and the lead while IFAD (also rated as a 5) provided timely support/responses to implementation and financing needs of the project.

E. Overall project achievement

143. Overall, PAPSTA achieved all the development objectives agreed at design despite the changes regarding the composition of its cofinancing and the rapidly changing Rwandese institutional context as a whole (different reforms in public administration and in the economic sector).
144. PAPSTA increased food security. This was achieved by increasing the knowledge and skills of the rural poor in the targeted areas. PASTA fully supported Rwandese policy making in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, the project presented highly innovative features by introducing new ideas and production methods as follows:
(i) integrated community approach to sustainable management of watersheds;
(ii) adoption of the bocage technique; (iii) kitchen gardening methods;
(iv) introduction of the SRI system; (v) promotion of the Pass on the Gift system;
(vi) introduction of cow insurance schemes; and (vii) establishment of milk collection centres.
145. Finally PAPSTA contributed to building effective local-level institutions in the country (establishment of the CCIs and of the CGLSs). In general, the PPA concludes that PAPSTA has been a satisfactory project with only a few areas of challenge.
146. This **overall project achievement is rated as a 5 (satisfactory)**.

¹² See Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012. *Assessment of Sector-wide Approach (SWAp)*.

Key points

- Innovations and the institutional structures established by PAPSTA (CGLS, CCISs) have been absorbed by the Rwandese public administration at local and central level (districts, RAB).
- Sustainability, especially of the cooperatives, remains an issue of concern and should be closely monitored. In addition more technical assistance is needed for the most vulnerable groups.
- PAPSTA piloted various technological innovations in the major agro-ecological zones of Rwanda (WSM, improved livestock, bocage, seed production, etc.) which was scaled up over nationally through the national extension service.
- Overall, efficiency of PAPSTA interventions has been satisfactory.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

147. The PAPSTA project design remained highly relevant to government priorities and adapted in response to the evolving environment. With its multi-level approach, simultaneously testing and replication of innovations and providing high-level policy input, PAPSTA has played a strategic role in the transformation of the agricultural sector; it responded to critical needs of MINAGRI at the right time. IFAD has become a reliable and valued partner of the MINAGRI in the process.
148. **The project design was sound and directly catered to the needs and interests of the rural poor.** Even though complex and difficult to manage the project design remained relevant to the context throughout the implementation period.
149. PAPSTA assisted MINAGRI in the policy design of some of the central policies shaping the sector, including PSTA II and III. The project also facilitated improved sector coordination through the SWAp and the sectoral M&E system.
150. The success of the project's performance can be attributed to the following key aspects: (i) the institutional arrangements through the establishment of the SPIU; (ii) development of the M&E framework; consistent practices across all projects for financial matters, procurement and audits; (iii) knowledge of staff is retained and transferred to new projects; and (iv) the use of results based contracts for staff which are also prevalent at all levels within the country from local through to national.
151. Given this using the new pilot financing mechanism would enable technical assistance to be provided to vulnerable groups to complete the skill development thus allowing greater benefits from the project(s) to be attained as well as increase sustainability.
152. **Sustainability of interventions, especially in the replication areas remain a concern.** Despite the fact that piloting, coupled with exit strategies and replication were a central design feature, with the benefit of hindsight it must be concluded that the time frame for ensuring the sustainability of local-level capacity-building, especially of the cooperatives, was underestimated.
153. The management arrangements of PAPSTA within the framework of the IFAD SPIU proved that it *is* possible to implement complex projects. The design of PAPSTA was multifaceted; project management was difficult initially due to delays in staff recruitment, changeover of staff on short terms contracts, delays in funding for central-level capacity-building and so forth. Another initial management challenge was the difficulty to harmonize central and local-level interventions that seemed to proceed as unrelated components. However, with a substantial increase in staff numbers, better horizontal coordination of the service providers, the establishment of the SPIU with general knowledge management and M&E systems the project

management improved. The implementation of all IFAD projects within one SPIU ensured continuous cross learning between IFAD (and other) projects, reduction of transaction costs, the preservation of expertise and retention of staff, especially between PAPSTA and the follow up project KWAMP. Staff and service providers implementing PAPSTA continued onto the implementation of KWAMP and directly applied the lessons learnt, added new elements for piloting and testing.

154. **PAPSTAs successfully piloted and documented a number of crucial locally appropriate innovations in the farming systems of all agro-ecological zones of the country, most of which are now adopted at national level and implemented by the national agricultural extension service (RAB).** The greatest shortcoming is the limited sustainability of intervention in the districts. The low intensity of interventions in just one-two watersheds per district and limited sustainability of various aspects within these; this problem is especially pronounced in the five extension watersheds covered after mid-term. Issues insufficiently tackled during the life span of PAPSTA include: limited inputs into marketing, post-harvesting technologies and processing, and rural credit facilities. Another critical issue is the lack of construction of (all weather) feeder roads which had not been included in the project design. These issues have now been incorporated into the design of recent IFAD projects in Rwanda, like KWAMP and the Project for Rural Income through Exports.

B. Recommendations

Sustainability

155. As already mentioned, PAPSTA achieved to a large extent the development objectives agreed at design and its overall performance can be considered satisfactory.
156. However, the seven year-period of implementation cannot be considered a reasonable time frame to ensure the sustainability of all the results produced by the project. In order to avoid the dissipation of the development achievements, the PPA suggests formulating future capacity-building activities to be carried out at local level as long term interventions (especially for the most vulnerable groups): if necessary, also the strengthening of local institutional structures (to be preserved beyond the time frame of projects) and processes providing capacity-building support could be envisaged. (This could either be built into the MINAGRI's ongoing work plans or could also be responded to through the proposal in paragraph 163).
157. Another aspect related to sustainability is the capacity to continue the delivery of services such as the ones provided by the PR/RV. One option may be to consider the adoption of a fee-for-service approach in this context.

Targeting

158. PASPTA has reached the rural poor, including vulnerable groups (women, youth and child headed households). However, as already noted these individuals still face specific challenges (female heads of households having limited labour force and experiencing considerable difficulties in saving cash, young people having restricted access to secondary and tertiary schooling while also being responsible for siblings and income).
159. In this respect PPA suggests to further strengthen capacity-building in favor of these highly vulnerable groups to enable them to face these challenges. Indeed these highly vulnerable groups should receive greater support for skill development (i.e. technology transfers, business skills, etc.) as they have a greater workload and less support than poor families with two adults. This could be done by facilitating access to high-level training opportunities (e.g. establishment of national scholarship program for secondary and tertiary education). This would be in line also with the provisions of PSTA III, which envisages the use of quota system for women and youth to access entrepreneurship training and other

courses. Youth training centres could also offer new opportunities to youth to become technical specialists.

Partnership with the Government

160. The Government structures are conducive to piloting new financing partnership with donors. In this context IFAD could undertake different actions such as the production of a single five-year period design document and the adoption of programmatic financing approach prior to the identification of agreed sectors of interventions
161. As far as the involvement of the private sector is concerned, it would be useful for the Government to develop a set of "principles of engagement" between the parties (Government, private sector entity and the target group). In this respect, IFAD could act as broker ensuring equitable risk mechanisms, capacity-building and technology transfer. Two key principals are that **greater risk should not be placed on the target group** who are already vulnerable and that they should **receive the same "benefits"** as other commercial producers from the private sector entity e.g. ongoing training/support, access to purchase bulk inputs and so forth.

Financing mechanisms

162. Given the achievements noted under project performance and the current high standards exhibited as well as the implementation arrangements in Rwanda a unique opportunity presents itself to pilot a new way of working that will further build on these achievements, reduce some risks as well as improve efficiencies for both the Government and IFAD. In addition, it is likely that such an approach would further reduce risks associated with complexity.
163. The PPA proposes to pilot a "programmatic financing" approach. Such an approach would provide flexibility to respond to unforeseen emergencies, allow for follow-up support to critical target groups (women and child headed households) and in the long run reduce costs associated with design. This proposal would require having an "in-depth" COSOP along the lines of a single five-year period design document and thus identifying clearly differentiated target groups, thematic focuses in priority order, geographical priorities, etc. – for which full criteria would need to be developed and agreed. Through the process a full list of key criteria for other countries to engage with IFAD on this basis could also be further developed following an assessment of the pilot.

Scaling up

164. Scaling up requires thorough preparation which would include environmental and social impact assessment studies to ensure long term environmental and social impacts (e.g. impact on marshland development as well as institutional arrangement that both reflect appropriate mandate roles and responsibilities among civil society, private sector and the government).
165. The identification of appropriate mitigation strategies for intervention could be a viable option. For instance, mitigating measures could include leaving some marshland areas uncultivated and ensuring ecological corridors between such remaining wetlands for the migration of plant and animal species and the preservation of biodiversity.
166. Also, the introduction of environmentally friendly cooking and heating devices could be considered as another measure to upscale PASTA intervention. The use of improved stoves (or biogas digesters) as a standard feature of any agriculture package can limit the presence of smoke in kitchens (major cause of respiratory diseases among women and children), help to save more than 30 per cent of firewood and spare trees that can fulfill other important environmental functions. Moreover, such a measure can promote local employment and business opportunities, especially for the youth.

Partnerships

167. The partnership between government, WFP and IFAD has resulted in significant achievements. Where appropriate such a partnership should be actively sought with partners. For example, the trilateral partnership IFAD, WFP and the Government demonstrated to be an excellent means to achieve the PSTA III objective of scaling up watershed management and soil conservation measures (WFP covered the costs of earth works, while the Fund accompanied technical, institutional and capacity-building support) and importantly provided an income for the poor. It is noted that this approach did not work in KWAMP. Financing/Partnership agreements need to be strengthened so as not to have a negative impact should the partner not deliver on their promised commitments.

Rating comparison

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>IFAD-PMD rating^a</i>	<i>PPA rating^a</i>	<i>Rating disconnect</i>
Project performance			
Relevance	6	6	0
Effectiveness	5	5	0
Efficiency	5	5	0
Project performance^b	5	5	0
Rural poverty impact			
Household income and assets	5	5	0
Human and social capital and empowerment	5	5	0
Food security and agricultural productivity	5	5	0
Natural resources, environment and climate change	5	5	0
Institutions and policies	6	6	0
Rural poverty impact^c	5	5	0
Other performance criteria			
Sustainability	5	4	-1
Innovation and scaling up	5	5	0
Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	4	0
Overall project achievement^d	5	5	0
Performance of partners^e			
IFAD	5	5	0
Government	5	5	0
Average net disconnect			-0.07

^a Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory.

^b Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

^c This is not an average of ratings of individual impact domains.

^d This is not an average of ratings of individual evaluation criteria but an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the rating for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, rural poverty impact, sustainability, innovation and scaling up, and gender.

^e The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall assessment ratings.

Ratings of the project completion report quality

	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE PCRV rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Scope	6	6	none
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)	4	5	+1
Lessons	6	6	none
Candour	5	5	none

Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory.

Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Region	East and Southern Africa	Total project costs	20.1		30.6	
Country	Rwanda	IFAD loan and percentage of total	8.4 (8.2 loan +0.2 Technical Assistance Grant (TAG))		13.9 (9.45 loan + Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) grant and TAG 4.45)	45%
Loan number	671 (loan) + 084 (DSF grant) + 733 (TAG)	Government of Rwanda	1.3	6%	1.35	4.4%
Type of project (subsector)	AGRIC	Government of The Netherlands	4.8	24%	//	//
Financing type	IFAD initiated and cofinanced	Belgium Survival Fund	1.5	7%	//	//
Lending terms [*]	Highly concessional	German Development Service	//	//	0.02	0.09%
Date of approval	8/9/2005	Department for International Development – United Kingdom	3.0	15%	3.4	15%
Date of loan signature	7/10/2005	World Food Programme	//	//	1.5	6%
Date of effectiveness	31/03/2006	Beneficiaries	1.1	5%	5.2	17%
Loan amendments	2	Number of beneficiaries: (if appropriate, specify if direct or indirect)			175 000 people (indirect beneficiaries)	
Loan closure extensions	None					
Country programme managers	Mr Francisco Pinchón (current) Mr Claus Reiner	Loan closing date	30/09/2013			
Regional director(s)	Mr Pèrin Saint Ange	Mid-term review	May 2009			
Project completion report reviewer	Ms Marina Izzo	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)	1 005 (IFAD loan) + 100% (DSF grant + TAG)			
Project completion report quality control panel	Mr Mark Keating	Date of project completion report	9 August 2013			

Source: President's Report, project completion report, supervision reports, IFAD's Loans and Grant System and Portfolio Management System.

* There are four types of lending terms: (i) special loans on highly concessional terms, free of interest but bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75%) per annum and having a maturity period of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (ii) loans on hardened terms, bearing a service charge of three fourths of one per cent (0.75%) per annum and having a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 10 years; (iii) loans on intermediate terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to 50 per cent of the variable reference interest rate and a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of five years; (iv) loans on ordinary terms, with a rate of interest per annum equivalent to one hundred per cent (100%) of the variable reference interest rate, and a maturity period of 15-18 18 years, including a grace period of three years.

Terms of reference

A. Background

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) will undertake a project performance assessment (PPA) of the *Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture* (PAPSTA). The PPA is a project-level evaluation aiming to: (i) provide an independent assessment of the overall results of projects; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations within the country.
2. A PPA is conducted as a next step after a project completion report validation (PCRVR). PCRVR performs the following functions: (i) independent verification of the analytical quality of the project completion report; (ii) independent review of project performance and results through desk review; and (iii) extrapolation of key substantive findings and lessons learnt for further synthesis. The PCRVR consists of a desk review of the project completion report and other available reports and documents. A PPA includes a country visit in order to complement the PCRVR findings and fill in information gaps identified by the PCRVR.
3. The PPA applies the evaluation criteria outlined in the IFAD Evaluation Manual. In view of the time and resources available, the PPA is generally not expected to undertake quantitative surveys. The PPA rather adds analysis based on interviews at IFAD headquarters, interactions with stakeholders in the country including project beneficiaries, and direct observations in the field. As such it relies necessarily on the data available from the project monitoring and evaluation system.
4. **Country context.**¹ Since 1994 Rwanda has made impressive progress in the promotion of both economic growth and social development. Between 2001 and 2012, real GDP growth averaged 8.1 per cent per annum. The poverty rate dropped from 59 per cent in 2001 to 45 per cent in 2011. Moreover, considerable efforts are being devoted to ensure that such achievements can be broadly shared to mitigate risks of erosion of the country's hard-won political and social stability. Specifically, Rwanda's long-term development goals are embedded in its Vision 2020, a broad national strategy aiming to transform the country from a low-income agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based, service-oriented economy by 2020. In order to achieve these long-term development goals, the government of Rwanda has formulated a medium-term strategy, namely the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) whose highest priority is the acceleration of economic growth and the achievement of a marked reduction of poverty by operating in four thematic areas: economic transformation, rural development, productivity and youth employment, accountable governance. The EDPRS 2 aims to achieve the following goals by 2018: (i) to increase GDP per capita to US\$1,000, (ii) to decrease the poverty rate to below 30 per cent and (iii) to reduce extreme poverty rate to below 9 per cent. An underlying macroeconomic assumption is to accelerate annual GDP growth to 10 per cent over the period 2013-2018. Conversely, among the major fragilities identified in the Rwandan economy there is the significant weakness of the private sector which is still largely informal. The latter has to play a bigger role in ensuring economic growth. Poor infrastructure and the lack of access can be considered among the major constraints to private investment. Despite this situation, some reforms have been successfully implemented to improve the business environment and to reduce the cost of doing business: according to the World Bank, Rwanda is now ranked as the third easiest place to do business in Sub-Saharan Africa.

¹ World Bank. www.worldbank.org/en/country/rwanda/overview.

5. **Project description.** The overall objective was to contribute to the poverty reduction process in Rwanda by transforming the current practice of subsistence farming into market-oriented agriculture and increasing opportunities for growing cash crops, while ensuring food security and preserving the existing resource base. This had to be achieved by: (i) strengthening the technical, managerial and institutional capacity of the major stakeholders (farmers' organizations, government and decentralized district administrations, civil society organizations, the private sector and NGOs) involved in Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA) implementation and improving their performance in delivering priority services to the target group; (ii) undertaking innovative agricultural pilot action programmes consisting of watershed protection, livestock development, crop production in marshland and the strengthening of the research and extension system; and (iii) improving the overall management information system and the communications arrangements as well as the participatory monitoring and evaluation system to accelerate the dissemination and the adoption of farming technologies.

B. Methodology

6. **Objectives.** The main objectives of the PPA are to: (i) assess the results of the programme; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in Rwanda.
7. **Scope.** The PPA will take account of the preliminary findings of the PCRV and further desk review issues emerging from interviews at IFAD headquarters, and a focused mission to the country for the purpose of generating a comprehensive, evidence-based evaluation. However, the PPA will not need to examine or re-examine the full spectrum of programme activities, achievements and drawbacks, but will focus on selected key issues. Furthermore, subject to the availability of time and budgetary resources, due attention will be paid to filling in the evaluative information gaps of the PCR and other programme documents.
8. **Evaluation criteria.** In line with the evaluation criteria outlined in IOE's Evaluation Manual (2009), added evaluation criteria (2010)² and IOE Guidelines for PCRV and PPA (January 2012), the key evaluation criteria applied in this PPA will include:
- (i) Relevance, 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;
 - (ii) 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;
 - (iii) Efficiency, which indicates how economically resources/inputs are converted into results;
 - (iv) 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 result of development interventions. Five impact domains are employed to generate a composite indication of rural poverty impact: household income and assets; human and social capital and empowerment; food security and agricultural productivity; natural resources, environment and climate change; and institutions and policies;
 - (v) Sustainability, indicating the likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It

² Gender, climate change, and scaling up.

also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life;

- (vi) Pro-poor innovation and scaling up, assessing the extent to which IFAD development interventions have introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction and the extent to which these interventions have been (or are likely to be) replicated and scaled up by government, private sector and other agencies;
 - (vii) Gender equality and women's empowerment. This criterion is related to the relevance of design in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, the level of resources committed, and changes promoted by the project; and
 - (viii) Besides, the 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.
9. **Data collection.** The PPA will build on the initial findings of the PCRV. In addition, interviews with relevant stakeholders will be conducted both at IFAD headquarters and in Rwanda. During the mission to Rwanda, additional primary and secondary data will be collected in order to reach an independent assessment of performance and results. Data collection methods will mostly include qualitative participatory techniques. The methods deployed will consist of individual and group interviews with beneficiaries, and direct observations. The PPA will also make use – where applicable – of additional data available through the programme's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Triangulation will be applied to verify findings emerging from different information sources.
10. **Stakeholders' participation.** In compliance with the Evaluation Policy of 2011, the main programme stakeholders will be involved throughout the PPA. 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 IFAD East and Southern Africa Division and with the Government of Rwanda. Formal and informal opportunities will be explored during the process for the purpose of discussing findings, lessons and recommendations.

C. Evaluation process

11. In all, the PPA will involve five phases: desk work; country work; report drafting and peer review; receipt of comments on the draft PPA report from the IFAD East and Southern Africa Division and the Government; and the final phase of communication and dissemination.
12. **Desk work phase.** The PCRV and further desk review provide initial findings and identify key issues to be investigated by the PPA.
13. **Country work phase.** The PPA mission is scheduled for 18-27 March 2014. Mission members will interact with key Government officials, local authorities, Community Innovation Centres (CCIs), Local Management and Supervision Committees (CLGSs), cooperatives, programme staff and beneficiaries. At the end of the mission, a brief will be provided to the IFAD partner ministry(ies), followed by a wrap-up meeting in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, to summarize the preliminary findings and discuss key strategic and operational issues.
14. **Report drafting and peer review.** At the conclusion of the field visit, a draft PPA report will be prepared and submitted to IOE internal peer review for quality assurance.
15. **Communication and dissemination.** The final report will be disseminated among key stakeholders and the evaluation report published by IOE, both online and in print.

D. Key issues for further analysis

16. Based on the PCRV there are a number of areas in the analysis which would merit from further analysis to enable IOE to make a more conclusive assessment of the programme. The following key issues will be further investigated:
17. **Relevance.** The PPA will identify those features of PAPSTA approach that made it relevant to the establishment of the agricultural sector-wide approach (SWAp). Also, it will be assessed if the PAPSTA's approach can be adopted by other IFAD-funded initiatives and by projects financed by other donors in the country and in the region at large. Then, the targeting approach will be analysed: in particular, it will be assessed to what extent PAPSTA was successful in targeting vulnerable groups such as people with HIV and women-headed households or if the changes which the project underwent during implementation had adverse effects on its capacity to fully reach these groups.
18. **Effectiveness.** The PPA will focus on the in depth analysis of the achievements produced by the institutional building and the piloting and replication components as well as by the project coordination and management one. As far as the former is concerned, the main objective of the PPA will be to evaluate to what extent results obtained in terms of institutional development are likely to exert a long term impact on the agricultural policy making of Rwanda: currently the project completion report (PCR) briefly on the process and strategies put in place as a consequence of PAPSTA's implementation and only a few qualitative indicators are provided to give reasons for the achievements obtained in this sector. In addition, less evidence is given to show grounds for the strengthening of the local bodies (in particular, the districts). The field mission aims to assess to what extent these organizations (cooperatives, local authorities, CCIs, CLGSs) have benefitted from PAPSTA's activities, especially in a long run perspective. Special attention will be given to the CCIs as potential platforms for the scaling up of the innovations which have been tested during the project's life. Next, in relation to the piloting and replication component, the PCR presented quantitative and technical data to explain the satisfactory performance of the project. Nevertheless, a deeper level of critical analysis seems to be required to assess to what extent the watershed planning approach and the promotion of hedging practices (*embocagements*) as soil protections measures have been successful, taking also into consideration the high complexity of PAPSTA's design and approach. Moreover, it will be assessed to what extent the overall implementation mechanism which has been set up (i.e. establishment of the IFAD Single Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources) has been effective in supporting the achievement of the development objectives of the project.
19. **Impact.** The PPA team will assess the sustainability of the institutional structures, technologies and innovations introduced by PAPSTA beyond the completion of the project. This will entail the assessment of their internalization and their streamlining into the local and governmental structures. Moreover, it will be also assessed if they can be up scaled in the framework of development initiatives financed by other donors.

E. Evaluation team

20. The PPA mission will be composed of Ms Louise MacDonald, Evaluation officer, Lead Evaluator, Ms Sabine Hausler (natural resource management and forestry specialist), IOE consultant and Ms Marina Izzo, IOE consultant. Ms Ximena Novoa Cleves and Ms Maria Cristina Spagnolo, Evaluation Assistants, will provide research and administrative support.

F. Background documents

IFAD (2013). *Project Completion Report of the Support Project for the Strategic Plan for the transformation of Agriculture (PAPSTA)*

IFAD (2011). *IFAD Evaluation Policy*

IFAD/IOE (2012). *Guidelines for the Project Completion Report Validation (PCRV) and Project Performance Assessment (PPA)*

IFAD/IOE (2009). *Evaluation Manual. Methodology and Processes.*

Methodological note on project performance assessments

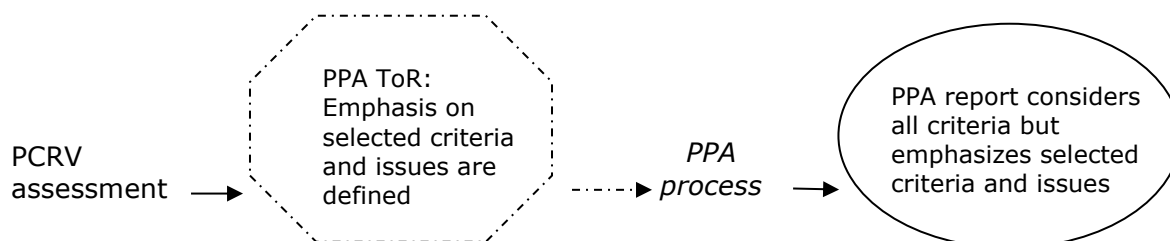
A. What is a project performance assessment?¹

1. The project performance assessment (PPA) conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) entails one mission of 7-10 days² and two mission members.³ PPAs are conducted on a sample of projects for which project completion reports have been validated by IOE, and take account of the following criteria (not mutually exclusive): (i) synergies with forthcoming or ongoing IOE evaluations (e.g. country programme or corporate-level evaluations); (ii) major information gaps in project completion reports (PCRs); (iii) novel approaches; and (iv) geographic balance.
2. The objectives of the PPA are to: assess the results and impact of the project under consideration; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in the country involved. When the PPA is to be used as an input for a country programme evaluation, this should be reflected at the beginning of the report. The PPA is based on the project completion report validation (PCR/V) results, further desk review, interviews at IFAD headquarters, and a dedicated mission to the country, to include meetings in the capital city and field visits. The scope of the PPA is set out in the respective terms of reference.

B. Preparing a PPA

3. Based on the results of the PCR/V, IOE prepares brief terms of reference (ToR) for the PPA in order to sharpen the focus of the exercise.⁴ As in the case of PCR/Vs, PPAs do not attempt to respond to each and every question contained in the Evaluation Manual. Instead, they concentrate on the most salient facets of the criteria calling for PPA analysis, especially those not adequately explained in the PCR/V.
4. When preparing a PPA, the emphasis placed on each evaluation criterion will depend both on the PCR/V assessment and on findings that emerge during the PPA process. When a criterion or issue is not identified as problematic or in need of further investigation, and no additional information or evidence emerges during the PPA process, the PPA report will re-elaborate the PCR/V findings.

Scope of the PPA



¹ Extract from the PCR/V and PPA Guidelines.

² PPAs are to be conducted within a budget ceiling of US\$25,000.

³ Typically, a PPA mission would be conducted by an IOE staff member with the support of a consultant (international or national). An additional (national) consultant may be recruited if required and feasible within the evaluation budget.

⁴ Rather than an approach paper, IOE prepares terms of reference for PPAs. These terms of reference ensure coverage of information gaps, areas of focus identified through PCR/Vs and comments by the country programme manager, and will concentrate the PPA on those areas. The terms of reference will be included as an annex to the PPA.

C. Evaluation criteria

5. The PPA is well suited to provide an informed summary assessment of project relevance. This includes assessing the relevance of project objectives and of design. While, at the design stage, project logical frameworks are sometimes succinct and sketchy, they do contain a number of (tacit) assumptions on mechanisms and processes expected to generate the final results. At the post-completion phase, and with the benefit of hindsight, it will be clearer to the evaluators which of these assumptions have proved to be realistic, and which did not hold up during implementation and why.
6. For example, the PPA of a project with a major agricultural marketing component may consider whether the project framework incorporated key information on the value chain. Did it investigate issues relating to input and output markets (distance, information, monopolistic power)? Did it make realistic assumptions on post-harvest conservation and losses? In such cases, staff responsible for the PPA will not be expected to conduct extensive market analyses, but might consider the different steps (e.g. production, processing, transportation, distribution, retail) involved and conduct interviews with selected actors along the value chain.
7. An assessment of effectiveness, the extent to which a project's overall objectives have been achieved, should be preferably made at project completion, when the components are expected to have been executed and all resources fully utilized. The PPA considers the overall objectives⁵ set out in the final project design document and as modified during implementation. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to capture good performance or under-performance in areas that were not defined as an objective in the initial design but emerged during the course of implementation.
8. The PPA mission may interview farmers regarding an extension component, the objective of which was to diffuse a certain agricultural practice (say, adoption of a soil nutrient conservation technique). The purpose here would be to understand whether the farmers found it useful, to what extent they applied it and their perception of the results obtained. The PPA may look into reasons for the farmers' interest in new techniques, and into adoption rates. For example, was the extension message delivered through lectures? Did extension agents use audio-visual tools? Did extension agents engage farmers in interactive and participatory modules? These type of questions help illustrate *why* certain initiatives have been conducive (or not conducive) to obtaining the desired results.
9. The Evaluation Manual suggests methods for assessing efficiency, such as calculating the economic internal rate of return (EIRR),⁶ estimating unit costs and comparing them with standards (cost-effectiveness approach), or addressing managerial aspects of efficiency (timely delivery of activities, respect of budget provisions). The documentation used in preparing the PCRV should normally provide sufficient evidence of delays and cost overruns and make it possible to explain why they happened.
10. As far as rural poverty impact is concerned, the following domains are contemplated in the Evaluation Manual: (a) household income and assets; (b) human and social capital and empowerment; (c) food security and agricultural

⁵ Overall objectives will be considered as a reference for assessing effectiveness. However, these are not always stated clearly or consistent throughout the documentation. The assessment may be made by component if objectives are defined by components; however the evaluation will try to establish a correspondence between the overall objectives and outputs.

⁶ Calculating an EIRR may be challenging for a PPA as it is time consuming and the required high quality data are often not available. The PPA may help verify whether some of the crucial assumptions for EIRR calculation are consistent with field observations. The mission may also help shed light on the cost-effectiveness aspects of efficiency, for example whether, in an irrigation project, a simple upgrade of traditional seasonal flood water canalization systems might have been an option, rather than investing on a complex irrigation system, when access to markets is seriously constrained.

productivity; (d) natural resources, the environment and climate change;⁷ and (e) institutions and policies. As shown in past evaluations, IFAD-funded projects generally collect very little data on household or community-level impact indicators. Even when impact data are available, both their quality and the methodological rigour of impact assessments are still questionable. For example, although data report significant increases in household assets, these may be due to exogenous factors (e.g. falling prices of certain commodities; a general economic upturn; households receiving remittances), and not to the project.

11. PPAs may help address the "attribution issue" (i.e. establishing to what extent certain results are due to a development intervention rather than to exogenous factors) by:
 - (i) following the logical chain of the project, identifying key hypotheses and reassessing the plausibility chain; and
 - (ii) conducting interviews with non-beneficiaries sharing key characteristics (e.g. socio-economic status, livelihood, farming system), which would give the mission an idea of what would have happened without the project (counterfactual).⁸
12. When sufficient resources are available, simple data collection exercises (mini-surveys) may be conducted by a local consultant prior to the PPA mission.⁹ Another non-mutually exclusive option is to spot-check typical data ranges or patterns described in the PCR by means of case studies (e.g. do PCR claims regarding increases in average food-secure months fall within the typical ranges recorded in the field?). It is to be noted that, while data collected by a PPA mission may not be representative in a statistical sense, such data often provide useful reference points and insights. It is important to exercise care in selecting sites for interviews in order to avoid blatant cases of non-beneficiaries profiting from the project.). Sites for field visits are selected by IOE in consultation with the government concerned. Government staff may also accompany the PPA mission on these visits.
13. The typical timing of the PPA (1-2 years after project closure) may be useful for identifying factors that enhance or threaten the sustainability of benefits. By that stage, the project management unit may have been disbanded and some of the support activities (technical, financial, organizational) terminated, unless a second phase is going forward or other funding has become available. Typical factors of sustainability (political support, availability of budgetary resources for maintenance, technical capacity, commitment, ownership by the beneficiaries, environmental resilience) can be better understood at the ex post stage..
14. The PPA also concentrates on IFAD's role with regard to the promotion of innovations and scaling up. For example, it might be observed that some innovations are easily scaled up at low cost (e.g. simple but improved cattle-rearing practices that can be disseminated with limited funding). In other cases, scaling up may involve risks: consider the case of a high-yield crop variety for which market demand is static. Broad adoption of the variety may be beneficial in terms of ensuring food security, but may also depress market prices and thereby reduce sale revenues for many households unless there are other, complementary activities for the processing of raw products.
15. The PPA addresses gender equality and women's empowerment, a criterion recently introduced into IFAD's evaluation methodology. This relates to the emphasis placed on gender issues: whether it has been followed up during

⁷ Climate change criterion will be addressed if and when pertinent in the context of the project, as most completed projects evaluated did not integrate this issue into the project design.

⁸ See also the discussion of attribution issues in the section on PCRVs.

⁹ If the PPA is conducted in the context of a country programme evaluation, then the PPA can piggy-back on the CPE and dedicate more resources to primary data collection.

implementation, including the monitoring of gender-related indicators; and the results achieved.

16. Information from the PCRV may be often sufficient to assess the performance of partners, namely, IFAD and the government. The PPA mission may provide further insights, such as on IFAD's responsiveness, if relevant, to implementation issues or problems of coordination among the project implementation unit and local and central governments. The PPA does not assess the performance of cooperating institutions, which now has little or no learning value for IFAD.
17. Having completed the analysis, the PPA provides its own ratings in accordance with the evaluation criteria and compares them with PMD's ratings. PPA ratings are final for evaluation reporting purposes. The PPA also rates the quality of the PCR document.
18. The PPA formulates short conclusions: a storyline of the main findings. Thereafter, a few key recommendations are presented with a view to following up projects, or other interventions with a similar focus or components in different areas of the country.¹⁰

¹⁰ Practices differ among multilateral development banks, including recommendations in PPAs. At the World Bank, there are no recommendations but "lessons learned" are presented in a typical PPA. On the other hand, PPAs prepared by Asian Development Bank include "issues and lessons" as well as "follow-up actions" although the latter tend to take the form of either generic technical guidelines for a future (hypothetical) intervention in the same sector or for an ongoing follow-up project (at Asian Development Bank, PPAs are undertaken at least three years after project closure).

Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Definition^a</i>
Project performance	
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies. It also entails an assessment of project design in achieving its objectives.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
Rural poverty impact^b	Impact 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 result of development interventions.
Household income and assets	Household income provides a means of assessing the flow of economic benefits accruing to an individual or group, whereas assets relate to a stock of accumulated items of economic value.
Human and social capital and empowerment	Human and social capital and empowerment include an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the empowerment of individuals, the quality of grassroots organizations and institutions, and the poor's individual and collective capacity.
Food security and agricultural productivity	Changes in food security relate to availability, access to food and stability of access, whereas changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields.
Natural resources, the environment and climate change	The focus on natural resources and the environment involves assessing the extent to which a project contributes to changes in the protection, rehabilitation or depletion of natural resources and the environment as well as in mitigating the negative impact of climate change or promoting adaptation measures.
Institutions and policies	The criterion relating to institutions and policies is designed to assess changes in the quality and performance of institutions, policies and the regulatory framework that influence the lives of the poor.
Other performance criteria	
Sustainability	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.
Innovation and scaling up	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have: (i) introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction; and (ii) the extent to which these interventions have been (or are likely to be) replicated and scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.
Gender equality and women's empowerment	The criterion assesses the efforts made to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the design, implementation, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation of IFAD-assisted projects.
Overall project achievement	This provides an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the analysis made under the various evaluation criteria cited above.
Performance of partners	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation.
IFAD	It also assesses the performance of individual partners against their expected role and responsibilities in the project life cycle.
Government	

^a These definitions have been taken from the OECD/DAC *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management* and from the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2009).

^b The IFAD Evaluation Manual also deals with the "lack of intervention", that is, no specific intervention may have been foreseen or intended with respect to one or more of the five impact domains. In spite of this, if positive or negative changes are detected and can be attributed in whole or in part to the project, a rating should be assigned to the particular impact domain. On the other hand, if no changes are detected and no intervention was foreseen or intended, then no rating (or the mention "not applicable") is assigned.

List of key persons met

Government of Rwanda

Mr Raphael Rurangwa, Director General Planning, MINAGRI

Mr Norbert Sendege, Director General Crop Production, MINAGRI

Mr Henry Semitende, Rwanda Agricultural Board Focal Point KWAMP (former FP PAPSTA)

Mr Alex Ndagijimana, former Manager, Management Information System/M&E Program IV PSTA, MINAGRI

IFAD SPIU/MINAGRI

Mr Francisco Pichon, Country Program Manager IFAD,

Mr Raphael Rurangwa, Director General of Strategic Planning and Programs Coordination, MINAGRI

Mr Janvier Gasasira, SPIU- Coordinator, MINAGRI

Mr Felix Kayijuka, Head of Finance and Fiduciary Aspects, SPIU, MINAGRI

Mr Jean Claude Mudahunga, Head of Management Information System /SPIU IFAD, MINAGRI

Mr Viateur Karangwa, KM & Communication Specialist, SPIU/MINAGRI

Mr Patient Maganya, Land Husbandry and Watershed Management Specialist, Consultant

Mr Aimable Ntukanyagwe, Country Programme Officer, IFAD

Mr Christian Rusengo Hakiba, Associate Professional Officer, IFAD

Mr Alfred B. Mutbwa, Programme Manager, SPIU, MINAGRI

International and donor institutions

Dr Charles Kayumba, Country Director, Heifer International, service provider PAPSTA

Ms Katrien Meersman, Belgian Embassy representative

Mr Didace Kayranga, WFP, in charge of PAPSTA implementation

Local government

Mr Emmanuel Mazimpaka, Vice Mayor (in charge of Economic Development Planning, District of Ngorero and President of JADF)

Beneficiaries, cooperatives and local target groups

Mr Melard NIYOMUGABO para-vet, and Mrs NIYOMUGABO, resource person kitchen gardens; farmers, Nyarubogo Watershed, Nyanza District

Mr Emanuel Kubwimana, President Cooperative Jyambere Mayaga, Nyanza District and 38 members of the cooperative

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