Independent Office of Evaluation

IFAD
Investing in rural people

Tajikistan
Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project

PROJECT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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Investing in rural people

Republic of Tajikistan

Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project

Project Performance Evaluation

Report No. 5722-TJ
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Photos of activities supported by the Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project

Front cover: A tractor and straw baler owned by a village organization in Degrez, Muminobod District. The project promoted the community procurement and ownership of agricultural machinery.

Back cover: Agricultural machinery owned by a village organization in Degrez, Muminobod District (right); Muminobod District, one of the five districts originally targeted under the project. After the mid-term review, the geographical scope of the project was reduced, with Muminobod remaining one of two target districts (along with Shamsiddin Shohin) (left).

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Preface

The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) conducted a project performance evaluation Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project in Tajikistan (KLSP). The project promoted a community-driven approach, which the Government supported as an innovative approach to poverty reduction at the time of project design (2008). Tajikistan is a landlocked and mountainous country, with the majority of the population residing in rural areas. The country has made steady progress in reducing poverty and growing its economy, with the poverty rate falling from 83 to 29.5 per cent of the population between 2000 and 2017.

KLSP was the first IFAD-financed project in the country. Some important lessons were learned since then. IFAD identified the novelty of the approach and the limited capacity of implementing partners as a risk at project design. Therefore, the partnership with non-government partners with experience in community development, in particular the Aga Khan Foundation, was relevant and important. The evaluation confirmed that this partnership, and the community mobilization and capacity-building carried out by Aga Khan Foundation, were instrumental for achieving the project results in the following period.

Nevertheless, the project proved to be too ambitious, overstretching the capacities of government partners at that time. Slow progress and financial management problems caused IFAD to suspend the project during its third year of implementation. In the following period, IFAD, in close consultation with the Government, made a number of decisions that turned around the project and made it succeed in the end. First, project management was transferred to the project management unit the Ministry of Agriculture, which was implementing another IFAD project at that time. Second, the project scope was reduced to focus on those communities that had already been mobilized. Third, IFAD pushed for the project funds to be released, which included community contributions kept in an account. Fourth, IFAD in consultation with its partners, insisted that community priorities were to be addressed, after a long period of delays. At project completion, all participating communities had benefited from some investments. Economic analysis showed that the continuation enabled the project investments to yield positive returns. The evaluation found that the project contributed to increased household incomes. These lessons show that IFAD, with perseverance and in close consultation with its partners, can enable projects to succeed, even if they start from a difficult base.

The evaluation was conducted by Johanna Pennarz, Lead Evaluation Officer, IOE, in collaboration with senior consultant Nelly Dolidze. The evaluators were supported by resource persons based in the country: Malika Abdulvasieva, Shuhrat Igamberdyev and Boymurod Kurbonov. Nuri Niyazi, IOE Evaluation Research Analyst, and Lisa Forrestier (IOE Intern) provided valuable inputs into the analysis. Manuela Gallitto, Evaluation Assistant, provided administrative support. The external reviewer of this report was Christian Hergarten, specialist for agro-eco-systems in Central Asia.

I hope the lessons generated by this evaluation will be useful to inform and improve IFAD's operations in Tajikistan and other countries.

Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

Members of a village organization in Chargi Poyon. The project's focus on building the capacities of village organizations, with the aim of delivering sustainable governance structures in rural communities, was scaled down after the mid-term review with a subsequent reduction of the original ambitions of the community-driven approach.

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Contents

Currency equivalent, weights and measures ii
Abbreviations and acronyms iii
Map of the project area iv
Executive summary v
IFAD Management's response x
I. Evaluation objectives, methodology and process 1
II. Project and country context 3
A. Country background 3
B. Policies on rural development and agricultural growth 4
C. IFAD's position and role within the Tajik context 5
D. The project 5
III. Main evaluation findings 10
A. Project performance and rural poverty impact 10
B. Other performance criteria 29
C. Overall project achievement 33
D. Performance of partners 34
IV. Assessment of the quality of the PCR 38
V. Conclusions and recommendations 39
A. Conclusions 39
B. Recommendations 40

Annexes

I. Basic project data 42
II. Definition and rating of the evaluation criteria used by IOE 43
III. Rating Comparison 45
IV. Evaluation framework 46
V. Theory of change 49
VI. Itinerary of field mission 50
VII. Achievements against logframe indicators 52
VIII. Additional tables and figures 56
IX. Method used for the analysis of survey data 65
X. List of key persons met or interviewed 68
XI. Bibliography 71

Currency equivalent, weights and measures

Currency equivalent

Currency unit = TJS (Tajikistan Somoni)

US$1.00 = TJS 10.32

Weights and measures

1 kilogram (kg) = 2.204 pounds (lb)
1 000 kg = 1 metric tonne (t)
1 kilometre (km) = 0.62 miles
1 metre (m) = 1.09 yards
1 square metre (m^2) = 10.76 square feet (ft)
1 acre (ac) = 0.405 ha
1 hectare (ha) = 2.47 acres

Abbreviations and acronyms

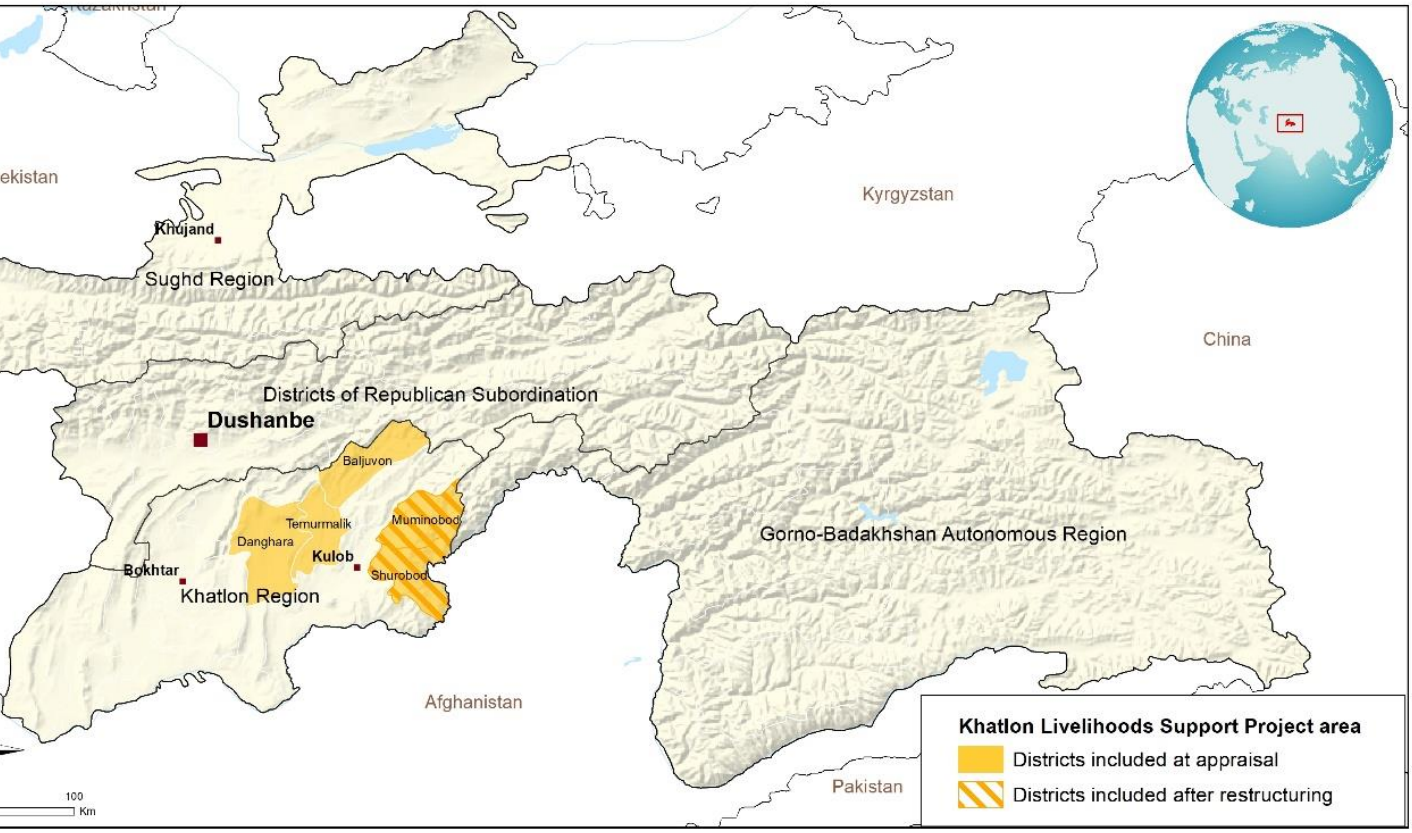
ATAC	Agriculture Training and Advisory Centre
CAP	community action plan
CDD	community-driven development
CDF	Community Development Fund
CIG	common interest groups
DPO	district project officer
ENRM	environment and natural resource management
ERR	economic rate of return
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
KLSP	Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project
LPDP	Livestock and Pasture Development Project
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MSDSP	Mountain Societies Development Support Programme
MTR	mid-term review
NAAS	National Academy of Agricultural Sciences
NDS	National Development Strategy
O&M	operation and maintenance
PCR	project completion report
PCU	project coordination unit
PIM	project implementation manual
PMU	project management unit
PPE	project performance evaluation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SALMGC	State Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography
SUDVO	Social Union for Development of Village Organizations
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund

f the project area

public of Tajikistan

tlon Livelihoods Support Project (KLSP)

ect performance evaluation



esignations 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 frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

ompiled by IFAD | 03-11-2020

Executive summary

A. Background

1. **Project background**. The Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project (KLSP) was the first IFAD-financed project in the country. Tajikistan is a landlocked and sparsely populated country with mountainous areas accounting for about 93 per cent of the total land area. In 2019, the country's gross domestic product per capita (current US$) was US$870.8, the lowest among the Central Asian countries. Tajikistan is a net importer of food, in particular wheat. Khatlon is a major agricultural region with the highest rates of undernutrition and the largest number of people living below the poverty line. When the project was prepared, it was the poorest region in the country, with a 54 per cent poverty rate (2009).

2. **Evaluation objectives**. The main objectives of the project performance evaluation (PPE) were to: (i) provide an independent assessment of the achievements and results of KLSP; (ii) draw lessons to inform the further development of IFAD's cooperation with the Republic of Tajikistan; and (iii) obtain insights and lessons to inform other knowledge products of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE), for example on community-driven development and infrastructure.

3. **Evaluation scope and approach**. The PPE reviewed and validated the project performance and results, using IOE evaluation criteria, based on a review of project documents and monitoring and evaluation data. The findings were complemented by stakeholder interviews and site visits. The evaluation team was led by IOE. The evaluation took all necessary measures to mitigate any risks associated with the post-pandemic work environment. The data collection phase concluded with a wrap-up meeting with implementing partners.

4. **Project objective and approach**. The overall objective of KLSP was the reduction of poverty for 18,750 households and the increased profitability of small farms (including household plots) across the whole project area. The project aimed to achieve this objective through a community-driven approach, with a community development fund as the mechanism for supporting interventions identified by the participating communities. The community-driven approach was aligned with government policies at the time of appraisal, namely the "Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Public Associations" (2008). It was implemented in partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation.

5. **Project implementation**. KLSP was officially launched on 17 April 2009 and closed on 30 June 2016. At appraisal, the total project cost was US$14.95 million, which included an IFAD grant equivalent to US$12.3 million. The project's implementation was carried out in two phases. From 2009 to 2012, the project was managed by the Project Coordination Unit of the State Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography. However, slow progress and non-compliance with auditing requirements resulted in a suspension of project activities in 2012. Following the mid-term review (MTR) in 2013, the project was placed under the Project Management Unit of the Livestock and Pasture Development Project at the Ministry of Agriculture in 2014. The total cost of the project was revised to US$12.31 million, with the IFAD grant reduced to US$9.66 million. The project was granted a six-month extension to complete the infrastructure activities planned.

6. **Adjustment of design**. After the MTR, the project objective was revised. The project area was reduced from five to two districts and the number of participating villages was adjusted from 220 to 250 down to 82 villages. These were the villages in which mobilization of village organizations had already been carried out and beneficiary contributions had been raised. The expected number of beneficiaries was also revised downwards to 8,782 households.

B. Findings

7. **Relevance.** The project was aligned with government policies and the initiatives of other development partners at the time. The focus on building the capacities of village organizations in partnerships with the Aga Khan Foundation was relevant and aimed at building sustainable governance structures in rural communities. However, the adjustments made after the MTR not only reduced the quantitative targets, but also scaled down the original ambitions of the community-driven approach. The expectations raised through participatory process were not fully addressed in the end. With the adjustments made, the project also abandoned the ambition of rolling out the community-driven approach across a larger area and creating sustainable linkages into local government.

8. **Effectiveness.** Levels of achievements differed distinctively between the two phases. During the first phase (2009–2012), achievements were low due to slow delivery, procurement issues, and administrative and management issues. However, community mobilization and capacity-building initiated during this phase provided the foundation for the achievements in the following phase, where subprojects identified by the communities were effectively implemented. Among the 82 village organizations targeted, 20 benefited from small-scale infrastructure and 62 from the provision of agricultural machinery between 2014 and 2015.

9. **Efficiency.** The poor performance of project management was the main cause for the low achievements during the first phase. Under the new management, implementation greatly improved. However, some of the delays continued into the second phase. In particular, the implementation of infrastructure projects took longer than expected. At completion, the project had disbursed 82 per cent of the allocated budget. Costs per beneficiary had increased, mainly because of the reduced number of beneficiaries. Issues in fiduciary management, which had led to the suspension of the project during the earlier phase, were resolved during the second phase.

10. **Rural poverty impact.** The project's interventions were relevant overall, and they were effective. However, they were too limited in their scope and duration to make a significant impact on agricultural productivity, incomes and food security. The provision of machinery provided immediate benefits in terms of cost savings and income for the majority of villages targeted. Provision of basic infrastructure contributed to improved living conditions in a smaller number of communities. The biggest contribution to rural poverty reduction has been the training and capacity-building provided. The village organizations continue to play their roles as rural development agents, as confirmed during this evaluation.

11. **Sustainability**. Following the initial delays, the project was not able to implement its exit strategy as planned. With regard to the institutional sustainability, the evaluation found that while the village organizations are overall still active, their technical and financial capacity to maintain the infrastructure and machinery provided is often limited.

12. **Innovation and scaling up**. KLSP included some innovative features. The community-driven approach, although already widely applied in the country, was new for the Government at that time. The agricultural technologies promoted were new within the local context, although they had varying success. The field trials on intensive apple orchards were successful and scaled up in the following time. However, the intention to roll out the participatory planning processes through the government system was only realized to a limited extent.

13. **Gender equality and women's empowerment**. The project made a commendable effort to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Women participated equally in project activities; their participation in training and decision-making was actively supported. A major shortcoming was that gender-related outcomes or impacts were not systematically monitored or assessed. From the limited evidence

available it seems that, while there were some good practices and individual success stories, the broader social and economic benefits were limited for women. Furthermore, the project was not able to address gender biases and women's exclusion from decision-making in a broader way.

14. **Environment and natural resource management, and climate change adaptation**. The project made efforts to promote conservation agriculture practices as a contribution to sustainable soil management, but adoption rates were low. The region's vulnerability to natural and climate disasters would have demanded strategies for climate change adaptation. The project had opportunities to climate-proof its interventions, which it did not use.

C. Conclusions

15. **KLSP had a promising start, implementing the community-driven approach within the government system.** KLSP started off as a community-driven development project, and as such created high expectations among beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders. While the project hardly delivered any of the expected benefits envisioned during phase I, the mobilization and capacity-building laid the foundation for the results achieved in the period that followed. It was the right decision to suspend the project, and it was also right to relaunch the project after adjustments had been made. Phase II was then intended as an "orderly phasing out". The intention was to bring tangible benefits to the communities mobilized during phase I and conclude the project in an orderly manner. The restructuring significantly reduced the original ambitions, and the project was not able to realize its full potential. Considering the strong motivation of the participating communities and the effective partnerships established, the project might have achieved more if it had been given additional time to fully utilize the resources of the community development fund and implement its exit strategy together with local partners.

16. **The pressure to disburse the remaining funds within the short time left made the project "lopsided" towards productivity aspects, while basic needs received less support**. The provision of agricultural machinery was a quick win and created tangible economic benefits. Other equally important aspects of the project design received less attention during phase II. Contrary to expectations at design, the project was not able to address the overwhelming demand for community infrastructure within such a short period. The quality of the infrastructure built was rather mixed, and there was insufficient attention to operation and management (O&M). The original intention of the project to deliver a holistic and sustainable approach to poverty reduction was not followed through.

17. **Nevertheless, and despite the turbulent implementation process, the project made a commendable contribution to strengthening community-level institutions.** The village organizations, however limited in their capacity, will continue to play a role as development agents. In this respect, the implementing partner, the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) was instrumental in terms of community mobilization, local self-governance and local resource mobilization, and laid the foundations for the capacity-building of village organizations and the continuity of KLSP-initiated activities in some communities. However, the assumption that the village organizations will be able to sustain themselves was over-optimistic; a more strategic follow-up would have been needed.

18. **Results would have been even better if the project had been given time to implement a proper exit strategy in cooperation with local partners**. The village organizations and other relevant groups (such as the common-interest groups) in the communities will require further strengthening, and it would have been important for IFAD to remain involved. Water supply systems are performing poorly, mainly due to shortcomings in the existing tariff scheme and weak O&M practices. The inefficiency are eroding the benefits for village organizations and they risk losing ownership over the water supply systems if they do not maintain them in

line with existing regulatory frameworks. This is one of the areas where IFAD could have contributed in a more strategic manner. Enhancing linkages of village organizations with local government and other development partners working in the area for continued support and cooperation, as anticipated in the design, should have been part of the exit strategy.

19. **Gender equality and women's empowerment was an unfinished agenda in KLSP**. KLSP's focus on women's needs was important and could have been a highlight of IFAD's engagement in the country. The project made a good start engaging women, with the help of MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation. Following the restructuring, and with the focus on completing the planned activities within the set time frame, the emphasis on an inclusive and gender-focused approach was somewhat diluted. Women's basic needs were often neglected and the more strategic needs, in order to empower women, were not followed up.

20. **Partnerships were instrumental for achieving the project results**. The constructive dialogue with the Government of Tajikistan has made it possible for the project to continue. The engagement of national partners with a track record on the ground laid the foundation for the results achieved. In particular the partnership with MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation was important to ensure synergies and follow-up on developing community organizations.

21. **The evaluation concludes** that building on the experiences from KLSP, IFAD is well placed to address the pertinent needs of smallholder farmers and contribute to building sustainable community institutions in Tajikistan. IFAD is appreciated as a partner and has been successful in building relationships with government and non-government partners. IFAD should continue working in partnerships to promote community-based approaches to advance the Government's poverty reduction agenda. In the future IFAD may need to anticipate additional resources to advance the focus on gender equality and capacity-building as contributions to sustainable and equitable development.

D. Recommendations

22. In line with the conclusions above, the evaluation offers the following recommendations.

23. **Recommendation 1. Devise a strategic and long-term approach to building the capacities of community organizations, in partnerships with like-minded development partners**. First and foremost, the approach to community-based organizations needs to be aligned with ongoing initiatives supported by other development partners and the government agenda, and it needs to take a longer-term perspective to make a sustainable contribution to the emerging institutional framework in the rural areas. Capacity-building for village organizations and community organizations should incorporate financial, legal and technical aspects, such as the O&M of infrastructure projects. IFAD should continue the successful cooperation with Aga Khan; it should also strengthen partnerships with international partners (e.g. CARITAS) working with community-based organizations within the same area, to ensure the coherence and sustainability of the approaches promoted.

24. **Recommendation 2. Allocate sufficient resources to ensure a pro-poor and gender-focused approach to address the need for water in an efficient and sustainable way.** The rural poor and women are in dire need of clean water for human and livestock consumption. Instead of providing basic water supply systems, IFAD should shift to multi-use water supply schemes. Local communities often end up using drinking-water access points for irrigation and livestock water supply purposes. Projects would need to learn from these experiences and secure sufficient funding for multiple-use water schemes (for both domestic needs and agricultural production, including livestock) which are low-cost and equitable.

25. **Recommendation 3: Complement the technical capacities of project management units with qualified staff to support implementation quality and a pro-poor and gender focus.** Subject-matter experts/consultants are needed to oversee all phases of the infrastructure project's life cycle, such as planning and subproject proposal clearance, selection of service providers (including assessment of technical proposals and financial proposals against the baseline costs), construction processes (including quality checking of materials used by the provider) and final handover of the project. There should be a separate engineer assigned to water support and wastewater infrastructure, and another focused on other types of infrastructure projects such as road and bridge construction or construction of electricity grids. IFAD should closely supervise and monitor the procurement and quality of infrastructure subprojects through supervision and/or local consultants reporting to IFAD. A social inclusion and gender specialist could provide advice and ensure that gender-focused approaches are incorporated in a meaningful way into the design, implementation and monitoring of the intervention/project. Advancing the pro-poor and women's empowerment agenda will require consistent focus and follow-up by project management and supervision.

IFAD Management's response[1]

1. Management welcomes the overall evaluation findings of the Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project (KLSP) project performance evaluation (PPE) conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE).

2. Management recognizes and agrees with the IOE's assessment that the overall performance of the project is moderately satisfactory. Management agrees that the low achievements of phase 1 mandated a restructuring, which led to a reduction in the project's scope. The project delivered relevant investments that were chosen by the communities themselves in a participatory process, and that were in line with their priorities. It also introduced new husbandry practices to the region, such as dwarf apple varieties, which subsequently have been replicated spontaneously by the population in their home gardens.

3. Management appreciates the PPE's recommendations, which are generally already being internalized and acted upon. The detailed Management's view on the proposed recommendations are presented below:

4. **Recommendation 1. Devise a strategic and long-term approach to building the capacities of community organizations, in partnerships with same-minded development partners**.

   Agreed. IFAD has been engaged with capacity building of community organizations since KLSP, and has enhanced its approach in connection with the Livestock and Pastures Development Project 1&2 and Community based Agricultural Support Project (CASP). Most recently, as part of the new CASP+ under design, IFAD intends to further improve such approach by engaging specialized agencies at regional and central levels into the development of Community Action Plans. Local NGOs, as well as international agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, will provide direct facilitation. Moreover, IFAD foresees close consultation with relevant internationally financed projects and NGOs that may include ACTED (funded by the EU Commission), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), CARITAS, Sarob, etc.

5. **Recommendation 2. Allocate sufficient resources to ensure a pro-poor and gender focus approach to address the need for water in an efficient and sustainable way.**

   Agreed. IFAD envisages continuing the support of the rural poor through village organizations as nexus. In line with the methodologies piloted by AKF, and further scaled up and improved by IFAD in connection with KLSP and the subsequent portfolio, ownership is created by raising requisite capacity at community level, so that the village organizations are capable of setting their own informed investment priorities within the framework of their Community Action Plans. Such capacity building should include clear communication about multi-use water systems, their benefits and cost.

6. **Recommendation 3: Complement the technical capacities of project management units with qualified staff to support implementation quality and pro-poor and gender focus.**

   Agreed. One of the ongoing projects (CASP) will be strengthened with an engineer to supervise design and implementation of works, and this recommendation will be considered for the next project (CASP+) as well. A full time gender specialist was already hired by the Project Management Unit for CASP in Q1/2020. Civil engineers s will be included in the supervision missions. NEN and the Tajik portfolio benefits from the close support of the ECG social inclusion desk with a dedicated SI specialist.

[1] The Programme Management Department sent the final Management's response to the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD on 10 December 2020.

7. Management thanks IOE for the fruitful process and will ensure that lessons learned from this exercise are internalized to further improve the performance of IFAD-funded projects in Tajikistan and elsewhere.

Republic of Tajikistan
Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project
Project Performance Evaluation

I. Evaluation objectives, methodology and process

1. **Background.** The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) undertakes project performance evaluations (PPEs) annually for a select number of completed projects. The selection criteria for PPEs include: (i) synergies with forthcoming or ongoing IOE evaluations; (ii) novel approaches; (iii) major information gaps in project completion reports (PCRs); and (iv) geographic balance. The main purpose of these evaluations is to assess the results and impact of a project and to generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in Tajikistan.

2. **Objectives.** The main objectives of the PPEs were to: (i) provide an independent assessment of the achievements and results of the Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project (KLSP); (ii) draw lessons to inform the further development of IFAD's cooperation with the Republic of Tajikistan; and (iii) obtain insights and lessons to inform other IOE knowledge products – for example, on community-driven development (CDD) and infrastructure.

3. **Scope**. The scope of this PPE was defined as follows: (i) to review and validate the project performance and results, using IOE evaluation criteria, based on a review of project documents and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data; and (ii) to explore further the key issues that may provide valuable lessons for future IFAD interventions through document review, data analysis, stakeholder interviews, and, as far as possible, site visits.

4. **Methodology and process.** The PPE assessed KLSP's performance based on the evaluation criteria set out in the second edition of the IOE Evaluation Manual,[1] as elaborated in the approach paper for this evaluation (June 2020). The evaluation framework, which includes the evaluation questions, is included in annex IV. In line with the practice adopted in many other international financial institutions, IOE is using a six-point rating system, where 6 is the highest score (highly satisfactory) and 1 is the lowest score (highly unsatisfactory).

5. The evaluation team was led by IOE and included an international evaluation consultant. The evaluators performed an extensive document review, including project documents, the available M&E and survey data, and relevant country studies. From the baseline and endline survey data, the evaluators were able to prepare additional analyses on project outcomes and impact. The PPE process involved extensive stakeholder consultation. The evaluators conducted group discussions and interviews with project stakeholders, most of them online because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

6. In-country, data collection was supported by national consultants who performed their tasks under the guidance of the evaluation team. The national consultants conducted interviews (in-person and online) with national and local government stakeholders, project implementing partners, former project staff, direct project beneficiaries, and other relevant international organizations operating in the country. In addition, the consultants spent 10 days visiting beneficiary communities and investment projects funded within the framework of KLSP. The field visits were conducted in close collaboration with the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Livestock and Pasture Development Project (LPDP). The evaluation team took all necessary measures to mitigate any risks associated with the post-pandemic work environment. The data collection phase concluded with a wrap-up meeting with implementing partners, where the evaluators presented preliminary findings and observations. After the meeting, the

[1] Second edition of IOE Evaluation Manual (2015).

data collected were reviewed and findings from different sources triangulated to inform the final analysis presented in this report.

7. **Data availability and limitations**. In the context of COVID-19, the PPE met ethical and methodological challenges. Social distancing and restraint were required, following the "do no harm" principle of basic human rights and humanitarian assistance reflected in the Norms and Standards for Evaluation developed by the UN Evaluation Group.[2] This placed certain limitations on the interactions with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

8. Without the possibility of IOE officers or international consultants travelling to the country, the PPE had to rely to a greater extent on the national consultants who supported the collection of primary and secondary data, as they had easier access to the relevant national stakeholders, such as national government agencies, NGOs, academia, and some direct beneficiaries. These meetings and site visits were important for triangulating findings obtained through the document review.

9. Due to infrastructure and communication issues, interviews with the lower levels of Government and direct beneficiaries in Khatlon were impossible to arrange even digitally. Consequently, site observations and data-gathering in Khatlon Region were conducted solely by the national consultants. Observations were shared and probed during regular interactions with the international consultant working on this PPE.

10. The selection of sample communities for meetings and field visits had to consider accessibility under pandemic conditions and was guided by government partners. With limited possibility to adjust the sample, this approach may have induced a performance bias. Therefore, the review of project M&E data and surveys was important to contextualize the observations.

11. The PPE team was unable to validate some findings regarding phase I. Stakeholders involved in phase I, including former staff of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), were not available for interviews, and certain reports were also not available, which had been submitted to the PCU by the project implementing partners – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) of the Aga Khan Foundation.

[2] Norm 6: Ethics - "Evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance…".

II. Project and country context

A. Country background

12. Tajikistan is a landlocked and sparsely populated country with mountainous areas accounting for about 93 per cent of the total land area, which poses challenges with respect to food security and development, including transport connectivity and communication. Tajikistan is highly agrarian, with the majority of the population residing in rural areas. The gross national income per capita is US$1,030; hence the country is classified as a low-income country. Due to its narrow economic base,[3] its reliance on remittances from labour migrants, and its difficult natural conditions, Tajikistan's economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, and opportunities for growth are limited.

13. Agriculture is the second-largest sector of the economy and holds a dominant position in terms of output and employment. Agriculture accounts for 53 per cent of total employment and generates about a quarter of the total GDP, predominantly through the export of cotton. According to the World Bank dataset, in 2019, the country's GDP per capita (current US$) was US$870.8, which is the lowest among the Central Asian countries. Tajikistan is a net importer of food, in particular wheat. Given the country's mountainous geography, the total arable land area is limited to only 5 per cent. Moreover, due to the country's arid climate and the cultivation of water-intensive crops such as cotton, agriculture relies heavily on irrigation. Approximately 83 per cent of smallholder land in Tajikistan is irrigated, enabled through large-scale investments in agriculture.[4]

14. Livestock remains a key part of the agriculture sector, and livestock ownership represents a key coping strategy for smallholder farmers in Tajikistan. Rearing livestock is an activity in which nearly the entire rural population engages. Livestock- rearing relies primarily on grazing, supplemented by limited cultivated fodder crops and minimal concentrates. The management of the 3.8 million hectares of pastureland in the country has been inadequate to foster economic growth and preserve the fragile resources.

15. Notwithstanding the above challenges, Tajikistan made steady progress in reducing poverty and growing its economy, with the poverty rate falling from 83 to 29.5 per cent of the population and the economy growing at an average rate of 7 per cent per year between 2000 and 2017.[5] However, non-monetary poverty indicators in rural areas continue to be high, with only a minority of the population in rural regions having access to safe drinking water, for instance. The country faces continuing food-security challenges. The malnutrition rate has been decreasing over the past decade but remains the highest in Central Asia, and high levels of stunted growth and nutrient deficiencies persist.[6] Female-headed households are more at risk of poverty and extreme poverty than households headed by males.[7]

16. Tajikistan's high vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters represents an additional challenge to its successful economic development. Between 1992 and 2016, natural disasters and severe weather events led to staggering GDP losses and affected millions of people.

17. Tajikistan has major water resources, with four big rivers (Pyanj, Vakhsh, Zarafshon and Sirdaryo) and approximately 1,300 natural lakes. However, the poor state of the water infrastructure system has resulted in water shortages for irrigation and personal consumption. Many rural communities, and the agriculture sector as a whole, suffer from the effects of a rising water table and increasing soil salinity. Water distribution

[3] Dominated by the production of aluminium, cotton and electricity at time of project design (see World Bank – State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Priorities for Sustainable Growth: A Strategy for Agriculture Sector Development in Tajikistan (May 2016).
[4] FAO. 2018. Tajikistan – Small Family Farms Country Factsheet.
[5] World Bank. 2019. The World Bank in Tajikistan.
[6] World Food Programme. 2020. Tajikistan.
[7] Asian Development Bank. 2016. Tajikistan Country Gender Assessment. Manila.

and irrigation management are centralized and organized around cotton farming. In 2020, the Government adopted a new law for water users associations in 2020, officially establishing these community-based organizations as part of irrigation governance and empowering them to provide better service to farmers.[8]

B. Policies on rural development and agricultural growth

18. The key documents setting out government policies for development and rural poverty reduction at the time of project design included the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2007–2009,[9] a rolling three-year Public Investment Programme (PIP) 2007–2009, and the National Development Strategy (NDS) of the Republic of Tajikistan to 2015.[10]

19. The Government of Tajikistan is committed to gender equality. It has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of the United Nations, as well as its optional protocol. The Constitution enacts the gender equality rights and there is a solid legislation regarding the different Codes (Family, Labour, Land, Criminality, Education, and Public Health). In 2005, a law was passed and specifically targets gender: State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women. Furthermore, there is also the National Strategy on Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011–2020, and a State Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for the period 2014–2023.[11]

20. The NDS drew on experience gained elsewhere in the world, as well as lessons learned from the country's earlier phases of economic development, and laid out the key goals, priorities and principles for the country's economic development, which were also reflected in the PRSP and the PIP. The highlighted priorities included:

    (i) Creation of an institutional environment conducive to a market economy, including macroeconomic and administrative reforms to improve efficiency and the investment climate for the development of the private sector and entrepreneurship;

    (ii) Economic development, including food security, development of the agro-industrial complex, infrastructure, communications, energy and industry; and

    (iii) Strengthening of basic social services, including development of health care, education, water supply, sanitation and housing;

    (iv) Gender equality and environmental sustainability.

21. No specific government policy paper for the development of the agriculture sector was in place. However, there was a draft Food Security Programme developed by a working group established under a government decree in 2006; the group included representatives of the line ministries and agencies, the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, and the Centre of Strategic Research under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. One of the key priorities of this programme was to ensure food accessibility (both economic and physical) based on sustainable agricultural development. Thus, the main priorities of the development of the agricultural sector defined for the period 2007–2015 in this programme were as follows: (i) diversification and more efficient production; (ii) development of export-oriented production; and (iii) development of rural business (i.e. agricultural and non-agricultural activities in rural areas). The programme stated that expanding the agriculture sector and encouraging the introduction and transfer of technology were the main ways to improve agriculture.

22. In 2008, the Government of Tajikistan approved a "Concept for Agrarian Policy" with the objectives to achieve national food security by 2015 for the main foodstuffs, as well

[8] http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/Profile_segments/TJK-WR_eng.stm.
[9] International Monetary Fund. 2009. IMF Country Report No. 09/82, Republic of Tajikistan: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (March 2009).
[10] Republic of Tajikistan. 2007. National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period to 2015 (March 2007).
[11] Asian Development Bank. 2016. Tajikistan country gender assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank. pp. 7–9.

as to increase the incomes of agricultural producers through improved performance. The main directions identified in this concept were land reforms, and the development and modernization of subsectors, including crops, livestock and horticulture. The Government of Tajikistan approved a National Food Security Programme by decree dated 29 January 2009, with the key priorities of the programme and for sectoral development confirmed as in its draft form (outlined above). In addition, the Government, through various decrees and policy pronouncements, attempted to improve rural smallholders' access to basic social and agriculture services and natural resources.

23. A 2012 report[12] provided an analysis of the state of the agriculture sector and proposed actions that needed to be taken to sustain agricultural growth. It highlighted the problems in the cotton sector and identified opportunities for the development of the livestock and fruit subsectors.[13] The study identified a significant potential to increase both intensive and pasture-based livestock production in response to simple, low-cost changes in feed production and conservation, animal husbandry and pasture management.

24. With the growing number of livestock, the emergence of commercial livestock farmers, and further deterioration of natural pastures, the focus on pasture management reforms eventually resulted in the adoption of the Pasture Law in March 2013. This law serves as the foundation for pasture management decentralization reforms in selected areas on a small scale.

C. IFAD's position and role within the Tajik context

25. Tajikistan received a 0.9 per cent share of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Asia between 2010 and 2017 (OECD/DAC data).[14] However, the average ODA amounts increased by 39.4 per cent between 2000–2009 and 2010–2017. In 2017, Tajikistan received US$297 million in ODA. The highest proportions of ODA in Tajikistan go to the economic sector (60 per cent), followed by the social sector (17 per cent) and the production sector (including agriculture) (13 per cent).

26. KLSP was the first IFAD-financed project in the country. Since then, IFAD has provided a cumulative US$77.564 million in financing for four projects (closed and ongoing). A country strategic note[15] was approved in November 2016, notably after the closure of KLSP, providing a strategic blueprint for a coherent, programmatic approach in support of the agriculture sector as agreed with the Government of Tajikistan.

27. IFAD's overall objective in Tajikistan is to improve nutritional status and increase incomes in poor rural communities in the country by: (i) supporting the capacity of central and local institutions to improve the governance of poor rural communities, and strengthen their access to agricultural technologies, veterinary and other agro-services, infrastructure and markets; and (ii) enhancing resilience against climate change and natural disasters among rural communities, to be reflected in the improved management of the resource base and improved sustainability of returns for farmers. The country programme places an emphasis on reaching poor rural women and youth, especially those who are household heads, by supporting them not only in production, but also in moving further up the value chain, by engaging them in processing, management, marketing and ownership.

D. The project

28. **Project area**. Khatlon is a major agriculture-producing region with the highest rates of undernutrition and the largest number of people living below the poverty line. In 2009, Khatlon was the poorest region in the country, with a 54-per-cent poverty rate (2009

[12] World Bank in cooperation with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs. 2012. Priorities for Sustainable Growth: A Strategy for Agriculture Sector Development in Tajikistan.
[13] Mainly fresh and dried apricots, raisins, grapes and pears.
[14] Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee. 2019. Development Aid at a Glance; 2019 edition".
[15] IFAD. 2016. Tajikistan; Country strategy note; main report and appendices (November 2016).

LSMS).[16] The population of Khatlon is predominantly rural, with 82 per cent engaged in agriculture in 2013. The region supports substantial herds of the country's livestock: about 864,000 heads of cattle and almost 2 million heads of sheep and goat. These constitute about 41 per cent of the country's large ruminants and 40 per cent of small animals. In terms of pastures, Khatlon has 1.2 million hectares of pastures, which constitute 32 per cent of the total pasture resources of the country and 84 per cent of the winter pastures.[17]

Table 1
Number of livestock (as of 1 January 2014, heads)

	Cattle	*Sheep and goats*	*Horses*	*Total*	*Pasture area per one head of livestock (ha)*	*Number of livestock per 1 ha of pasture (heads)*
Shurobod	24 954	63 503	2 475	90 932	1.08	0.93
Muminobod	33 574	109 573	3 249	146 396	0.25	4.04
Khatlon region (all districts)	86 887	1 988 637	55 791	2 908 315	0.42	2.37

Source: LPDP II Project Development Report, 2015. Table 10, page 40.

29. **Project implementation**. KLSP was officially launched on 17 April 2009 and closed on 30 June 2016. The project's implementation was carried out in two phases, one before and one after the restructuring that took place in 2013. During phase I (2009–2012) the project was managed by the PCU of the State Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography (SALMGC). The PCU was responsible for knowledge management, communications, and implementation of the M&E arrangements. However, slow progress made in project implementation due to management problems and the PCU's non-submission of audited financial statements resulted in a gradual suspension of project activities and its complete cessation by February 2012; the PCU was dismantled.

30. A mid-term review (MTR), conducted in January 2013, resulted in a proposal for an orderly phase-out of the remaining activities of the project. The Government of Tajikistan accepted the proposal and a governmental decree on the resumption of the project's implementation under the PMU of the LPDP at the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) of the Republic of Tajikistan was issued on 30 October 2013. Thus, the project was restructured in 2013 and entered phase II. Its management was handed over to the PMU of MOA.

31. IFAD engaged the following two implementing partners: (i) the MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation as the community facilitator to focus on mobilization and the organizational development of the village organizations; and (ii) FAO as the technical facilitator responsible for on-farm trials and demonstrations (initially, in collaboration with participating national agricultural research institutes and, subsequently, with local NGOs).

32. During phase I, FAO implemented the project in cooperation with the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) to provide support in the form of equipment used during the project, training and extension services for farmers, and the development of participatory technology.[18] The activities implemented by FAO between February and December 2015 (phase II) were implemented rapidly. Therefore, FAO subcontracted local NGOs: the Agriculture Training and Advisory Centre (ATAC) for crop demonstrations and training; the Tajikistan Veterinary Association to support local veterinarians; and Intermed to support the development of female bee-keepers.

[16] The ADB Country Partnership Strategy: ADB Tajikistan, 2016–2020, Poverty Analysis (Summary), page 3, quotes a poverty rate of 39.24 per cent, above the national average of 35.6 per cent.
[17] LDPD II Project Design report. 2011.
[18] Identification of demand and adaptive research trials.

33. The Project Steering Committee[19] provided overall policy guidance for and oversight of project activities. The District Development Committee was responsible for the approval of sub-project proposals developed by village organizations, while the Jamoat Council was in charge of screening and prioritizing community action plans (CAPs) and subproject proposals to be implemented by the village organizations.

34. **Project objectives**. The overall objective of KLSP was the reduction of poverty for 18,750 households and the increased profitability of small farms (including household plots) across the whole project area. After the MTR, the project objective was revised. The project area was reduced from five to two districts – Muminobod and Shurobod (now Shamsiddin Shohin District) – and the number of participating villages was adjusted from 220–250 down to 82 villages. These were the villages in which mobilization of village organizations had already been carried out and beneficiary contributions had been raised. The decision to reduce the number of villages took into account the limited time remaining for implementation. The expected number of beneficiaries was also revised downwards to 8,782 households.

35. **Project components.** KLSP comprised three components with the related results as follows:

36. **Component 1: Institutional support:** *Enhanced capacity (by community-based, jamoat, district-level and central-level institutions) to develop the natural resource base in a participatory manner and to implement the land reform process*. The second part of this component ("implement the land reform process") was dropped after the project restructuring (2014). The first component included the following two subcomponents:

    (a) Subcomponent "*Development of community organizations",* intended to help participating communities to prioritize their needs with respect to investments that would boost their economic development and help those communities to plan, finance and manage the implementation of supporting investments and their subsequent operation and maintenance; and

    (b) Subcomponent "*Capacity-building of project partners",* designed to orient project partners[20] toward the bottom-up, demand-driven, participatory approach of the project.

37. **Component 2: Enhancement of agricultural productivity and profitability:** *Improved access by farmers and livestock owners to improve agricultural and livestock technologies and inputs, and to the required productive infrastructure.* The second component had the following two subcomponents:

    (a) Subcomponent 2.1: *On-farm technology validation and demonstration,* aimed at helping with the validation and transfer of improved agricultural technologies in response to the priority needs of the participating communities; and

    (b) Subcomponent 2.2: *Community Development Fund,* to finance investments in physical infrastructure such as: link-roads, water supplies for irrigation, drinking water, electricity supply infrastructure, low-cost storage and marketing facilities, and others.

38. **Component 3: Project management:** *Project managed for development effectiveness and efficiency.* This component was intended to ensure that the project was managed effectively and efficiently, and comprised two subcomponents: (a) Project management; and (b) Monitoring and evaluation.

[19] Initially consisting of the representatives of the livestock, poultry, bee-keeping and fisheries departments of MOA; State Enterprise Pasture and Ameliorative Agency; Investment Department of the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management; Investment Division of the Ministry of Finance; State Committee for Women's Affairs and Families; Agency of Land Reclamation and Irrigation; and SALMGC. Following the project's restructuring, the Project Steering Committee was reconstituted under the chairmanship of MOA with a similar structure and responsibilities.

[20] The government agencies, including research institute scientists and district-level staff of the line departments (e.g. for land, agriculture and irrigation), entrepreneurs, service providers and local organizations directly involved in supporting project activities.

39. **Project financing.** At the appraisal stage, the estimated total project cost was US$14.95 million. This includes an IFAD grant equivalent to US$12.3 million, a beneficiary contribution of US$1.88 million, and a government contribution of US$0.51 million. After the project's restructuring in 2013, the total cost of the project was US$12.31 million, including an IFAD grant worth US$9.66 million, a beneficiary contribution of US$1.88 million, and a government contribution of US$0.51 million. Upon completion, the actual spending stood at US$10.09 million (including the IFAD grant of US$8.94 million), which constituted 82.0 per cent of the approved amount. In the end, the Government had disbursed significantly more than the planned allocation. MSDSP contributed US$0.04 million (see table 2 below).

Table 2
Planned project costs after restructuring and actual expenditures at project closure (in US$ million)

	Approval (1)	*% of total*	*Actual (2)*	*% of total*	*Disbursement rate (2/1)*
IFAD grant	9.66	78.5%	8.94	88.6%	92.5%
Government	0.51	4.1%	0.88	8.7%	172.5%
MSDSP	0.26	2.1%	0.04	0.4%	15.4%
Beneficiaries	1.88	15.3%	0.23	2.3%	12.2%
Total	12.31		10.09		82.0%

Source: PCR; Operational Results Management System.

Table 3
Component costs (in US$ million)

	Approval (1)	*% of total*	*Actual (2)*	*% of total*	*Disbursement rate (2/1)*
Institutional support	1.58	12.8%	1.13	11.2%	71.5%
Enhancement of agricultural productivity and profitability	8.60	69.9%	7.31	72.4%	85.0%
Project management	2.13	17.3%	1.66	16.4%	77.9%
Total	12.31		10.10		82.0%

Source: PCR; Operational Results Management System.

40. **Time frame.** KLSP was approved by IFAD's Executive Board in December 2008 and declared effective on 17 April 2009. The original completion date was set as 30 June 2015, but this was extended to 31 December 2015 with an eventual closing date of 30 June 2016.

41. IFAD grant financing for the project was suspended in February 2012 due to the non-submission of audited financial statements. In November 2011, IFAD sent a legal notice of suspension of project activities to the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan. The project was officially suspended in February 2012.

42. In October 2013, the Government of Tajikistan issued a decree to resume the project's implementation under the PMU of MOA, and a new project coordinator was appointed in January 2014. The project resumed upon the signing of agreed amendments to the Project Grant Agreement by both the IFAD and the Government of Tajikistan on 24 July 2013. The PCR was submitted on 5 August 2016.

Key points

- Tajikistan is highly agrarian and the poorest Central Asian country. From 2000 to 2017, Tajikistan made steady progress in reducing poverty and growing its economy, with the poverty rate falling from 83 to 29.5 per cent of the population and the economy growing at an average rate of 7 per cent per year.
- The majority of the population resides in rural areas. Non-monetary poverty indicators in rural areas continue to be high, with only a minority of the population in rural regions having access to safe drinking water. The country is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, which impede its successful economic development.
- The poor state of water infrastructure has resulted in water shortages for irrigation and personal consumption. Rural communities and the agriculture sector as a whole suffer from the effects of a rising water table and increasing soil salinity.
- Agriculture is the second-largest sector of the economy and holds a dominant position in terms of output and employment. In 2005, it accounted for 23.6 per cent of GDP, 51.4 per cent of employment, 26 per cent of exports, and 39 per cent of tax revenue.
- The main objectives of the PPE were to: (i) provide an independent assessment of the achievements and results of KLSP; (ii) draw lessons to inform the further development of IFAD's cooperation with the Republic of Tajikistan; and (iii) obtain insights and lessons to inform other IOE knowledge products, for example on CDD and infrastructure. KLSP was the first project in Tajikistan that incorporated the CDD approach and therefore was rated highly by the Government of Tajikistan.
- KLSP was launched in 2009 and comprised three components: (i) institutional support; (ii) enhancement of agricultural productivity and profitability; and (iii) project management.
- The project was launched on 17 April 2009 and closed on 30 June 2016. The project's implementation was carried out in two phases, one before and one after the restructuring that took place in 2013. Phase I was implemented in 2009–2012 and phase II took place in 2014–2015.
- At the appraisal stage, the estimated total project cost was US$14.95 million. After the project's restructuring in 2013, the total cost of the project was US$12.31 million.

III. Main evaluation findings

A. Project performance and rural poverty impact

Relevance

43. **Alignment with national policies**. The PRSP of the Republic of Tajikistan laid out several key priorities for 2007–2009, including food security and the development of the agriculture sector. The document also highlights the importance of infrastructure projects extending access to water, energy, sanitation, housing and municipal services. Likewise, the NDS of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2007–2015 pointed to the deterioration of health care, social welfare, water supply, sanitation, housing and municipal services, the environment, and gender equality. The original objective of the project was to increase farm profitability in five project districts and reduce poverty for 18,750 households across the project area, which would coincide with the national strategic documents enacted prior to the project's launch.

21. The community-driven approach of KLSP was aligned with government policies at the time of appraisal. In 2008, the Government of Tajikistan enforced the "Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Public Associations",[22] which regulated the formation, activity, reorganization and dissolution of public associations. The village organizations and public organizations created within the framework of KLSP fell under this law.

44. According to the project appraisal document (dated September 2008), the IFAD team actively engaged national stakeholders to ensure the relevance and coherence of the project activities with national priorities. Following the appraisal, the Director of SALMGC (the lead project agency) confirmed the relevance of the proposed project design. Following appraisal, the project was approved by the President of Tajikistan in May 2008.

45. **Relevance to the IFAD strategy in Tajikistan**. The KLSP agenda was aligned with the strategic priorities of IFAD's Sub-regional Strategic Opportunities Paper for Central Asian Countries and the strategic objectives of IFAD's country strategy note. IFAD's Sub-regional Strategic Opportunities Paper for Central Asian Countries, approved by the Executive Board of IFAD in December 2005, identified four strategic priorities for IFAD's activities: (i) natural resource management; (ii) rural financial services and rural microenterprise development; (iii) support for the privatization of land and for the land reform process; and (iv) strengthening grassroots participation.

46. The IFAD's country strategy note[23] for Tajikistan was issued after the project's completion, in November 2016, and it outlined two key strategic objectives: (i) to support the capacity of central and local institutions to improve governance of poor rural communities, and strengthen their access to agricultural technologies, veterinary and other agro-services, infrastructure and markets; and (ii) to enhance climate change resilience and natural disaster risk awareness of rural communities, reflected in the improved management of the resource base and the sustainability of returns for farmers.

47. **Quality of the design.** Overall, the design was comprehensive and appropriate. The appraisal document (2008) addressed the development objectives of the project and its alignment with the national policy and strategic priorities. It also pointed to the following categories of benefits anticipated within the project's framework: (i) on-farm benefits such as improved production from better technologies; (ii) benefits arising from productive infrastructure; and (iii) benefits associated with institutional development.

48. The design envisaged a comprehensive set of activities, including social and productive infrastructure, capacity-building and participatory technology

[22] Republic of Tajikistan. 2013. Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Public Associations.
[23] IFAD. 2016. Tajikistan; Country strategy note; main report and appendices (November 2016).

development, delivered through a community-driven approach. Strengthening the capacity of village organizations for community development was an approach promoted by the Aga Khan Foundation's MSDP in Tajikistan. KLSP, working in partnership with MSDP, was the first project using this approach within the government system and therefore was appreciated by the Government of Tajikistan.

49. The appraisal document (2008) outlined risks and mitigation strategies, targeting and gender mainstreaming, project sustainability and scaling-up approaches. It identified as a risk that SALMGC and technical institutes in Tajikistan were not familiar with CDD approaches at the time.[24] The project sought to mitigate this risk through the involvement of strong NGOs, such as MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation and CARITAS.

50. A major gap in the original design was that it did not include a specific poverty or gender analysis. The only poverty analysis that could have informed the selection of project villages was included in the aide-memoire of the 2010 supervision. When the project area was reduced during design, there was no further justification provided with regard to poverty criteria.

51. **Quality of the logframe**. The quality of the KLSP logframe was on par with logframes prepared at the same time. There are several versions of the project logframe as a result of the adjustments made during design and implementation.[25] As a common shortcoming, the various versions include targets only, but no baseline values, which made it difficult to track progress. Furthermore, the targets were not time-bound. The status of achievements was recorded during the MTR and project closure. The outcome related to land reform was dropped after the MTR, and the related indicators were revised accordingly. Data on outcome-level indicators were collected through (external) baseline and impact surveys. The period between the second baseline survey (2015), reflecting the adjustments in the project scope, and the impact survey (2016) was very short and only covered phase II. The majority of logframe indicators were output-oriented, recording low-level achievements or numbers of beneficiaries participating in activities. Very few indicators are gender-disaggregated. The monitoring of capacity-building under component 1, including progress on the CAPs, was delegated to MSDSP; the indicators were not included in the logframe. Given the participatory nature of the project, the M&E system could have included feedback mechanisms, reflecting on the quality of services and areas for adjustments.

52. **Approach to targeting.** The project appraisal document (September 2008) outlined the targeting approach and the selection criteria applied to identify the target groups for different types of activities. At the outset, the primary target group comprised poor and very poor households in five targeted districts (about 220–250 villages) of Khatlon region. The project design targeted the following groups: (i) the rural poor living in extreme poverty, who are either landless or are living at the bare minimum subsistence level from their household plots; (ii) subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers, in particular those willing to move to more commercial farming; and (iii) the rural underemployed and self-employed. The appraisal envisaged a combination of targeting strategies, including geographical targeting (of poor villages), direct targeting (of farmers groups and individual farmers for capacity-building), self-targeting (through the village development planning process,) and indirect targeting (through grant subprojects for productive infrastructure).

[24] The risk of having the wrong implementing partner was also discussed during the quality assurance The Quality Assurance Group recommended a swift transition of project management to MOA, in case the agreed milestones could not be met. Quality assurance Progress Report 2010).

[25] A first version of the project's logframe was developed at the inception phase of the project in 2006. A modified version of the logframe attached to the design document dated October 2007 included outcome and output indicators for each component. The logframe attached to the MTR records the status of achievements for output-level indicators. A revised version of the logframe was then attached to the 2014 supervision report, which includes the revised project goal and the adjusted targets for the restructured project.

53. During phase I, the PCU conducted the ranking of 406 villages in the five targeted districts to finalize the list of those eligible to participate in the project. Primary target group beneficiaries were expected to be living on less than US$2.15 purchasing power parity per capita per day, i.e. either extreme or absolute poor, which comprise around 78 per cent of the total population of Khatlon.[26] The aide-memoire of the 2010 supervision provides the list of villages, from the Muminobod and Shurobod districts, selected on the basis of a number of indicators, namely population and households numbers as well as poverty and agriculture potential scores

54. Following the project's restructuring in 2013, the number of targeted communities was reduced from five to two districts of Khatlon region. Furthermore, instead of 220–250 village organizations, the project area was reduced and targeted 82 of them. The main justification provided was that these were the villages already mobilized during phase I (see Box 1 below).

55. **Participatory process**. The participatory process is clearly described in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM 2010). The PIM stipulates that "*investments through the Community Development Fund (CDF) should focus on public goods, although assets that will directly support private sector production, processing and marketing could also be financed if providing benefits to a large number of villagers and if the CAP identifies the investment as a priority".* It elaborates the detailed process of preparing and implementing the CAPs, from community mobilization and organization, identification of priorities, through to appraisal and approval. While community mobilization seems to have progressed well since 2010, the process of obtaining approval was slow and finally came to a halt when the project was suspended.[27] Communities were motivated and even provided in-cash and in-kind contribution before subprojects were implemented or funded by the project.[28]

56. During phase I (starting 2010), the project mobilized 82 village organizations to identify their first priority projects. Farmers in Muminobod had identified 10 topics, with agricultural machinery, roads and bridges, irrigation and water as top priorities. In Shurobod the top priorities were agricultural machinery, flour mills and irrigation. During phase II, the project continued to focus on the 82 village organizations that had already been mobilized during phase I. In 2014, another round of trainings was conducted to update the CAPs[29] and identify additional (second and third) priorities. The process resulted in 82 CAPs prepared and approved at the level of village organizations.

57. After initial delays in the process, the project had been able to deliver subprojects to all the 82 village organizations targeted during phase II. In total, the project supported 20 infrastructure projects in 12 of them and invested in 98 pieces of machinery provided to 63 village organizations. However the second priorities, which often included infrastructure subprojects, had only been partly addressed.[30] The increased costs and lengthy approval processes for infrastructure subprojects may explain why the project could not address the second and third priorities.[31]

[26] Poverty issues were discussed at a start-up workshop in December 2009.
[27] The MTR noted a number of flaws in the decision-making process. There was a high level of misunderstanding of the approval process for subprojects and decisions made by the district project officer (DPO) and PCU. There were also questions in communities on partial implementation of their subprojects, e.g. tractors were procured without supplemental equipment or spare parts. (MTR Learning Note 2013).
[28] MTR Learning Note 2013.
[29] The aide-memoire signed by the Government of Tajikistan and IFAD (2014) noted that the original CAPs prepared in 2009–2010 would require updating, because priorities had changed and some of the proposed infrastructure subprojects would require clearance by the state construction expertise. (Supervision mission 17-30 March and 15-39 April 2014)
[30] MSDSP reported that 82 subprojects of second priority and 36 subprojects of third priority were identified in 2014. From the second priorities, 12 subprojects of Shurobod District and 18 subprojects of Muminobod District were approved by the PMU for implementation, but not yet implemented, although communities had already mobilized their contributions. (Annex 4 in MSDSP Final Report, 2015).
[31] See Supervision 2014.

Furthermore, according to MSDSP, some balances of community contributions are still outstanding.[32]

Box 1
Community development funds in KLSP

KLSP provided funding to implement priority subprojects of the CAPs. Project funding was allocated depending on the size of population as well as poverty and agricultural indicators. The average allocation was to be about US$53,000 per community. Communities raised matching funds (cash and in-kind). Many of these communities built sheds for the machinery as contribution to the investment. Income generated from the implemented subprojects was channelled to the Community Fund at the level of village organizations. They made decisions on the use of these funds at the village meetings. In one of the target village organizations, the community decided to allocate the funds to providing support to the elderly and the disabled, awarding small stipends to high-achieving school students, and buying fuel for schools and poor households.

Source*:* MTR Lessons Learned Note (2015).

58. **Relevance of the promoted technologies**. The introduction of intensive apple orchards was relevant from an agro-ecological perspective. Restoring existing or planting new orchards in the Muminobod and Shurobod districts has an economic potential to improve rural livelihoods given the favourable climatic conditions and comparatively high prices of and demand for fruits.[33] The establishment and maintenance of intensive apple orchards is rather expensive and therefore more attractive to medium and better-off farmers

59. The promotion of conservation agriculture in Khatlon was very relevant within the agro-ecological context; the semi-fertile loess soils of the region are highly erosive under precipitation or an improper irrigation technique, often resulting in massive gully formation and surface sheet erosion. Ensuring minimum, if not zero, tillage as well as constant vegetation cover (or mulching) are among the most important measures to reduce soil degradation, apart from proper livestock management (only controlled grazing on slopes and zero tillage on slopes).[34] The machinery required for conservation agriculture – such as direct seeding systems, tillers and powerful tractors – are expensive, and even higher yields in the longer term cannot compensate for such investment costs. Therefore, this technology is more relevant for larger-scale agriculture. Conservation agriculture is also more labour-intensive because weeds must be removed constantly during growing to reduce the competition for soil nutrients. These could be among the reasons for the low adoption rates reported by the project.

60. The provision of agricultural machinery, in particular tractors and ploughs, was a priority for decision-makers and farmers, and the project approach to promote the ownership of agricultural machinery by village organizations was relevant. The World Bank country assessment (2012) emphasized the need for new approaches to mechanization, suitable for small farms and low-cost production systems. Increased crop production will depend on access to modern, low-cost cultivation practices; appropriately scaled tractors, harvesters and equipment should be improved, especially for low-income households. More village-based hired machinery operators and new forms of joint ownership were needed that would offer cost-effective ways to improve access to farm machinery without incurring the full costs of ownership.

[32] Some of the village organizations even paid the community contribution for additional machinery aggregates but did not receive any further guidance or information on this matter. Some of them are still seeking that information. (Aga Khan Foundation comments on draft PPE report).
[33] From a value chain perspective, intensive orchards would also require appropriate storage and post-harvest processing capacity to increase profit margins.
[34] Conservation agriculture would be more relevant for Muminobod, where the plains in the valley bottom are ideal for agriculture, while the slopes and river fans to the east are used for livestock-grazing and some horticulture. In Shurobod, livestock-rearing dominates, with some horticulture, because of its mountainous terrain.

61. **Adjustment of design**. Following the poor performance during phase I and the MTR in 2014, the project was restructured. The main adjustment was to transfer the project management to an already existing PMU under MOA and to reduce the geographic scope of the project. The restructuring aimed at an "orderly phasing out", which would enable the project to address community expectations and deliver the subprojects identified through the participatory planning process.[35] The adjustments were pragmatic and allowed the project to deliver significant benefits within a relatively short period. The main change in the project design was the reduction in the number of beneficiaries, focusing on those 82 village organizations that had already been mobilized in Muminobod and Shurobod. Other than that, the project still intended to address the community priorities expressed in the CAPs, including infrastructure priorities, for which it received an extension of six months, until December 2015.[36] The revised PIM (October 2014) details the revised management and approval processes, with overall project management under the PMU in MOA and with a streamlined district-level administration. These adjustments helped to speed up the implementation process during phase II. However, in practice they meant that the ambitions to roll out the community-driven approach over a larger area and create sustainable linkages into local government were significantly scaled down.[37]

62. **To conclude**, the KLSP design was relevant. The project was aligned with government policies and the initiatives of other development partners at the time. The focus on building the capacities of village organizations in partnerships with MSDSP was relevant and aimed at building sustainable governance structures in rural communities. The agricultural technologies promoted were overall appropriate within the agro-ecological context, although they were not specifically targeted to the poorer segments of the population. The adjustments made after the MTR not only reduced the quantitative targets, but also scaled down the original ambitions of the community-driven approach. The participatory process raised communities' expectations, which in the end the project was not able to fully address. With the adjustments made, the project abandoned the idea of rolling out the community-driven approach and creating sustainable linkages with local government. In light of this analysis, the PPE rates the project's relevance as **moderately satisfactory (4).**

Effectiveness

63. **Project outreach.** The original objective of the project was to reduce poverty for 18,750 households and to increase the productivity of small farms (including household plots) across the whole project area. The revised number of targeted beneficiaries (the members of the village organizations) amounted to 8,782 households. Data included in the PCR show that the project targeted 71,155 people in 82 village organizations. The largest number of people were reached through the provision of machinery to 63 of them. A further 20 of them benefited from community infrastructure (see table 4 below).

64. **Infrastructure subprojects.** The inventory of infrastructure subprojects and machinery included in the PCR shows that almost all village organizations benefited. They would receive an infrastructure subproject or machinery according to the

[35] The restructuring of the project and the resulting adjustment of the project scope were done through a series of steps following the MTR (2013). The implementation support mission (2013) resulted in an action plan outlining the steps required by the PMU and sub-contractors (MSDSP and FAO) to resume implementation. The 2014 Supervision Report (May 2014) reviewed the progress and concluded that the project should proceed to an orderly phasing out. The report includes the logframe with the revised project goal (for 8,750 households).

[36] See extension request, dated 6 October 2014. The rationale provided was that this extension would enable the project to utilize the full 2015 construction season to complete the infrastructure projects. The PPE notes that the extension request did not include the revised project goal.

[37] According to appraisal, the "ambitions" of the community-driven approach were through the formulation of CAPs to: (i) identify constraints to their local economy and consider options for creating viable opportunities for sustainable economic development using local and external resources; and (ii) identify the infrastructure and other investments required to facilitate the implementation. The design expected that, given the resource and capacity constraints, the project would be able to cover a maximum of 250 CAPs.

relevant priority and based on the amount of community contributions raised. PPE analysis of their characteristics (see table 1 in annex VIII) shows that village organizations receiving machinery had a larger population size on average. Those receiving infrastructure were among the poorest in Muminobod. In Shurobod, where overall poverty is higher, infrastructure subprojects were found in the relatively better-off villages. (See table 2 in annex VIII).

65. **Capacity-building interventions.** A large number of people (20,952) benefited from the capacity-building provided under the project, including 9,042 women. MSDSP, as service provider under the KLSP, mobilized a large number of villagers through a participatory and transparent process. The project provided updated information on the community information boards, located in visible and accessible public places in the targeted village organizations, to inform them about training activities, the top priorities listed in the CAPs and social partnerships. It also provided a manual on the use of agricultural machinery, a manual on M&E, service price lists, receipt examples, and other materials to enable the village organizations to fully participate in the implementation process. MSDSP also facilitated participatory monitoring through community data sheets, which were distributed in electronic and hard-copy versions among the targeted villages.

Table 4
KLSP outreach

Activities	*Village organizations*	*Beneficiaries*	*Households*	*Women*
Project area	82	71 155	8 782	ND
Infrastructure	20	15 543	2 058	ND
Machinery	63	56 507	6 798	ND
Capacity-building (MSDSP)	82[38]	20 952	-	9 042
Capacity-building (FAO)	1 205	-	-	605

Source: Compilation of data included in PCR and aide-memoire of the supervision mission 2010.

66. **Achievement of the project's objectives.** The initial list of indicators, set at appraisal in 2008 to assess the achievement of the project's objectives, was adjusted after the project's restructuring in 2013. Furthermore, there were some inconsistencies in the indicators used in the various reports and the M&E database, thus making it impossible to track the achievements over time.[39]

67. Achievements over time were uneven (see annex VII). During phase I of the project (covering 2009–2012), progress was hampered by slow delivery, procurement issues, and administrative and management challenges of the PCU (the national implementing partner of the KLSP for phase I). During phase I, the project managed to partially achieve three of its six subcomponents (subcomponent 1.a: Development of community organizations; subcomponent 2.a: On-farm technology validation and demonstration; and subcomponent 2.b: Community Development Fund). The other three subcomponents were not achieved to any extent. Within the framework of subcomponent 1.a, the project managed to reach out to, and deploy its activities in, two out of five districts of Khatlon region only.

68. Phase II of the project demonstrated significant progress in achieving the revised (and lower) targets set after the MTR (2013): three out of its six subcomponents were fully achieved and the other three (subcomponent 1.b: Capacity building of project partners; subcomponent 2.a: On-farm technology validation and

[38] The PPE did not receive the final list of beneficiaries. Therefore, no cross-validation was conducted to verify that the capacity-building activities engaged the residents of all 82 villages.
[39] The revised set of indicators outlined in the KLSP Supervision Report (dated 2014) did not coincide with either the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) table in the PCR or the indicators provided in the project's M&E database kept by the PMU. Finally, the Project Annual Report for 2015, prepared by the PMU, lacked qualitative details about progress made with respect to the outcome indicators.

demonstration; and subcomponent 3.b: Monitoring and evaluation) were achieved partially.

69. Table 5 below summarizes the achievements for each of the project phases. It shows that the effectiveness greatly improved during phase II, in particular for components 1 and 3.

Table 5
Achievements of KLSP components

Components	*Implementation Period*	
	Phase I (2009–2012)	*Phase II (2014–2015)*
Component 1: Institutional support	Partially achieved	Mostly achieved
Component 2: Enhancement of agricultural productivity and profitability	Partially achieved	Partially achieved
Component 3: Project management	Not achieved	Mostly achieved

Source*:* PPE compilation based on PCR and PMU M&E data.

70. **Achievement of component 1 - Institutional support.** The indicators and targets set for component 1 were partially achieved during phase I and overall achieved during phase II, although for a reduced scope of beneficiaries compared to the original design. During phase I, none of the outcome-level indicators[40] set in the logical framework of the project was achieved. The revised logical framework of the project outlined two outcome-level indicators for phase II: "Percentage of households in the project area participating with an improved capability to use their own and other resources and services to support their own priorities (including those of vulnerable groups) for sustainable economic development" and "Number of village organizations and CIGs [common interest groups] functioning effectively two years after their establishment." Indicator 2 was accomplished for all village organizations and CIGs.

71. **Development of community organizations.** Taking into account the accomplishments of subcomponent 1.a (Development of community organizations) during phase I and the challenges associated with the outcome- and output-level indicators, this subcomponent is considered to have been partially achieved during phase I of the project.

72. During phase I (2009–2011), MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation, and other local NGOs subcontracted under subcomponent 1.a demonstrated partial accomplishment of output-level indicators. MSDSP achieved considerable results during phase I of the project. It organized and strengthened 82 village organizations[41] (41 in Muminobod District and 41 in Shurobod districts) in two of the initially planned districts (at the appraisal) and conducted a number of training sessions and workshops.[42] MSDSP also facilitated the creation of 82 CAPs and 70 CIGs (out of a planned 750) and supported the development of 27 subprojects funded by the CDF. Despite the advances made and the achievements recorded, MSDSP was unable to perform all activities stipulated in its contract[43] because of the suspension of the project in 2012.

[40] "Percentage of households in project area participating in natural resource base development activities (planning and implementation)"; "Number of Village Organizations and Common Interest Groups (CIGs) functioning effectively three years after their establishment"; "Number of households receiving improved extension services by the Government and national agricultural research systems on a regular basis"; and "Percentage increase in the number of persons holding individual land certificates".
[41] These village organizations had previously been trained by MSDSP on organizational development.
[42] Eighty-two capacity-building training activities in economic development for the village organizations; training modules on 14 agricultural topics for over 1,300 members of CIGs in 82 village organizations; workshops on the development of CAPs for 41 village organizations in Muminobod District; two conferences on the 'Role of community-based organizations in KLSP implementation' and 'Capacity-building of village organizations and their roles in the implementation of KLSP'.
[43] Out of an allocated US$600,000, only two tranches of US$100,000 and US$150,000 were disbursed to MSDSP to cover actual expenses.

However, its achieved results did lay the foundations for the capacity-building of VOs.

73. For phase II (2014–2015) that followed the project's restructuring, IFAD and the Government of Tajikistan agreed that the project would focus solely on 82 VOs in Muminobod and Shurobod districts.[44] The 82 VOs participated in awareness workshops, prepared CAPs, and conducted a number of related meetings and training activities. Furthermore, 164 training activities were conducted on the various topics, such as: financial management; mechanism of use of agriculture machinery and tools; cultivation of early vegetables; pest control and establishment of water user committees; and CIGs. In total, 3,315 people took part in these training activities, of whom 1,060 were women. The project also provided 82 courses on economic development, covering topics such as marketing and entrepreneurship, with a total of 1,687 participants (681 female and 1,006 male participants).

74. **Capacity-building of project partners.** At appraisal, the project was supposed to build the capacity of the partners (government agencies, research institutions, district-level staff of the line departments, entrepreneurs, service providers, and local organizations) directly involved in supporting the project's activities. Training sessions for staff engaged with the ongoing land reform process were expected to be delivered through SALMGC with the help of the World Bank and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The project was also expected to engage more actively with local governance agencies. Neither the relevant indicators nor any separate evidence was found to suggest that significant progress had been made during phase I (2009–2012) of the project.

75. Following the project's restructuring in 2013, the technical training activities under the subcomponent had been incorporated into the contract with FAO under subcomponent 2.a (On-farm technology validation and demonstration). The PMU of MOA's LPDP took over the project's implementation. The PMU received support in developing the project's M&E database and in the training of its staff. For example, IFAD helped to organize an eight-day experience-sharing visit to Azerbaijan in 2014 for the representatives of the PMU, MOA and MSDSP in order to obtain more information about agriculture-related projects in Azerbaijan that incorporated similar activities, such as rehabilitation of irrigation networks, institutional development of rural areas, and financial services in agriculture. With regard to the M&E database, the PPE revealed that it had been updated in a sporadic way by the sub-contracted database developer.

76. **Achievement of component II - Enhancement of agricultural productivity and profitability.** The outcome-level indicators for this component developed at appraisal were subsequently modified to adjust to the revised timeline of the project after its re-launch. The accomplishment of this subcomponent during phase I had to be measured against the progress made across the outputs identified in FAO's project report. On-farm technology validation and demonstration was included in phase II (2012–2014). The modified logframe did not correctly reflect the title of this component,[45] while the output-level indicators were not segregated per subcomponent.

77. During phase I (2009–2012), the activities relating to this subcomponent were carried out by FAO's Sub-regional Office for Central Asia, and were launched with a four-month delay. The outputs of this subcomponent were not fully achieved during phase I. According to the PCR, the project did achieve the following: 74 out of 8000 farmers were trained on new crop and livestock technologies; 65 on-farm adaptive research and demonstration trials were implemented (out of a planned 130); and

[44] A mismatch in terms of the component name at the output-level sections presented through different reporting channels (the PMU's M&E database, the logical framework of the KLSP Aide-Mémoire dated 2010, and the PCR) made it unfeasible to validate the achievements made against the given indicators.

[45] Instead, it titled the component as "Component 2: Enhanced access of poor farmers to improved crop and livestock technologies."

1,062 participants out of the planned 4,500 learned about new agricultural technologies from exchange visits and field days supported by the project.

78. During phase II, 1,205 participants benefited from the technical training sessions, exchange visits and field days facilitated by FAO, over 50 per cent (605) of whom were female participants. Four field days (two per district) were held to demonstrate pasture and grassland rehabilitation techniques, conservation agriculture, crop rotation and intensive orchard management, while six exchange visits were also arranged. Participants included about 460 farmers (50 per cent of whom were women)

79. Demonstration plots included intensive apple orchards (two hectares), and 15 types of cereals, legumes, oilseeds and fodder crop varieties planted across 10 hectares to demonstrate pasture rehabilitation techniques. Other plots demonstrated the use of conservation techniques in wheat-based cropping systems, such as no-till planters and alternative crops (rye, safflower, oats, barley, flax and mung bean) on 2 hectares in Muminobod and 5 hectares in Shurobod. Different winter crops (cereals, legumes and fodder) were also planted using no-till planters for seed production purposes.

80. The project also provided agrochemical laboratory equipment to the Tajik Agrarian University (amounting to about US$160,000) and technical support and laboratory equipment for the development of artificial insemination in Tajikistan (about US$460,000). The project also procured some purebred cattle (12 heads from outside the country and 40 heads within the country, at about US$273,000).

81. The feedback gathered from project beneficiaries confirmed that farmers highly appreciated the technical training activities provided by FAO on intensive orchards (apples), pasture management and fodder production, wheat production, veterinary services and bee-keeping. The training sessions on veterinary services and intensive orchards were considered innovative and very useful for local farmers. Data from the KLSP endline survey suggest that adoption rates were high, ranging between 81 per cent (for pasture management) and 93 per cent (for intensive orchard management). The survey reports slightly lower adoption rates for cropping techniques linked to conservation agriculture (76 per cent for potato and 77 per cent for wheat) (see figure 2 in annex VIII).

82. **Community development fund.** The effectiveness of the CDF was limited. The original logframe included two indicators, the first on livestock and crop production projects and the second on physical infrastructure to be funded through the CDF. The MTR noted the preparation of 70 proposals for the first indicator (against a target of 400–500 proposals) and six for the second indicator (target 220–250 proposals). Following project restructuring, there was only one indicator on productive infrastructure, which foresaw a total number of 200 project proposals funded by the CDF and implemented by communities. The number of proposals implemented was 118 at completion, which included 20 infrastructure projects and 98 pieces of machinery. The total cost of subprojects funded was US$4.5 million and beneficiaries' contributions amounted to US$0.4 million.

83. The CDF became more effective during phase II, but then the limited timeframe for implementation (less than two years) made it challenging to finance infrastructure subprojects, which require lengthy procedures pertaining to design, permits for construction, land acquisition, and other factors. In addition, the requirement for communities to raise their mandatory contributions within a short time was challenging for the poorer segments of the population, as illustrated in Box 2 below.

Box 2
Mobilizing community contributions from the poor

Field interviews found that some village organizations were facing difficulties raising the 5 per cent contribution from all participating households. Some good practices to prevent elite capture were found in the village organization of Odinaboi. Here, women gathered their savings from tens of savings groups and were able to fund the machinery themselves, without any main investor. They presented to the evaluation team the financial documents and journal with the provided services signed by the households. In other village organization, the better-off villagers were sometimes able to contribute more, and the uneven contributions led to the biggest investors becoming the owners of the machinery. In those cases, the owners of the machines would have to sign a commitment that they would provide the machines to other villagers with favourable conditions.

Source: PPE field visits.

84. **To conclude**, levels of achievement differed distinctively between the two phases. During phase I (2009–2012), achievements were low due to slow delivery, procurement issues, and administrative and management issues related to the PCU. Community mobilization and capacity-building initiated during phase I provided the foundation for the achievements in phase II. During phase II, the project demonstrated significant progress on three out of six subcomponents. Outreach to the 82 village organization targeted was achieved through capacity-building, small-scale infrastructure and the provision of machinery. The CDF took off after project restructuring, but overall underperformed. Given the uneven performance of the project, effectiveness is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

Efficiency

85. **Project management.** The PCU structure used during phase I was inefficient and a main cause for the slow implementation of all components of the project. Reportedly, this was related to the inadequate capacity and administrative structure of the PCU. According to stakeholder feedback, some functions of the PCU, MSDSP and the district project officer (DPO) were misunderstood. The DPO tended to supervise the work of MSDSP, which caused delays in implementation that led to frustration and confusion at community level. Besides, no PCU staff member was solely assigned to coordinate/facilitate social/community development with MSDSP. Stakeholders felt that the PCU generally acted as a controller rather than a coordinator of the work. This led to long delays in the appraisal and approval of CAPs and subprojects, as well as further delays in their implementation.

86. After the PMU (under MOA) took over project management, implementation progress and efficiency improved. The PMU was formally appointed on 2 November 2013, and a new project coordinator was appointed in January 2014. A new team was appointed and vehicles, office equipment, furniture and appropriate accountancy software as well as an M&E database were procured. Combining the PMU of the two IFAD-supported projects (KLSP and LPDP) led to efficiency gains. However, it did not enable greater transparency and visibility of KLSP interventions. Stakeholders interviewed during this PPE were often not able to distinguish between the interventions provided by the two projects, probably also due to the overlaps in some of the activities supported (e.g. procurement of tractors, training on livestock and pasture management).[46]

87. **Implementation delays.** The implementation pace was behind schedule during phase I. Some of the delays continued into phase II. For example, some of the

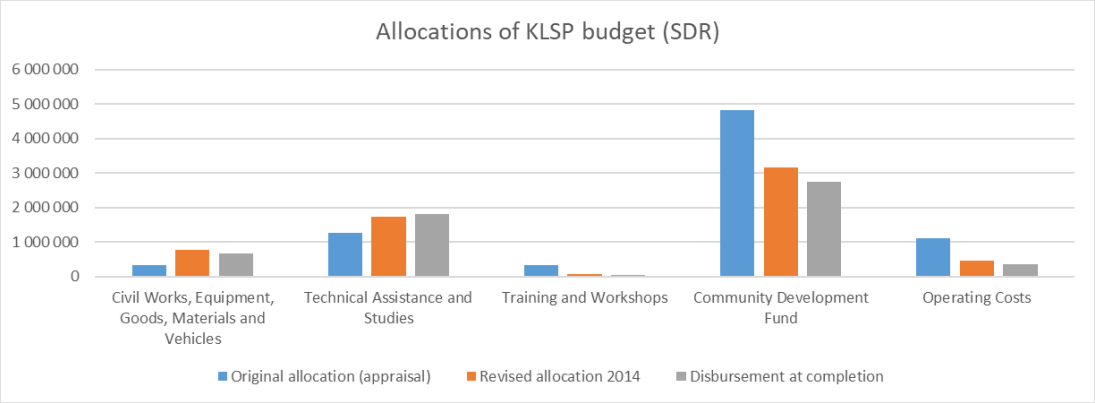
[46] The close link between KLSP and LPDP was also reinforced by IFAD, which supervised both projects simultaneously during phase II.

equipment required to implement demonstration trials was delayed.[47] Implementation of infrastructure subprojects also required additional time. In 2014, the project received a six-month extension, until December 2015.

88. **Disbursements.** Prior to the suspension of the project's activities in 2012, the actual spending was US$2.34 million, which constituted 15.6 per cent of the approved budget. Following the project's restructuring in 2013, disbursements accelerated. According to the data reflected in the Management Information System operated by the PMU, the major share of expenditures of all three components of the project was spent in 2014. The overall disbursement of the project stood at 82 per cent at project closure. Some 92.5 per cent of the IFAD grant was disbursed at project closure.

89. **CDF as funding mechanism.** The CDF was an innovative funding mechanism to support demand-led community development, but the complexity of the processes involved (from prioritization to approval) made it slow to move. The CDF was intended as the main mechanism for funding the subprojects included in the CAPs. At design, 61 per cent of the project budget was allocated to the CDF. Following the slow progress made during phase I, the allocation for the CDF was adjusted down to 51 per cent of the project budget. However, progress remained slow and disbursement from the CDF stood at 86.6 per cent of the adjusted budget at completion, or 57 per cent against the budget at appraisal.

Figure 1
Disbursement according to cost categories



Source: PCR.

90. **Costs per beneficiary.** Costs per beneficiary had increased at completion, compared to the design, indicating that the project had to spend more to achieve the (in this case lower than planned) results. At design, the costs per beneficiary were US$102. After project targets were reduced following restructuring, the costs per beneficiary went up to US$173. At completion, the costs per beneficiary stood at a lower US$141, mainly because the budget was not fully disbursed.

[47] According to FAO, the project agreement (subcomponent 2.a of the project) for phase II was signed but with some delay. Consequently, this delayed the preparatory work for no-till planting of spring crops and, as a result, the demonstration trials were infested by weeds. The implementing partner also reported that the procurement of field equipment was delayed and only delivered by the end of the project. Consequently, the no-till planters procured were used for the establishment of demonstration plots to support the adoption and promotion of modern crop management practices.

Table 6
Costs per beneficiary

	No. of beneficiaries	*No. of households*	*Total project cost (US$)*	*Cost per beneficiary (US$)*	*Cost per household (US$)*
At appraisal	146 250	18 750	14 949 000	102	797
After restructuring	71 155	8 782	12 310 000	173	1 402
At completion	71 155	8 782	10 040 000	141	1 143

Source: President's Report (2008); aide-memoire, supervision mission (2010); and PCR (2016).

91. **Economic rate of return.** Analysis of the (ex post) economic rate of return (ERR) concluded that the project became profitable by continuing through phase II. The analysis considered three scenarios. The first scenario (A) assumed that all project activities were stopped after phase II in 2012. In this case, the ERR would have been 5 per cent, which is below the social discount rate of 7 per cent. The second scenario (B) calculated the ERR for the activities conducted after 2013 (only). The analysis found that the project was economically profitable during this phase, with an ERR estimated at 24 per cent and a net present value of US$6.3 million.[48] In the third scenario (C), the analysis estimated the ERR for the entire project duration at 15 per cent, while the net present value of the net benefit stream, discounted at 7 per cent, was US$8.6 million.[49]

92. The ex-post financial ERR analysis in the PCR was based on four business models: (i) farmers' production of wheat and potatoes with machinery owned by the village organization, rather than rented privately; (ii) their business of renting out machine services; (iii) bee-keeping and the production of honey; and (iv) the application of conservation agriculture with rotations of wheat and chickpeas.[50] For models (iii) and (iv) it should be noted that the uptake was relatively low. Bee-keeping targeted a small number of women only[51] and uptake of CA was reportedly low.

93. Most details were presented for the use of machinery equipment and the relatively high, positive financial returns (for both village organizations that own the machinery and farmers that use it as a paid service). The ERR (24 per cent) seems to be extremely high and indicates that some service fees were below full costs (including depreciation and other fixed costs). Reportedly, the service fees charged to farmers (varying by village organization) were below those required for replacement, also since service fees did not go up with significantly declining exchange rates. The extent to which the costs charged to farmers allow for proper depreciation and replacement of machinery after 10 years is unclear.[52] The efficiency calculation of machinery also makes no reference to "social costs" for village organizations of not charging poor households.

94. **Fiduciary management** was unsatisfactory during phase I. Reportedly, the PCU failed to submit audited financial statements for 2010 and 2011. According to the PCR, the relevant accounting software was installed at the outset of the project activities. However, the accounting data were not updated on a regular basis and financial records were not officially submitted as required. The PCU and DPO accounts did not align with the categories detailed in the grant agreement, making it impossible to trace the assets. Furthermore, the Financial Management Operational Manual had not been finalized and adopted before 2011; thus there was no clear

[48] In this scenario, all project costs before 2013 were considered to be "sunk costs".
[49] Cash flows were calculated taking into account all project investment costs (from 2009 to 2016) and benefits achieved from activities implemented during 2011–2016 as well as projected costs until 2028.
[50] These business models were very different from the ones reviewed at appraisal, which were about livestock activities, water supply and sanitation and natural resource management activities. It is surprising that the PCR did not review livestock models and related fodder production, although these were supported by some of the KLSP activities.
[51] A total of 40 women were trained in bee-keeping management and were provided all necessary accessories for bee-keeping and 10 beehives each (in total 400 hives). PCR.
[52] The PCR clearly stipulated that "*village organizations did not create the depreciation fund" proposed by the project "due to [not] enough income",* but they had "savings in the bank" that could be used for this purpose.

guidance on financial procedures. In 2010–2011, IFAD subcontracted an international consultant to strengthen the capacity of the PCU, although little progress was recorded as a consequence.

95. After project management had been transferred to the PMU under MOA, fiduciary management was assessed as mostly satisfactory by IFAD supervisions in 2014 and 2015.

96. **To conclude**, project management was inefficient during phase I and a main cause for the low achievements at that time. Following the restructuring, implementation progress and efficiency improved. The complexity of the participatory planning and the approval processes contributed to the delays. Project disbursements stood at 82 per cent at completion. Costs per beneficiary had increased at completion, compared to the design, mainly as a result of the reduced project scope. Fiduciary management was unsatisfactory during phase I, but most of the issues were resolved towards the end. Overall, efficiency is rated **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Poverty impact

97. The PPE approach paper includes a reconstructed theory of change that illustrates the four assumed impact pathways leading to higher agricultural productivity, profitability and incomes, thereby reducing poverty in participating communities and households:

(i) **Enhanced capacity of village organizations** to manage the social and economic development of their communities. The project contributed to this pathway by providing capacity-building and a CDF for village organizations to manage infrastructure and machinery projects. The number and range of interventions financed through the CDF were too limited to meet the pertinent needs of the poor people in the project areas. However, the capacities of village organizations were visibly strengthened and in many cases sustained.

(ii) **Enhanced capacity of partnering organizations** to manage, monitor and evaluate community social and economic development projects. The project cooperated with a broad range of partners, including non-governmental and research organizations. Among these, the cooperation with MSDSP was probably the most successful one. The contract with MSDSP was results-based and included a detailed plan of the activities, outputs, payment arrangements and reporting requirements. The results for the capacity of village organizations- building delivered by MSDSP were pivotal for project success.

(iii) **Establishment of social and productive infrastructure** which is sustainable and effectively managed and used. The infrastructure has been funded through the CDF and is managed by the village organizations to ensure that communities continue to have access thereto. The social infrastructure delivered was much needed, but overall was too limited (in terms of quantity and quality) to make a significant impact. The machinery provided was in demand and contributed to lower production costs (see efficiency).

(iv) **Introduction of new technologies and enhancement of agricultural skills** through training activities and on-farm demonstrations and validations, enabling farmers to use their resources and services more effectively. The outcomes from this pathway were less observed, also due to data limitations. Livestock activities were not well documented, and the success of the demonstration plots was mixed. Conservation agriculture, although relevant for the project context, was not widely adopted.

98. KLSP implemented two baseline assessments and one impact study. The first baseline assessment was carried out in 2010. However, because the geographic coverage of the project changed after its restructuring, KLSP arranged a second

baseline study in 2013–2014, which was completed in 2015. At the time of this second baseline study, the project had already provided training to the treatment and control groups. Meanwhile, the impact study was arranged in 2015 and completed in 2016. Both studies incorporated treatment village organizations from Muminobod and Shurobod districts and a control group from the Khovaling District.

99. The PPE used the data collected through the phase II surveys. The surveys covered the same 400 households at baseline (the second baseline) and endline: 185 in Muminobod, 180 in Shurobod and 35 in Khovaling. Only one village organization was covered in the control group, which makes its reliability very low. Moreover, one can observe some contamination, since the control group also benefited from training.

100. The PPE assessed poverty impact across the following four poverty domains: (i) household income and assets; (iii) food security and agricultural productivity; (ii) human and social capital empowerment; and (iv) institutions and policies.

101. **Household income and assets.** Statistical analysis of the survey data shows that both districts gained from agricultural activities. The average of agricultural incomes reported was higher at the endline and it seems that the project effects are positive.[53,54] For the non-agricultural income, the average was also higher. However, compared with the trend in the control group, it seems that the project effects are on average negative, and more so in Shurobod (see annex IX for the methodology).[55]

Table 7
Difference-in-differences regression on yearly agricultural income

	Both	*Muminobod*	*Shurobod*
Against baseline	1 473.7*	1 473.7**	1 473.7*
	(1.94)	(2.37)	(1.76)
Against control	-169.8	-234.6	-103.2
	(-0.38)	(-0.62)	(-0.20)
Project effect	1 430.4*	1 401.5**	1 449.8
	(1.78)	(2.01)	(1.55)
N	533	292	292

T-statistics in parentheses | * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.
Source*:* PPE calculation based on KLSP baseline and end line surveys (computed via Stata: Software for statistics and data science).

[53] However, levels are only significant in Muminobod (less than 5 per cent).
[54] These results need to be interpreted cautiously as there was some contamination by another project (LPDP during 2013–2019).
[55] The amount is 1.69 times the loss in Muminobod and the significance level is at 11 per cent.

Table 8
Difference-in-differences regression on monthly non-agricultural income [56]

	Both	*Muminobod*	*Shurobod*
Against baseline	634.3***	634.3***	634.3***
	(5.32)	(4.70)	(5.26)
Against control	-154.6*	-158.6	-150.4
	(-1.75)	(-1.52)	(-1.62)
Project effect	-165.7	-123.7	-208.7
	(-1.33)	(-0.84)	(-1.59)
N	800	440	430

T-statistics in parentheses | * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.
Source*:* PPE calculation based on KLSP baseline and endline surveys (computed with Stata).

102. The survey results also showed that fewer respondents had to rent machinery after the projects (see figure 3 in annex VIII). There was no change in the comparison group (Khovaling). In both project districts there was a greater share of households owning (private) tractors after the project. In Shurobod there was a large share using tractors "borrowed" from the village organizations. The field visits confirmed that tractor rental fees are generally competitive for their members, compared with what they would pay for privately owned tractors. Current fees range from TJS 80 to TJS 120 (approximately US$50–US$150), with an additional cost of 35–40 litres of fuel to be covered by the renter. Farmers reported that these costs were manageable and they were satisfied by their services in this regard. There had been some cases of complaints about the accessibility of machinery for residents of villages served by village organizations, but this was linked with a relatively high demand for such services in the villages.

103. **Agricultural productivity**. Project data were insufficient to validate any gains in agricultural productivity. Livestock interventions were potentially important to increase productivity and incomes,[57] but no data were collected for the economic internal rate of return[58] Project data also provide no insights about the extent to which crop productivity increased. Yields were reported for the economic models included in the PCR, and they suggest a rather extensive agriculture farming system with low profitability.[59] The majority of households cultivated wheat, potatoes and apples, but wheat yields are still low (1.2 tonnes per hectare).

104. **Food security.** The comparison of data from baseline and impact studies suggests that food availability improved in the project districts, while it remained unchanged in the control district (see figure 4 in annex VIII). However, it should be taken into consideration that baseline and end line were conducted in different months of the agricultural cycle,[60] and the difference in time is likely to cause some underestimation. According to the agricultural cycle, household dietary diversity is

[56] It was a ranged variable, hence approximated by each median value. As the highest ranges were larger, there could be an over- or underestimation of the monthly income; however, it is very unlikely that the approximation is systematically above or below the median of each high range, and the number of observations is relatively low in these ranges. Hence, this should not bias the data.
[57] For the LPDP, the Research and Impact Assessment Division impact study found that livestock interventions such as better breeds, more appropriate breeding techniques, water availability and veterinary services had translated into higher livestock productivity.
[58] The end line survey, however, suggests that the interventions did not address the most important limitations for livestock production, such as lack of vaccinations and straw, insufficient financial resources, lack of veterinarians, lack of water and insufficient pastures.
[59] Endline survey reports indicate that the area of agricultural land ploughed decreased in Muminobod District but increased slightly in Shurobod (see tables 3 and 4 in annex VIII).
[60] Baseline September 2014 (according to the date and hour of the survey in the dataset) and end line February 2016 (same).

highest after the harvest. The agricultural lean season is from January to May; stocks from market and home production often last only until February or March.[61]

105. **Human and social capital and empowerment.** KLSP was designed to enhance the capacity of partnering organizations (including the project implementing partners, such as MSDSP and the PMU), village organizations and individual farmers. The analysis of the baseline and end line data reveal that in Muminobod the majority of respondents participated in one or two training activities (see figure 5 in annex VIII). However, respondents from the control group also participated in training activities. The majority of households benefited from training in livestock development and improved land management, which is evidence of the project shifting its focus to livestock development during phase II. It was also noteworthy that the exchange visits carried out during the project specifically included women from female-headed households (see figure 6 in annex VIII).

106. **Social and productive infrastructure**. The community-based infrastructure had a dual impact in the benefitting (20) village organizations: it provided access by rural communities to much-needed basic infrastructure, thus making a contribution to living conditions; and it strengthened the role and ownerships of village organizations operating and maintaining the infrastructure. The PPE mission found that basic infrastructure was a high priority in all village organizations visited, beyond the 20 village organizations that had received infrastructure as demanded. The PPEs confirmed improvement in access to water sources in both districts, as well as improvement in overall quality of infrastructure (water, electricity and communication). However, the quality and conditions varied, and the few facilities provided were sometimes overstrained by the big demand.

107. **Access to water**. The impact survey found that fewer people were using open water resources (e.g. rivers) and more had access to clean water (see figure 7 in annex VIII). However, the communities visited during the evaluation reported having interrupted access to water supply. One of the reasons was that water resources are used for multiple purposes – drinking, irrigation and livestock.

108. **Quality and reliability of water supply.** Site visits conducted during the PPE found a mixed picture with regard to the quality and reliability of the water supply. People had established illegal connections to the public water tap to set up their own private water taps. This has the negative effect of limiting access to water for the rest of the community. No evidence was found that water-quality tests are being conducted on a regular basis; the communities visited during the evaluation were unable to demonstrate a certified proof of water quality, although the PPE acknowledged that in some cases the occasional chlorination of water had been maintained. The PPE also found that water supplies primarily designed and built as drinking-water supply systems were also used for irrigation and livestock. This multi-purpose usage and absence of water-quality evidence could have a potentially negative impact on health. While such risks are traditionally minimal for systems supplied from natural springs (i.e. in mountainous regions), these risks can be higher for boreholes with different compositions of minerals. In most cases, the population use public water points that suffer from regular water losses. Hence, there were complaints about water supply being inadequate or absent.

[61] World Food Programme. 2018. Fill the Nutrient Gap: Summary report Tajikistan. Rome. p.10.

Box 3
Provision of water in Chagami Naf (Shurobod)

The villagers had raised their contributions in 2014 and over the course of the project, two contractors had been working on the borehole construction. The first left before finishing, the second was not qualified for this type of work, and the construction ended up being ineffective. Because of time and budget constraints, at the end of the project, the problem was not resolved. In 2018, the villagers succeeded in funding the reconstruction and rehabilitation of one of the 27 water boreholes. The villagers and livestock from four villages are using water from this borehole. During the field visit, it appeared that the children were in charge of fetching water most of the time; those coming from the far-off village some three kilometres away spend half a day just to collect water.

Source: PPE field visits.

109. Public taps in the communities visited during the evaluation were found to be a frequent source of disputes among neighbouring households. The PPE team learned that households in some communities had learned to take turns when using rubber pipes to irrigate their respective household plots. MSDSP reportedly delivered dispute resolution training sessions with a focus on water-sharing and distribution. At the time of KLSP's implementation, public taps had been widespread across rural Tajikistan, but in recent years, most development agencies have been promoting households' connections. To reduce the costs of project implementation, community contributions were used to cover such costs outside the bounds of project funding.

110. **Access to electricity**. A comparison of baseline and endline survey reports indicates that access to electricity improved. Access to electricity is highly susceptible to seasonal changes. The impact survey reported that while almost all respondents had uninterrupted access to electricity (100 per cent in Muminobod, 98 per cent Shurobod), only 30 per cent of the interviewed households reported having electricity in the cold season, while 14 per cent indicated that they have no electricity and 56 per cent indicated that the electricity is sometimes shut off. In the cold season, people mainly heat their houses with wood (96 per cent) and dung (85 per cent); only 28 per cent heat their houses with electricity.

111. The PPE found that in the villages visited, electricity supply systems provided by the project were in good order. However, in one case the system was not able to meet energy demand and was hardly sufficient even only for lighting. The PPE also noted cases where other village organizations had connected to the installed transformer, thus increasing demand on the system. Interviews with village organizations and households confirmed that the subproject was relevant to priority needs of the village residents.

112. **Access to roads**. Transport is a major constraint and cost factor for farmers.[62] Roads had been a priority expressed by local authorities and community residents. The roads visited by the PPE team were found to be accessible and moderately reliable. Prior to rehabilitation, the roads were dangerous and difficult to pass,

[62] According to the feedback received during interviews in the village organization of Chargi Poyon (Muminobod), the villagers annually (in spring) collect money (TJS 4,500–5,000 or about US$400–500) to spread gravel on the road, as otherwise it turns too muddy for children to go to school, and they need to install trays for run-off water from melting snow. According to the feedback received during interviews in the village organizations of Chargi Poyon, Degrez (Muminobod), Dusti, Turkoni, Tuto, and the village organizations of Chagami Nav, Chagami Poyon, and Yakhshor (Shurobod), children travel 4 to 5 kilometres to attend school; The roads are closed for three to six months every year, and there are no bridges to pass through and access the clinic in the district centre; therefore, many women give birth at home.

especially during winter. The PPE also observed a case where a bridge was still in good condition, but at risk of being damaged by the passage of heavy vehicles.

113. **Institution and policies**. The project has built on the tested approach of MSDSP to establish and strengthen village organizations as agents for rural development and governance. The intention was to fill the institutional and capacity gap left after the Soviet era and to establish participatory and democratic structures that empower and represent communities and are inclusive towards women (among other groups). This approach, implemented with the support of MSDSP, has been overall successful in the project. The PPE mission confirmed that the village organizations visited have generally been active and that local residents were aware of their activities.

114. The village organizations supported during the project undertook their activities in line with the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Public Associations"; their charters have been registered at the regional Department of Justice of Khatlon Province. Although by charter, they are non-profit organizations, they are entitled to generate incomes as long as the resources are spent to cover their expenses and re-invested in the implementation of further subprojects. The village organizations visited reported good cooperation with local authorities. Local authorities stated they have been benefiting from the network of village organizations in terms of community mobilization, resources mobilization, and use of agricultural machinery and equipment.

115. The transfer of knowledge and the capacity-building activities implemented for village organizations, the PMUs and local governance entities have the potential for a lasting effect. Taking into account that the country lacks agricultural extension services, the engagement of local NGOs (e.g. NAAS, ATAC and the Association of Veterinarians of Tajikistan) strengthened the capacity of these organizations and contributed to knowledge transfer and the sustainability of project results, as these NGOs were the ones mainly providing extension services and were actively involved in agricultural development in Tajikistan.

116. **To conclude**, the project's interventions were relevant overall, and they were effective. However, they were too limited in their scope and duration to make a significant impact on agricultural productivity, incomes and food security. The provision of machinery has provided immediate benefits in terms of cost savings and income. Provision of basic infrastructure has contributed to improved living conditions in some communities but was too limited to address the demand in project villages. In the longer term, the biggest contribution to rural poverty reduction may have been the training and capacity-building provided. The village organizations are likely to continue playing a role as rural development agents. In light of this assessment, rural poverty impact is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

Sustainability

117. **KLSP exit strategy**. The project appraisal document incorporated the project exit strategy, which revolved around the post-project sustainability of village organizations. It was expected that after the project all 82 of them would have the capacity to sustain operation and maintenance (O&M) of the equipment and infrastructure provided. As an exit strategy, the project proposed the creation of district-level associations of village organizations and CIGs, or so-called Social Union for Development of Village Organizations (SUDVOs), to develop them into fully functional producer associations. The delays experienced in initial implementation made this exit strategy impracticable.[63] Instead the project's exit strategy became to assign to the jamoats the responsibility for monitoring their sustainability. However, as confirmed by MSDSP, all 82 village organizations are still members of SUDVOs in their respective locations.[64]

[63] Supervision report 2015.
[64] The SUDVOs remain the main entry to the jamoats where MSDSP is implementing projects.

118. **Sustainability of village organizations**. The PPE team assessed their capacity after project completion and found that the capacities to sustain the activities initiated by the project were still limited. While all village organizations visited had developed CAPs under KLSP (2014–2017), these plans had not been updated at the time of the PPE visits (2020). While most of them did not continue the general meetings with the same frequency as before, they reported having two to four general meetings annually, although no proof of general meetings had been provided (e.g. meeting minutes or protocols). In 2020, most of them had managed to have one or two meetings despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of them had stopped collecting membership fees (on average TJS 1–3 per household) after receiving agricultural machinery and equipment.

119. All VOs visited were generally able to maintain the required paperwork. The village organizations also maintained a register of all incomes and expenses, mainly related to tractor-lending, and this enabled them to pay the related taxes. However, financial transparency was found to be insufficient. The revision committees of the visited village organizations were not able to provide evidence of revisions conducted or any reports on the financial situation. Some members of the revision committees lacked knowledge and skills in how to conduct revisions. Members of the village organizations were not informed of the financial incomes and expenditures. Nevertheless, the 82 village organizations supported under KLSP continue to play a vital role in village life, supporting the construction of village roads and sports facilities, supporting vulnerable households and female-headed households, and contributing to political events led by government authorities.[65]

120. **Cooperation between village organizations and other donors.** Many of them continued their cooperation with other donors, and projects had been able to implement other local development initiatives after KLSP closure. The PPE team noted that visited village organizations had implemented one or two additional subprojects with community support or in some cases with external support.[66] Projects covered rehabilitation of roads, construction/renovation of local schools, soil embankment, cleaning of roads following water-related disasters, and medical site renovation. In some cases, village organizations had been able to mobilize resources from village residents. Overall, the PPE team found that the village organizations had demonstrated some social mobilization capacity. However, they lacked technical knowledge and operational capacity in the independent implementation of a project.

121. **Sustainability of water supply systems**. The water supply infrastructure was designed primarily with the purpose of providing access to drinking water but was actually used for irrigation and livestock. Although, by design, all the systems' reservoirs have sufficient capacity to meet drinking-water demands, the target village organizations do not have even the slightest estimates as to whether such capacity is actually sufficient for other purposes such as irrigation and livestock. Hence, across most systems, reservoirs are filled several times during the day, and the PPE team actually received reports that some households did not have adequate access to drinking water.

122. Water tariffs were lower than the estimated cost and not sufficient to cover O&M costs. Public water taps generally did not have valves, which caused water wastage.[67] The village organizations generally lack the technical expertise and knowledge to maintain water supply systems – for example, familiarity with legal requirements and technical standards. None of them demonstrated the mandatory proof of water quality regardless of the water source (natural springs or boreholes).[68] Furthermore, public water points are not sustainable and represent a recurrent source of conflicts

[65] Feedback provided by Aga Khan Foundation.
[66] Namely Oxfam GB, MSDSP, CARITAS and LPDP.
[67] Only one system visited by the PPE team had in fact enforced a full-cost recovery tariff, but this had been achieved through another project supported by the Aga Khan Foundation.
[68] Failure to comply here may result in legal penalties for the already financially constrained village organizations.

between households. Some of them claim that this issue was repeatedly raised during general meetings. There are increasing cases of inadequate connections to build systems (stand-pipes), which could have been regulated during the project's implementation.

123. **Sustainability of machinery provided**. All visited village organizations had tractors in working order. Agricultural machinery was still functioning and well used, as confirmed during field visits.[69] The village organizations have so far been able to cover O&M costs from the revenues collected from users (village residents) to keep tractors functioning. Tractor drivers had been hired through a competitive process initiated by village organizations and in general agreement with their members (through their general meetings). The field visits confirmed that the drivers and the village organizations were fully responsible for supervision and maintenance of the machinery. Some issues were noted with regard to maintenance. According to the feedback received, fuel for the machinery was often of poor quality and this led to damages of fuel pumps and plungers. Some of them have reported facing difficulties in finding spare parts for them.[70]

124. **To conclude**, following the delays during phase I, the project was not able to implement its exit strategy as planned. With regard to the institutional sustainability, the evaluation found that while the village organizations are overall still active, their technical and financial capacity to maintain the infrastructure and machinery provided is often limited. Sustainability is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

B. Other performance criteria

Innovation, replication and scaling up

125. **Innovation**. KLSP design included some innovative features, although not all of them were equally successful in the end. The community-driven approach was not new in the context of Tajikistan, but the idea to roll out this approach within the government institutional context was innovative.[71] Before KLSP, community mobilization and development approaches were commonly used by other development partners, including MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation. Therefore, the engagement of MSDSP as a community facilitator made good use of the available experiences. Integrating the community development approaches successfully used by NGOs, such as Aga Khan or CARITAS, into the government system was innovative, as was the focus on gender and poverty. From the feedback obtained during the wrap-up for this PPE, it appears that this approach was well appreciated by the Government.

126. The introduction of participatory technology development, farmer–extension–research linkages, the proposed links with technology demonstrations and technical training and the conservation agriculture approach were innovative within the local context. The field trials had varied success. While in particular the intensive orchards were well received, technology in relation to conservation agriculture has met lower acceptance.

127. **Scaling up**. The project had some built-in potential for scaling up, by linking the CDD with local government structures. The potential for scaling up the approach was somewhat weakened when the role of district government and linkages with other development partners were reduced during phase II. Nevertheless, the project made an effort to link the village level planning (CAPs) with the jamoat development plans (JDPs). Following the approval of CAPs by the PMU, key CAP priorities were incorporated into 13 JDPs. The process included village organizations beyond the scope of KLSP. Their heads, heads of women's groups and village activities were

[69] Outside the agricultural season, communities use tractors for emergency needs in the districts and jamoats, e.g. cleaning of roads from water-related disasters.
[70] Reportedly this was because for these models, spare parts could only be found in Chinese markets.
[71] Although the World Bank-funded Community Agriculture and Watershed Management Project adopted a similar approach at the time of KLSP design.

involved in these events. Heads of jamoats, jamoat secretaries and other related specialists as well heads of producer organizations also took part.[72]

128. The PPE team also obtained feedback from local stakeholders (local authorities, ATAC and experienced farmers) that the experience regarding intensive orchards (apples) has been replicated, and that farmers continue to collect and share knowledge about the success. The farmers interviewed during the evaluation reported increasing interest from neighbouring communities in replicating this approach.[73]

129. **To conclude**, KLSP included some innovative features. The community-driven approach, although already widely applied in the country, was new for the Government at that time. The agricultural technologies promoted were new within the local context, although they had varying success. Overall, innovation is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).** The field trials on intensive apple orchards were successful and scaled up in the following period. However, the intention to roll out the CAP through the government system was only realized to a limited extent. Scaling up is therefore rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

Gender equality and women's empowerment

130. **Relevance of approach and focus**. Focusing on women is highly relevant in Khatlon, where many male farmers have left for Russia in search of labour, and women farmers are taking care of fields and households. The situation of women and children considered "abandoned" by labour migrants is a concern, as such families are usually impoverished and may risk exclusion. Furthermore, the average size of women-headed farms is smaller than those headed by men.[74]

131. Addressing the poverty situation of rural women through an appropriate set of interventions was therefore important and relevant. In particular, KLSP's focus on female-headed households was commendable and likely to set an example to prevent further exclusion of this groups. Promoting apiculture and livestock health and improvement through training and capacity-building was suited to addressing the priorities of women and also benefited the poor. As the primary users of household water, women were also expected benefit from improved access to water.

132. The project emphasized gender mainstreaming and equality, with targets to ensure that no less than 50 per cent of members of the village organizations were women, and their councils were also required to include three women (including two representatives of the women's group and one of the monitoring committee). The MSDSP reports recorded the number of women attending workshops and training activities, but they do not report gender-related outcomes. The PCR contains no gender-disaggregated data, as required in the logframe. It does not report results regarding gender equality and women's empowerment.

133. **Participation of women**. Among the participants in the MSDSP-implemented capacity-building during phase II, 43 per cent were female.[75] In total, the training sessions were attended by 20,952 participants, out of whom 9,542 were female. The technical training conducted by FAO during phase II of the project indicated female participation of over 50 per cent. Overall, the FAO training activities benefited 1,205 participants, of whom 605 were female. In addition, female PMU staff were engaged in the project's finance, procurement and M&E activities. While some training activities were attended exclusively by male participants, the analysis of baseline

[72] MSDSP final report 2015.
[73] For example, 2.5 hectares of land were allocated for apples, another 4 hectares were assigned for black plums, and 10 more hectares were set aside for orchards planned by the District Hukumat (Office Executive). Given the increasing demand for intensive orchards, the District Hukumat for Muminobod was asked to allocate more land for these purposes. In addition, interest in intensive orchard cultivation was expressed in the remote village of Childukhtaron Jamoat, which lies outside the geographic coverage of the project.
[74] Asian Development Bank. 2016. Tajikistan Country Gender Assessment. Manila.
[75] An MSDSP report for phase I is not available.

and end line data revealed that the exchange visits were more women-oriented than the other training activities (see figure 6 in annex VIII).

134. **Equal sharing of and access to social and economic benefits.** The PIM (2010, 2014) specified that the project would target women by forming women's groups and would encourage each CAP to consist of at least one subproject specifically for the women's group. The available project documentation does not provide many cases of gender-specific subprojects being followed up.

135. The PCR reports that 40 women were trained in bee-keeping management and were provided all necessary accessories for bee-keeping and 10 beehives each (in total 400 hives). Otherwise gender-specific benefits from this or other income-generating activities are not reported.

136. The field interviews conducted during this PPE revealed that access to basic infrastructure, in particular drinking water, irrigation and/or irrigated lands, accessible and safe roads with bridges or passes, remains a priority for women. Hence, the provision of water was highly relevant for women, although it was addressed through six subprojects only. Where the quality and quantity of the drinking-water facilities were poor, women were particularly affected.

137. The field visits found cases were women's groups successfully prioritized subprojects that are highly relevant for female beneficiaries. For example, women's groups led by women NGOs in the village organization of Momaniyon in Muminobod and women's groups headed by women activists (who provided counselling services to the victims of domestic violence) in the village organization of Doghiston managed to prioritize water supply projects in their villages. The PPE also found that women's groups that participated in the MSDSP 'Community-based-savings project' were able to prioritize and rehabilitate the internal roads in their village.

138. **Women's equality and participation in decision-making.** Overall, the project made some efforts to strengthen the role of women through capacity-building and ensuring their participation in decision-making processes for selecting priority subprojects. However, their participation in decision-making was often limited. Stakeholder interviews hinted at cultural biases of the traditionally patriarchal society of Tajikistan, which continue to limit the number of women leaders. In some cases, the meetings of village organizations were dominated by male beneficiaries and in other cases the selection of subprojects did not reflect the opinion of women members of village organizations.

139. MSDSP took measures to ensure equal participation of women and maintained a list of participants to meetings of the village organizations. Women from remote places and/or in conservative households found it more difficult to attend the meetings. In some cases when gender balance was not secured, the meetings were rescheduled for a time when more women could participate. In the most difficult cases, village organizations were instructed that work in a particular community would not continue until women were allowed to communicate their needs and priorities.

140. KLSP implementation was reported to be more gender-focused in villages represented by women leaders (as chairs of a village organization) and with more female-headed households. In some communities, when subproject priorities suggested by men did not concur with those of women, MSDSP suggested that their work additionally with constituent village residents to revise the priorities in accordance with the needs of both male and female residents.

141. From the field visits, it appeared that the project did not fundamentally change gender inequality in the geographical area, which is considered quite conservative and where development projects typically lack women's participation, leadership and mobility. Stakeholder feedback indicated that men had generally been considerably more active and dominating during the meetings organized by MSDSP.

142. **To conclude**, the project has made a commendable effort to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Women participated equally in project activities; their participation in training and decision-making was actively supported. A major shortcoming was that gender-related outcomes or impacts were not systematically monitored or assessed. From the limited evidence available, it seems that, while there were some good practices and individual success stories, the broader social and economic benefits were limited for women, mainly due to the limited choice of subprojects. Furthermore, the project was not able to address gender biases and women's exclusion from decision-making in a broader way. The rating is **moderately satisfactory (4).**

Environment and natural resource management, and adaptation to climate change

143. **Environment and natural resources management (ENRM).** Both targeted districts – Muminobod and Shurobod – are upstream districts in terms of watershed management and suffer from a high incidence of water-related disaster events. Conservation agriculture was supposed to improve and support vegetation growth in upstream to keep moisture/water from escaping downstream.

144. In order to promote climate-smart agricultural technologies such as conservation agriculture, a demonstration plot was set up on about 6 hectares of land for the rehabilitation of pasture and grassland in both targeted districts, demonstrating no-till planting of pasture and fodder crops (alfalfa, sainfoin, clover and barley) during the spring cropping season.

145. A demonstration of no-till planting of winter crops was set up on about 20 hectares of land in both districts in October and November 2015. In addition, four field days and six exchange visits were organized to demonstrate conservation agriculture, enrichment of crop rotation, and intensive orchard management.

146. Training materials were developed and FAO, in cooperation with Lanzhou University, organized a week-long study tour to Gansu Province (China) on pasture and grazing land management and conservation agriculture for the specialists of MOA and PMU, members of the Pasture User's Union and village organizations. The project also provided the main field equipment for the further adoption and promotion of conservation agriculture, and for intensification of crop production and rehabilitation of pastures and grasslands.

147. However, the interviews conducted with project beneficiaries revealed that the conservation technologies were less successful due to the limited acceptance and understating by local farmers of the necessity and potential benefits of such technologies.

148. **Climate change adaptation**. IFAD did not have a strategy in place to address climate change issues, although they were known in the project area and could have been addressed by sound technical choices. For example, more could have been done to climate-proof the intensive orchard demonstration. On the positive side, the local apple varieties that the project promoted have greater resilience to drought or late cold spells; and integrating market-oriented dwarf varieties with local varieties can help ensure that agrobiodiversity is being maintained. However, the intensive orchards did not integrate any agroforestry elements, such as intercropping or water-harvesting structures. Instead, they used simple ditch irrigation techniques, which from a water-use efficiency perspective is far from ideal. Drip irrigation (pressurized) would clearly improve the investment and make it more resilient to potential climate change impacts. The location of intensive orchards on the plains or valley floor should also have been considered. Many slopes have been developed in the 1980s, with terracing and soil bunding, which would allow the planting of orchards on (gentle) slopes, which are less suited for other purposes.

149. Given the shortage of water in the project area, sustainable use of water resources could also have been considered in the provision of infrastructure. The PPE mission observed that water-waste cases were caused by the irregular set-up of the communal public water points, operating without valves. However, water waste was minimized by attaching rubber pipes to household irrigation plots. Taking into account that the population is currently suffering from water scarcity, proper management of the available water supply systems and ensuring access to clean water remain of the utmost importance.

150. **To conclude**, the project has made efforts to promote conservation agriculture practices as a contribution to sustainable soil management, although these practices were not embraced by local farmers. The ENRM criterion is therefore rated **moderately satisfactory (4).** The region's vulnerability to climate-change related natural disasters would have demanded strategies for climate change adaptation. The project had opportunities to climate-proof its interventions, which it did not use. Climate change adaptation is rated **moderately unsatisfactory (3).**

C. Overall project achievement

151. The objectives of the project were aligned with relevant development policies at the time of design, such as the PRSP (2007–2012) and the NDS (2007–2015).

152. Actual achievements of the project varied depending on the given component and the implementation period. During phase I of the project (covering 2009–2012), the achievements were uneven due to slow delivery, procurement issues, and administrative and management challenges of the PCU. Phase II of the project saw significant progress in achieving the targets set for three out of six subcomponents. Outreach was mainly achieved through the provision of machinery to 63 village organizations. However, the achievements from community mobilization and capacity-building, supported by MSDSP since phase I, were significant.

153. Project interventions were relevant, but they were too limited in scope and duration to have a significant impact on agricultural productivity, incomes and food security. The provision of machinery has provided immediate benefits in terms of cost savings and income. Provision of basic infrastructure has contributed to improved living conditions in some communities but was too limited in scale overall. In the longer term, the biggest contribution to rural poverty reduction may have been the training and capacity-building provided.

154. All the village organizations supported within the framework of KLSP remain legally functioning and have generally good cooperation with local authorities. Overall, the PPE team found that they had demonstrated some social mobilization capacity; however, they continued to lack technical knowledge and operational capacity in the independent implementation of a project.

155. The project also contributed to creating social and productive infrastructure in the targeted districts which had to be maintained by the village organizations. The communities visited during this PPE confirmed improvement in access to water sources in both districts, as well as improved overall quality of infrastructure (water, electricity and communication). However, the evaluation observed that some of the water systems are not properly managed and maintained. Their capacity to operate and maintain the systems is still limited and the tariffs are not sufficient to cover the costs.

156. **Overall,** project performance is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

D. Performance of partners

IFAD

157. IFAD designed KLSP, its first project in Tajikistan, with a number of relevant and innovative aspects, in particular the community-based approach. The decision to work in partnership with NGOs, such as the Aga Khan Foundation and CARITAS,[76] was appropriate and instrumental for achieving many of the results seen today. Nevertheless, the weak capacities of the main implementing partner and the PCU made the project fall into disarray during phase I.

158. Despite its lack of experience in implementing projects in Tajikistan, and no hands-on experience with the project implementing partner (the PCU), IFAD designed a relatively ambitious project for five districts in Khatlon Region on the assumption that there would be adequate capacity at the local level. Following the MTR the scope of the project was reduced to two districts, which were selected because of their capacity (even prior to the commencement of KLSP) and their readiness to carry the project's activities out further. By starting with smaller-scale activities, IFAD would have an opportunity to thoroughly build the capacity of the national implementing partner and to instruct it on the relevant administrative and business practices.

159. IFAD's decision to suspend the project and then – considering the financial commitments already made by the village organizations – to release the remaining funds after restructuring was also appropriate. However, this meant that the remaining funds had to be disbursed in a relatively short time, focusing mainly on the provision of machinery. It left limited time to follow the more comprehensive community-based development approach, envisaged at the start of the project. In particular, the innovative instrument of the CDF was not brought to full use, and many of the priorities expressed by the target communities could not be addressed.

160. While most of the delays that occurred during the early years of the project were due to the insufficient capacity of the PCU, IFAD also had a role in them. The Financial Management Operational Manual was not finalized and adopted until 2011 and the PCU had no clear guidance on the financial procedures. During the project's restructuring, IFAD did not take into consideration the possibility of time loss (there was a gap of over a year between cessation and resumption of the project) and did not consider a no-cost extension of KLSP, which was essential for successful implementation of lengthy infrastructure subprojects as well as for seasonality of agricultural production.

161. IFAD put into place effective supervision arrangements.[77] Supervision missions were carried out annually during phase I. After restructuring, two supervision missions were carried out (in 2014 and 2015) and they were combined with the supervision mission for LPDP. The composition of supervision missions showed continuity, with the country programme manager and an expert from FAO's Investment Centre participating in every mission. Issues in project management were quickly addressed and followed up. However, during phase II it seems that supervision missions paid insufficient attention to implementation details, e.g. quality of infrastructure, and targeting and gender issues.

162. In addition, IFAD hired a national consultant to closely monitor the implementation of KLSP. The consultant conducted regular and ad hoc community visits to resolve any ongoing issues related to the operation of village organizations as well as some

[76] Originally, CARITAS had been engaged to establish the CIGs. However, this part of the project was reshaped, and the CIGs were mainly supported by MSDSP, which was subcontracted as a community facilitator for a 36-month period to perform activities under this subcomponent.

[77] In the period 2009–2015, IFAD carried out four supervision missions in addition to a start-up, an MTR, and five implementation support missions.

controversial cases associated with the prioritization of subprojects.[78] According to stakeholder feedback, the IFAD consultant had taken active part in some of the meetings and ensured that IFAD priorities, including gender balance, were sufficiently addressed.

163. **To conclude**, the performance of IFAD was proactive and sufficient, overall, to help restructure, resume and implement KLSP. In light of the narrative above, the performance of IFAD is rated **satisfactory (5).**

Government

164. The Government's attitude towards KLSP manifested its political will to implement and take ownership of the project. The constructive dialogue and collective efforts of both the Government of Tajikistan and IFAD served as a key precondition for the project's implementation. After the issues associated with the first project partner, the PCU, negatively affected the project's implementation in phase I, IFAD engaged the Government of Tajikistan in further discussion to identify a new project partner.

165. During phase I of the project, the PCU demonstrated a lack of capacity to manage the project. The desk research and in-person interviews confirmed that the project faced implementation difficulties in 2009–2011. The PCU had difficulties understanding the project design, coordinating the work, and complying with IFAD procurement and financial regulations. For example, the procurement of vehicles and office equipment/furniture was not in line with the grant agreement and the IFAD Procurement Guidelines. Furthermore, the annual programme of work and budget was either not submitted by the PCU or was submitted after the 60-day deadline stipulated in the grant agreement. In 2010, IFAD assigned the international project adviser to provide assistance to the PCU (i.e. in the preparation of an action plan). The PCU also failed to submit the necessary audited financial statements for 2010–2011. In like manner, the PCU did not submit the semi-annual and annual reports to IFAD within three months of the completion of the reporting period.

166. Phase II of the project was managed by a new national partner and merged with the PMU of LPDP at MOA. However, it appears that the PMU was thinly stretched with regard to its technical capacity and mainly relied on consultants and subcontractors.[79] There was one engineer in charge of assessing all the subprojects (water supply, infrastructure and machinery projects) and overseeing the construction. While the detailed design was undertaken by companies, the PMU engineer had to control all construction sites. The number of infrastructure subprojects (20) and their diversity (roads, bridges, power supply and water supply systems) was challenging for one engineer to handle. Furthermore, no gender specialist was engaged; the function was to some extent performed by the M&E specialist of the PMU, but also delegated to MSDSP.

167. The design of the M&E database was subcontracted, and no staff were assigned to regularly maintain the M&E database, with data entry completed instead by subcontracted personnel on an irregular basis. The majority of the data were entered at the beginning of 2014 by the database developer (who was hired on a temporary basis). By the end of the project, the developer did fill some of the gaps. Overall, the M&E database did not provide a comprehensive picture of the project's implementation and expenditure. The evaluation team also observed that data presented in the database covered the period 2014–2015, and no information was available for the period 2009–2012.

[78] For example: priorities were influenced by some informal leaders, which did not necessarily fit the interests of the majority; priorities did not coincide with interests of women; actual decisions during the general meetings of village organizations did not coincide with those noted in the endorsed minutes; their members were not able to accurately assess the costs of subprojects (e.g. rehabilitation, materials, procurement).

[79] The local consultants recruited to support KLSP implementation included a local project coordinator, accountant, procurement officer, engineer, and an agricultural specialist (Supervision 2014).

168. **To conclude**, in light of the narrative above, the performance of the Government is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

Implementing partners

169. **Mountain Societies Development Support Program:** MSDSP had a strong regional presence and sufficient capacity in community development and had been implementing other community projects in the KLSP-focused areas since the early 2000s. Thus, MSDSP had already built strong relationships with local communities and local governments, prior to KLSP's commencement, and continued to monitor the quarterly community meetings. MSDSP already had well-prepared and tested methodologies for establishing village organizations, and had developed training modules on their management, financial management, and other topics relevant for them. The MSDSP manuals on creating village development plans were further reintegrated into the CAPs prepared within the framework of KLSP. All of the aforementioned aspects helped MSDSP to successfully achieve its targets in the short time frame given.

170. **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations:** The Government of Tajikistan signed a Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF)[80] Agreement with FAO in September 2009 to implement subcomponent 2.1 (On-farm technology validation and demonstration). However, the preparation process took over four months and caused subsequent delays in the implementation of the subcomponent activities. As agreed, FAO conducted two follow-up missions (in November and December 2009) and finalized the selection of the national project manager, with further plans in place to recruit other project personnel. It also signed Letters of Agreement with four participating research institutions and a Memorandum of Understanding with NAAS. However, discord between the Government and FAO with regard to the budget and some clauses of the UTF Agreement[81] led to the termination of the UTF Agreement with FAO in December 2009. As a result, the national project manager, as well as agreements signed between FAO and local organizations, were suspended.

171. Following negotiations between IFAD, FAO and the Government of Tajikistan, the project activities were reset. During phase II, FAO acknowledged the implementation challenges faced in phase I and replaced its national subcontractor NAAS with other NGOs, namely ATAC, the Tajikistan Veterinary Association, and Intermed. The services provided by FAO were successful to varying degrees. Overall, the technical training activities provided for intensive orchard cultivation (apple), pasture management and fodder production, wheat production, veterinary services and bee-keeping were positively appraised, especially the training sessions on veterinary services, bee-keeping and intensive orchard cultivation (which was replicated within and outside the districts).

[80] UTF is a funding modality financed entirely either by the beneficiary country itself or by its credit with international financing institutions for programmes or projects to be implemented in the country.
[81] There was a contradiction between the cost tables and budgets presented in the IFAD Project Design Report and in the UTF Agreement. This contradiction could potentially lead to legal problems.

Key points

- **Relevance.** The project was aligned with government policies and the initiatives of other development partners at the time. The primary target group beneficiaries of the project were the extreme or absolute poor.
- The agricultural technologies promoted were overall appropriate within the agro-ecological context but were not specifically suited to the poorer segments of the population.
- The CDD approach was expected to address the salient needs of poor people in the project area. However, following the restructuring, the original design of the CDD was only partly implemented.
- **Effectiveness.** Project achievements were uneven during phase I of the project (2009–2012), due to slow delivery, procurement issues, and administrative and management issues related to the PCU. Phase II of the project saw significant progress in achieving the targets set for three out of six subcomponents. Outreach was mainly achieved through the provision of machinery to 63 village organizations.
- **Efficiency.** The project experienced several delays due to a lack of effective project management by the PCU and associated administrative challenges.
- Phase II (2014–2015) was implemented at an accelerated pace and by project-end 99 per cent of its budget had been disbursed. It demonstrated significant progress in achieving the targets set: three out of its six subcomponents were fully achieved and the other three (Partner capacity-building, On-farm technology validation, and M&E) were achieved partially.
- **Impact.** The project did not demonstrate a significant impact on income from crops, but contributed to creating social and productive infrastructure, maintained by village organizations. Although KLSP did not directly focus on food security, it nonetheless contributed to agricultural productivity and some increases in income from agricultural activities (although not significant).
- **Gender equality and women's empowerment.** The gender and poverty focus of the project was innovative; women's participation in decision-making was encouraged, notwithstanding hindrances of the cultural context of a largely male-dominated society, which continued to limit the number of women leaders. Field visits conducted during the PPE found that women's participation in decision-making has been weak and issues of gender inequality were not addressed.
- Capacity-building for apiculture and livestock addressed the priorities of women and benefited the poor. Women benefited from improved household access to water in the communities where their priorities were addressed.
- **Sustainability.** All village organizations were found to be legally functioning and cooperated well with local authorities. However, few of them implemented projects with the support of other organizations during the past years, owing to a lack of technical knowledge and operational capacity.
- Their Tractors and machinery were found to be in working order, and tractor O&M costs were covered from collected user fees. However, sustainability and ownership of water supply systems are compromised by non-cost-recovery tariffs and their low management capacity.
- **Innovation and scaling up.** KLSP's approach of implementing the community-based approaches, developed by NGOs, in the context of government systems, was innovative. The project made links with local government planning processes as an attempt of scaling up, although it is not clear if this was followed through beyond the end of the project. .
- **ENRM and climate change adaptation.** Both targeted districts are upstream districts in terms of watershed management and suffer from a high incidence of water-related disasters. Conservation agriculture was supposed to support vegetation growth in upstream milieus and avoid moisture/water loss. However, conservation agriculture technologies were not widely adopted by poor farmers because they require high labour inputs.

IV. Assessment of the quality of the PCR

172. **Scope.** The PCR covered core evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency as prescribed by IFAD's PCR guidelines.[82] In addition, the PCR addressed impact and other performance criteria such as sustainability, innovation and potential for scaling up. However, no narrative was provided on the rural poverty impact domain including households' incomes and assets, human and social capital and empowerment, food security, agricultural productivity, and institutions and policies.[83] Likewise, the PCR did not provide evidence on gender equality and women's empowerment, or adaptation to climate change adaptation. Hence, the scope of the PCR is rated **moderately satisfactory (4).**

173. **PCR methods, process and data quality.** The quality of data presented in the PCR varied depending on the topic. In some cases, the data were found to be unsubstantiated. For example, the efficiency part of the PCR lacked significant details (e.g. the efficiency calculation of machinery made no reference to "social costs" for village organizations of not charging poor households; the cost per beneficiary at phase II was calculated to be US$820 per family, although no information was provided on how it is related to other comparative projects). Furthermore, the PCR omitted the fact of mismatch of the output and outcome indicators which were reflected in different documents. It also misjudged the quality of the M&E system applied by the PMU. In addition, the PCR overrated the capacity of village organizations, which was unsubstantiated to a certain degree during the PPE field visits. Likewise, it overrated the performance of project partners, namely FAO. While the PCR was clear on targeting the poor and women, it did not clarify how many households were "poor" and how many of these were able to rent machinery at subsidized fees. Not much reference was made to the specific farm or non-farm activities of the poor either. The PCR is rated **moderately unsatisfactory (3)** for quality and data.

174. **Candour.** The PCR was found to be largely frank and open in admitting some shortcomings of the project. However, at times the ratings did not correspond to the narrative or were not supported by any evidence. The candour of the PCR is rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

175. **Lessons learned.** The PCR provides good lessons pertaining to the management and effectiveness aspects of the project. However, it lacks some important challenges with regard to the performance of FAO and the result of merging the project with the PMU of LPDP. Sustainability assessments also brought some important lessons and prerequisites to secure continuity of the project's results. No lessons had been identified with regard to conservation agriculture or the project's design shortcomings (e.g. issues with the logframe and indicators). In light of this assessment, the lessons in the PCR are rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

[82] IFAD. 2012. Guidelines for project completion report validation and project performance assessment.
[83] Despite lacking the narrative, the PCR still provided a rating on the rural poverty impact domain.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

176. **KLSP had a promising start, implementing the community-driven approach within the government system.** KLSP started off as a CDD project, and as such created high expectations among beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders. While the project hardly delivered any of the expected benefits envisioned during phase I, the mobilization and capacity-building laid the foundation for the results achieved in the period that followed. It was the right decision to suspend the project, and it was also right to relaunch the project after adjustments had been made. Phase II was then intended as an "orderly phasing out". The intention was to bring tangible benefits to the communities mobilized during phase I and conclude the project in an orderly manner. The restructuring significantly reduced the original ambitions, and the project was not able to realize its full potential. Considering the strong motivation of the participating communities and the effective partnerships established, the project might have achieved more if it had been given additional time to fully utilize the CDF resources and implement its exit strategy together with local partners.

177. **The pressure to disburse the remaining funds within the short time left made the project "lopsided" towards productivity aspects, while basic needs received less support**. The provision of agricultural machinery was a quick win and created tangible economic benefits. Other equally important aspects of the project design received less attention during phase II. Contrary to expectations at design, the project was not able to address the overwhelming demand for community infrastructure within such a short period. The quality of the infrastructure built was rather mixed, and there was insufficient attention to O&M. The original intention of the project to deliver a holistic and sustainable approach to poverty reduction was not followed through.

178. **Nevertheless, and despite the turbulent implementation process, the project made a commendable contribution to strengthening community-level institutions.** The village organizations, however limited in their capacity, will continue to play a role as development agents. In this respect, the implementing partner MSDSP was instrumental in terms of community mobilization, local self-governance and local resource mobilization, and laid the foundations for the capacity-building of village organizations and the continuity of KLSP-initiated activities in some communities. However, the assumption that they will be able to sustain themselves was over-optimistic; a more strategic follow-up would have been needed.

179. **Results would have been even better if the project had been given time to implement a proper exit strategy in cooperation with local partners**. The village organizations and other relevant groups (such as the CIGs) in the communities will require further strengthening, and it would have been important for IFAD to remain involved. Improper management of water supply systems, shortcomings in the existing tariff scheme and weak O&M practices are eroding the benefits for village organizations; they risk losing ownership over the water supply systems if they do not maintain them in line with existing regulatory frameworks. This is one of the areas where IFAD could have contributed in a more strategic manner. Enhancing their linkages with local government and other development partners working in the area for continued support and cooperation, as anticipated in the design, should have been part of the exit strategy.

180. **Gender equality and women's empowerment was an unfinished agenda in KLSP**. KLSP's focus on women's needs was important and could have been a highlight of IFAD's engagement in the country. The project made a good start engaging women, with the help of MSDSP. Following the restructuring, and with the focus on completing the planned activities within the set time frame, the emphasis on an inclusive and gender-focused approach was somewhat diluted. Women's basic

needs were often neglected and the more strategic needs, in order to empower women, were not followed up.

181. **Partnerships were instrumental for achieving the project results**. The constructive dialogue with the Government of Tajikistan made it possible for the project to continue. The engagement of national partners with a track record on the ground laid the foundation for the results achieved. In particular, the partnership with Aga Khan Foundation/MSDSP was important to ensure synergies and follow-up on developing community organizations.

182. **The evaluation concludes** that building on the experiences from KLSP, IFAD is well placed to address the pertinent needs of smallholder farmers and contribute to building sustainable community institutions in Tajikistan. IFAD is appreciated as a partner and has been successful in building relationships with government and non-government partners. IFAD should continue working in partnerships to promote community-based approaches to advance the Government's poverty reduction agenda. In the future, IFAD may need to anticipate additional resources to advance the focus on gender equality and capacity-building as contributions to sustainable and equitable development.

B. Recommendations

183. In line with the conclusions above, the evaluation offers the following recommendations.

184. **Recommendation 1. Devise a strategic and long-term approach to building the capacities of community organizations, in partnerships with like-minded development partners**. First and foremost, the approach to community-based organizations needs to be aligned with ongoing initiatives supported by other development partners and the government agenda, and it needs to take a longer-term perspective to make a sustainable contribution to the emerging institutional framework in the rural areas. Capacity-building for village organizations and community organizations should incorporate financial, legal and technical aspects, such as the O&M of infrastructure projects. IFAD should continue the successful cooperation with Aga Khan; it should also strengthen partnerships with international partners (e.g. CARITAS) working with community-based organizations within the same area, to ensure the coherence and sustainability of the approaches promoted.

185. **Recommendation 2. Allocate sufficient resources to ensure a pro-poor and gender-focused approach to address the need for water in an efficient and sustainable way.** The rural poor and women are in dire need of clean water for human and livestock consumption. Instead of providing basic water supply systems, IFAD should shift to multi-use water supply schemes. Local communities often end up using drinking-water access points for irrigation and livestock water supply purposes. Projects would need to learn from these experiences and secure sufficient funding for multiple-use water schemes (for both domestic needs and agricultural production, including livestock) which are low-cost and equitable.

186. **Recommendation 3: Complement the technical capacities of project management units with qualified staff to support implementation quality and a pro-poor and gender focus.** Subject-matter experts/consultants are needed to oversee all phases of the infrastructure project's life cycle, such as planning and subproject proposal clearance, selection of service providers (including assessment of technical proposals and financial proposals against the baseline costs), construction processes (including quality checking of materials used by the provider) and final handover of the project. There should be a separate engineer assigned to water support and wastewater infrastructure, and another focused on other types of infrastructure projects such as road and bridge construction or construction of electricity grids. IFAD should closely supervise and monitor the procurement and quality of infrastructure subprojects through supervision and/or local consultants reporting to IFAD. A social inclusion and gender specialist could

provide advice and ensure that gender-focused approaches are incorporated in a meaningful way into the design, implementation and monitoring of the intervention/project. Advancing the pro-poor and women's empowerment agenda will require consistent focus and follow-up by project management and supervision.

Basic project data

				*Approval (US$ m)**		*Actual (US$ m)*	
Region	NEN		Total project costs		12.3		10.1
Country	Tajikistan		IFAD grant and percentage of total	9.66	78.5%	8.94	88.6%
Grant number	DSF-8026-TJ		Grantee (National Government)	0.51	4.1%	0.88	8.7%
Type of project (subsector)	Rural Development		MSDSP**	0.26	2.1%	0.04	0.4%
Financing type	Grant		Cofinancier 2				
Lending terms			Cofinancier 3				
Date of approval	16 Dec 2008		Cofinancier 4				
Date of grant agreement signature	16 Dec 2008		Beneficiaries	1.88	15.3%	0.23	2.3%
Date of effectiveness	17 Apr 2009		Other sources				
Grant amendments	Grant Agreement amended on 24 July 2013 (from US$12.3 million to US$9.7 million)		Number of beneficiaries	Direct: 8 782 households (*amended appraisal target*)		Direct: 9 787 households 78 298 individuals	
Country programme managers	Ya Tian (2006-2008) Nigel Brett (2008-2009) Frits Jespersen (2009-2015) Mikael Kauttu (2015-now)		Project completion date			31 Dec 2015	
Regional director(s)	Mona Bishay (2004-2008) Nadim Khouri (2008-2011) Khalida Bouzar (2012-2020)		Financial closing date			30 Jun 2016	
			Mid-term review			17 Jan 2013	
			IFAD grant disbursement at project completion (%)			92.5%	
			Date of the project completion report			5 Aug 2016	

* Revised appraisal values as in line with the amended Grant Agreement.

** Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) of the Aga Khan Foundation.

Sources: Project Completion Report (2016); Operational Results Management System.

Definition and rating of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Criteria	*Definition* *	*Mandatory*	*To be rated*
Rural poverty impact	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. *Four impact domains* • Household income and net 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. The analysis must include an assessment of trends in equality over time. • 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 grass-roots organizations and institutions, the poor's individual and collective capacity, and in particular, the extent to which specific groups such as youth are included or excluded from the development process. • Food security and agricultural productivity: Changes in food security relate to availability, stability, affordability and access to food and stability of access, whereas changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields; nutrition relates to the nutritional value of food and child malnutrition. • 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.	X	Yes No No No
Project performance	Project performance is an average of the ratings for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of benefits.	X	Yes
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 and coherence in achieving its objectives. An assessment should also be made of whether objectives and design address inequality, for example, by assessing the relevance of targeting strategies adopted.	X	Yes
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	X	Yes
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.	X	Yes
Sustainability of benefits	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.	X	Yes
Other performance criteria			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment, for example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making; work load balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods.	X	Yes
Innovation and scaling up	The extent to which IFAD development interventions: (i) have introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction; and (ii) have been (or are likely to be) scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.	X	Yes
Environment and natural resources management	The extent to which IFAD development interventions contribute to resilient livelihoods and ecosystems. The focus is on the use and management of the natural environment, including natural resources defined as raw materials used for socio-economic and cultural purposes, and ecosystems and biodiversity - with the goods and services they provide.	X	Yes
Adaptation to climate change	The contribution of the project to reducing the negative impacts of climate change through dedicated adaptation or risk reduction measures	X	Yes

Criteria	*Definition* *	*Mandatory*	*To be rated*
Overall project achievement	This provides an overarching assessment of the intervention, drawing upon the analysis and ratings for rural poverty impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of benefits, gender equality and women's empowerment, innovation and scaling up, as well as environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.	X	Yes
Performance of partners			
• IFAD	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation. The performance of each partner will be assessed on an individual basis with a view to the partner's expected role and responsibility in the project life cycle.	X	Yes
• Government		X	Yes

* These definitions build on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management; the Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation agreed with the Evaluation Committee in September 2003; the first edition of the Evaluation Manual discussed with the Evaluation Committee in December 2008; and further discussions with the Evaluation Committee in November 2010 on IOE's evaluation criteria and key questions.

Rating comparison[a]

Criteria	*Programme Management Department rating*	*Project Performance Evaluation rating*	*Rating disconnect*
Rural poverty impact	4.4	4	0
Project performance			
Relevance	5	4	-1
Effectiveness	4	4	0
Efficiency	3	3	0
Sustainability of benefits	4	4	0
Project performance[b]	**4**	**4**	**0**
Other performance criteria			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	5	4	-1
Innovation	5	4	-1
Scaling up	5	4	-1
Environment and natural resources management	4	4	0
Adaptation to climate change	4	3	-1
Overall project achievement[c]		**4**	
Performance of partners[d]			
IFAD	5	5	0
Government	4	4	0
Average net disconnect			**-0.42**

[a] Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory; n.p. = not provided; n.a. = not applicable.

[b] Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of benefits.

[c] 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, sustainability of benefits, rural poverty impact, gender, innovation and scaling up, environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.

[d] The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall project achievement rating.

Ratings of the Project Completion Report quality

	Programme Management Department rating	*IOE rating*	*Net disconnect*
Scope		4	
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)		3	
Lessons		4	
Candour		4	
Overall rating of the Project Completion Report			

Rating scale: 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 3 = moderately unsatisfactory; 4 = moderately satisfactory; 5 = satisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory; n.a. = not applicable.

Evaluation framework

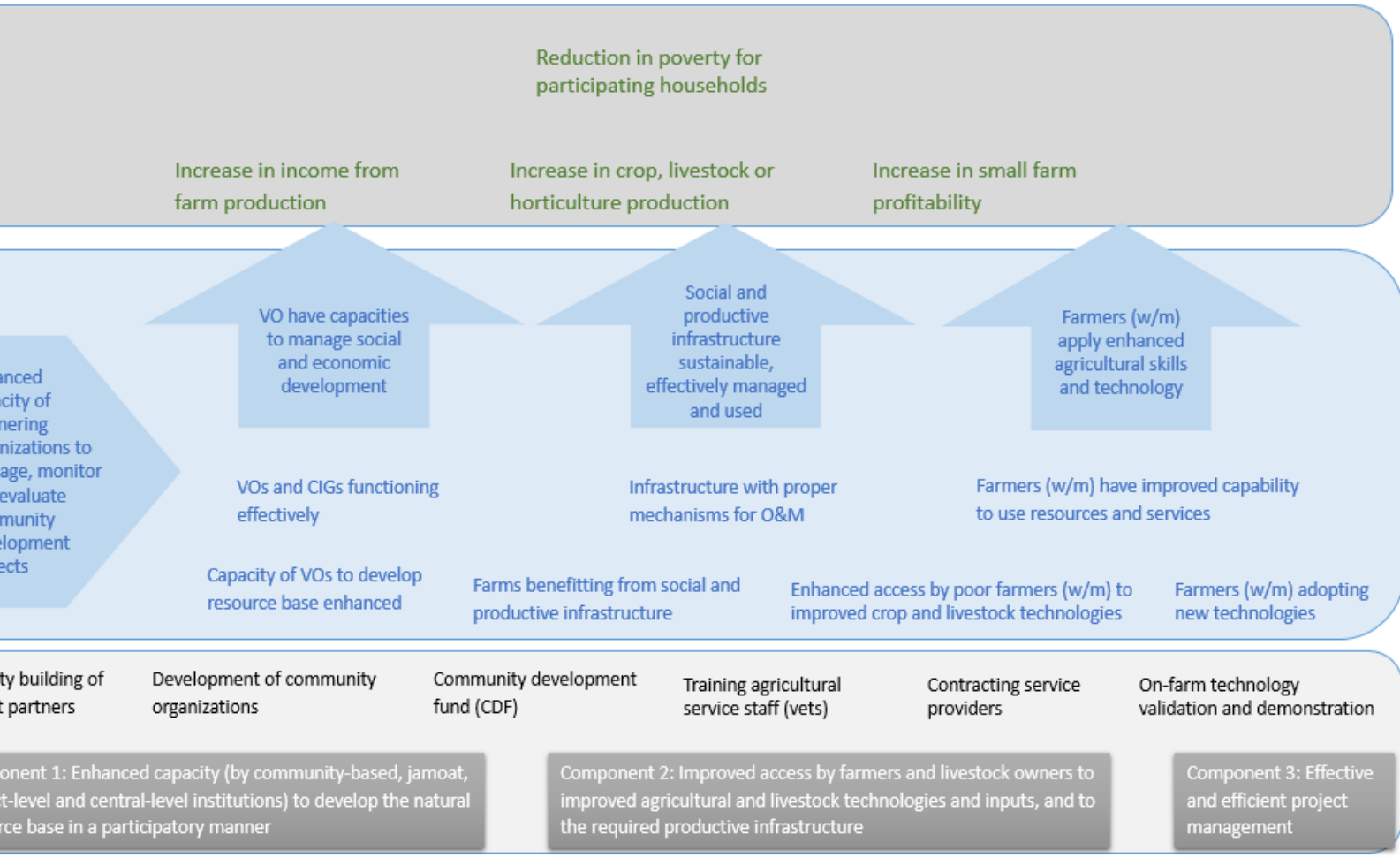
Evaluation question	*Data required*	*Risk*
Targeting		
1. What were the mechanisms to ensure equitable benefits for poor households, youth and women? Were there any issues identified in this regard?	M&E data on beneficiaries, disaggregated according to poverty, gender and age	Quality of data may not be sufficient to allow disaggregated analysis
2. To what extent did the participatory approach contribute to effective targeting of poor household, youth and women? What could have been done to ensure better targeting of poor households, youth and women?	Participatory process documented by project; Interviews with facilitators and beneficiaries	Coverage of beneficiaries may not be sufficient to allow representative sample
Gender equality		
3. To what extent did women participate in the different activities? What were the challenges and barriers for their participation in some activities?	Interviews with facilitators and female beneficiaries	Outreach to women in project communities may be difficult
4. How effective was women's participation in decision making? Did their participation translate into longer-term empowerment and improvement of status?	Interviews with facilitators and female beneficiaries	Outreach to women in project communities may be difficult
5. What could have been done to improve/encourage women participation in the project? Are there any lessons to be learned in this regard for securing their active participation in other similar projects in the future?	Phone interviews with facilitators and female beneficiaries	Contact detailed of female beneficiaries might not be available
Sustainability of capacity building		
6. How sustainable (financially and institutionally) did the village organizations become since the project has closed?	Interviews with representatives of village organizations	Contact list of village organizations may not be available Their representatives may have moved on
7. How important and effective is their role in facilitating the longer-term social and economic development of the communities?	Phone survey with representatives of village organizations	Phone numbers of community members may not be available in the project office
8. What are crucial external and internal factors that affected and will continue affecting the sustainability of the project results?	Phone interviews with representatives of village organizations, IFAD team, project management unit, project partners, government representatives and project beneficiaries	

Evaluation question	*Data required*	*Risk*
Sustainability of technical services		
9. How sustainable are the technical trials and demonstration plots established under the project? What was (and is still) needed to ensure sustainability of technical trials and demonstration plots?	Pictures Site visits (where possible) Interviews with service providers and participating farmers	Site visits might not be possible;
10. Has the technical support provided by local NGOs been sustained and/or complemented by Government services? Are there any issues associated in this regard?	Interviews with service providers and participating farmers Interviews with identified government representatives	
Community development fund		
11. How were sub-projects approved and allocated under the CDF? And why did some village organizations end up without sub-projects?	Interviews with project management staff and representatives of village organizations	Contact list of village organizations may not be available Their representatives may have moved on
12. How did the project manage to overcome the initial bottlenecks (in terms of capacity) in the management of the CDF?	Interviews with project management staff and representatives of village organizations	Contact list of village organizations may not be available Their representatives may have moved on
13. To what extent did the CDF strengthen social capital and enhance the prospects for the sustainability of institutions and infrastructure in the communities?	Interviews with representatives of village organizations, project management unit, CDF, and community members Phone survey	Contact list of village organizations may not be available Their representatives may have moved on Phone numbers of community members may not be available in the project office
Benefits from infrastructure		
14. What is (are) the approach(es) used by the village organizations to manage community infrastructure and how do they differ between them?	Interviews with project management staff and representatives of village organizations	Contact list of village organizations may not be available Their representatives may have moved on
15. To what extent did the (social and economic) benefits estimated at the time of project closure continue to flow from community infrastructure?	Interviews with representatives of village organizations and community members Phone survey	Contact list of village organizations may not be available Their representatives may have moved on Phone numbers of community members may not be available in the project office

Evaluation question	*Data required*	*Risk*
Institutional and management capacities		
16. What capacities (and at what levels) would have been required at the start to enable the project to take off?	Interviews with Government representatives and project staff Interviews with IFAD, MSDSP, Aga Khan and FAO	Government staff may be difficult to reach Aga Khan and FAO staff may have moved on
17. What management and coordination structures would have been required at local level to manage the CDF more effectively?	Interviews with Government representatives and project staff Interviews with IFAD, MSDSP, Aga Khan and FAO	Government staff may be difficult to reach Aga Khan and FAO staff may have moved on
18. What were the major impediments/challenges (at national and local capacity level) that led to project restructuring?	Interviews with Government representatives and project staff Interviews with IFAD, MSDSP Aga Khan and FAO	
19. Were there any capacity related or any other issues identified after relaunching the project in 2014? And what kind of issues were they?	Interviews with Government representatives and project staff Interviews with IFAD, MSDSP, Aga Khan and FAO	
Innovation and scaling up		
20. Did the lessons from the community development approach used by KLSP inform similar initiatives by IFAD or other development partners?	Interviews with Government representatives and project staff Interviews with IFAD, MSDSP, Aga Khan and FAO	Government staff may be difficult to reach Aga Khan and FAO staff may have moved on
21. Is there any evidence that the lessons from KLSP have been learned or scaled up by Government?	Interviews with Government representatives and project staff Interviews with IFAD, MSDSP, Aga Khan and FAO	Government staff may be difficult to reach Aga Khan and FAO staff may have moved on

Source: Evaluation Approach Paper.

y of change


Reduction in poverty for participating households
Increase in income from farm production
Increase in crop, livestock or horticulture production
Increase in small farm profitability
VO have capacities to manage social and economic development
Social and productive infrastructure sustainable, effectively managed and used
Farmers (w/m) apply enhanced agricultural skills and technology
anced city of nering nizations to age, monitor evaluate munity elopment ects
VOs and CIGs functioning effectively
Infrastructure with proper mechanisms for O&M
Farmers (w/m) have improved capability to use resources and services
Capacity of VOs to develop resource base enhanced
Farms benefitting from social and productive infrastructure
Enhanced access by poor farmers (w/m) to improved crop and livestock technologies
Farmers (w/m) adopting new technologies
ty building of t partners
Development of community organizations
Community development fund (CDF)
Training agricultural service staff (vets)
Contracting service providers
On-farm technology validation and demonstration
onent 1: Enhanced capacity (by community-based, jamoat, t-level and central-level institutions) to develop the natural rce base in a participatory manner
Component 2: Improved access by farmers and livestock owners to improved agricultural and livestock technologies and inputs, and to the required productive infrastructure
Component 3: Effective and efficient project management

Itinerary of field mission

Day 1, 15 July (Muminobod)

07:00 Departure from Dushanbe
10:30 Arrival to Muminobod District
10:45 Meeting with Muminobod Hukumat (Office Executive)
13:00 Visit to Langar village organization (Boghgai Jamoat)
15:00 Visit to Chashmasor village organization (Shamsiddin Shohin Jamoat)
16:30 Visit to J. Rumi village organization (Shamsiddin Shohin Jamoat)
19:00 Arrival to Kulyab city

Day 2, 16 July (Muminobod)

08:30 Departure from Kulyab city
10:00 Visit to Buston village organization (Dehibaland Jamoat)
11:00 Visit to Intensive Orchard (Apples), Buston village
11:30 Visit to Demonstration Plot (Alfa-Alfa: Livestock Feed), Buston Village
12:00 Visit to Dusti village organization (Boghgai Jamoat)
14:30 Visit to Hanatarosh village organization (Dehibaland Jamoat), also meeting with Jamoat (Deputy Head)
15:30 Visit to Sarmaidon-1 village organization (Dehibaland Jamoat)
19:00 Arrival to Kulyab City

Day 3, 17 July (Muminobod)

07:00 Departure from Kulyab city
08:00 Meeting with Chairman of Hukumat of Muminobod District
09:30 Departure to Childukhtaron Jamoat of Muminobod District
11:30 Visit to Degrez village organization (Childukhtaron Jamoat)
15:00 Visit to Dashti Kalon village organization (Childukhtaron Jamoat)
20:00 Arrival to Kulyab City

Day 4, 18 July (Mumibobod)

10:00 Departure from Kulyab City
12:00 Visit to Chargi Poyon village organization (N. Nazarov Jamoat)
13:30 Visit to Momandiyon village organization (N. Nazarov Jamoat)
16:00 Demonstration Project: Apiculture - 1 household, 1 woman (bee-keeper), Momandiyon village
16:30 Demonstration Project: Apiculture – 1 household, 1 woman (bee-keeper), Kulchashmai Bolo village
17:30 Visit to Ghofilobod village (N. Nazarov Jamoat) – motorcycle for VET
17:44 Visit to Ghofilobod village organization (N. Nazarov Jamoat) – Boymurod and Shuhrat
17:00 Departure to Ghesh village, Dehibaland Jamoat (agriculture machinery and equipment, Ghesh village organization and women) – Malika

Day 5, 20 July (Muminobod)

08:30 Departure from Kulyab City
09:20 Visit to Momirak village (Balkhobi Jamoat) – Tractor Assessment
09:40 Visit to Turkoni village organization (Balkhobi Jamoat)
11:30 Visit to Momirak village organization (Balkhobi Jamoat)
14:30 Visit to Tuto village organization (Balkhobi Jamoat)
17:00 Visit to Balkhobi village organization (Balkhobi Jamoat)

Day 6, 21 July (Shurobod)

08:30 Departure from Kulyab City
09:30 Meeting with First Deputy Chairman, Hukumat of Shurobod District
12:40 Visit to Yakhshor village organization (Langardara Jamoat)
17:00 Visit to Dashtijum village organization (Langardara Jamoat)

Day 7, 22 July (Shurobod)

08:30 Departure from Kulyab City
10:00 Visit to Kisht village organization (Yol Jamoat)
12:00 Visit to Khirmanjo village organization (Yol Jamoat)
13:30 Visit to Anjirob village organization (Yol Jamoat)

Day 8, 23 July (Shurobod)

08:30 Departure from Kulyab City
09:20 Visit to Dashti Kalon Village - Intensive Orchard (Apples)
10:00 Visit to Shahri-Barbar village organization (Doghiston Jamoat)
10:30 Visit to Kaftar village organization (Doghiston Jamoat)
13:30 Meeting with Head of Doghiston Jamoat (Sub-District Local Authority)
13:45 Visit to Doghiston village organization (Doghiston Jamoat)
18:20 Visit to MSDSP Regional Office in Kulyab

Day 9, 24 July (Shurobod)

08:30 Visit to ATAC office in Kulyab (meeting with ATAC Officer)
09:45 Departure from Kulyab City
10:45 Visit to district members of Veterinary Association in Shurobod District
11:30 Meeting with the Chairman of Hukumat of Shurobod District
11:40 Meeting with Head of Shurobod Jamoat
12:00 Meeting with SUDVO of Shurobod Jamoat
13:20 Visit to Khairkoron village organization (Shurobod Jamoat)
14:00 Interview with farmer – Demonstration Project

Day 10, 25 July (Shurobod)

09:00 Departure from Kulyab City
10:00 Visit to Odinaboi village organization (Sarichashma Jamoat)
Visit to Jilga village organization (Sarichashma Jamoat)
13:20 Visit to Chagami Poyon village organization (Chagam Jamoat)
15:30 Visit to Chagami Nav village (Chagam Jamoat)
18:00 Departure from Kulyab City to Dushanbe

Achievements against logframe indicators

Table 1a
Outcome and output indicators for subcomponent 1.a (Development of community organizations)

Outcome indicators	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Actual*	*PPE assessment*
Percentage of households in project area participating have an improved capability to use their own and other resources and services to support their own priorities (including those of vulnerable groups) for sustainable economic development.	2.6	70	70	○
Number of village organizations functioning effectively two years after their establishment.	6	82	82	●
Number of CIGs functioning effectively two years after their establishment.	14	82	82	○
Output indicators				
Number of village organizations formed and strengthened	0	82	82	●
Number of CIGs formed and strengthened (of whom at least 50% women)	0	82	82	○
Number of persons provided with 1-3 day training on various subjects (of whom 40% women)	0	3 280	5 002	●

Sources: PMU and PCR.

● (Over)Achieved in PCR ● Not achieved but greater than baseline ● Not achieved ○ No target or no evidence provided

Table 1b
Component 1 indicators monitored by MSDSP project office

Indicator	*Target*	*Actual*
Per cent of households participated in community general meetings (disaggregated by gender)	70	80
Male	60%	55%
Female	40%	45%
Number of district level workshops held for chairmen of village organizations		2
Number of Community handbooks revised, printed & disseminated		164
Number of communities assessed and community data sheets updated		164
Number of trainings on CAPs		82
Number of CAPs developed at the level of village organizations		82
Number of CAPs approved at meetings of the village organizations		82
Number of jamoat development plans incorporated key priorities from the CAPs		13
Number of village organizations trained on economic development		151
Number of CIGs trained on economic development		141
Number of trainings on economic development		82
Number of participants attended the trainings for village organizations and CIGs on economic development		1 687
Number of village organizations and CIGs trained on DDT		332
Number of trainings on DDT		164
Number of community information boards updated		164
Number of participants attended the trainings on DDT		3 315
Number of community grant agreements signed by PMU		82

Source*:* MSDSP final report (2015).

Table 2
Outcome indicators for component 2 (Enhancement of agricultural productivity and profitability)

#	*Outcome Indicators*	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Actual*	*PPE assessment*
1.	Number of households reporting on increase in crop, livestock or horticulture production, by gender and sector	327	1 000	2 167	🟢
2.	Average per-cent increase in agricultural productivity, by year and main commodities	917.25	10-30	53	🟢
3.	Percentage of trained persons adopting the new technologies or production practices promoted, by gender and sector	2.3	40	51	🟢
4.	Number of households benefiting from new productive infrastructure, by gender and sector	7	8 782	9 787	🟢
5.	Percentage of livelihood of sustainability of the community infrastructure (functionality after 2 years)	10.7	100	70	🟠
6.	Percentage of infrastructures with proper mechanisms in place for operation and maintenance	N/A	100	100	🟢

Sources: M&E database, PMU and PCR.

🟢 (Over)Achieved 🟠 Not achieved but greater than baseline 🔴 Not achieved ○ No target

Table 3
Output indicators for subcomponent 2.a (on-farm technology validation and demonstration)

#	*Output indicators*	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Actual*	*PPE assessment*
1.	Number of farmers given training in livestock and crop development (of whom at least 40 per cent women)	50-100	1 000	1 000	🟢
	Female	400		426	○
2.	Number of farmers trained in livestock development	250	600	30	🔴
	Female	100		0	○
3.	Number of farmers trained in crop development	250	700	285	🟠
	Female	100		162	○
4.	Number of men and women undertaking exchange visits.	0	80	120	🟢
5.	Number of farmers participating in field days in livestock production methods	0	300	30	🟠
6.	Number of farmers participating in field days in crops production technologies	0	300	360	🟢
7.	Number of demonstration plots displaying new technologies.	0	20	20	🟢
8.	Number of new technologies demonstrated	15		15	○
9.	Number of new technologies developed through Participatory Technology Development Approach.	10		10	○
10.	Number of veterinarians participated in training (preparation and equipping of animals artificial insemination and production).	0	6	32	🟢
11.	Number of women (mainly women headed households) selected and trained on beekeeping management and development	0	40	40	🟢

Sources: M&E database, PMU and PCR.

🟢 (Over)Achieved 🟠 Not achieved but greater than baseline 🔴 Not achieved ○ No target

Table 4
Output indicators for subcomponent 2.2 (Community development fund)

#	*Output indicators*	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Actual*	*PPE assessment*
1.	Number of project proposals financed by CDF and implemented by communities	N/A	200	118	

Source: PCR.

(Over)Achieved Not achieved but greater than baseline Not achieved No target

Table 5
Output indicators for component 3 (Project management) from the PCR

#	*Output indicators*	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Actual*	*PPE assessment*
1.	Number of staff hired; Number of equipment purchased; Offices established	N/A	9; 25	9; 25	
2.	% of AWP&B, Progress Reports, thematic studies, impact surveys, financial reports prepared on time and with the required quality	N/A	80%	101%	
3.	Satisfactory financial management	N/A	Unqualified audit reports, minor issues in management letters from auditor	5	

Source: PCR.

(Over)Achieved Not achieved but greater than baseline Not achieved No target

Table 6
Outcome/output indicators for component 3 (Project management) from M&E database

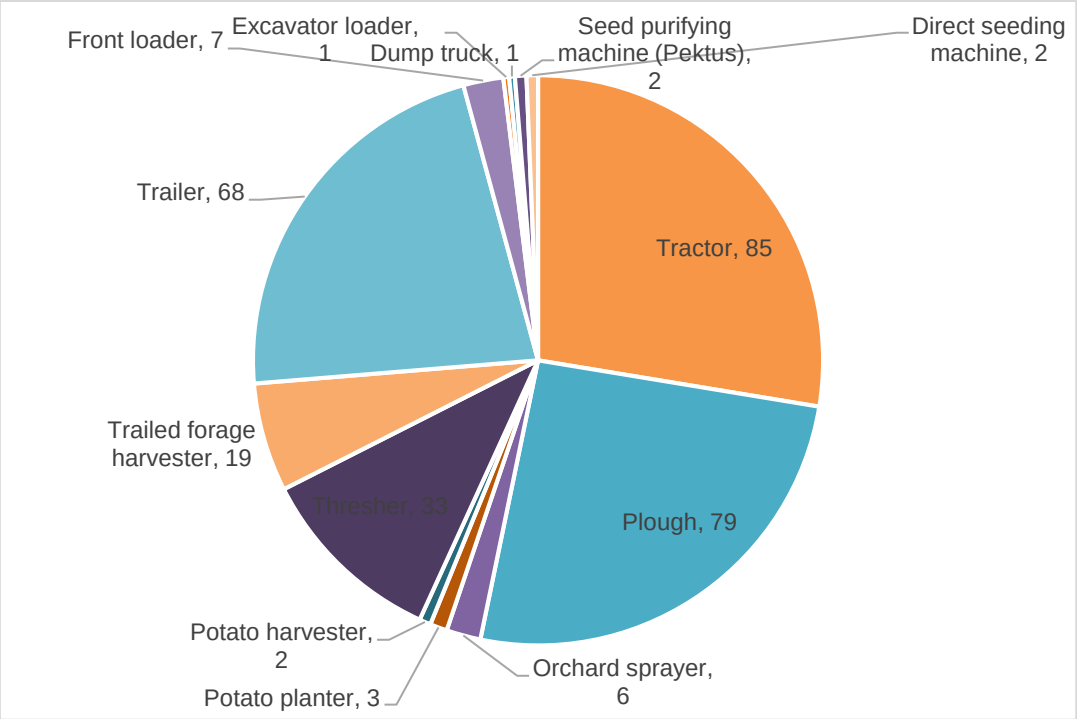
#	*Outcome indicators*	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Actual*	*PPE assessment*
1.	Project Steering Committee functioning properly	N/A	N/A	N/A	
2.	PMU functioning properly	N/A	N/A	N/A	
3.	PSR average score on 'Quality of Project Management', 'Quality of financial management' and 'M&E'	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Output indicators				
4.	Number of staff hired	0	N/A	9	
5.	Number of equipment purchased Indicators	0	N/A	24	
6.	New office opened	0	N/A	1	
7.	Percentage of AWPB, progress reports, thematic studies, impact survey and financial reports submitted timely and in due quality	0	80	84	
8.	Satisfactory financial management	0	1	-1	

Source: M&E database.

(Over)Achieved Not achieved but greater than baseline Not achieved No target

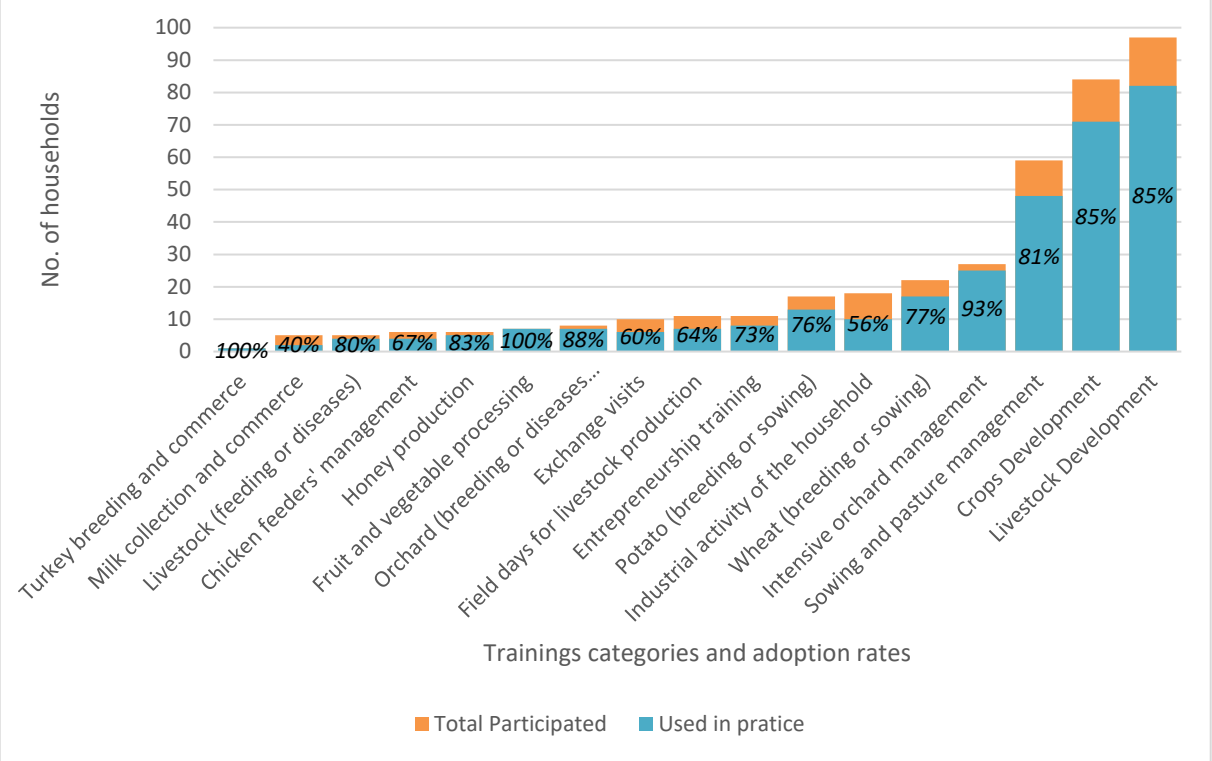
Additional tables and figures

Figure 1
Pieces of machinery provided



Source: PCR.

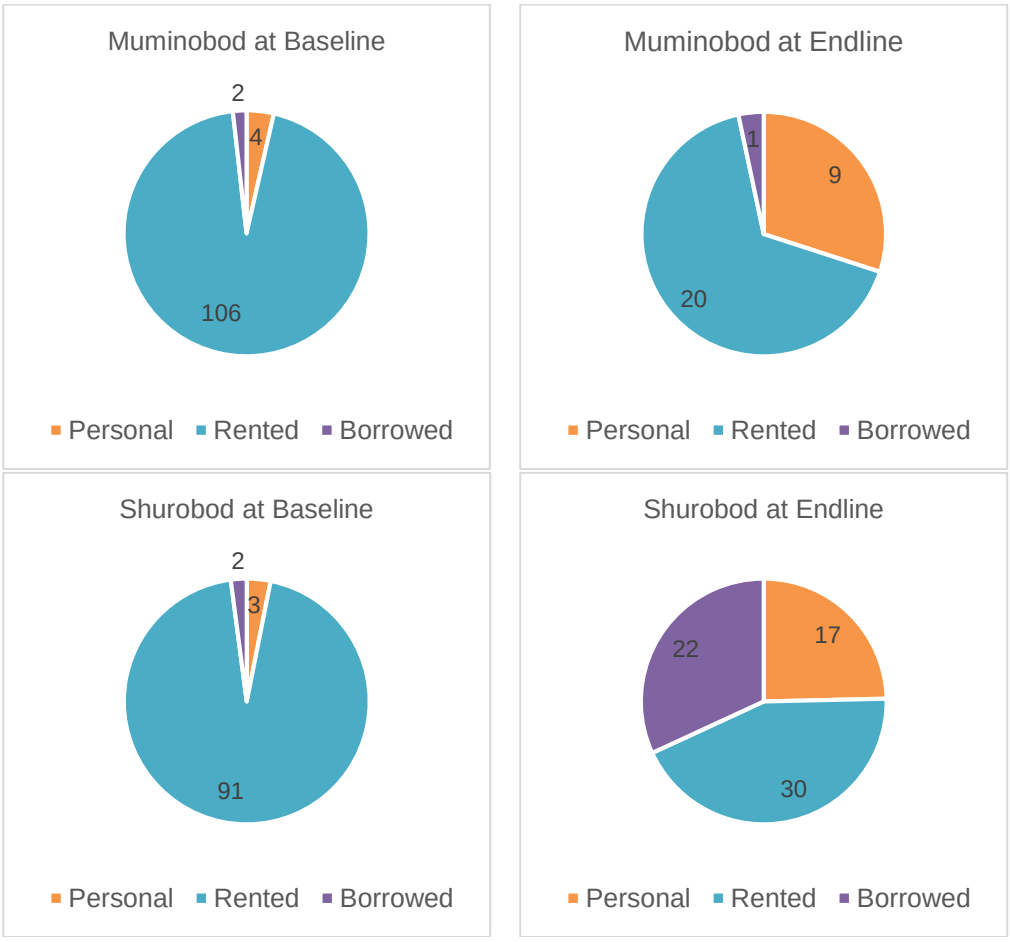
Figure 2
Adoption rates of the households: when participated, if the household used the knowledge in practice[1]



Source: PPE calculation based on the KLSP endline survey.

[1] All the households who reported having used in practise are part of the households having reported participating in the first place.

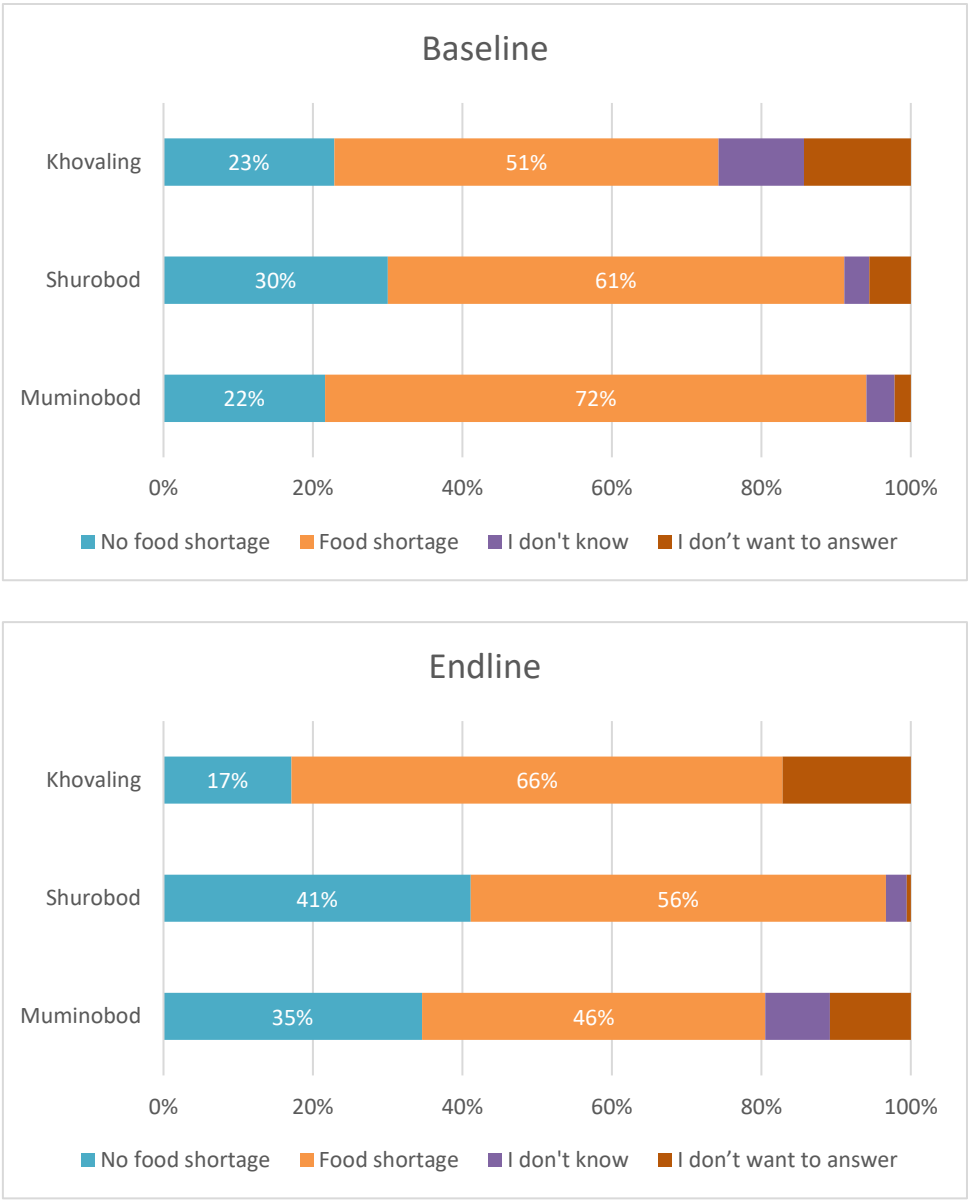
Figure 3
Tractor ownership of the households (comparison at baseline and endline)[2]



Source: PPE calculation based on KLSP baseline and endline surveys.

[2] At the baseline, 27 households in Khovaling reported renting the tractor, as well as 1 household reported having a personal one. At the endline unfortunately, only 2 households reported in Khovaling (they reported renting tractors).

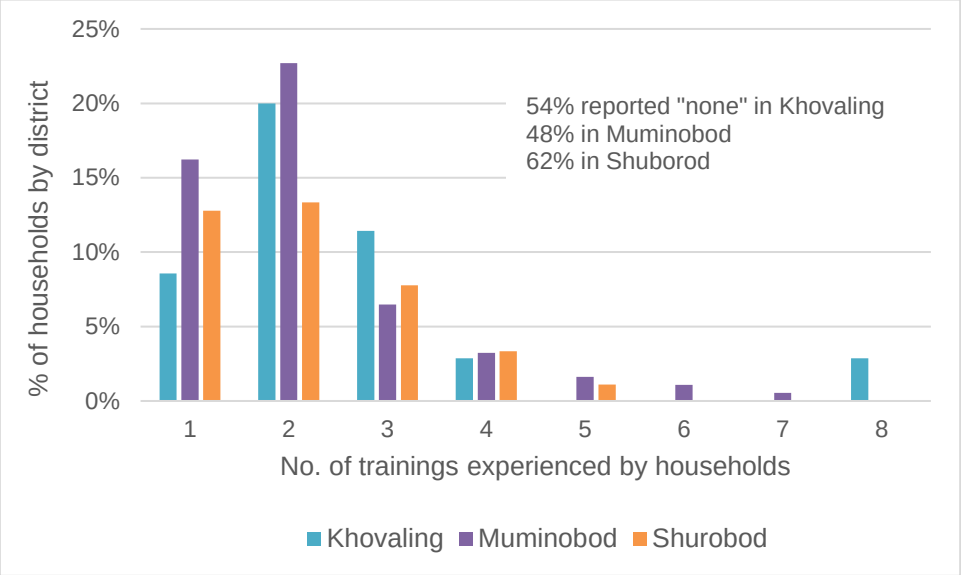
Figure 4
Food insecurity: survey responses as to whether food shortage was experienced in the preceding month (baseline vs. endline)[3]



Source: PPE calculation based on KLSP baseline and endline surveys.

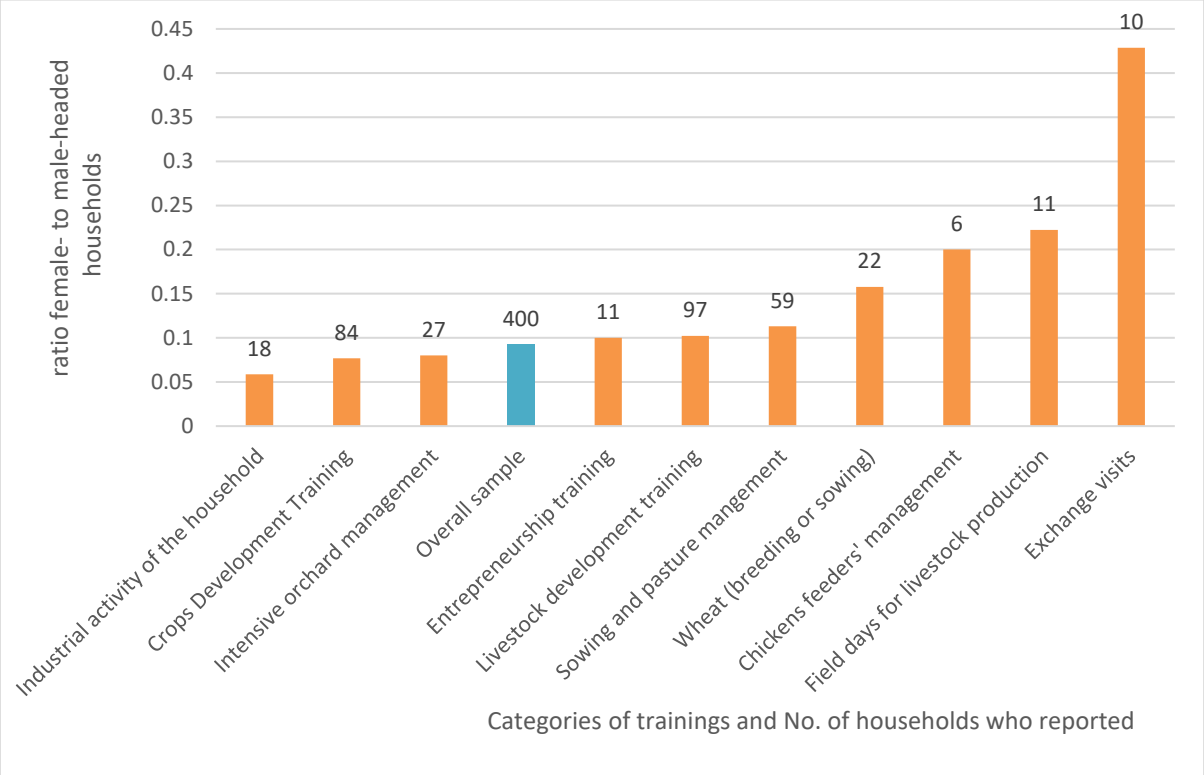
[3] This question is perfectly reported both at baseline and endline.

Figure 5
Number of training activities attended by share of respondents (by district)



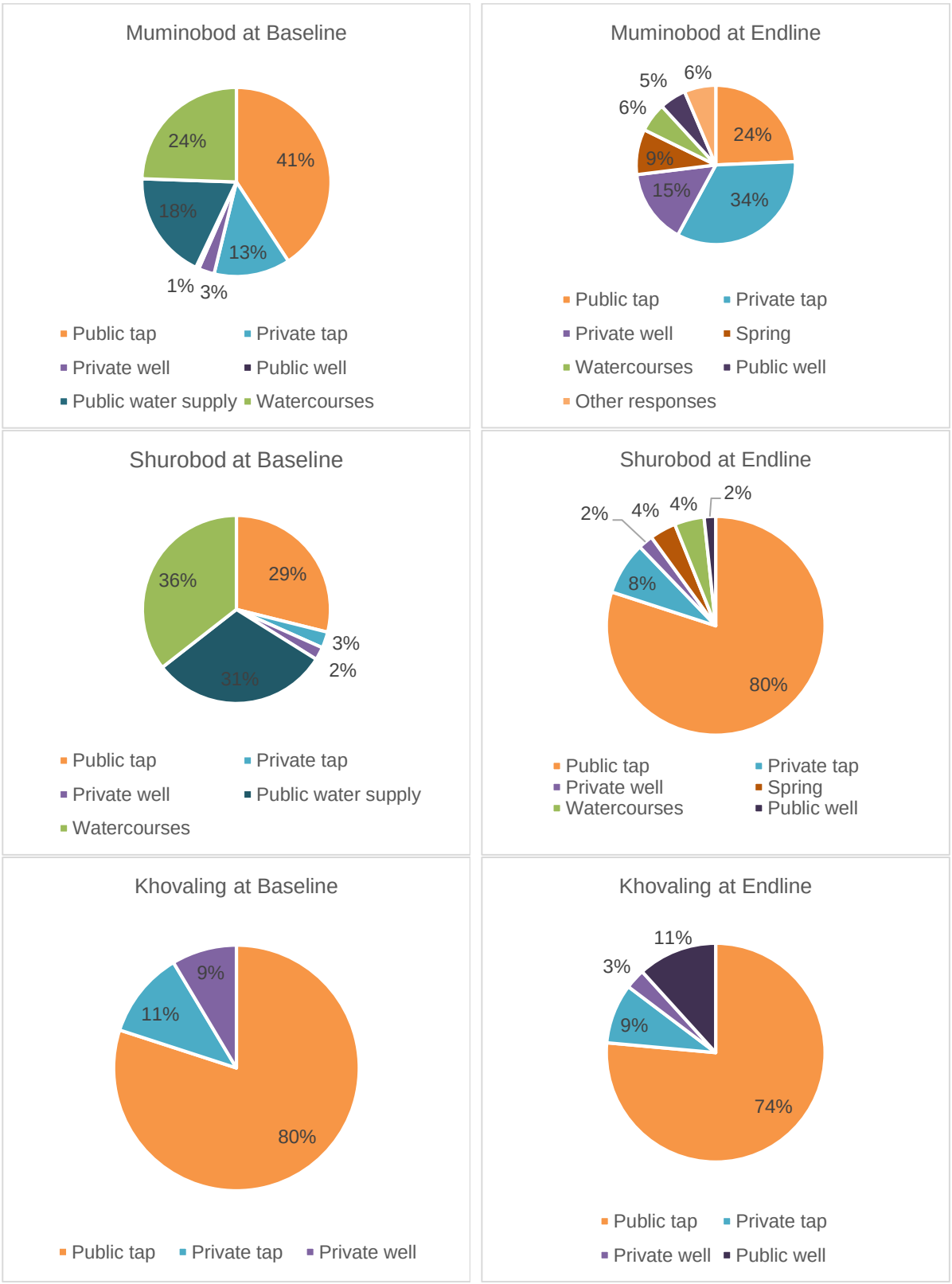
Source: PPE calculation based on KLSP endline survey.

Figure 6
Ratio of surveyed female- to male-headed households participating in the different categories of training



Source: PPE calculation based on KLSP endline survey.

Figure 7
Comparison of water usage between baseline and endline surveys (by district)[4]



Source: Endline report, prepared by M-Vector, 2016, Table 2.1.5; baseline survey.

[4] These figures were reported as answers concerning access to water during the hot season; however, it is also representative of the figures from the cold season.
Regarding the households who reported not having access to water, it only appeared at the endline for less than 1 per cent (0.5 per cent) in Muminobod and less than 3 per cent (2.9 per cent) in Khovaling, during the warm season. It is embedded into "Other responses".

Tables

Table 1
Correlation of machinery provision with village characteristics

	Households	*Poverty*	*Machinery**	*Only vehicles***
Households	1			
Poverty	-0.13	1		
Machinery*	**0.84**	-0.15	1	
Only vehicles**	**0.67**	-0.17	Not relevant	1

Correlation more than +0.30

* Excluding tools (harrows, buckets and shovels); ** Tractors (both types), dump truck and plough.
Source: Number of households and machinery variables from the PCR and the poverty indicator from the Aide-Mémoire supervision mission 2010.

Table 2
Average poverty (proxy indicator) in total sample (82 village organizations) and which with infrastructure sub-projects[5]

Total sample	*Both*	*Muminobod*	*Shurobod*
Average	9.09	7.93	10.25
Standard deviation	2.32	1.75	2.25

Infrastructure sample	*Both*	*Muminobod*	*Shurobod*
Average	9.62	8.55	10.08
Standard deviation	2.23	1.23	2.44

Source: PCR and poverty indicator from the Aide-Mémoire supervision mission 2010.

Table 3
Usage of ploughed agricultural lands in hectares (baseline)

Baseline	*Muminobod*			*Shurobod*		
	Average	*Maximum*	*Minimum*	*Average*	*Maximum*	*Minimum*
Agriculture lands	562	2 000	70	525	1 496	156
Arable lands (of agricultural lands)	221	417	64	154	360	21
Orchards	44	102	3	0	0	0
Vineyards	2	3	1	0	0	0
Other agriculture lands	224	224	224	246	527	50

Source*:* Baseline report, prepared by Nuri Umed, 2015. Table 62, page 80.

[5] As there is no definition whatsoever of this poverty indicator provided by the government for the supervision mission aide-mémoire 2010, the take off of this figure is the comparison between the total sample and the sub sample, and the comparison between Muminobod and Shurobod.

Table 4
Usage of ploughed agricultural lands in hectares (endline)

Endline	*Muminobod*			*Shurobod*		
	Average	*Maximum*	*Minimum*	*Average*	*Maximum*	*Minimum*
Agriculture lands	181	300	70	501	1 496	30
Arable lands (of agricultural lands)	157	280	70	203	595	21
Orchards	32	70	10	22	50	2
Vineyards	- -	- -	- -	16	30	2
Other agriculture lands	- -	- -	- -	295	714	50

Source*:* Endline report, prepared by M-Vector, 2016. Table 9.1.2.2, page 100.

Method used for the analysis of survey data

1. Data

The two datasets are from a panel survey implemented in the context of the KLSP, at baseline and endline. The interviews took place in September 2014 for the baseline and in February 2016 for the endline. The baseline was conducted by the firm Nuri Umed and the second by M-Vector.

There are two treated districts, Shurobod and Muminobod, and one control district, Khovaling. Each of them represents respectively 180, 185 and 35 households, and 12, 10 and 1 village organizations in the surveys.

2. Data limitations

2.a. Surveys

Due to the suspension of the project, the baseline survey was conducted one year after the beginning; the trainings had started, even in Khovaling, the control district.

The endline survey was done in February, in the beginning of the lean season, contrary to the baseline, which was conducted after the harvests in February. It creates an underestimation bias.

Overall, another project, called the Livestock and Pasture Development Project (LPDP), was implemented over the same period (2013-2019) in the same area (plus two other districts next to those). According to the PCR, the geographic area changed at the start of the project to include, among others, Khovaling and Muminobod; Shurobod was then added later because gauged as "highly relevant".[1] The assumption of the Difference-in-Differences could be biased due to this later inclusion of Shurobod. However, we assume that the project implementation compensated this and that our bias on effect is attenuated because both treated and control areas of KLSP were treated under LPDP.

2.b. Sample/Data

First, there is an issue related to internal validity of the findings. In the absence of information on how the sample size was calculated, the control sample size of 35 households (and only one village organization) appears very small. Also, there is a significant difference in the sample sizes of treatment and control groups. In addition, the control district is next to Muminobod, which can create the risk of spillovers.

From the indicator of poverty provided in the aide-mémoire of the supervision mission 2010, one can compare the survey and overall sample at the village level. It seems that richer villages were selected in Shurobod, compared to Muminobod. Indeed the average and standard deviation of the poverty indicator of Shurobod substantially decreased whereas Muminobod's remained relatively stable. Hence, it seems that the survey has a village selection bias.

[1] Livestock and Pasture Development Project, Project Completion Report (2020). Paragraph 40, page 6.

Total sample	*Both*	*Muminobod*	*Shurobod*
Average	9.49	7.93	11.01
Median	8.55	7.46	10.43
Standard deviation	4.27	1.75	5.36

Survey sample	*Both*	*Muminobod*	*Shurobod*
Average	8.97	7.83	9.91
Median	8.16	7.12	9.32
Standard deviation	2.36	1.67	2.49

Source: Surveys and the poverty indicator provided by the government in the aide-mémoire of the supervision mission 2010.

For the agricultural incomes' variable, an issue was whether the zeros were null reporting or non-reporting, because at the baseline, the firm entered zeros and at the endline the other firm did not enter any zero. Due to this inconsistency, in this case, the sample is restricted to the non-zeros/non-empty cells (cf. dedicated footnote in Table 6 for the exact sample).

3. Baseline and end line comparison

The datasets were in different formats, ACCESS and SPSS, and in Cyrillic. The conversion was done through the software R and the translation from internet. Like the baseline report from Nuri Umed, the translation from Tajik to English is not perfect, but enough to search for the questions one wants to examine after reading through the questionnaire. After putting the IDs in order, the datasets are comparable. The analysis was at either the household level or the level of the village organization, never combined.

4. Method for the income changes

For the income changes in terms of yearly income from agricultural products and monthly income[2] from stipends, remittances, salary and business transaction, the method used is Difference-in-Differences. It controls for the characteristics related to the districts and the economic or other trends that may influence the areas over time. However, the Difference-in-Differences method does not control for any other project or policy that may interfere with KLSP in one of the districts between the baseline and the endline. Here, there is a substantial issue for the reliability of the outputs as IFAD has implemented in parallel, on the same area (it would depend if different treatments were given then), another project (cf. 2a). This has been computed on Stata and collapsed into Excel to obtain the averages. The formula is as follow:

$\beta = E\left[\overline{Y_1}^T\right] - E\left[\overline{Y_0}^T\right] - (E\left[\overline{Y_1}^C\right] - E\left[\overline{Y_0}^C\right])$ with $\overline{Y}$ being the income average and C and T being respectively the Control (Khovaling) and Treatment (Muminobod and/or Shurobod) groups.

5. Method for the correlation analysis

The correlation analysis of the machinery is simply to analyse the variation of the sum of the machinery except tools, or the sum of the vehicles only, with the village characteristics that are the size of its population and the poverty index at the village level from the Aide-Mémoire of the Supervision Mission 2010. One can use the data analysis ToolPak to compute it, but it can also be obtained by computing paired variables by paired variables

[2] Constrained by the questionnaire that had two different units of time depending on the questions (month, year), one cannot assume that one can be converted into the other, especially regarding the agricultural cycle.

the coefficient of correlation with the function "CORREL" or by hand with the formula below:

$Correl(X,Y) = \frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2 \sum(y-\bar{y})^2}}$ with $\bar{x}$ and $\bar{y}$ being the averages of their respective variable.

List of key persons met or interviewed

IFAD

Khalida Bouzar, Regional Director, Near East, North Africa and Europe Division

Frits Jepsen, former Country Programme Manager Tajikistan

Mikael Kauttu, Country Programme Manager Tajikistan

Zainab Kenjaeva, IFAD consultant, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Government

Ministry of Agriculture, Dushanbe

Karimzoda Sadi Gafor, First Deputy Minister for Agriculture

Dogiston Jamoat, Dogiston Jamoat, Shurobod District

Zamonova Jamilbi, Head

SUDVO of Shurobod Jamoat, Shurobod jamoat, Shurobod District

Hasanov Firdavs, Chairman

Hukumat of Muminobod District, Muminobod District

Amirshozoda Tohirkhon Temur, Chairman

Hukumat of Shurobod District, Shurobod District

Idiev Umarkhon, First Deputy Chairman

Zarifzoda Pochokhon Habibullo, Chairman

Village organizations

Vataniev Idimad, Chairman, Anjirob village organization, Yol Jamoat, Shurobod District

Sadulloev Shamsullo, Chairman, Balkhobi village organization, Balkhobi Jamoat, Muminobod District

Boboev Mirzo, Chairman, Buston village organization, Dehibaland Jamoat, Muminobod District

Mirzoev Olimjon, Chairman, Chargi Poyon village organization, N. Nazarov Jamoat, Muminobod District

Hakimov Nurkhon, Chairman, Chagami Poyon village organization, Chagam Jamoat, Shurobod District

Murodaliev Bahodur, Chairman, Chagami Nav village organization, Chagami Nav village, Chagam Jamoat, Shurobod District

Madiev Saimurod, Chairman, Chashmasor village organization, Jamoat Shamsiddin Shohin, Muminobod District

Gaforov Sherali, Chairman, Degrez village organization, Childukhtaron Jamoat, Muminobod District

Rabiev Bozorali, Treasurer, Dashti Kalon village organization, Childukhtaron Jamoat, Muminobod District

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Mark Whitton, Former Country Representative Tajikistan, Aga Khan Foundation

CARITAS

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Rahimov Haidar, Head of the Demonstration Plot (Alfa-Alfa: Livestock Feed), Muminobod District

Hakimov Iskandar, Head, "Saidali" Intensive Orchard (Apples) Dehkan farm, Dashti kalon village, Shurobod District

Demonstration Project: Apiculture, 1 household, 1 woman (bee-keeper)

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Sherova Zebuniso, Group member, Kulchashmai Bolo village, Muminobod District

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