

Independent Office  
of Evaluation



Republic of Sierra Leone

## Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project

PROJECT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION







Independent Office  
of Evaluation



**Republic of Sierra Leone**  
**Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project**  
**Project Performance Evaluation**

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Photos of activities supported by the Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project.

Front cover: A young oil palm farmer in Fadigi, Koinadugu District.

Back cover: Representatives of Kasiyatama Cocoa Cooperative in Kono District (left); A rehabilitated inland valley swap site ready for vegetable production in Bambaya village, Fiama Chiefdom, Kono District (right).

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## **Preface**

*This report presents the findings of the project performance evaluation, undertaken by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE), of the Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project in Sierra Leone. The project's goals were to reduce post-conflict poverty and food insecurity, and to improve livelihoods and living conditions of rural communities.*

*The project was very relevant to a fragile context. It helped revive one of the main sources of income for the rural poor people through rice and cocoa production. It supported the rehabilitation of rural infrastructure (roads), an important precondition for social, economic and political recovery. It contributed to the development of human capital by building the capacities of local bodies and institutions. It specifically included those most in need of support – women and youth.*

*However, the project fell short of its objective to enable the increased production to reach the market, a key requirement for realizing the full potential of income increase. While large numbers of women and youth were reached, their needs were not specifically assessed and, hence, they were not effectively addressed. Finally, the project did not have the desired success in linking primary agricultural producers with financial institutions.*

*Going forward, the evaluation recommends that IFAD-supported interventions should strengthen the institutional and financial capacities of smallholder farmers with the aim of strengthening their market power. They should also aim for more effective participation of youth and women through specific strategies and needs assessment at the design phase of projects. Exit strategies should be made a central part of project design.*

*This evaluation was conducted by Hansdeep Khaira, Evaluation Officer, IOE, in collaboration with Herma Majoor, IOE consultant. Internal peer reviews from IOE were effectively conducted by Johanna Pennarz, Lead Evaluation Officer, and Estibalitz Morras, Evaluation Officer. Fabrizio Felloni, IOE Deputy Director, provided useful comments on the draft report that helped enhance its quality. Manuela Gallitto, IOE Evaluation Assistant, provided valuable administrative support.*

*IOE is grateful to IFAD's West and Central Africa Division and to the Republic of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security for their insightful inputs into the evaluation process and the valuable support they provided to the IOE mission. I hope the results of this evaluation will enable IFAD's operations to contribute to long-lasting development whose benefits will accrue to all rural poor people in Sierra Leone.*



Oscar A. Garcia  
Director  
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD



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## Currency equivalent, weights and measures

### Currency equivalent

Currency unit = Sierra Leonean leone (SLL)

US\$1 = SLL 2,500 (at appraisal in September 2003)

= SLL 7,500 (at project completion in April 2017)

### Weights and measures

1 kilogram (kg) = 2.204 pounds (lb)

1 kilometre (km) = 0.62 miles

1 metre (m) = 1.09 yards

1 square metre (m<sup>2</sup>) = 10.76 square feet (ft)

1 acre (ac) = 0.405 ha

1 hectare (ha) = 2.47 acres

## Abbreviations and acronyms

ABC	agriculture business centre
AfDB	African Development Bank
AWPB	annual work plan and budget
CB	community bank
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
DAO	district agricultural office
DPCU	district project coordination unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	farmer-based organization
FSA	financial services association
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation
IRR	internal rate of return
IVS	inland valley swamp
IVSA	inland valley swamp association
JPPCU	Joint Programme Portfolio Coordination Unit
LC	local council
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MTR	mid-term review
NERICA	New Rice for Africa
NPCU	National Project Coordination Unit
PCR	project completion report
PPE	project performance evaluation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCPRP	Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project
RFCIP	Rural Finance and Community Improvement Project
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
RIPMA	Rice Processing and Marketing Agency
RIPMCO	Rice Processing and Marketing Company
SLARI	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute
ToC	theory of change
WFP	World Food Programme


# Map of the project area

## Republic of Sierra Leone

### Rehabilitation and Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP)

Project performance evaluation



 The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.  
IFAD Map compiled by IFAD | 11-03-2019

**An automatic weather station in Kabala, Koinadugu District, constructed by the projects with funds from the Global Environment Facility.**

**@IFAD/Hansdeep Khaira**





## Executive summary

### A. Background

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) undertook a project performance evaluation (PPE) of the Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP) in Sierra Leone. The main objectives of the evaluation were to: (i) conduct an independent assessment of the results of the project; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future IFAD operations in the country.
2. In preparation for the PPE, IOE gathered preliminary findings from the desk review of the project completion report (PCR) and other key project documents. Following this, IOE undertook an evaluation mission, where additional evidence and data were collected to verify the preliminary information and to reach an independent assessment of the project's performance and results. The methods deployed for data collection in the field comprised: direct observations; key informant interviews with project stakeholders, former project staff, and local and national government authorities; and group interviews with beneficiaries.

### B. The project

3. RCPRP was to be an integrated response to rehabilitating and sustaining the essential services and restoring the basic production capacity to pre-conflict levels. The development **goals** of RCPRP were to reduce post-conflict poverty and food insecurity, and to improve livelihoods and living conditions of rural communities. This was to be achieved through the project **objective** of support to the short-term recovery of rural communities and their farming systems, while laying the basis for long-term rehabilitation and participatory development.
4. The original design of the project had four technical **components**. However, in recognition of impressive economic growth and transformation in the economy as a whole, the mid-term review (MTR) proposed a refocusing of activities and outputs, and the project's components were condensed into two: 1) support to smallholder agriculture and commercialization; and 2) support to community development and decentralization. Component 1 had three activities: (a) rehabilitation of tree crops; (b) rehabilitation of inland valley swamps (IVSs); and (c) rehabilitation of feeder roads coupled with intensive capacity-building. Activities under component 2 focused on strengthening decentralized institutions in four districts, in particular the district councils and the ward development committees.
5. Initially, the **project area** comprised two districts, Kono and Kailahun, in Eastern Province. The selection was based on criteria such as vulnerability, accessibility, agricultural potential (both districts have gravel soils suitable for tree plantations), geographical spread and avoidance of overlap with other donor operations. Later on, two adjacent districts, Kenema and Koinadugu, were included to broaden the impact of the project. Thus, the project was active in four districts. Based on the ex ante poverty and livelihood analysis, and in concurrence with national and IFAD strategic interests, five core groups were **targeted** to benefit from this project's interventions: (i) smallholder farmers; (ii) women; (iii) youth, particularly unemployed youth; (iv) people with disabilities; and (v) micro- and small-scale entrepreneurs.
6. The target for the number of beneficiaries was initially 20,000. With the addition of Kenema and Koinadugu, the number of beneficiaries doubled to 40,000. With the top-up funding in 2012 for the scaling up of the rehabilitation of infrastructure (ward offices and roads), it was expected that an additional 100,000 rural poor people would directly or indirectly benefit from improved local public services and increased economic opportunities.

7. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) was the lead agency, responsible for coordinating and managing RCPRP. In the initial stages of the project, supervision was undertaken by the African Development Bank (AfDB), but IFAD took over direct supervision in January 2009 and refocused the project's components while decentralizing the National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) in the field. The NPCU became the semi-autonomous executive arm of the MAFFS for IFAD-funded projects, responsible for day-to-day implementation.

### **C. Main findings**

8. **Relevance.** RCPRP was well aligned to the national strategies, policies and priorities related to agriculture and poverty. It was also relevant to the strategic priorities of IFAD in Sierra Leone during its lifetime. Importantly, its design and approach evolved with the changing situation in Sierra Leone. At its outset, the project rightly focused on post-conflict reconstruction, and after the MTR, it appropriately reformulated its focus to the emerged needs of smallholder farmers and to the new process of decentralization. By ensuring a focus on smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs, women, youth and disabled people in its design, RCPRP acknowledged the need to include vulnerable groups and to avoid reinforcing patterns of exclusion. However, the design had some shortcomings in the context of the country. For example, although the project had an appropriate focus on development of tree crops and the rice value chain, challenges of access to finance and market were insufficiently included in the design. Similarly, some of the changes proposed in the original design were questionable, such as the plan to drop the formulation of participatory community development plans directly with communities, which removed an element of participatory approach to development.
9. **Effectiveness.** The project achieved its objectives related to increasing production of rice and cocoa, the two commodities that are the fulcrum of agriculture and rural development in Sierra Leone. Similarly, it achieved rehabilitating roads as per the plan, and this was seen as essential for transport, travel, reaching decentralized institutions and selling produce. Most capacity-building-related targets were met and the targeted local institutions had received the activities well. The project also achieved its objectives on reaching women and youth. However, it was less successful in creating effective links between primary producers and the market. For example, the rice cooperatives created by the project's assistance faced issues of resources and did not provide an avenue for purchasing rice, as had been envisaged. As a result, they were largely confined to selling to the retail market or intermediaries at less favourable prices. The cocoa cooperatives were in better shape but in general faced capital issues and an overreliance on very few buyers. The effectiveness of climate- and environment-related interventions was also mixed.
10. **Efficiency.** RCPRP witnessed a lag of 36 months from approval to the first disbursement. Actual management costs exceeded the estimates due to a change in management structure, the decentralization of the project, and a one-year, no-cost extension. RCPRP had eight financing sources, and while all the external financing sources were 100 per cent disbursed, shortfalls in Government and beneficiary contributions resulted in overall disbursements of 90 per cent. The project also witnessed a high turnover of financial controllers. Procurement largely followed the prescribed procedures. The internal rate of return for the overall RCPRP at completion stood at a healthy 25 per cent. However, given that final management costs vastly exceeded their initial allocation, overall benefits to the households could have been higher if the programme had spent more on investment activities rather than on staff salaries.
11. **Rural poverty impact.** The project engendered positive effects on incomes and assets. These were based on improved quality and quantity of production in rice and cocoa, through the adoption of good agronomic practices. However, linkages to markets were not sufficient to allow farmers to reach their full income potential.

Roads rehabilitated by the project were perceived as a major enabler to improved incomes and access to services from decentralized institutions and banks; some 80 per cent of those surveyed reported reduced travelling time across communities. Following the IVS interventions, many of the farmers groups surveyed were utilizing their swamps all year round intermittently, and cultivating the swamps two times or even three times per year with rice, tubers and vegetables. The proportion of food-secure people was higher in project areas, but attribution could not be fully ascertained. The training under RCPRP on different topics helped create a strong human asset base, especially regarding farmers' production and cooperatives' business management. The project also contributed to the building of various institutions at a decentralized level, which included addressing their most basic needs and helping them in generating income.

12. **Sustainability of benefits.** In terms of economic sustainability, most farmers and their organizations were still engaged in project-induced activities, and although the profit and yield were slowly decreasing, these were still above the pre-project levels. However, access to suitable finance opportunities was a constraint for many target groups to keep their business profitable and sustainable. Similarly, sustainability of institutions is still fragile, mainly due to a lack of funding from central government and to staff turnover; however, income generation through youth centres and cadastral systems provides some relief. In terms of social sustainability, RCPRP's lack of direct engagement with communities to support their coordinated planning and access to decision-making and services is affecting their sustainability. The project's aim to ensure sustainability of roads was noteworthy; the project had tried to set up a system for road maintenance. However, this has not functioned since project completion due to lack of funding and limited ownership.
13. **Innovation.** A number of approaches used in RCPRP are considered innovations. The project introduced the use of male and female youth as service providers in IVS rehabilitation. Working with local contractors enabled the project to increase the speed and quality of implementation, while at the same time benefiting youth with employment and stronger capacity. Another innovative activity was the establishment of property cadastral systems for revenue generation in district councils. In order to ensure sustainability of roads, RCPRP advocated with the Government to include maintenance of feeder roads in the Government's road maintenance fund. Previously, only trunk roads had been part of this fund. Establishment of a loan recovery system feeding into an agricultural development fund, under Apex Bank, for agricultural lending was found to be innovative.
14. **Scaling up.** The local youth contractor strategy has been adopted by MAFFS and also used in a number of other projects in Sierra Leone, such as the Diversity Food Production Programme, the Linking Farmers to Market Project of the Islamic Development Bank, and the Smallholder Commercialization Programme under the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme. The property cadastral system was scaled up through adoption by the Kenema District and City Councils. Experience was further shared with other councils with involvement of the Local Government Finance Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and a task force was established to study the system for further replication to the remaining local councils.
15. **Gender equality and women's empowerment.** The project introduced the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), which resulted in greater understanding of gender issues among the beneficiaries and how to address them. The project's outreach was also impressive, with about 40 per cent of those reached through its activities being women. RCPRP successfully mobilized female as well as male farmers in farmers groups and financial services associations (FSAs). Most FSAs had three female members in executive positions. Thus, it contributed to enhancing women's decision-making role. However, regarding important activities such as



receiving training, the numbers of women trained were disproportionately lower than those of men trained. The project also missed the opportunity to conduct a gender analysis at the design stage to try to identify and address the specific opportunities and challenges of women and men.

16. **Environment and natural resources management.** RCPRP did not have any negative environmental or natural resources impact because its focus was on rehabilitation of existing swamps, revitalization of cocoa trees in existing farms, and rehabilitation of existing roads. In terms of natural resources management, local government staff and farmers were trained on using integrated pest management and sustainable land and water management. However, three out of the four dams built to facilitate water management were broken beyond repair. In terms of the afforestation efforts, the community showed little interest in the planted trees because plans for maintenance, harvesting or sharing the proceeds had not been made by the community. Similarly, no fire belt was constructed around the trees, leading to the current and potentially further loss of trees.
17. **Adaptation to climate change.** The project had received funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to undertake a number of activities related to climate change adaptation. GEF had constructed and equipped 8 automatic weather stations and 20 rain gauges in high schools for weather-related data collection and analysis, and sharing with farmers and other stakeholders, including ministries. However, the evaluation noted that many staff had left, and no new staff had been put in place and the offices were understaffed. Even if data were collected, the state's meteorological department did not have the software to analyse them.

#### **D. Conclusions**

18. With its original focus on reconstruction, followed by the shift towards rehabilitation of agriculture and development of local institutions, RCPRP was sufficiently well suited to the fragile context of Sierra Leone. Working with institutions in a fragile context is challenging, but RCPRP managed to visibly improve those capacities of local institutions that were essential for effectively supporting smallholder farmers.
19. The turnaround of RCPRP from a late-starter to a largely successful project was down to its design flexibility and competent project management. After a difficult start, the changes in the design coupled with IFAD's direct supervision helped the project pick up steam, and its activities were implemented mostly as per plan.
20. RCPRP's strategy to target a mix of food and cash crops was correct from income and food-security standpoints, and it was supported by the proper execution of most of its plans. Its execution of activities, especially those related to production, paid off. Increased quantity and improved quality of rice and cocoa production (and a good outlook for oil palm production) contributed to the increase in the incomes and food security of farmers. The use of improved rice seed varieties, such as New Rice for Africa, made it possible for farmers to have two harvests annually.
21. However, the project lacked a concerted approach to linking farmers to markets. Support to road rehabilitation was perceived as very important by the project in connecting beneficiaries to markets. It also contributed to savings in terms of time and transport and maintenance costs, pushing incomes and profits higher. However, the approach to establishing linkages with the private sector for output markets through marketing organizations, such as cooperatives, was less prominently pursued, which eventually hampered farmers in their efforts to achieve optimal profits.
22. Efforts to mainstream women and youth were mainly at the output level. Nonetheless, although the project tried to engage sufficient women, gender-specific activities that recognize gender differences were not sufficiently included. As for youth, even if they were also engaged and, in some activities, even as the

main target group, a structured approach towards mainstreaming youth was lacking.

23. A paucity of Government funds and a lack of access to finance will remain two crucial impediments to the sustainability of RCPRP's benefits. Lack of access to finance is still the main impediment to farmers and grass-roots organizations, as in many cases it hampered them in their efforts to achieve the growth that they needed to create a viable sustainable business. The project had developed a comprehensive plan for sustainable maintenance of its rehabilitated roads; however, once the project had been phased out, the expected budget from central government appeared not to have been forthcoming.
24. The opportunity to contribute to addressing a genuine concern such as climate change for the country was missed. Partnership with GEF was important in the light of Sierra Leone's climate change vulnerability and its consequences for smallholder farmers. GEF tried to introduce some interesting concepts, but limitations in design and implementation for some activities constrained the achievements.

## **E. Recommendations**

25. **To promote effective and efficient market participation by smallholder farmers, strengthen equally the institutional expertise and the financial capacity of marketing organizations.** Where marketing organizations such as farmers' marketing groups or farmers' cooperatives are important avenues for smallholder farmer commercialization, the focus should not be limited to building their institutional capacities alone. Especially in fragile contexts, the access to long-term, sustainable finance for such organizations is a critical requirement, and linkages with financial institutions a necessity. IFAD-supported interventions should strengthen the institutional and financial capacities of smallholder farmers with a focus on strengthening their market power so that they are no longer forced to side-sell at suboptimal farm-gate prices.
26. **In concert with awareness-raising and representation, aim for effective participation of youth and women through specific strategies and needs assessment at the design phase of projects.** The marginalization of women and youth is exacerbated in fragile contexts, including in countries with episodes of lengthy civil wars. In such situations, projects should move away from aiming for their mere participation and awareness-raising to ensuring that women and youth are structurally mainstreamed and that the activities are suitable for them. This should start early, from the design phase, ideally through a needs assessment plan. In the case of women, awareness-raising (through systems such as GALS) must be followed by a move to empowerment through well-directed activities.
27. **In fragile contexts, make exit strategies a central part of project designs and monitor following the strategies during implementation.** In fragile contexts, low institutional capacities and budgets can have an adverse effect on the sustainability of benefits that flow from IFAD-supported projects. In this regard, adequate attention is to be paid at the design stage through a well-designed and detailed exit strategy. One such strategy can be to formalize activities and responsibilities through memorandums of understanding, to ensure that all stakeholders know and execute their roles after the project's end. Other such avenues are partnerships with other development partners or scaling up the activities to ensure sustainability.

28. **Where adaptation to climate change is specifically pursued, treat it as an intrinsic part of the project design and not merely as an accessory.** In some countries, such as Sierra Leone, climate change is an issue that is too important to be covered merely by a relatively small component introduced at a later stage of the project. Climate change adaptation should be an intrinsic part from the design phase, designed in a way so as to blend in with or be of consequence to other project activities and appropriately costed. It should form part of the project's theory of change. Moreover, in concert with awareness, the focus should be equally on measures for adaptation and mitigation.

## IFAD Management's response<sup>1</sup>

1. Management commends the quality of the project performance evaluation (PPE) of the Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP), which was implemented in Sierra Leone from 2006 to 2017. The report is also timely as its recommendations are useful for the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project, which is in its start-up phase.
2. Management is in agreement with the report's assessment that the project was successful. In particular, Management agrees with the view that the project continued to be relevant throughout its lifetime, as its focus shifted from post-conflict recovery and reconstruction to longer-term development in line with the country's evolving needs. Management also notes that the project was effective in increasing rice production and yields, and achieved the planned support to the targeted area for cocoa and oil palm plantations. Similarly, the project completed rehabilitating roads as per plan, and the good condition of these roads was deemed critical for reaching decentralized institutions and selling produce. Due to these positive aspects, RCPRP had a positive impact on the beneficiaries' incomes and assets.
3. At the same time, Management recognizes that RCPRP fell short of achieving its full potential, mainly for reasons related to the creation of less-successful marketing linkages and constraints such as access to finance for smallholders. Similarly, Management recognizes that overall project efficiency suffered from the lag of 36 months from approval to the first disbursement while the project was being managed by the African Development Bank.
4. Management appreciates the PPE's recommendations, to which detailed comments are presented below:

(a) ***Recommendation 1. To promote effective and efficient market participation by smallholder farmers, strengthen equally the institutional expertise and the financial capacity of marketing organizations.***

**Agreed.** Management agrees that the institutional and financial capacity of second-tier or marketing organizations is important to promoting effective and efficient market participation by smallholders. Therefore, ongoing and future IFAD-funded projects in Sierra Leone will seek to provide appropriate training and technical assistance to the agribusiness centres, cooperatives and other relevant institutions, and moreover seek to link these to the provision of rural financial services in a more systematic way.

(b) ***Recommendation 2. In concert with awareness-raising and representation, aim for effective participation of youth and women through specific strategies and needs assessment at design phase of projects.***

**Agreed.** Management agrees that the targeting of women and youth can be better streamlined in project activities. While RCPRP sufficiently included women as beneficiaries, training activities included more men. Moreover, while youth were not explicitly targeted, they did participate in specific activities. Recognizing these shortcomings in the targeting approach towards youth in particular, the Sierra Leone country team will ensure that future project designs are based on a relevant needs assessment. For recently designed projects in the early implementation phase, the targeting strategy

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<sup>1</sup> The Programme Management Department sent the final Management's response to the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD on 31 October 2019.

will be revisited and will include household methodologies to improve intrahousehold gender relations.

- (c) ***Recommendation 3. In fragile contexts, make exit strategies a central part of project designs and monitor following of the strategies during implementation.***

**Agreed.** Management agrees to make exit strategies an important part of project designs and to monitor these strategies throughout implementation. Hence, to the degree possible, clear delineation of post-project responsibilities will be outlined in memorandums of understanding, or similar, to ensure the sustainability of benefits. During implementation, adherence to the planned responsibilities and the likelihood and feasibility of future handover will be monitored.

- (d) ***Recommendation 4. Where adaptation to climate change is specifically pursued, treat it as an intrinsic part of the project design and not merely as an accessory.***

**Agreed.** Management fully agrees that the adaptation to climate change is a crucial aspect of development projects and consequently should be treated as an intrinsic part of future IFAD-funded projects in Sierra Leone. As an example, IFAD has managed to attract a grant from the Adaptation Fund as cofinancing for the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project, which will be fully blended into project activities and will increase the adaptive capacity of the beneficiaries and their livelihoods.

Management thanks IOE for the productive process and is committed to internalizing lessons learned and outcomes of this exercise to further improve the performance of IFAD-funded programmes in Sierra Leone and elsewhere.



# Republic of Sierra Leone

## Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction 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.<sup>1</sup> The Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP) in the Republic of Sierra Leone was selected based on a number of considerations, in particular to provide inputs for the Sierra Leone country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) to be undertaken in 2019.
2. **Objectives.** The main objectives of the PPE were to: (i) assess the results of the project; (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in the country; and (iii) provide project-level evidence that would feed into the CSPE. The PPE also focused on key issues that emerged from the desk review, and as outlined in the approach paper (annex IV): the implementation model, strengthening of grass-roots institutions, market linkages, rural finance, value addition and youth.
3. **Methodology.** The PPE follows IFAD's Evaluation Policy,<sup>2</sup> the IFAD/IOE Evaluation Manual (second edition),<sup>3</sup> in line with the 2017 agreement between IOE and IFAD Management on the harmonized definitions of evaluation criteria, and the Guidelines for Project Completion Validation and Project Performance Evaluation.<sup>4</sup> It adopts a set of internationally recognized evaluation criteria (see annex II) and a six-point rating system in which 6 is the highest score (highly satisfactory) and 1 is the lowest (highly unsatisfactory). The evaluation was based on a desk review of available data and documents<sup>5</sup> and a three-week country mission including field visits. During this mission, the team also collected data for the CSPE in the target districts of RCPRP.
4. The scope of the PPE was identified based on the following criteria: (i) thematic areas<sup>6</sup> identified through a desk review (the PPE reviewed additional evidence and proposed a complete list of consolidated ratings); (ii) selected issues of strategic importance for IFAD in Sierra Leone; and (iii) limitations set by the available time and budget (the PPE was selective in focusing on key issues where value could be added, given the limited time and budget).
5. The PPE has built on available quantitative and qualitative data and information related to the project (e.g. a mid-term review [MTR], supervision reports and the project completion report [PCR]). Primary data were collected during the field mission.
6. The PPE crosschecked findings from the PCR, and triangulated data and information from different sources. Interviews were conducted both from IFAD headquarters (in person, telephone and video) and in country to obtain further information. During the field mission, additional primary and secondary data were collected to reach an independent assessment of performance and results. Data collection

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<sup>1</sup> 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) geographical balance.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ifad.org/en/web/ioe/policy>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process\\_methodology/doc/manual.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/manual.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process\\_methodology/doc/pr\\_completion.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/pr_completion.pdf). See annex IV, appendix I for an extract from the Guidelines, "Methodological note on project performance assessments".

<sup>5</sup> Including but not limited to supervision mission reports, mid-term review report, project completion report, baseline survey, and Western Uplands Poverty Alleviation Project (WUPAP) database. See also the bibliography in annex XII.

<sup>6</sup> Productive capacity, agricultural marketing, rural finance and institutional strengthening.

methods included qualitative techniques such as direct observation, interviews and focus group discussions with Government representatives at national and local levels, project stakeholders, beneficiaries and other key informants and resource persons.

7. Analysis in the PPE was assisted by the theory of change<sup>7</sup> (ToC) (see annex V). The ToC shows the causal pathway from project activities to project impacts and the changes that should take place in the intermediary stage, i.e. between project outcomes and impact. External factors that influence change along the major impact pathways, i.e. assumptions on which the project has no control, were also taken into account. The ToC was reconstructed so that any deviation from the project design, in terms of objectives and/or activities that might have occurred during the course of project implementation, was taken into account. These changes were identified on the basis of a desk review.
8. **Process.** The PPE mission was undertaken from 7 to 28 March 2019. At the start of the mission, meetings were held in Freetown with project staff. From 10 to 20 March 2019, the PPE team undertook field visits to the four target districts of RCPRP.<sup>8</sup> Within each district, the IOE team visited the following target groups: inland valley swamp associations (IVSAs), farmers engaged in tree crops, cocoa cooperatives, district councils, ward committees, district agricultural offices (DAOs) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) sites. Upon arrival back at the capital, staff from ministries and other partner organizations were interviewed (see annex XI).
9. A wrap-up meeting was held on 26 March 2017 at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), where preliminary findings were presented. Following the mission, further analysis of the data and findings was conducted to prepare the draft PPE report. The draft report was first peer reviewed within IOE after which it was shared with IFAD's West and Central Africa Division and the Government of Sierra Leone for comments. The comments provided were taken into consideration in finalizing the report.
10. In accordance with IFAD Evaluation Policy, the main project stakeholders were involved throughout the PPE process. This ensured that the key concerns of the stakeholders were considered, that the evaluators fully understood the context in which the programme was implemented, and that opportunities and constraints faced by the implementing institutions were identified. Formal and informal opportunities were explored during the process for discussing findings, lessons and recommendations. Early planning and involving the assistance of the IFAD project team and the country programme manager were successfully used to identify the most relevant respondents and to organize meetings and interviews.
11. **Data availability and limitations.** Primary data collection was conducted by the evaluation team using qualitative methods (focus group discussions and key informant interviews). For quantitative data, data from the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) were available from the MTR onwards only. Moreover, the PPE relied on the impact assessment report of 2017. However, while useful, there are some caveats regarding methodology in terms of cross-comparison between control and target groups, which pose some limitations to the conclusions drawn. For example, the report does not describe how balance was achieved between the treatment and control groups, and nor is the level of statistical significance of the results shown.
12. This is an ex post assessment of a project that became effective in 2006 and was further extended in 2012. Many people who had been engaged in the project's first

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<sup>7</sup> A project's ToC depicts the causal pathways from project outputs to project outcomes, i.e. through changes resulting from the use of those outputs made by target groups and other key stakeholders towards impact. The ToC further defines external factors influencing change along the major impact pathways. These external factors are assumptions when the project has no control over them, or drivers of impact when the project has a certain level of control.

<sup>8</sup> Kailahun, Kenema, Koinadugu and Kono.

years were no longer available. However, the fact that a National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) for IFAD projects exists meant that some key people could still be met, and information retrieved from documents with the unit. The documents gave the team a good insight into the entire implementation period under consideration. However, it is possible that the information collected from the respondents in qualitative interviews was focused on the more recent period of RCPRP's implementation.

## II. The project

### A. Project context

13. **National context.** Sierra Leone is a Least Developed Country with a GDP per capita of US\$675, ranking 167th out of 186 countries.<sup>9</sup> The country is in a recovery phase after being severely affected by an 11-year civil war (1991-2002), resulting in widespread degradation of infrastructure and displacement of the population. The effect of the conflict on agriculture was very extensive. Many farms and rural areas were abandoned, and villages were burned down and looted. Although remarkable economic and social progress has been made, the country still features among the world's 50 most fragile states.<sup>10</sup>
14. The Ebola virus disease outbreak in 2014 and the steep price decline in iron ore, a major commodity export for Sierra Leone, are two exogenous factors that had an adverse effect on its GDP.<sup>11</sup> Prior to these two factors, Sierra Leone had one of the highest economic growth rates in the world. The GDP growth rate increased steeply from 3.1 per cent in 2009 to 20.1 per cent in 2013 but then again fell sharply to minus 20.5 per cent in 2015. It finally recovered to 6 per cent in 2016.<sup>12</sup> Real GDP growth is projected to increase to 5.6 per cent in 2019 and 5.8 per cent in 2020. The main drivers of economic growth will be increased private agricultural and mining investment amid business climate reforms.<sup>13</sup>
15. Until the outbreak of Ebola, Sierra Leone had been seeking to attain middle-income status by 2035. However, the country is struggling with high youth unemployment, corruption and weak governance. The country continues to face the daunting challenge of enhancing transparency in managing its natural resources and creating fiscal space for development. Problems of poor infrastructure and widespread rural and urban impoverishment persist despite remarkable strides.<sup>14</sup>
16. Agriculture plays an important role in the country's economy. It contributed 59 per cent to the country's GDP in 2015<sup>15</sup> and employed 62 per cent of the labour force.<sup>16</sup> However, the sector is dominated by subsistence farming, and productivity is low, characterized by poor extension services, low capital investment, a lack of credit and microfinance facilities, and weak farmers' organizations. A lack of rural infrastructure including farm-to-market roads is also a key challenge. Commodity chains and entrepreneurial activities in rural areas are fragmented and often inefficiently connected. The country's staple crops are rice and cassava. Cash crops are produced mainly for export, and include cocoa, coffee and oil palm. The Government has initiated several reforms; the country's Roadmap for the National Agricultural Transformation (2018) identifies four enablers to increase rice self-sufficiency, livestock development, and crop diversification: improving the policy environment; promoting women and youth in agriculture; setting up private-sector-led mechanization; and sustainably managing biodiversity.<sup>17</sup>
17. Poverty is widespread but particularly acute and concentrated in rural areas where 62 per cent of the population live, with 49.8 per cent of rural households being food insecure.<sup>18</sup> Poverty is concentrated among smallholder farmers, women and youth,<sup>19</sup> with about 70 per cent of youth unemployed or underemployed. Poverty in

<sup>9</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, October 2015.

<sup>10</sup> 2018 Fragile States Index. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, States of Fragility 2018.

<sup>11</sup> From US\$139.87 per metric ton in 2013 to US\$41 per metric ton by 2015. Commodities booms and busts report — relevance to Sierra Leone, United Nations Development Programme, May 2016.

<sup>12</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2017&locations=SL&start=2000> (Accessed 10.02.2019).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/sierra-leone/sierra-leone-economic-outlook/> (Accessed 10.02.2019).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sierraleone/overview> (Accessed 10.02.2019).

<sup>15</sup> Economic Intelligence Unit, Country Report 4th Quarter, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> International Labour Organization *et al.*, Sierra Leone 2014 Labour Force Survey Report.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/sierra-leone/sierra-leone-economic-outlook/> (Accessed 10.02.2019).

<sup>18</sup> Sierra Leone Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Aged between 15 and 35.

Sierra Leone has several interrelated causes, including an absence of income sources, limited access to financial services, lack of inclusive land rights, and frail governance institutions. Sierra Leone's Human Development Index was 0.419 in 2018, ranking 184th out of 188 countries.<sup>20</sup>

18. **Project goals and objectives.** RCPRP was to be an integrated response towards rehabilitating and sustaining the essential services and restoring the basic production capacity to pre-conflict levels. The development goals of RCPRP were to reduce post-conflict poverty and food insecurity, and to improve livelihoods and living conditions of rural communities. This was to be achieved through the project objective of support to the short-term recovery of rural communities and their farming systems, while laying the basis for long-term rehabilitation and participatory development.
19. Rapid changes in the socio-economic and political environment in the country led to shifting Government priorities, gradually moving from rehabilitation, resettlement and reconstruction to sustainable economic development. The Government and IFAD reacted to these changes and, as a result, a number of changes were made, including an increase in funding, modification in the project's components, and expansion in project areas (the figure in annex VI depicts the evolutionary transformation of the project). The project lifespan can be divided into two broad phases: the first phase focusing on rehabilitation of the agriculture sector, with emphasis on raising production and productivity; and the second phase focusing on commercialization and support to decentralization of local government structures.
20. **Project components.** The original design of the project, which mainly aimed at rehabilitation and reconstruction after the civil conflict, had four technical components: (i) restored and improved agricultural production capacity and household food security; (ii) strengthened community and farmer-based organizations; (iii) established mechanisms for participatory community development; and (iv) rehabilitated and expanded rural infrastructure.
21. In recognition of impressive economic growth and transformation in the economy as a whole, refocusing of activities and outputs was proposed. There was a growing recognition that development in the form of increasing production and productivity would not succeed if market access were impeded because of bad roads and a lack of storage and drying facilities. With substantially increased funding, RCPRP was revised to expand opportunities in rice (inland valley swamps [IVSs]) and tree crop production, to improve access to markets with a scaled-up feeder and trunk road rehabilitation programme, and an expanded component on community development and decentralization to ensure sustainability and good governance. As part of these changes, the project's components were condensed to two technical components:
  - Component 1: Support to smallholder agriculture and commercialization
  - Component 2: Support to community development and decentralization
22. **Component 1** targeted the root causes of persistent low yields and low income levels in the targeted rural communities. The aim was to increase production, productivity, rural household incomes and create employment, on an economically and environmentally sustainable basis, through better access to services, technical skills, land, irrigation and markets. Through three subcomponents, the strategy focused on: (i) rehabilitation of tree crops; (ii) rehabilitation of IVSs; and (iii) rehabilitation of feeder roads coupled with intensive capacity-building.
23. *Tree crop rehabilitation.* This subcomponent focused on rehabilitating three tree crops that had been neglected during the civil war: coffee, cocoa and oil palm. Interventions supported by RCPRP were weeding, pruning and replanting, and capacity-building (through farmer field schools). The project provided 60 per cent

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<sup>20</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SLE> (Accessed 20.03.2019).



of the investment costs as a grant and in the form of assistance for making fermentation boxes, provision of plastic sheeting for solar drying tables, and training for farmers. Farmers were expected to pay back 40 per cent of investment costs and provide labour for the rehabilitation and expenses for the establishment of and care for village nurseries.

24. *IVS rehabilitation.* Under this subcomponent, the project supported the rehabilitation/development of existing IVSs that were technically, socially, economically and environmentally viable, and local agroprocessing capacities. IVSAs were formed to serve as key implementing partners through which the interventions were carried out (water management and maintenance of infrastructure, and training on association management). The incentives introduced to capitalize IVS groups were subsidized seasonal loans (for seeds and fertilizers) and development loans (60 per cent subsidies on tools and labour), and service providers with subsidized equipment loans (40 per cent subsidies on equipment for IVS development and cultivation). In doing so, farmer-based organizations (FBOs) were linked with financial services associations and community banks (CBs) supported by another IFAD-supported project (Rural Finance and Community Improvement Project [RCFIP I]) to access credit. As part of value-addition promotion, small-scale entrepreneurs were supported with agroprocessing equipment (rice mills, oil palm pressers and cassava graters), and the project provided training for operators. Finally, in terms of marketing linkages, rice and cocoa commercialization were strengthened with the development of cooperatives and a rice marketing company. Oil palm commercialization was supported through linking farmers with the private-sector company, Goldtree.
25. *Road rehabilitation.* Main outputs under this subcomponent were: selection of roads according to set criteria; design and specifications of the roads and structures; contracting and capacity-building of contractors and local council (LC) staff; and supervision. The Road Maintenance Fund Administration was created, and road maintenance units equipped with machinery in the target districts were established.
26. The expected outcomes from component 1 were: increased yields and quantities of marketable produce; improved profitability and sustainability of the supported enterprises. It was expected that the specific number of beneficiaries reached under this component would be disaggregated by sex and age.
27. **Component 2** focused on strengthening decentralized institutions in the four districts, in particular the LCs, the ward development committees, the DAOs and youth, including people with disabilities, in service delivery to their respective clientele. Outputs included the capacity-building of staff at the LC and ward levels in various skills, such as communication and financial management, and in administration and planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), conflict management, leadership, gender issues, HIV and also Ebola awareness and prevention. It included: construction of DAOs, ward offices and youth centres; the provision of logistics, equipment and material; and support in revenue collection at LC level.
28. The expected outcomes were the existence and increased level of implementation of development plans at district and ward levels, a good perception (access, use and satisfaction) of communities on service delivery by local government and the degree of transparency and accountability.
29. In addition, in 2011 a GEF-financed programme was integrated into RCPRP to support the farming communities to adapt to climate change. Main outputs were: a network of agriculture meteorological weather stations; the climate proofing of IVSs; and several pilot projects including water harvesting, greenhouses, water dams for irrigation (water management), and honey production.

30. **Project area.** Initially, the project area comprised two districts, Kailahun and Kono, in Eastern Province. The selection was based on criteria such as vulnerability,<sup>21</sup> accessibility, agricultural potential (both districts have suitable gravel soils for tree plantations), geographical spread, and avoidance of overlap with other donor operations. Later on, two adjacent districts, Kenema and Koinadugu, were included to broaden the impact of the project. Thus, the project was active in four districts.
31. **Project target group.** Based on the ex ante poverty and livelihood analysis, and in concurrence with national and IFAD strategic interests, five core groups were targeted to benefit from this project's interventions: (i) smallholder farmers; (ii) women; (iii) youth, particularly unemployed youth; (iv) people with disabilities; and (v) micro and small-scale entrepreneurs.
32. Specific activities under the subcomponents were targeted for the different groups. For example, smallholder farmers were to be provided with support in terms of farming knowledge and inputs, organizational capacities and linkages with agroprocessing and marketing opportunities. Under the IVS rehabilitation, the digging of boreholes and fixing of pumps to supply water to non-perennial swamps during the dry season were largely meant to benefit women who were producers of vegetables and groundnuts during the off-season. For youth, the project focused on: (i) creating employment opportunities; (ii) fostering entrepreneurial spirit and skills; and (iii) supporting youth organizations, particularly those with social, productive and advocacy roles. Similar activities targeted micro- and small-scale entrepreneurs as well as people with disabilities. Under tree crop rehabilitation, young farmers were trained in best agronomic practices.
33. The target for the number of beneficiaries was initially 20,000. With the addition of Kenema and Koinadugu, the number of beneficiaries doubled to 40,000. With the top-up funding in 2012 for the scaling up of the rehabilitation of infrastructure (ward offices and roads), it was expected that an additional 100,000 rural poor people would directly or indirectly benefit from improved local public services and increased economic opportunities.

## **B. Project implementation**

34. **Time frame.** RCPRP became effective on 2 March 2006, with an initial project completion date of 31 March 2011. At the end of the first phase, additional financing was provided for a second phase, with an initial revised completion date of 31 March 2016. However, with the disruption of project activities as a result of the Ebola virus disease epidemic in 2014, a no-cost extension of 12 months was granted until 31 March 2017.
35. **Project costs and financing.** The project was to receive total financing of US\$50.7 million in three tranches. The first tranche of US\$8.5 million covered the period 2006-2011; the second tranche of US\$21.4 million covered the follow-on RCPRP+ from 2011 to 2016; and a final top-up of US\$13 million (RCPRP++) was provided in 2012 for the scaling up of certain outputs of RCPRP+. In 2011, a cofinancing of US\$2.6 million was granted by GEF to integrate measures for the adaptation to climate change into project interventions. The project was also to receive US\$4.1 million in contributions from the Government of Sierra Leone, and US\$1.1 million of beneficiary contributions. Disbursements at completion totalled US\$45.8 million. The table presented in annex VII provides information on funds at appraisal and the actual expenditures.
36. **Implementation arrangements and significant changes thereto.** MAFFS was the lead agency, responsible for coordinating and managing RCPRP as well as the Agricultural Sector Rehabilitation Project funded by the African Development Bank

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<sup>21</sup> According to the PCR, these two districts were hardest hit by the war and have the highest concentration of vulnerable farm families in Sierra Leone.

(AfDB). A Joint Programme Portfolio Coordination Unit (JPPCU) was set up in 2006 for both projects, and IFAD selected the AfDB as the cooperating institution. After an initial slow start and little field implementation in the first two years, the 2009 IFAD MTR Mission, that took place in January of that year, proposed a number of significant changes in implementation.<sup>22</sup> IFAD took over direct supervision of RCPRP in January 2009, refocusing the project, decentralizing the project coordination unit in the field, and effectively ensuring strong implementation support and field supervision. From then on, the progress made was remarkable.

37. The NPCU became the semi-autonomous executive arm of MAFFS for IFAD-funded projects, responsible for day-to-day implementation. District Project Coordination Units (DPCUs) in Kailahun and Kono, and later in Kenema and Koinadugu, were established, responsible for field implementation. The NPCU and DPCUs were staffed with management and administration staff and subject-matter specialists. The project coordinator reported to MAFFS, the National Steering Committee and IFAD. The National Steering Committee, with members from all relevant ministries met twice a year (except during the Ebola outbreak), approved annual work plan and budgets (AWPBs) and reports presented by the NPCU, and provided policy guidance.
38. In the first phase of RCPRP (2006-2011), the majority of outputs in the IVS and tree crop components were delivered directly by NPCU/DPCU staff and MAFFS district agricultural officers (Crops, Tree Crops, Extension, Lands and Water Development Divisions [now Agricultural Engineering Division]), and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI).

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<sup>22</sup> IFAD, January 2009. RCPRP. Mid-term Review report.

### III. Main evaluation findings

39. The following section describes the evaluation's assessment of RCPRP against preselected criteria.

#### A. Project performance and rural poverty impact Relevance

40. **The alignment of RCPRP to national strategies, policies and priorities related to agriculture and poverty was good.** The objectives of RCPRP emanated from the National Recovery Strategy, put in place by the Government of Sierra Leone with the assistance of the international community including IFAD, to rebuild its economy and foster reconciliation after peace was declared in 2002.<sup>23</sup> Thus, RCPRP was strongly aligned with Government priorities to rebuild the country through policies, instituted reforms, and programmes to foster reconciliation and social and economic growth.<sup>24</sup> This included the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) I (2005-2007) and the Agenda for Change (PRSP II: 2008-2012) among others.<sup>25</sup>
41. RCPRP continued to be relevant to Government priorities during its lifespan. For example, it was aligned to the National Sustainable Agricultural Development Programme 2010-2030 that was developed by MAFFS in 2009, which has increasing agricultural productivity, in particular among rural poor smallholders, as its first strategic priority. Similarly, the national youth councils established in each district, as part of the National Youth Programme 2014-2018, were important partners and participants of RCPRP.
42. Decentralization has become a Government priority, and the decentralization programme started in March 2004 after the passing of the Local Government Act. Although RCPRP had already been designed when the act was issued, it adopted decentralization as a focus, and its approach was adapted to the actual Government decentralization framework. Coming from a recent conflict situation, the budget and human resources capacity within local government were limited. Necessary austerity measures as a result of the Ebola crisis again temporarily aggravated this situation. Therefore, these institutions were rightly targeted for such type of support after the MTR.
43. **RCPRP was relevant to the strategic priorities of IFAD in Sierra Leone during its lifetime.** The Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 2003 was developed immediately after the civil war, and its strategic direction included providing rapid assistance to the communities that were hosting resettlers. Suggested key interventions were the provision of basic agricultural packages (seed, tools and inputs) for expanding the areas cultivated and rehabilitation of feeder roads, which is exactly what RCPRP did.
44. The COSOP 2010 shifted the focus from reconstruction to longer-term development, similar to RCPRP after 2009. RCPRP was aligned with two out of three of its strategic objectives (SOs), namely: SO1: support to agriculture: small farmers' access to irrigation, technical skills and markets is improved; and SO3: support to participatory local development: rural poor have increased their level of participation in the process of management of local decentralized institutions.
45. **RCPRP's design and approach evolved with the changing situation in Sierra Leone. At its outset, RCPRP rightly focused on post-conflict reconstruction.** During the civil war, agricultural activities had been disrupted throughout Sierra Leone, and hence, after the conflict, agricultural production was very low and mainly based on labour-intensive subsistence agriculture. The project

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<sup>23</sup> IFAD Results Series Issue 2. *Results from the Field*.

<sup>24</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP. Project Completion Report. Main report and appendices.

<sup>25</sup> The Republic of Sierra Leone. *An Agenda for Change*. Second Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP II) 2008-2012.

did not conduct a separate needs analysis, but the assessments done at the appraisal stage contributed to connecting the RCPRP approach to the most important needs of the target population. Thus, for example, in its first phase, RCPRP focused on rehabilitation of farmland and infrastructure, and included the provision of seeds and tools. This approach of post-conflict recovery and reconstruction played right into the immediate needs of poor smallholders in the two districts that had been hardest hit by the civil war. The first two districts selected under RCPRP (Kono and Kailahun) had a large number of vulnerable inhabitants, low accessibility to markets and yet strong agricultural potential. Importantly, the districts had suffered much from the civil war and had received little external resource support.<sup>26</sup>

46. **After MTR, RCPRP appropriately reformulated its focus to the emerged needs of smallholder farmers and to the new process of decentralization. However, the plan to drop the formulation of participatory community development plans directly with communities removed an element of participatory approach to development.** After 2003, the situation in Sierra Leone improved in a number of ways. Average economic growth was 7.6 per cent from 2003 to 2016. In 2003, 66.4 per cent of people lived below the poverty line, decreasing to 52.9 per cent in 2011.<sup>27</sup> In accordance with this and after the recommendations of the MTR<sup>28</sup> in 2009, the project was rightly redesigned towards a longer-term approach to community rehabilitation and sustainable economic development.
47. The simplification of the design, by decreasing the number of components from four to two, introduced a stronger focus among activities and recognized the limited implementation capacities in a fragile context. At the same time, it also contributed to potentially larger benefits from IFAD funds to the communities by better aligning the activities to the needs raised by the beneficiaries, among others through including fertilizer and rehabilitation of tree crops and increasing the length of feeder roads in response to the needs of beneficiaries, who identified roads as a top priority.<sup>29</sup>
48. After the MTR, RCPRP supported the decentralization of Government responsibilities and youth centres, making rural communities stronger. This change in approach was relevant to the development in Sierra Leone away from post-conflict-related reconstruction and emerging needs of poor rural communities towards building sustainable livelihoods. Currently still, in rural areas, poverty and food insecurity rates are often higher than average,<sup>30</sup> and rural youth and women are among the most vulnerable groups.<sup>31,32</sup> The design of RCPRP therefore remained relevant until the end of the project.
49. The original design had foreseen the formulation of 1,000 community development plans using participatory rural appraisal techniques by the project, directly engaging local communities. However, with the focus on decentralization, the direct participation approach was dropped, and, instead, ward committees were trained to develop and implement development microprojects.
50. **By ensuring a focus on smallholder farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs, women, youth and disabled people in RCPRP design, IFAD acknowledged the need to include vulnerable groups and avoid reinforcing patterns of exclusion.** The five focus groups for RCPRP targeting were: (i) smallholder

<sup>26</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, January 2009. RCPRP Mid-Term Review report.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sierraleone/overview> (Accessed 09.03.2019).

<sup>28</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, January 2009. RCPRP Mid-Term Review report.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Sierra Leone Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis 2015.

<sup>31</sup> FAO, 2016. National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, Sierra Leone.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/countryinfo.html> (Accessed 23.03.2019).



farmers; (ii) women; (iii) youth, particularly unemployed youth; (iv) people with disabilities; and (v) micro- and small-scale entrepreneurs.<sup>33</sup>

51. Smallholder farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone are struggling to survive, and targeting them was therefore very relevant. These farmers help produce an important amount of food for the inhabitants of Sierra Leone but face many challenges in terms of capacity and services available to them. To participate in tree crop farming, the minimum requirement was 1 ha of land. Even if targeting farmers with such an area of land, who are in need of equipment, presents a risk of bypassing poor people, many respondents were of the view that land tenure is usually not an issue in Sierra Leone, even among the poor. The targeting strategy involved reaching existing groups of farmers who possessed experience useful and relevant for the project and had knowledge of local resources (human, material, etc.). They had been hit hard by the consequences of the civil war. Many had had to leave their plantations and farms, and they came back finding them partly or fully destroyed.
52. Youth were targeted mainly through employment opportunities (activities related to rehabilitation of IVSs, tree crops and roads), and supporting youth to organize themselves (youth centres) was also a relevant focus for the youth themselves as well as for their communities and national development, especially given that one third of the population of Sierra Leone is aged between 15 and 35, and 70 per cent are underemployed or unemployed.<sup>34</sup> Given the fact that most youth do not own land, the design foresaw schemes to negotiate long-term leases of large areas of land for at least 30 years between the landowning families, paramount chiefs, LCs and youths organized in groups. However, the design did not contain specific activities to include youth in parts of the value chain.
53. Targeting of women in agriculture-related interventions was also highly relevant. Although, according to the Constitution, women in Sierra Leone have equal rights in decision-making, in practice, they are restricted by cultural, structural and material challenges, affecting their access to and participation in decision-making at various levels of society.<sup>35</sup> In recognition that men are the main decision takers at the household level, the project targeted women through reaching out to women-headed households. Women were to be targeted through introducing low-cost, time- and energy-saving processing technologies and adult literacy training.
54. In the project design, 16,000 disabled people were expected to be included among the direct beneficiaries of RCPRP.<sup>36</sup> Targeting the disabled was relevant because between 30.4 per cent and 34.5 per cent of disabled people in the target provinces were engaged in employment.<sup>37</sup> This foreseen focus was relevant to the Sierra Leone Disability Act (2011)<sup>38</sup> and the COSOP 2010-2015, which included income generation for disabled people as a mitigation strategy.<sup>39</sup> Most of the war-disabled people were found to have farming backgrounds and, although the Government and NGOs provided physical, medical and social rehabilitation, there was little attention to strengthening their economic productivity. Targeting disabled people through providing support to income generation in agricultural settings was therefore relevant.
55. **Although RCPRP had an appropriate focus on development of tree crops and the rice value chain, challenges of access to finance and markets were**

<sup>33</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP. Project completion report.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/countryinfo.html> (Accessed 08.03.2018).

<sup>35</sup> Rogers, N.M., Women, May 2011. *Politics and Decision-Making in Sierra Leone*. GJDS, Vol. 8, No. 1.

<sup>36</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, September 2003. RCPRP. Draft Appraisal Report.

<sup>37</sup> Sierra Leone Statistics, Oct 2017. Population and Housing Census Thematic Report on Gender 2015.

<sup>38</sup> The Sierra Leone Disability Act (2011) established the National Commission for Persons with Disability, charged with fighting all forms of discrimination against persons with disability and ensuring the enhancement of equal opportunities for persons.

<sup>39</sup> Pilots developed for youth and disabled through income-generating activities (oil palm rehabilitation, agroprocessing, mechanized rice production).

**insufficiently included.** Cocoa and oil palm farms had been in use for many decades, but abandoned during the civil war, resulting in years of lack of management. RCPRP focused technical assistance and input provision for the development and rehabilitation of tree crop farms and the development of IVSs, supported by improving access to markets through infrastructure development and support to cooperatives and FBOs. The prior and existing need for road rehabilitation was brought up in almost every interview, equally by Government and beneficiaries.

56. However, the design of RCPRP did not sufficiently address access by smallholder farmers to rural finance or to markets (apart from road rehabilitation), which were also among the needs of the farmers. Rural finance was to be made accessible through sensitizing farmers and encouraging them to access it through another ongoing IFAD-supported project, the RFCIP I. This did not work, as discussed in detail later in the document.
57. **To conclude on relevance**, the design of RCPRP was closely aligned with the Government's development agenda and IFAD's COSOP. It maintained its relevance by adapting the project strategy to changing social, economic and political circumstances. At the outset, the PRSP was relevant to post-conflict needs, but after the MTR, the approach was rightly adapted towards longer-term development-orientation. The design recognized the profound effects of the civil war on vulnerable sections of the society, and their inclusion in specific activities was a response to this. However, the inadequate focus on financial needs of the farmers and on markets took away some of the sheen of its relevance. The PPE rates project relevance as **satisfactory (5)**.

### **Effectiveness**

58. **The RPCRP achieved little by way of planned activities in the first three years of its implementation, but the MTR in 2009 and the move to direct supervision helped it make the necessary adaptations.** After its design was finalized in 2003, RCPRP only became effective in March 2006 due to delay in the Government meeting the necessary conditions for disbursement of IFAD funds. Apart from the establishment of the project management and supervisory structure, there was very little output until the MTR. The implementation arrangement with the AfDB through the JPPCU was less successful than envisaged, expatriate staff were underperforming, and surveys and M&E frameworks had not been implemented. The MTR recommended various changes in management and design of the project, which were followed, leading to a strongly improved implementation and a jump in disbursements.
59. **The project managed to reach smallholder farmers but did not follow up sufficiently strongly with agroprocessing for small-scale entrepreneurs.** RCPRP was designed to reach the most vulnerable groups in the poorest and most food-insecure chiefdoms and wards. The geographical targeting was good, as the targeted areas had very low food-security rates. About 24,920 rural households received project services, or about 149,520 individuals, against a final target of 140,000.<sup>40</sup> Most of the farmers targeted were engaged in rice, cocoa and oil palm production and sometimes, in addition, in vegetable production. Moreover, increased attention to land tenure issues by awareness-raising and follow-up on the need for legally binding land agreements for IVSAs ensured that land access was also covered.<sup>41</sup>
60. Small-scale entrepreneurs were supposed to be reached through agroprocessing, but this was less successful. Although RCPRP positively affected the entrepreneurial capacities of the local contractors that were hired, the efforts related to agroprocessing were found to be less prominent. The RPCRP foresaw providing

<sup>40</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

<sup>41</sup> IFAD, 21 November 2016. RCPRP supervision mission, 10-21 October 2016.

small-scale, post-harvest, agroprocessing operating units, including 28 rice mills, 30 oil palm presses and 35 cassava graters.<sup>42</sup> The rice mills and oil presses were reprioritized by the MTR, but it is unclear how many have been provided and whether they are fully operational.<sup>43</sup> Only one IVS among the eight visited by the evaluation team had a rice mill provided by the RPCRP, and it was not functioning well.

61. **RCPRP sufficiently reached women as beneficiaries, but less so in training. Youth were reached in specific activities, but their inclusion as beneficiaries is not clear. The RPCRP's reach to disabled beneficiaries was insignificant.** In 2015, 28.1 per cent of households were women-headed,<sup>44</sup> and RCPRP often targeted such households to reach women, although also women from other households were reached. The project did well in reaching, on average, a level of 40 per cent of beneficiaries being women. However, it reached only a limited proportion of women with training, also as a result of low target-setting (see paragraph 150).
62. In 2011, capacity and needs assessments for youth and disabled people were conducted to develop youth and disabled action plans for the project. Support to youth and disabled groups had been included at the design stage but progress was already flagged as limited in 2012.<sup>45</sup> The assessment and action plan were not fully utilized either, due to delays with both the plan's development and the construction of youth centres.<sup>46</sup> The late development and partial implementation of the youth action plan may have led to an often ad hoc approach and a lack of mainstreaming of youth in the target group.
63. Youth were the main target group in some activities, such as support to youth centres. Moreover, 702 youth contractors were trained to support IVSs, and 6,572 young people were employed for rehabilitation of tree crops, IVSs and roads. Young people were also included as participants in IVSAs and tree crop production, but in a less systematic manner. The project envisaged half of the beneficiaries of IVS and tree crops to be young people, but exact information was not provided.
64. No partner had been engaged with a specific focus on working with people with disabilities, and no criteria had been set for actually reaching people with disabilities. Moreover, as data were not disaggregated,<sup>47</sup> the group was not tracked and probably was not included as intended in the design. Struggling with many priorities, resources were not dedicated to doing so. The evaluation only saw one example of people with disabilities participating in a youth centre.

**Objective 1: Smallholder farmers' access to irrigation, technical skills and markets is improved, and post-harvest losses are reduced.**

65. **In rice production, RCPRP was reasonably effective in increasing production and yield, but the link to markets was less successful.** RCPRP supported farmers in rice and tree crop production with training and inputs. A total of 28 farmer field schools were established, benefiting 700 farmers, which generated positive feedback from participants.

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<sup>42</sup> The team saw one oil press (which was in good condition) provided by RCPRP to a community.

<sup>43</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

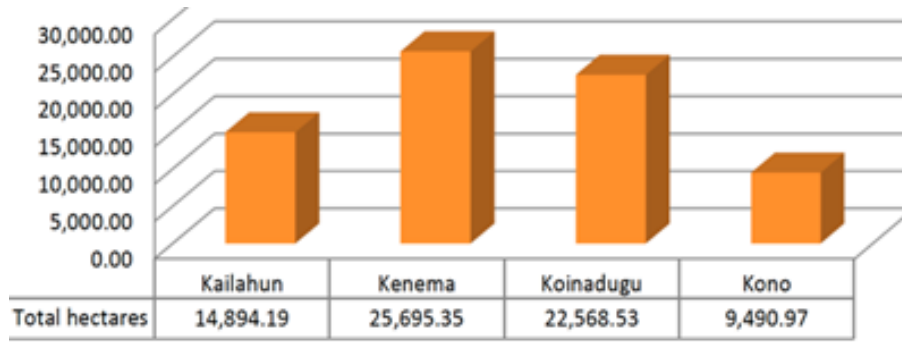
<sup>44</sup> Sierra Leone Statistics, Oct 2017. Population and Housing Census Thematic Report on Gender 2015.

<sup>45</sup> IFAD. RCPRP, Supervision mission: 04 to 19 Oct 2012.

<sup>46</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision mission, 10-21 October 2016.

<sup>47</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

Figure 1  
IVSs identified through GIS assessment in target



Source: GeoData assessment, May/June 2015.

66. In May-June 2015, an assessment was done to map the IVSs<sup>48</sup> in the target districts for support under RCPRP, as reflected in figure 1. The project had aimed to include 3,000 ha, and, almost equal to that, 2,960 ha of perennial and seasonal swamps for rice and vegetable production were rehabilitated and developed,<sup>49</sup> benefiting 8,737 farmers (exceeding the target of 6,250) with an IVSA, the majority with a land agreement in place.<sup>50</sup> Rehabilitation of IVSs was done by using local labour and subsidized tools, equipment and fertilizer.
67. The quality of the IVS rehabilitation improved from the first phase to the second phase of RCPRP.<sup>51</sup> Double and even triple cropping of rice was successfully adopted in some of the developed swamps and yields were increased, with a rice yield study<sup>52</sup> showing yields of over 3 metric tons/ha per crop cycle in project farms compared to about 1 metric ton/ha in non-project IVSs.<sup>53</sup> The seed was provided through SLARI clonal gardens, which IFAD helped to rehabilitate. The farmers agreed to repay 40 per cent of the cost upon harvest, and most of them have succeeded in doing so.
68. The project assisted in the creation of the Rice Processing and Marketing Agency (RIPMA), which was later incorporated as the Rice Processing and Marketing Company (RIPMCO) with the assistance from the Agricultural Development Fund.<sup>54</sup> However, RIPMCO was still facing difficulties in operating effectively and had a low rate of equipment operating time, which it was not able to improve independently.<sup>55</sup> Most IVSs visited by the evaluation team reported that RIPMCO had stopped collecting their rice after the end of the project, thereby affecting the offtake of their produce. Farmers were either milling their rice with local millers and then selling it themselves, or they were selling unmilled rice to intermediaries and thereby earning lower prices.

<sup>48</sup> GeoData, Sierra Leone, 2 March 2016. Final Report Identification, Delineation, Mapping and Documentation of Inland Valley Swamps in Kailahun, Kenema, Koinadugu and Kono.

<sup>49</sup> PCR and Supervision mission November 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Of the IVSAs visited by the mission, only one did not avail itself of the agreement, which was lost in a flooding, but in practice the lease continued. Some IVSAs even owned the land.

<sup>51</sup> IFAD. RCPRP. Supervision Report: 3-18 February 2014.

<sup>52</sup> IFAD, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, November 2014. Impact Assessment of IVS Rehabilitation in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu districts.

<sup>53</sup> All swamps were GPS surveyed, but measurement accuracy varied and led to discrepancies.

<sup>54</sup> Funds recovered from farmers for inputs and services were put into the Agricultural Development Fund, which was also used to capitalize the financial services associations (FSAs) and community banks (CBs) (developed under another IFAD-supported project, the RFCIP I). These associations and banks would then on-lend the funds to rural communities as loans.

<sup>55</sup> With the current business model and based on available data, RIPMCO is facing a high risk of failure. The supply of rice by the four cooperatives established by the project is a major issue due to: (i) high transportation costs; (ii) a lack of operational transport trucks and drivers; (iii) an unfavourable pricing policy between RIPMCO and the cooperatives; and (iv) insufficient operational funds of the cooperatives (PCR, paragraph 200).

Table 1  
**Activities undertaken by cocoa farmers**

Activity	RCPRP supported	
	Yes	No
Pruning	4.37	14.3
Pest and disease management	3.24	10.6
Shade management	2.06	6.8
Fermentation and drying	1.96	6.4

Source: IFAD, MAFFS, June 2015. Impact Assessment of Fairtrade Certification Scheme.

69. **The project achieved the planned support to the targeted area for cocoa and oil palm plantations. Cocoa yields went up but cooperatives face issues. The oil palms have yet to start bearing fruit.** Already by November 2016, RCPRP had reached 100 per cent of the targeted 9,000 ha of tree crops (1,000 ha for oil palm<sup>56</sup> and 8,000 ha for cacao) to be rehabilitated or replanted.<sup>57</sup> Although coffee had been included in the design, the sharp decrease in world market prices discouraged farmers from growing this crop and it was dropped. Cocoa farmers supported by the project were able to produce 434.4 kg/ha against 387.9 kg/ha for non-project farmers.<sup>58</sup> Some of the planting materials to fill the gaps in their gardens were supplied from the SLARI clonal garden, although not all. However, cocoa farmers are still struggling with diseases, especially black pod disease, which appears impossible to eradicate.
70. IFAD supported three cooperatives working in Kailahun, Kenema and Kono<sup>59</sup> with training, tools and equipment,<sup>60</sup> which contributed to their effectively operating as a group. The cocoa farmers who were trained on good agricultural practices in cocoa farming followed those much better than did non-project farmers (table 1). The cooperatives' staff acknowledged the usefulness of the training and displayed a good understanding of the concept of Fairtrade and organic production and its standards. Nonetheless, although capacity-building was the same for all cooperatives, the evaluation team observed considerable variation in the capacity of the trained staff. Moreover, the amount of cocoa beans traded by RCPRP-supported cooperatives has been decreasing every year due to non-availability of operating capital to finance purchases from farmers. Finally, dependence on only one exporter (Sierra Leone Trading) means that market power in the value chain is skewed away from farmers and their cooperatives.
71. RCPRP had provided considerable support to increasing the capacity of the SLARI to supply planting materials. Nonetheless, in 2016, the commitment of many SLARI staff at Pendembu was found to be below standard, and there was little evidence of proper maintenance of the garden where cocoa plants were grown.<sup>61,62</sup> Moreover, there was doubt about the planting material, which had been introduced in 1977 and should be replaced by more modern versions.<sup>63</sup>
72. The planting material for oil palms sourced from Njala University was of the Dura variety instead of the expected Tenera hybrid variety. Dura palms usually produce

<sup>56</sup> 400 ha for Koinadugu, as no cocoa farms were implemented here; 200 ha for the other districts.

<sup>57</sup> 1,100 ha oil palm with 1,100 households involved; almost 8,000 ha of cocoa with 4,500 households.

<sup>58</sup> IFAD, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, January 2016. Cocoa Yield Study Report.

<sup>59</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, June 2015. Impact Assessment of Fairtrade Certification Scheme.

<sup>60</sup> RCPRP provided tools, good agricultural practice (GAP) demonstration farms, payment for nursery work, administration costs, office items, bicycles, furniture, computers and training on agronomics, bookkeeping and the Gender Action Learning System (GALS).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

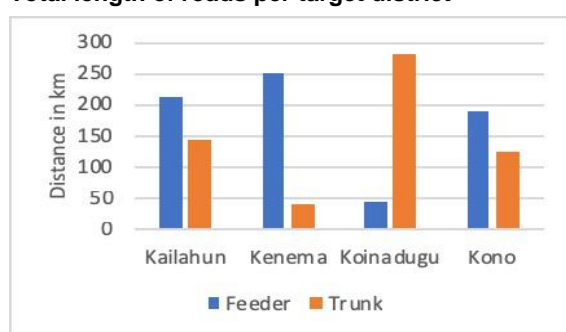
<sup>62</sup> The evaluation team had the same impression and visited a site that was reportedly without water and electricity and with only a fraction of the staff in place, compared to actual needs.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

25 per cent less yield and oil, and so the yields may be affected. Maturing of palm trees takes five years, and although the farmers had a positive outlook, the trees will not bear fruit until 2020, after which the farmers are expected to repay the 20 per cent. The palm plantations visited by the team were in good shape, and the farmers expected no particular issues before the start of harvest.

73. **The project achieved road rehabilitation roads as per the plan, and this was seen as essential for transport, travel, reaching decentralized institutions and selling produce** (figure 2). RCPRP contributed to improved access on 686 km of feeder roads and 599 km of trunk roads (86 per cent of the target of 1,500 km in total), and tools were provided and structures put in place for maintenance. Road rehabilitation started in 2009, and the average cost was US\$10,590 per kilometre. As per the supervision mission of 2012, this was much lower than the cost per kilometre in some of the other donor-funded projects, where the norm was US\$20,000 per kilometre.

Figure 2  
Total length of roads per target district



Source: PCR; NPCU database.

74. The roads were essential for linkage to markets as well as for reaching decentralized institutions, and the construction was done effectively. One reason was the clear criteria set for site selection.<sup>64</sup> Thus, contractor selection was also done transparently through tendering. Although the feedback was mostly positive, one district council commented that they had struggled to resolve issues with the contractors, who saw IFAD as their employer and did not consider themselves responsible to the council, unlike as expected in the project design.
75. As for quality of the roads, in 2015, an impact assessment revealed that 80.6 per cent of those surveyed were very satisfied with the general condition of the roads.<sup>65,66</sup> Road construction had provided employment for local communities and contractors, and had helped in building contractors' capacity,<sup>67</sup> making it easier for them to embark on building projects later.
76. A better and increased commitment of the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) was observed. In 2013, the SLRA had been provided with motorbikes and allowances, and buildings in Kono and Kailahun Districts were rehabilitated. The evaluation team observed that the SLRA is well aware of the condition of roads and committed to live up to its mandate, but struggles with obtaining the necessary funding from the central level.

<sup>64</sup> These included: (i) overall road conditions in the district; (ii) linking production areas and markets; (iii) physical access to financial and social services; (iv) connection between two different administrative/traditional units; and (v) link/connection to the road backbone (trunk road).

<sup>65</sup> NPCU, MAFFS, February 2015. Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Roads in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu Districts.

<sup>66</sup> However, the 2016 supervision mission found that the rehabilitated roads visited in Kenema District were of good quality, but voiced serious doubts on the quality of feeder-road rehabilitation works in Kono and Koinadugu Districts.

<sup>67</sup> NPCU, MAFFS, February 2015. Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Roads in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu Districts.



77. **The effectiveness under GEF was limited, which also reflected a lack of improved access to irrigation.** Improved access to irrigation, which was foreseen under component 1, hardly materialized. Most of this irrigation was to be achieved under the Integrated Water and Natural Resource Management GEF grant. However, GEF was not very effective in its implementation overall. Possibly as a result of design flaws combined with lack of maintenance, only one out of the four dams built remained operational. Roof rainfall-harvesting activities had been underperforming and already discontinued at an earlier point in time. Under the Sustainable Development of Climate Resilient IVS, extension workers were trained as per plan, but other activities were only partly implemented,<sup>68</sup> and some were not implemented at all.<sup>69</sup> Under Capacity Building and Awareness Raising of Climate Change at Institutional and Local Level, GEF performed well when it came to awareness-raising on what climate is (including through radio) but less so on activities related to weather stations and certification of three Meteorological Department staff.<sup>70</sup> The evaluation observed that, possibly as a result, data from weather stations were not regularly collected, submitted or used.

**Objective 2: Provide support to community development and decentralization**

78. **Capacity-building of the various targeted local institutions had been received well, but budget shortages and a lack of ongoing capacity-building hamper the staff in their efforts to implement their operations effectively.** Under the project, capacity-building took place in the form of training and technical assistance (including for LCs, youth councils and DAOs) as well as provision of buildings, logistics and equipment to the various groups. One of the constraints mentioned by all local institutions' staff was staff turnover; as there was no system to enable continuous capacity-building of (new) staff, they faced a continuous capacity drainage. The project helped develop a coordination framework, but this did not work equally well in all district councils.
79. District councils were supported with one vehicle and four motorbikes each, office equipment, furniture and a V-SAT Internet connection. At ward level, offices were supported beyond the project area.<sup>71</sup> Functioning of the wards offices was reported to vary with the level of activity of the ward councillor. The evaluation team found most of them functioned well. This observation was confirmed by 60 per cent of households in the project communities knowing about the councils' annual budget, against about 23 per cent of households in other communities.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, district councils as well as ward committees remain limited in their operation by a lack of budget.<sup>73</sup> This has adverse effects for RCPRP's end-beneficiaries as their needs cannot be or are only partly funded through the district development plans.
80. The decentralized agriculture offices or DAOs were provided with two new office buildings and one vehicle, and four motorbikes for each district to improve their reach to farmers. DAO officers found that the support had not only enhanced their service delivery, but also their contribution to the agricultural sector in general.<sup>74</sup> Given the lack of regular visits by extension staff to the farms, this was a significant development.
81. **RCPRP introduced an innovative cadastral system to collect taxes, which is slowly gaining ground.** The Revenue Mobilization Project was piloted under

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<sup>68</sup> Local study tours and procurement of participatory mapping equipment were implemented for 50 per cent, and consultations with local communities and farmer field school training for 33 per cent.

<sup>69</sup> Development of user-friendly tools to disseminate agrometeorological (agromet) data and the integration of agromet data in decision-making at community level.

<sup>70</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

<sup>71</sup> A total of 226 offices (target: 294) were built (four of them equipped with solar power) and 1,060 (target: 1,166) ward committee members (50 per cent female) were trained and equipped with bicycles.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> IFAD. RCPRP. Supervision Report: 3-18 February 2014.

<sup>74</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision mission, 10-21 October 2016.

RCPRP and cadastral survey software. Training and logistics support were provided to four district councils to enable them to set up a property tax and business register. The objective was to help them source their own revenue, which would be used for development work in communities. The councils managed to generate 40-50 per cent<sup>75</sup> of their own source revenue through the system in 2015.<sup>76</sup> However, structural tax payment is still relatively new, and this shift in culture will also need time.<sup>77</sup>

82. **To conclude on effectiveness**, the RPCRP started its actual achievements against plans after adaptations had been made, based on the 2009 MTR, which put the project on its course. RCPRP was effective in increasing rice production and yields, and achieved the planned support to the targeted area for cocoa and oil palm plantations. The project completed road rehabilitation roads as per plan, and the good condition of these roads was seen as essential for transport, travel, reaching decentralized institutions and selling produce. Most capacity-building-related targets were met, and the targeted local institutions had received the activities well. Market linkages, especially for the rice farmers and agroprocessing for small-scale entrepreneurs, were less strongly pursued.
83. Even if there was no structural approach for engaging youth, they did benefit from their engagement as youth contractors and in support to youth centres. The effectiveness under GEF was limited, which also reflected a lack of improved access to irrigation through an integrated water system approach. Nonetheless, it was perceived that in reviving production of rice and cocoa, the two commodities that are the fulcrum of agriculture and rural development in Sierra Leone, the project played a significant role. The evaluation rates effectiveness as **satisfactory (5)**.

#### **Efficiency**

84. Efficiency is a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
85. **Time efficiency.** One dimension of efficiency is the minimization of delays between the legal and administrative steps needed to make a project effective. There was delay in RCPRP starting after the Project Loan Agreement had been signed in February 2004. The project only became effective in March 2006, due to delay in the Government of Sierra Leone meeting the necessary conditions for IFAD funds to be disbursed. Moreover, implementing agency agreements were not executed on schedule because the required "no objection" clearances were not issued by the AfDB, the supervising entity, in time for project management to proceed with hiring implementing partners. The first disbursement was made 36 months after the project's approval. Table 2 shows the time taken under the different stages from approval to first disbursement.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Kenema, SLL 350 million; Kono, SLL 150 million; Koinadugu, SLL 120 million; and Kailahun, SLL 76 million.

<sup>77</sup> Another reason for the lack of optimal functioning of the tax collection system was power dynamics with paramount chiefs. Chiefs are the heads of chiefdoms (wards consist of various chiefdoms) and, before decentralization, used to collect taxes and take the decisions that are now under the district council.

Table 2

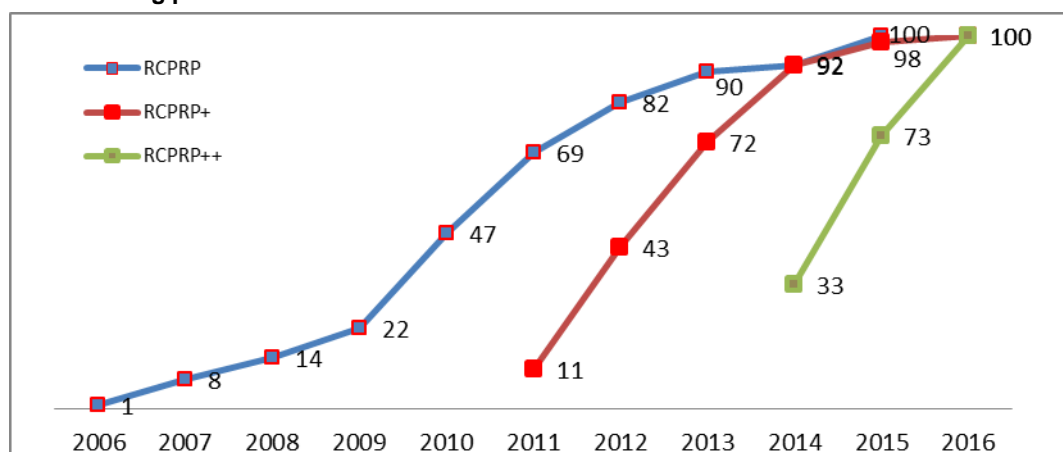
**Timeline between approval and first disbursement (months)**

	Approval to signing	Signing to effectiveness / entry into force	Approval to effectiveness / entry into force	Effectiveness to first disbursement	Approval to first disbursement
RCPRP	2.1	24.7	26.8	9.5	36.3

Source: IFAD Flexcube.

86. At the end of the first phase, additional financing was provided for a second phase, with an initial revised completion date of 31 March 2016. Then, with the disruption of project activities as a result of the Ebola virus disease epidemic, a no-cost extension of 12 months was granted until 31 March 2017. However, this meant that an annual payroll of about US\$400,000 for about 40 staff had to be sustained even when there were no ongoing field activities.
87. **Disbursement performance.** As mentioned in section IIB of this report, the project received total financing of US\$50.7 million in three tranches. The first tranche of US\$8.5 million covered the period 2006-2011, the second tranche of US\$21.4 million covered the follow-on RCPRP+ from 2011 to 2016, and a final top-up of US\$13 million (RCPRP++) was provided in 2012 for the expansion of certain outputs of RCPRP+. The disbursement rates of the three tranches were varied (figure 3). While the tranches that covered the period from project mid-term onward were quick to disburse, the first tranche was extremely slow. The reasons for the latter were mainly related to the project's implementation structure and project management (discussed in detail below). In the end, the project was able to disburse 100 per cent of all the three tranches from IFAD.

Figure 3

**Disbursement rates of IFAD and GEF funds for RCPCP (2006-2016): percentage disbursed by year and financing phase**

Source: IFAD Flexcube.

88. However, although the IFAD loans and grants were fully disbursed, overall, RCPRP was able to disburse only 91 per cent of the total funds; this is because the Government's own contribution was below the pledged amount (table 3).<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> According to the NPCU, the computation for duties on vehicles, fertilizers, etc. is not included in computing the Government's contribution because these figures are not available.

Table 3  
**Status of financing plan and actuals**

	<i>Initial IFAD financing</i>	<i>Supplementary financing</i>		<i>Additional supplementary financing</i>		<i>GEF</i>	<i>Domestic</i>		<i>Total</i>
Effective from	March 2006	January 2011	January 2011	January 2013	January 2013	March 2012			
Financing source	IFAD loan 619	IFAD loan 619-A	IFAD grant 8074	IFAD loan 619-B	IFAD grant 8074-A	GEF grant	Government	Beneficiaries.	
Pledges (US\$ million)	8.5	10.7	10.7	6.5	6.5	2.6	4.1	1.1	50.7
Actual (US\$ million)	9.0	10.7	10.7	6.0	6.0	2.6	1.269	-	46.3
Exchange gain	0.53	-	-	(0.47)	(0.47)	-			(0.41)
% disbursed, SDR terms (GEF in US\$)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	31%	0	91.20%

Source: PCR with additional data collected during IOE mission.

89. **Cost efficiency.** Compared to appraisal allocations, costs of managing the programme were higher than anticipated – 170 per cent overrun – and overall, project management costs were close to 30 per cent of the project cost. The high cost of expatriate staff members who headed the JPPCU in the initial years led to overexpenditure of the salary budget in the early years. The change in management structure, i.e. the decentralization of the project management by the creation of an NPCU, to replace the JPPCU as the main project-coordinating organ, and the DPCU, came with additional salary and operation costs. The payroll increased to about US\$400,000 per year compared to an estimate for personnel of US\$29,000.
90. **Financial management.** The project had a high turnover in terms of financial controllers; five office holders occupied the position from the time of project's entry into force until its closing. Moreover, the evaluation notes that the project was not consistent in the management of the FIFO exchange rate and lost some funds (in the region of US\$50,000).
91. As per the PCR, the procurement processes and procedures were handled effectively for the most part, and followed the proper process line from issuing of bidding documents to receipt of bids, evaluation, award and signature. Procurement practices were consistent with the IFAD Procurement Guidelines, the IFAD Procurement Handbook and – as applicable – the Sierra Leone Procurement legal framework (the Act, Regulations and Manual) and the World Bank Procurement Guidelines (used for international competitive bidding). After the merger of the NPCU and project management unit for the Smallholder Commercialization Programme Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (SCP-GAFSP), the three IFAD-funded or –supervised projects (RCPRP, RFCIP2 and the SCP-GAFSP) were managed by one procurement unit, thereby increasing efficiency by sharing knowledge and lessons learned among the staff and exchanging expertise and information.
92. **Cost per beneficiary.** The RCRCP reached an estimated total number of 24,920 rural households, i.e. about 149,520 individuals, against an initial target of 20,000 households at design, i.e. about 120,000 individuals. Given the project costs at closing to be US\$50 million, the cost per beneficiary works out to US\$334. However, as funding was substantially increased during the project's lifespan, it is inappropriate to calculate the cost per beneficiary at project design for comparison purposes. Given that the final management costs vastly exceeded their initial allocation, overall benefits to the households could have been higher if the programme had spent more on investment activities rather than on staff salaries.

93. **Internal rate of return.** In the design of RCPRP and all the successive supplementary financings, there was no computation of the internal rate of return (IRR). However, the PCR undertook an extensive calculation of the IRR. The computation was supported by financial models based on: (i) cocoa; (ii) New Rice for Africa (NERICA); (iii) paddy rice; (iv) greenhouse technology; (v) open fields with microcatchment treatment; (vi) transport efficiency gains from the feeder road rehabilitation; and (vii) employment benefits from feeder road works. Table 4 shows the calculation of IRR related to agriculture.
94. Based on the computation of the above seven models, the PCR calculates IRR at 25 per cent, i.e. investments in the project have been profitable.

Table 4

**Summary of household income from rehabilitation / enhanced agriculture production**

<i>Crop model</i>	<i>Increase in income per unit (SLL 000)</i>	<i>Average farm size</i>	<i>Household income</i>	<i>Net present value (SLL 000)</i>	<i>IRR</i>	<i>Benefit/cost</i>
Cocoa	4 944	1.7	8 404	3 539	27%	2.26
NERICA rice	5 012	4.12	20 650	6 246	33%	1.38
Paddy rice	3 186	4.12	13128	1 510	24%	1.22
Greenhouses	1 290		1 290	1 802	31%	1.42
Catchment areas	798		798	234	22%	1.19

Source: PCR.

95. **To conclude on efficiency,** RCPRP witnessed a lag of 36 months from approval to first disbursement. Actual management costs exceeded the estimates due to a change in management structure, the decentralization of the project and a one-year no-cost extension. RCPRP had eight financing sources, and while all the external financing sources were 100 per cent disbursed, shortfalls in Government and beneficiary contributions resulted in overall disbursements of 90 per cent. The project also witnessed a high turnover of financial controllers. Procurement largely followed the prescribed procedures. The IRR for the overall RCPRP at completion stood at a healthy 25 per cent. The evaluation rates efficiency as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

**Rural poverty impact**

96. The progress at impact level is described below and has been broken down into specific impact areas. The quantitative results have been largely derived from the impact assessment study carried out by the project management unit in 2017; limitations of the study were mentioned earlier in the document. The expected pathway to increased incomes and assets, as the final objective, was through increased production and productivity and improved market access (enhanced road connectivity and linkages to cooperatives to final buyers).

**Household incomes and assets**

97. **There were positive effects on incomes and assets, and these were based on an improved quality and quantity of production in rice and cocoa, through the adoption of good agronomic practices. Linkages to markets had slightly improved, but not sufficiently to allow farmers to reach their full income potential.** In crop production, RCPRP was able to help farmers increase their income by making use of rehabilitated land, increasing productivity and improving yields. In the outcome assessment, the average monthly income per household for project participants was SLL 9,865,501, while that of farmers not supported by the project was SLL 4,727,165.<sup>79</sup> Project-supported households were

<sup>79</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, December 2016. Assessment of Outcome Indicators in the GEF Project.

found to use 42 per cent of their total expenditure on food, while for non-project supported households the share was 58 per cent. During the evaluation, without leading questions, some farmers shared that they had increased their incomes sufficiently to enable investment in their children's education and family health bills.

98. In the IVSs, smallholder farmers managed to increase their production, yield and income, helped by the distribution of better-quality seed rice, tools, fertilizers and cash-for-labour. Technical, management and business skills training were provided to service providers, IVSA and FBOs, which contributed to using better agronomic practices. Some of the IVS farmers were reported to have grown from being subsistence farming to commercial farmers. Previously, the farmers were said to sell their produce to buy rice, but now they eat their own rice and still have enough produce to sell for an income. A number of IVSA members were also able to diversify their livelihoods, for example, by shopkeeping and tailoring.
99. As for assets, the 2017 impact assessment<sup>80</sup> measured a 17.1 per cent increase in household asset ownership among RCPRP beneficiaries, against a target of 20 per cent (mainly for motorcycles, radios, watches and mobile phones).
100. Linkages to market were to be strengthened through agriculture business centres (ABCs) and RIMPCO. However, only a limited proportion of farmers had access to ABCs, and most rice farmers reported that RIMPCO no longer came to collect their produce. As a result, they were mostly confined to selling to the retail market or intermediaries at less favourable prices. For cocoa, cooperatives supported under RCPRP reported that they were recognized as an organization and able to sell at higher prices; most of them obtained a Fairtrade certificate, which enabled them to sell at a set premium. Some of them also obtained a certificate for organic production, with an even higher premium. However, they are still facing challenges in finding new markets, and they do not have access to liquidity/credit to buy large volumes of produce from their members. Moreover, no long-term linkages and partnerships were established with traders or private-sector players to do business on a sustainable basis.
101. **Roads rehabilitated by the project were perceived as a major enabler to improved incomes and access to services from decentralized institutions and banks.** The rehabilitation of feeder roads and trunk roads was perceived to facilitate major impact by many different respondents. Staff from ward committees, district councils and DAOs confirmed the contribution of better roads to the Government's ability to provide development support. RCPRP beneficiaries and others reflected various forms of impact. Already in 2015, 66.8 per cent of the respondents reported increased access to markets outside of their communities after the roads had been rehabilitated. Some 80 per cent reported reduced travelling time across communities (among others, to local authorities), and almost half of the respondents reported increased road access to financial services associations (FSAs) and CBs.<sup>81</sup>
102. One indirect and off-farm effect of RCPRP was on the livelihoods of young people who transported passengers on their motorcycles. Those interviewed described that transporting the produce had become much easier for farmers and, hence, their access to markets was better. Not only did the better condition of the roads positively affect the time needed for transporting the goods,<sup>82</sup> but hiring transport for goods became cheaper, and hence profits higher. The road impact assessment reported that average transportation costs across beneficiary communities per

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<sup>80</sup> IFAD, GEF, GASFP, October 2017, RCPRP & GEF Project: Integrating Adaptation to Climate Change into Agricultural Production and Food Security in Sierra Leone. Final Project Impact Evaluation Report for RCPRP.

<sup>81</sup> NPCU, MAFFS, February 2015. Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Roads in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu Districts.

<sup>82</sup> In one case, an improvement was reported of from 11 hours to 1.5 hours to reach the market.



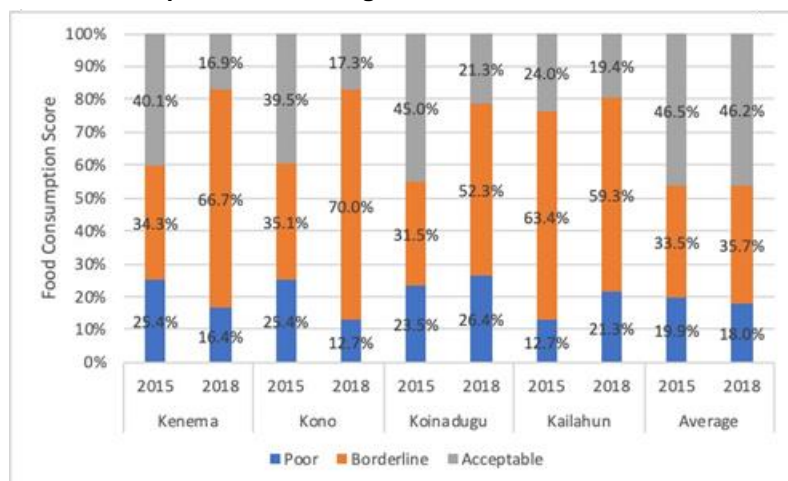
person on a motorbike had decreased from SLL 13,126 to SLL 9,680 after rehabilitation.<sup>83</sup>

### Food security and agricultural productivity

103. **Agricultural productivity increased in most IVSs, leading to more food available and higher sales, but yields were now decreasing.** Following the IVS intervention, many of the farmer groups surveyed were utilizing their swamps intermittently all year round and cultivating the swamps two times or even three times per year with rice, tubers and vegetables. At the time of the mission, farmers were still positive, but they had to rely on their own seed multiplication, and some reported a lack of access to, or a lack of money for, good fertilizer, potentially limiting their profit. This had resulted in yields starting to decrease.
104. IFAD supported rehabilitating 8,000 ha of cocoa plantation. In 2015, farmers were already able to harvest from their new trees and reportedly happy with the result.<sup>84</sup> In an assessment in 2015,<sup>85</sup> 81 per cent of cocoa farmers had improved their agronomic practices, 45 per cent of farmers had increased the quality of their cocoa bean production, and 60 per cent had improved their productivity. A yield assessment found that, for RCPRP-supported cocoa growers, the average yield for the three districts was 818.1 kg/ha, against 605.5 kg/ha for other farmers. The average production increase was 38.7 per cent for RCPRP-supported farmers, against 12.8 per cent for other farmers.<sup>86</sup>
105. **The proportion of food-secure people was higher in project areas, but attribution cannot fully be ascertained and the goal was not fully achieved. It is unlikely that RCPRP contributed to a change in nutrition status.** Regarding food security, the PCR reports that, at baseline, the proportion of food-secure people in the target districts was 55 per cent, and at the end of the project it was 50 per cent – which means the targeted increase of 20 per cent had not been achieved. The PCR reported that 38 per cent of the chiefdoms benefiting from project actions were found to be food secure<sup>87</sup> against a target of 25 per cent.<sup>88</sup>

Figure 4

**Food consumption score in target districts and at national level**



Source: CFSVA 2015 and WFP Food Security Monitoring Report 2018.

<sup>83</sup> NPCU, MAFFS, February 2015. Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Roads in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu Districts.

<sup>84</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision mission, 10-21 October 2016.

<sup>85</sup> IFAD, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, June 2015. Impact Assessment of Fairtrade Certification Scheme.

<sup>86</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, January 2016. Cocoa Yield Study Report.

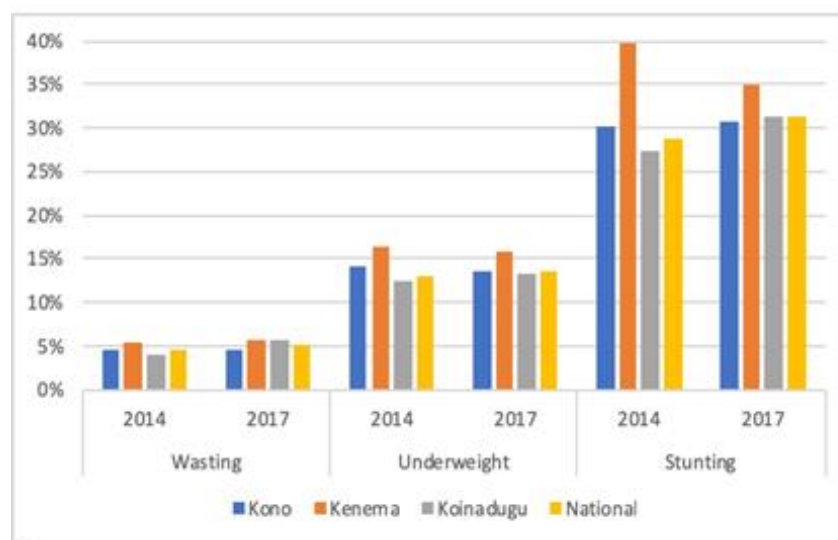
<sup>87</sup> Defined as “able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical coping strategies.”

<sup>88</sup> Based on the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment 2015 joint publication by the Government of Sierra Leone, the World Food Programme (WFP), International Development Association, FAO and AfDB.

106. Upon studying food consumption scores (FCSs) from the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis as well as the food security monitoring report 2018 of the World Food Programme (WFP),<sup>89</sup> figure 4 was developed. A closer study of this chart reveals that the outcomes are ambiguous. At the nationwide level, the FCS levels hardly changed between 2015 and 2018. In Kenema and Kono, more people than average moved up from a poor to an average FCS, but also more moved down from an average to an acceptable FCS. In Koinadugu and Kailahun, more people had a poor FCS in 2018 than in 2015, and fewer had an acceptable score. This means that in none of the four areas was a clear improvement achieved in the FCSs. Therefore, the evaluation finds that the impact of the project on food security is lower than planned, and that the change is difficult to attribute to RCPRP implementation.
107. Based on data from Sierra Leone nutrition surveys,<sup>90</sup> the prevalence of malnutrition fell considerably from 2008 to 2014, but the trend changes between 2014 and 2017. For example, stunting (height for age) fell from 36.0 per cent (2008) to 28.8 per cent (2014) but increased again to 31.3 per cent in 2017. Figure 5 demonstrates the changes between 2014 and 2017 for three of the project districts compared with the national level.<sup>91</sup> It appears that the indicators in the project areas are more or less similar (on average) if compared to the national level. In particular, the stunting rate (an indicator for chronic malnutrition) remains worrying; the World Health Organization classifies a stunting rate of higher than 30 per cent as very high.<sup>92</sup>

Figure 5

**Wasting, underweight and stunting rates for three target districts and at national level**



Source: Sierra Leone National Nutrition Survey 2014 and 2018.

<sup>89</sup> WFP, September 2018. Sierra Leone Food Security Monitoring Report.

<sup>90</sup> Government of Sierra Leone, Irish Aid, UNICEF, 30 June-14 August 2014. Sierra Leone National Nutrition Survey 2008, 2014 and 2017.

<sup>91</sup> Kailahun District was excluded in 2014 because it was the first district affected in the Ebola outbreak and under blockade by the time the survey started.

<sup>92</sup> [https://www.who.int/nutrition/nlis\\_interpretation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.who.int/nutrition/nlis_interpretation_guide.pdf) (Accessed 28.03.2019).

108. Apart from stunting in Kenema District, the nutrition indicators in RCPRP have not improved more strongly than average. This is not unexpected, because although the RCPRP had included the indicator “percentage reduction in the prevalence of child malnutrition”, its design did not include any nutrition-specific activities. Some impact on the nutrition status may have been achieved by affecting food diversity through the increased production of vegetables and related potential dietary diversity, and indirectly by an increase in income and food security, but that effect is only small.

### **Human capital, social capital and empowerment**

109. **Training of members of youth centres improved their skills and enabled them to act as a group to access their rights.** Young people want to work in agriculture, but many do not have sufficient skills for mechanized farming. Therefore, they remain limited to subsistence farming, which is less attractive as the income potential is low and the work hard. The support to youth centres helped young people engage together in agriculture. Whereas previously they had no building for their activities, now they have a place to gather. Not only do they use this building for revenue creation by renting it out; the building (in combination with training provided by the project) has also facilitated their developing proposals for external funding and allowed them to gather and jointly advocate for their priorities to be addressed. These priorities reportedly include political participation and access to justice.
110. Young people benefited from being selected to work in certain activities, such as road construction. This provided employment opportunities for young labourers, which gave them access to a temporary income.<sup>93</sup> They were taught additional skills and gained experience to apply for future jobs. The capacity-building of SLARI indirectly provided opportunities for young people wanting to be engaged in agriculture, and linking them to communities, as they have many students in their programme.
111. **The training of RCPRP on different topics helped create a strong human asset base, especially as regards farmers’ production and cooperatives’ business management.** Training of farmers on group and conflict management helped them to act collectively in production and (to a lesser extent) in sales of produce. Agriculture technical training contributed to rice and cocoa farmers using good agricultural practices. Rice farmers operate as a group in IVSAs and were trained on issues such as group dynamics and conflict management, and they work together and communicate on a regular basis. In many places, there was a tendency to sell individually, but women in particular preferred to operate as a group, by dividing tasks and designating one person to sell the rice for all.
112. Training of cooperatives was useful for improving business management, obtaining certificates and engaging in Fairtrade and organic production with better and more reliable income. All RCPRP-supported cooperatives were now engaged in Fairtrade production, and although they still faced constraints, it looked as if they kept their records well, and the capacity-building had brought their quality to a higher level. Finally, training of district and ward council staff contributed to their more effective management and becoming engaged in generating revenues.

### **Institutions and policies**

113. **RCPRP contributed to the building of various institutions at the decentralized level, which included addressing their most basic needs and helping them in generating income.** The building infrastructure for ward councils has helped them in operating efficiently and effectively – prior to RCPRP, ward committees did not have any structure at their disposal where they could

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<sup>93</sup> NPCU, MAFFS, February 2015. Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Roads in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu Districts.

gather and discuss their issues. Notwithstanding decentralization still being in a fledgling state and funding from central government limited, ward committee members already found their position strengthened and their contribution to decision-making improving; being able to meet in a well-equipped place was found to better enable that process.

114. District councils were found to be more mobile and better equipped, and they could work more efficiently with the equipment and support provided by RCPRP. Two out of four district councils (Kono and Koinadugu) have been able to use their cadastral system for income generation in an effective manner (the other two less so)<sup>94</sup> as a result of tailored RCPRP support. The councils have used the income to fund projects in the taxpaying communities and operation of ward committees, including installing public toilets, rehabilitation of school buildings and youth centres, and construction of passenger sheds. These district councils were positive about the working of the system, but they did not know yet how to achieve full access to and ownership of the system, an issue that IFAD is currently addressing.
115. DAOs had also received transport means and equipment, and as a result their capacity at district level had improved. However, at the field level, DAOs felt that their effective operation, notwithstanding the better district capacity, was severely hampered by the lack of skilled extensionists. Moreover, extensionists often do not have means of transport or shelter in the areas where they work. RCPRP farmers confirmed that access to extensionists was very limited, especially regarding rice-related matters.
116. Youth councils, equally provided with structures, equipment and training, reported stronger performance and better access to revenues and funding, based on project support in developing business plans. Additional income was derived through renting out their premises as well as making use of their skills to develop and submit proposals to external funders.
117. **RCPRP successfully supported the establishment of FBOs and IVSAs. The cooperatives were demonstrating some good results, even if they also faced challenges, but RIPMCO still has a low impact.** With regard to field-level institutions for beneficiaries, the project helped create a number of them where they had not existed previously, such as FBOs and IVSAs. The evaluation found those groups working well and relatively cohesive.
118. The project also supported the strengthening of existing institutions such as cocoa cooperatives and RIPMCO. Most cocoa cooperatives appeared better able to link to markets, but they were also struggling with sales-related issues. They face strong competition in cocoa supply, and externally fixed prices, while their margin is small; the yearly certification cost takes up half of the premium. Any unfavourable price or quantity change is therefore a threat. Moreover, notwithstanding recommendations to broaden the group of buyers for export,<sup>95</sup> the cooperatives still depend on one buyer, the Kaigoma Company.<sup>96</sup>
119. Towards the end of the project, RIPMA was transformed into RIPMCO, a new private company, with an estimated initial equity of SLL 1 billion. To accomplish this, a transfer of SLL 842,657,000 from the Agricultural Development Fund was needed. The transformation was done against the recommendation of the October-November 2015 supervision mission,<sup>97</sup> to halt further investment of resources into RIPMA until an appropriate business plan had been presented; the 2016 supervision mission also repeated that recommendation.<sup>98</sup> RIPMCO is now struggling with its operations and outreach to farmers; its impact in the rice market

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<sup>94</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP. Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP. Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

<sup>97</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone. Aide Memoire. Supervision Mission. 22 October-12 November 2015.

<sup>98</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision Report, 10-21 October 2016.

was found to be still low due to, among others, its difficulties in creating strong links with farmers, FBOs and cooperatives, and a low rate of equipment operating time.

120. At a policy level, RCPRP was able to influence the road maintenance administration fund to include feeder roads. Earlier, the fund was only for maintenance of trunk roads but was now expanded to include feeder roads, a move that will help RCPRP beneficiaries.
121. **To conclude on for rural poverty impact**, RCPRP had a positive impact on the beneficiaries' incomes and assets. This was mainly a result of adoption of good agronomic practices, which resulted in productivity increases in most IVSs and cocoa plantations. For a country with serious infrastructure constraints, rehabilitation of roads had an immediate effect in terms of increased access to markets and reduced travelling time and cost to communities. Besides productivity, the project's contribution to increased capacities of people and institutions was noteworthy. The training of RCPRP on different topics helped create a strong human asset base, and addressing the most basic needs of decentralized institutions such as buildings and equipment created functioning institutions for the rural population. However, it is unclear whether RCPRP contributed to a change in nutrition status. Access to markets had slightly improved, but not sufficiently to allow both rice and cocoa farmers to reach their full income potential. The evaluation rates rural poverty impact as **satisfactory (5)**.

### **Sustainability of benefits**

122. **Economic sustainability. Most farmers and their organizations were still engaged in project-induced activities, and although the profit and yield were slowly decreasing, these were still above the pre-project rates.** The beneficiaries were still growing rice and tree crops and, in most cases, still earning more income than before. The roads, even if maintenance is an issue, are still of sufficient quality to reduce the cost of bringing the goods to market. Moreover, the loan recovery system, where the farmers repaid 40 per cent of the cost of inputs into the Agricultural Development Fund, also allows other farmers to benefit from the same funds in future.
123. After RCPRP closed, most contractors ended their services as well, and the evaluation found only a few of them still engaged. Moreover, the services of Government, such as agricultural extension, were far less available than had been hoped for at the design stage. Still, the evaluation, as other missions,<sup>99</sup> found that most beneficiaries had been able to continue the activities that they had started under the project and are likely to continue doing so.
124. Nonetheless, there are also threats to sustainability. Not all IVSAs are sufficiently strong yet to ensure maintenance of the swamp in the long run. One reason is that without sufficient equipment such as power tillers, rice haulers and threshers, it is difficult to maintain high production.
125. One of the greatest challenges to sustaining incomes will be the affordability and availability of inputs. Yields were reported as decreased to the evaluation team – as the NERICA rice seeds are no longer subsidized, not only do farmers find the improved type of seed very expensive, it is also hard or even impossible to find. The Government was reported not to have been able to establish sufficient seed growers, and the quantity of seed produced by SLARI is far too small. Fertilizer was frequently found an equal cost impediment, and often not available either. The Ministry of Agriculture has discontinued the provision of fertilizers against in-kind payment in rice after harvest, and the private sector has not been able to make the necessary quantity available yet.

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<sup>99</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision Report, 10-21 October 2016.

126. Another equally strong challenge to sustainability of incomes is the low performance of RIMPCO regarding purchases of rice, as explained above. Cocoa cooperatives were found to still be operational and able to cover operational costs, although there were also challenges. Some of the previous buyers did not wish to engage with the cooperatives any longer without the project supporting them. Although the demand for cocoa still looks promising, especially for Fairtrade and organic cocoa, the cost of the certificates is an important impediment.
127. **Access to suitable finance opportunities was a constraint for many target groups to keep their business profitable and sustainable.** Limited access to finance has hampered all target groups in terms of the impact and sustainability of their activities. The IVSAs and FBOs and their members in most cases had not been able to access loans for their operations from the IFAD-supported CBs and FSAs, or from commercial banks. In 2014, less than 5 per cent of households could access credit from the IFAD-initiated FSAs,<sup>100</sup> and the evaluation mission also found very few farmers with access to finance. As a result, farmers were often unable to expand their production, or buy the equipment to do so; even buying fertilizer or improved seeds at the right moment was a problem. Not only was obtaining a loan per se a problem, most of the financial products are not suitable to the seasonal character of farming. Young people rarely obtain a loan, and the FSAs are not interesting to them, as they have to deposit 25 per cent of the loan value in shares before they can obtain a loan, which is money they do not have.
128. As for cocoa production, the amounts of cocoa beans traded was seen as decreasing each year, due to non-availability of operating capital to finance sizeable purchases from farmers.<sup>101</sup> Cocoa cooperatives and RIMPCO faced a similar problem, as they would need to increase their business size considerably to make it economically viable, but again they could not obtain loans to do so.
129. **Institutional sustainability. Sustainability of institutions is still fragile, threatened by a lack of funding from central government and staff turnover; income generation through youth centres and cadastral systems provides some relief.** Institutional capacity-building by the project fully matched the local context and ownership. For example, youth centres were handed over after construction to the district youth councils, which have now assumed full responsibility. There are indications that the youth centres have become a successful, self-sustaining investment by the project, also because they are able to generate a certain level of income.
130. In order to obtain continuous benefit from RCPRP's capacity-building, decentralized institutions depend on funds from the central government. However, such allocations often come late or are not forthcoming at all. Although the funding situation was reported to have slightly improved, it is still a major impediment, not only to address needs brought up by the community, but also for issues such as staff salaries, fuel for cars, and refresher training. District councils reflected a level of funding as low as 20 per cent of their needs. Therefore, without the contribution of the project, there will be insufficient operational funds available to continue the services and conduct maintenance.
131. The evaluation notes that revenue collection by the district councils is sustainable even if it only covers part of the needs. However, the unwillingness of community members to pay taxes and of paramount chiefs to transfer taxes constrains the realizing of benefits from the cadastral system.
132. SLARI, which operates under MAFFS, is also hampered in the provision of its services by funding shortages. Some of its field offices are heavily understaffed, and lack water and electricity. As a result, some nurseries are no longer used. They

<sup>100</sup> IFAD, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, November 2014. Impact Assessment of IVS Rehabilitation in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu districts.

<sup>101</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision mission, 10-21 October 2016.

have no money for new research and developing new technologies. This not only threatens the sustainability of SLARI itself, but also of farmers, who would need access to improved seed to be able to produce profitably.

133. **Social sustainability. RCPRP's lack of direct engagement with communities to support their coordinated planning and access to decision-making and services is affecting their sustainability.** RCPRP made an effort to involve local communities, by engaging rice and tree crop farmers, including through organizing them and by supporting decentralized organizations to better reach out to community members. However, planning and monitoring at community-level institutions was no longer included after modifications to the project design at the time of MTR, leaving less room for prioritizing various needs by the communities. Although IVSAs are now better able to defend their interests as a group, the community is not able yet to identify community-based needs, combine these with individual needs, and find solutions or present these to local authorities in a coordinated and coherent manner. This has the effect of not developing their bargaining power sufficiently for them to feel empowered. Although RCPRP-supported institutions and organizations are socially acceptable, their sustainability also depends on a number of issues such as access to markets, financial services, leadership and decision-making. These issues were not covered to the full extent by RCPRP.
134. **Technical sustainability. RCPRP had tried to set up a system for road maintenance, but it has not functioned since project completion due to lack of funding and limited ownership.** The concept of coupling the rehabilitation of roads with the expansion of the Road Maintenance Fund Administration and road maintenance committees to cover feeder roads could have worked well also after the project, if central government had allowed the appropriate tax income from fuel sales to flow back into the fund. However, this has not happened. In the last three years, the fund had not been replenished at all, and district councils did not feel sufficient ownership to allocate funds from another source. Hence, no road maintenance had been done. Road maintenance equipment provided by the project was not sufficiently maintained, repaired or used. As road maintenance was not, and probably will not be, continued, the Government will have to start rehabilitation of the project-supported roads at a certain point in time, which is less cost-effective than regular maintenance would have been.
135. **To conclude on sustainability,** the evaluation team observed that economic sustainability of benefits was still visible, although there were issues related to affordability and availability of farm inputs, which could eventually affect benefits. Similarly, the aversion of farmers' groups to aggregate produce and the adverse financial health of the marketing bodies are other impediments to a sustained flow of benefits. Institutional sustainability, especially of state institutions, is doubtful, unless regular funds are received from the Government. The evaluation rates sustainability as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

## **B. Other performance criteria**

### **Innovation**

136. This evaluation criterion includes assessment of the extent to which RCPRP interventions were able to introduce innovative approaches to achieve its objectives. Some of the project's activities can be considered as innovative both in the context of IFAD-supported programmes in the country and in the context of the programmes or activities of other donors or of the Government.
137. A number of innovative approaches of RCPRP deserve highlighting. The project introduced the use of male and female youth as service providers in IVS rehabilitation. Previously, the already heavily stretched local human resources of MAFFS had been used. Working with the local contractors enabled the project to increase the speed and quality of implementation, while at the same time



benefiting youth with employment and stronger capacity. Moreover, as the contractors were from the same communities, they would potentially also be available after the project's end.

138. Another innovative activity was the establishment of property cadastral systems for revenue generation in district councils. The councils are autonomous but also largely financed at central level; however, these funds are inadequate and tied. The cadastral system was piloted in three district councils and one city council. It was an innovative way for them to independently generate additional funds. Cumulatively, the four councils have collected US\$204,766 as property tax.<sup>102</sup>
139. In order to ensure sustainability of roads, RCPRP advocated with the Government to include maintenance of feeder roads in the Government's road maintenance fund. Previously, only trunk roads had been part of this fund. However, it must be pointed out that these funds have not been received by the district councils.
140. Establishment of a loan recovery system feeding into an Agricultural Development Fund under Apex Bank for agricultural lending was found innovative. The project recovered 40 per cent of the provision of machinery, small tools, seed, fertilizer and labour costs provided to farmers. These funds would then become available to farmers through loans from the FSAs and CBs, and thus help in revolving the funds to multiple farmers.
141. RCPRP attempted a number of innovations, most of which were largely successful. The evaluation gives a rating of **satisfactory (5)** to this criterion.

### **Scaling up**

142. The definition adopted by IFAD for scaling up is: expanding, adapting and supporting successful policies, programmes and knowledge in order to leverage resources and partners to deliver larger, more sustainable results for a greater number of rural poor.<sup>103</sup> In the case of RCPRP, the evaluation of this criterion was based on information gathered through interviews, and by triangulating the information through secondary sources.
143. The local youth contractor strategy has been adopted by MAFFS and also used in a number of other projects in Sierra Leone, which include projects such as the Diversity Food Production Programme, the Linking Farmers to Market Project of the Islamic Development Bank, and the Smallholder Commercialization Programme under the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme.
144. The property cadastral system was scaled up through adoption by the Kenema district and city councils. Moreover, experience was further shared with other councils with involvement of the Local Government Finance Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and a task force was established to study the system for further replication to the remaining local councils. The evaluation confers a rating of **satisfactory (5)**.

### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

145. **The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) approach helped strengthen understanding on gender-related issues among project staff and participants.** GALS is a community-led methodology that aims to give women and men more control over their lives in an equitable manner. It was introduced in 2011 into RCPRP to help identify gender indicators that can steer change in unfair relationships at the household level. Through GALS, project staff were trained, as were community facilitators,<sup>104</sup> who trained community members. As part of the Gender Action Plan, over 3,500 project participants were trained. As a result, understanding of gender issues and how to address these was strengthened.

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<sup>102</sup> IFAD/MAFFS AM RCPRP October-November 2015.

<sup>103</sup> IFAD 2015: IFAD's Operational Framework for Scaling up Results.

<sup>104</sup> Lowe, H.Z., 8-29 August 2011. Report on the Introduction of the GALS Methodology in Sierra Leone.

Moreover, women were encouraged to participate in paid tasks, which had previously been reserved for men. The 2016 supervision mission reported beneficiaries' perception of increased household and farm work collaboration with a fairer distribution of workload, as well as improved household and financial planning, including increased sharing of household income and decision-making.

146. **Women have an important role in agriculture and women-headed households are particularly vulnerable; thus, IFAD reaching a level of 40 per cent of beneficiaries being women was an important achievement.** As roughly 70 per cent of women are employed in agriculture and provide 75 per cent of the labour along the food chain,<sup>105</sup> including them as participants according to a predefined quota and addressing their needs was found an appropriate choice. In rural areas, gender roles are usually rigid and place a heavy work burden on women who contribute, alongside household tasks, to the family farm, notably in planting, weeding and harvesting, whereas men do heavy work such as digging and underbrushing. Some women reported that they work harder than men, but in most cases, they did not feel unequally burdened. However, women had to hire male labour for work that they found too heavy (such as underbrushing), which had a bearing on their profits, whereas men can often rely on support from women free of charge for work that is usually done by women.
147. Most households own their dwellings, but women-headed households are less likely to own assets than are male-headed households,<sup>106</sup> also because inheritance mostly goes through the male line in Sierra Leone. The proportion of women who own the required minimum of 1 ha of land is small. Nonetheless, among the 5,000 participants, 35 per cent were female (against a target of 30 per cent),<sup>107</sup> which was quite an achievement, and empowering for women, especially as cocoa farming is mostly a male engagement. However, women's role in cocoa was only partly acknowledged in cocoa cooperatives, where women can only register if they are the head of the household, as in other cases registration is in the husband's name.
148. **RCPRP contributed to enhancing women's decision-making role.** RCPRP successfully mobilized female as well as male farmers in farmers' groups and FSAs. Most FSAs had three female members in executive positions.<sup>108</sup> The evaluation team met with such women, who appeared well aware of the business and were respected by the other members.
149. In agriculture, women bring the goods to market and sell them, and they also appear to have access to the income. In all the groups interviewed but one, it was reported that there was mutual decision-making on how the money was spent, although in some groups the response was mixed. Especially in vegetable growing, many women were able to sell the produce and keep the income. However, it needs to be considered that the mission was not able to do in-depth, one-on-one interviews on gender-related matters.
150. **However, RCPRP reached only a limited proportion of women in training activities.** In a number of activities, RCPRP was able to achieve a gender balance in terms of general beneficiary targeting, but less so in training activities. In the IVSAs that were supported with rehabilitation, equipment and seeds, out of 8,736 benefiting members, 4,429 were female, which is 50.4 per cent against a target of 40 per cent.<sup>109</sup> Nonetheless, for the training on IVS rehabilitation, out of 859 farmers trained, only 15 per cent were women.<sup>110</sup> Thus, even if women

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<sup>105</sup> FAO, 2016. National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, Sierra Leone.

<sup>106</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, November 2014. Impact Assessment of IVS Rehabilitation in Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu districts.

<sup>107</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, June 2015. Impact Assessment of Fairtrade Certification Scheme.

<sup>108</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision Report, 10-21 October 2016.

<sup>109</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP. Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

<sup>110</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 14 November 2016. RCPRP Supervision Report, 10-21 October 2016.

benefited during the project, many of them will still have to depend on trained men in future.

151. Furthermore, the project reached only 10 women out of 40 trainees among district council staff in total, and 5 among 20 DAO staff. For sustainable land and water management, only 27 per cent of trainees were female. Moreover, among the design target group of 16,000 disabled people, only 20 per cent were meant to be female – thus neglecting the doubly marginalized position of disabled women. A better gender balance in training could have helped the project be more gender-transformative, especially in areas usually dominated by men. However, with goals for the proportion of female training participants at 30 per cent being much lower than for men, the design did not pursue a gender balance in training.
152. Youth councils themselves strive towards gender balance, and as a result, 40-50 per cent of their members were female, who benefited equally from project support such as provision of equipment. Again though, in youth training,<sup>111</sup> of the 80 reached, only 20 were women. For road construction, among the 1,281 young people employed, 289 were female.
153. **The design of RCPRP had flagged the need to address the extremely low proportion of female extension workers / service providers but did not manage to contribute to a change.** At the design stage, it was acknowledged that the presence of sufficient female frontline workers in the villages is essential. Extension staff of MAFFS and NGOs were found to be mostly male, and it was suggested that the project address that, potentially through cooperatives and district associations.<sup>112</sup> However, the situation did not change. Among the DAO staff trained by RCPRP, only 25 per cent were female,<sup>113</sup> and some DAOs have no female extension staff at all. According to DAO management, it is difficult to recruit female extensionists, as only a few women graduate from agricultural education. They do not see the direct need to have gender balance among extensionists, as for women farmers the gender of the extensionists does not make any difference, whereas male farmers still feel uncomfortable with female extensionists and prefer male extensionists.
154. In the project design, there had been an opportunity to partly address this issue by recruiting female youth contractors, but among the 702 that were trained on water management and improved agronomic practices, only 20 per cent were female, against a target of 10 per cent. The target of 10 per cent was rather low to begin with. Moreover, for young women it is particularly difficult to find employment, and RCPRP could have taken the opportunity to address that.
155. **Gender-disaggregated data** were collected by the project, but the M&E framework contained no gender-sensitive questions. Moreover, in many activities, the group of final beneficiaries was gender-balanced, but not in all, and the activities were not designed in a diversified way to suit the needs and opportunities of women and men.
156. **The project did not do a gender analysis at the design stage** to try to identify and address the specific opportunities and challenges of women and men. Women and men were engaged in a similar manner in the project, without considering their specific roles in the value chain or trying to address their particular constraints. Simply including women as beneficiaries in the training related to rice and crop tree production in the same manner as men did not produce optimal results. The project could have adopted measures to reduce women's drudgery, for example, by improving access to drinking water, or have included activities that were

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<sup>111</sup> On business management, report writing, book keeping, conflict resolution, and management and leadership skills.

<sup>112</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, September 2003. RCPRP. Draft Appraisal Report. Main Report, Annexes & Working Papers.

<sup>113</sup> IFAD, Sierra Leone, 21 April 2017. RCPRP. Project completion report. Main report and appendices.

typically undertaken by women, such as vegetable growing (which was addressed in a very limited way) or the keeping of small ruminants.

157. **In summary, for this criterion**, RCPRP was the first project to be introduced to the concept of GALS in Sierra Leone, and the results were clear; it led to a greater understanding of gender issues among beneficiaries and provided an approach on how to address these issues among men and women. The project's outreach was also impressive; about 40 per cent of the beneficiaries reached through its activities were women. However, regarding important activities such as receiving training, the numbers of women trained were disproportionately lower than those of men trained. The project missed the opportunity to undertake a gender analysis at the design stage to try to identify and address the specific opportunities and challenges of women and men. The rating given to this criterion is **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

#### **Environment and natural resources management**

158. RCPRP did not have any negative environmental or natural resources impact because its focus was on rehabilitation of existing swamps, revitalization of cocoa trees in existing farms, and rehabilitation of existing roads. There was no new land, forested or not, that was put under cocoa cultivation with the project's support. Road rehabilitation activities did not have an impact on the environment, or on natural resources. The roads were not new, and the work consisted in rehabilitating existing roads. It should also be added that the rehabilitated roads did not lead to new population settlements, or displacement of people from pre-existing settlements.
159. Natural resources management was mainly achieved by training of local government staff but also of farmers through 28 farmer field schools, among others, on using integrated pest management, and the training of 400 farmers on sustainable land and water management. The pilot activities in micro catchments (24 were constructed and operational by the end of the project) and greenhouses were promising activities. To better foster water conservation and management, 20 rainwater-harvesting facilities were built.
160. However, three out of the four dams were broken and beyond repair. The IVSAs did not seem to have been engaged or aware of necessary maintenance, but the dam failures looked like the result of an insufficiently strong design. The GEF MTR (2015) had recommended that community dam management committees be set up, and that monitoring and maintenance protocols be put in place, but these recommendations were not followed, potentially contributing to the current status.
161. In terms of afforestation efforts, longevity of community forests was found to be constrained. The trees that were planted for harvesting, such as cashew nuts, were not bearing fruit yet, because the interest of the community was low. This was reflected in the fact that the community had not made plans for maintenance, harvesting or sharing the proceeds. Another potential threat to natural resources management is the customary activity of slash-and-burn, which results in wildfires. A memorandum of understanding was developed with the Department of Forestry; their staff would be instrumental in encouraging community members to construct a fire belt around the planted trees. No such fire belt had been constructed though, leading to the current and potentially further loss of trees. The evaluation provides a rating of **moderately satisfactory (4)** to this criterion.

#### **Adaptation to climate change**

162. The average temperature in Sierra Leone is projected to increase in the coming decades and, as precipitation levels are projected to decrease, the country may face more drought and longer dry spells. Therefore, activities supporting natural resources management and climate change adaptation, including those supported by IFAD, are essential. According to a GEF assessment, as a result of climate

change, 52 per cent of respondents indicated prolonged drought, 30 per cent heavy rain and 14 per cent flooding.<sup>114</sup>

163. The inclusion of GEF in the project was a good effort to introduce a focus on climate change. The cultivation of climate-resilient rice with a shorter duration and less need for water<sup>115</sup> was promoted for use in the IVSs. The rice was multiplied under SLARI, the institute that had also received support from RCPRP in terms of rehabilitating their clonal garden in Pendembu, and in Kailahun, Kenema and Kono Districts. Not only was the rice variety climate-resilient, it could be double-cropped, and the yield was high at 149 kg per 25 kg at the outset,<sup>116</sup> which was confirmed at research and by monitoring yields achieved in the field.
164. Community radio, supported by RCPRP, has been a popular source of information<sup>117</sup> for awareness-raising on climate change effects. Interviewed farmers were able to mention signs of climate change, which they associate with prolonged periods of sunshine, a late start to the rainy season, and a reduced length of the rainy season. However, they did not display knowledge on how to adapt to climate change (apart from using the rice provided by the project) or how to contribute to preventing it. The availability of water for agricultural activities is an increasing problem (sometimes limiting rice farmers to producing only one crop), which the project did not address sufficiently successfully.
165. The project did not establish a baseline data series and verification of data at completion on rainfall volume and distribution patterns, which was seen as a lost opportunity for learning lessons about possible effects of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. GEF had constructed and equipped 8 automatic weather stations and 20 rain gauges in high schools for weather-related data collection and analysis and sharing with farmers and other stakeholders, including ministries. However, the evaluation noted that many staff had left, no new staff has been put in place and the offices were understaffed. Hence, data are not submitted to the central level with the necessary regularity. However, even when data are submitted, the Meteorological Department does not yet have the necessary software to analyse them. The evaluation rates adaptation to climate change as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

### **C. Overall project achievement**

166. Overall, RCPRP was successful. The project largely met its targets in terms of outreach and in number and type of activities. Its impact on incomes and assets of the beneficiaries was positive, as measured through the impact assessment study. This was largely a result of successfully increasing production and productivity, up to two rice harvests in a year, on the back of improved seeds, fertilizer use and farmer training on best agricultural practices. Roads were the high point of the project; their benefits went beyond connecting farms to markets to make physical accessibility of health care and education far better. Institutional capacities of Government structures and grass-roots organizations were augmented and human capital was honed through training on a number of skillsets.
167. However, RCPRP fell short of achieving its full potential, for reasons related to the creation of less successful marketing linkages and constraints such as access to finance for smallholders. The project's achievements with respect to women and youth were in terms of reaching the outreach targets and undertaking some activities targeting these two groups; however, it missed an opportunity to direct strategies geared toward their specific needs. The inclusion of climate change

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<sup>114</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, December 2016. Assessment of Outcome Indicators in the GEF Project.

<sup>115</sup> NERICA L19 and L20 varieties.

<sup>116</sup> IFAD, GEF. Project implementation report. GEF Fiscal Year 2016 (01 July 2015 - 30 Jun 2016).

<sup>117</sup> IFAD, MAFFS, December 2016. Assessment of Outcome Indicators in the GEF Project.

adaptation was an important objective, although its execution left much to be desired. The evaluation rates overall project achievement as **satisfactory (5)**.

## **D. Performance of partners**

### **Government**

168. **Counterpart financing.** There is some lack of clarity on Government funding. According to the PCR, the Government did not pay the counterpart funds on a regular basis as required in the loan agreement. It states that this problem may not have been unique to RCPRP, and it is likely that other donor-funded projects in Sierra Leone with a counterpart funding conditionality were experiencing this problem. However, some supervision documents mention that the Government contributed to the project through tax exemptions (15 per cent of goods and service). However, the NPCU was not able to quantify the total value of the tax exemptions, and as a result, the Government contribution remained underestimated. The evaluation takes the narrative in the PCR as its basis. Insofar as activities of the project are concerned, these were not affected by Government funding, due to the additional funding received from IFAD.
169. **Project management.** As mentioned above, the project had issues related to delay in implementation of its activities. In addition, the centralized structure of the project unit made no provision for district coordinating units to ensure that the project management was effective and properly coordinated at both the national and district levels. However, the appointment of the project coordinator after the MTR, and the decision to decentralize part of the project management staff in the districts, closer to the project's activities, were steps in the right direction. Similarly, the decision of the Government to create one NPCU for all IFAD-supported projects was also helpful in generating efficiency in decision-making and a platform for exchange of ideas and discussions. Routine management meetings at both the district and NPCU levels provided opportunities for cross-learning and teamwork. All these gave a fillip to the implementation, and the project quickly recovered the lag that had been incurred previously. The evaluation team, having met key project staff, notes that they were competent and subject matter specialists.
170. **Monitoring and evaluation.** Until 2009, the M&E function was practically non-existent and only became effective practically from 2010 onward, when a new M&E officer was recruited and the baseline study conducted. However, thereafter, it made good strides in this function with regular reporting of RIMS and several assessment studies undertaken. The knowledge management function was also pursued; a number of communication products, such as brochures and videos highlighting the project's achievements, were disseminated.
171. The logical framework provided a coherent rationale reflecting a progressive hierarchy from the project's development goals through the link with project purpose to the components, activities and anticipated outputs. At each level, monitoring indicators linked to the project objective, components and activities or outputs were identified, and the means or sources of verification specified. However, as outlined in the PCR, a number of the monitoring indicators were not specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) (in many cases being unquantified or difficult to measure) and were prone to misinterpretation. The PCR further points out that the indicators reported under the RIMS first- and second-level monitoring indicators were at an impressive, if unrealistic, total of over 80. This raised valid questions on their specific relevance to the anticipated results, apart from the fact that it placed an excessive demand on project management.
172. **To conclude on Government performance,** problems related to implementation and coordination at the start of the project led to delays to the extent that there was nothing of substance to report until the MTR. However, thereafter, a series of

measures undertaken in agreement with the Government, including having a competent and centralized NPCU, helped put the project back on track, and to an extent even change its approach to make it more relevant. The evaluation rates this criterion as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

### **IFAD**

173. RCPRP was launched in 2006 for an implementation period of five years, and so should have ended in March 2011. However, very few physical achievements were realized initially, despite the fact that beneficiaries and stakeholders in the project areas had been sensitized on the project's planned interventions. One reason for the very low achievement was weak communication between the AfDB, IFAD and the JPPCU, established to coordinate the activities of both the Agricultural Sector Rehabilitation Project (funded by the AfDB) and RCPRP, resulting in long delays in approvals and the issuing of "no objection" clearances. For example, two years after project launch, the project implementation manual had not been finalized. Two expensive underperforming expatriate staff were heading the unit and the project coordinator had not been recruited (according to the 2009 MTR). In this regard, IFAD could have done more to improve the situation.
174. However, after the MTR, which also coincided with IFAD's decision at the corporate office that country programme managers (CPM) supervise missions, IFAD made field visits and assessed progress twice a year, except for the Ebola outbreak, through its supervision missions. A review of the supervision missions for this evaluation shows that they provided constructive feedback. For example, the project saw various adaptations of design and strategy, which were either initiated by supervision missions or supported by the CPM in a flexible and timely manner. In particular, the MTR undertook an honest and transparent review of the situation and proposed large-scale changes in design, which in hindsight were relevant to the situation. However, at the same time, according to the PCR, changing consultants in successive missions resulted in conflicting messages. Sometimes, recommendations by missions could not be followed because of budget implications.
175. IFAD's timely guidance and coordination facilitated the achievement of close to 100 per cent cumulative disbursement of the IFAD loan and grant. Given the slowdown in activities due to the Ebola outbreak, IFAD rightfully provided the programme with a one-year, no-cost extension. Annual audits were carried out by complying with required international audit standards, and reports were accepted by IFAD.
176. Baseline surveys had not been done and no M&E framework had been set up. The evaluation points out IFAD could have done more about the lack of an M&E system apart from solely raising the issue in the supervision reports, especially given the corporate emphasis on measuring results (through RIMS).
177. The evaluation rates IFAD's performance as **moderately satisfactory (4)**. This rating reflects the fact that despite a slow start to project implementation, caused in no small measure by outsourcing supervision to a third party (the AfDB, in this case), IFAD's direct supervision starting from the MTR onward led to a renewed focus on implementation and changes in design, and as a result, more than 99 per cent of IFAD's contribution was disbursed by project end.

### **E. Assessment of the quality of the project completion report**

178. **Scope.** The report was mainly compliant with IFAD's PCR guidelines. It mostly followed the required structure and provided most of the tables and annexes requested by the guidelines. The detailed analysis of IRR in the annex is very useful. However, there is no mention of a bibliography. The scope of the PCR is rated as satisfactory (5).



179. **Candour.** The PCR is well written and addresses the requirement of a completion report, as it contains some credible information and at the same time clearly brings up the fact that information is still missing (for example, on effective targeting, and support to off-farm activities). The candour of the PCR is rated as satisfactory (5).
180. **Quality.** Although the PCR follows the required evaluation criteria, it has sometimes formulated recommendations in places in the report where it is supposed to display findings. Moreover, in the section on conclusions and recommendations, it contains only conclusions. Last, there is very little indication of (expected) impact. The report is duplicative, and contains some inconsistencies, such as the female fraction of trained IVS youth contractors, which is given as 16 per cent, 20 per cent and 40 per cent on different pages. The quality is rated as moderately satisfactory (4).
181. **Lessons.** The PCR draws some good lessons related to M&E, gender and targeting, and coordination with stakeholders. These are pertinent and valid, and some resonate well with this evaluation's own findings and analysis (although it is to be pointed out that some other areas, such as implementation and market linkages, that were not mentioned were equally important). It is rated as satisfactory (5).

## IV. Conclusions and recommendations

### A. Conclusions

182. **With its original focus on reconstruction, followed by the shift towards rehabilitation of agriculture and development of local institutions, RCPRP was sufficiently well suited to the fragile context of Sierra Leone.** Working with institutions in a fragile context is challenging, but RCPRP managed to visibly improve those capacities of local institutions that were essential for effectively supporting smallholder farmers. The support also laid the foundation for wider rural development, which included local councils as well as youth centres. Nonetheless, the project missed out on the opportunity to have a robust exit strategy, which could have helped formalize the activities and relations, and prevented at least in part the issues that currently threaten sustainability, such as the lack of available budget.
183. **The turnaround of RCPRP from a late-starter to largely a successful project was down to its design flexibility and competent project management.** After a difficult start, the changes in the design coupled with IFAD's direct supervision helped the project pick up steam, and its activities were implemented mostly as per plan. The project was and remained relevant to the situation of smallholder farmers and Government efforts to address this, and its achievements were appreciated by respondents. Three years after the project had completed, there were clear signs of sustainability of impact, notwithstanding some of its shortcomings. The decentralization of the project coordination unit to the districts (to be closer to the beneficiaries) and the quality of competent technical experts in the NPCU contributed to RCPRP's implementation success.
184. **RCPRP's strategy to target a mix of food and cash crops was correct from income and food security standpoints, and it was supported by the proper execution of most of its plans.** The project targeted a mix of cash and food crops that are also grown by the majority of farmers. In doing so, it not only contributed to the developmental objectives of a country emerging from a civil war, but also ensured that it could reach as many farmers as possible. Its execution of activities, especially those related to production, paid off. Increased quantity and improved quality of rice and cocoa production (and a good outlook for oil palm production) contributed to the increase in the incomes and food security of farmers. The use of improved rice seed varieties such as NERICA made it possible for farmers to have two harvests annually.
185. **However, the project lacked a concerted approach to linking farmers to markets.** Support to road rehabilitation was perceived as very important by the project in connecting beneficiaries to markets. It indeed also contributed to savings in terms of time and transport and maintenance costs, pushing incomes and profits. However, the approach to establishing linkages with the private sector for output markets through marketing organizations such as cooperatives was less prominently pursued, which eventually hampered farmers in their efforts to achieve optimal profits. There was mention of linkage to ABCs in the design, and the project tried to support cocoa cooperatives and RIPMCO; however, for all of these the achievements were limited, inter alia because the focus in the design had not been sufficiently strong and detailed.
186. **Efforts to mainstream women and youth were mostly at the output level.** Gender and youth were well recognized in the project; RCPRP took various steps to try and ensure these target groups would be sufficiently addressed among participants. Nonetheless, in terms of gender mainstreaming and equality, although the project tried to engage sufficient women, gender-specific activities that recognize gender differences were not sufficiently included. Having a strong focus on women in training activities could have helped the project be more transformative. However, in reality, the proportion of women in training was much

lower than the overall proportion. As for youth, even if they were also engaged and, in some activities even as the main target group, a structured approach towards mainstreaming youth was lacking.

187. **A paucity of Government funds and a lack of access to finance will remain two crucial impediments to sustainability of RCPRP benefits.** The project made an attempt at financial inclusion, among others by linking beneficiaries with FSAs and CBs through better roads, and by encouraging farmers to become stakeholders in FSAs, but the efforts were not sufficiently successful. Lack of access to finance is still the main impediment to farmers and grass-roots organizations, as in many cases it hampered them in their efforts to achieve the growth that they needed to create a viable and sustainable business. The project had developed a comprehensive plan for sustainable maintenance of its rehabilitated roads, which included a maintenance fund and local road committees. This concept worked as long as the project was operational. However, once the project had been phased out, the expected budget from central government appeared not to have been forthcoming.
188. **The opportunity to contribute to addressing a genuine concern such as climate change for the country was missed.** Partnership with GEF was important in the light of Sierra Leone's climate change vulnerability and its consequences for smallholder farmers. GEF tried to introduce some interesting concepts, but limitations in design and implementation for some activities constrained the achievements. Although community forests, dams and a meteorological network could have had beneficial effects for vulnerable farmers in both the short and long run, none of these was developed and implemented in a manner to ensure their use and sustainability.

## **B. Recommendations**

189. **To promote effective and efficient market participation by smallholder farmers, strengthen equally the institutional expertise and the financial capacity of marketing organizations.** Where marketing organizations such as farmers' marketing groups or farmers' cooperatives are important avenues for smallholder farmer commercialization, the focus should not be limited to building their institutional capacities alone. Especially in fragile contexts, the access to long-term, sustainable finance for such organizations is a critical requirement, and linkages with financial institutions a necessity. This is not only necessary for making upfront payments to farmers for procuring produce, but also includes buying equipment and maintaining adequate levels of working capital. IFAD-supported interventions should strengthen the institutional and financial capacities of smallholder farmers, with a focus on strengthening their market power so that they are no longer forced to side-sell at suboptimal farm-gate prices.
190. **In concert with awareness-raising and representation, aim for effective participation of youth and women through specific strategies and needs assessment at the design phase of projects.** The marginalization of women and youth is exacerbated in fragile contexts, including in countries with episodes of lengthy civil wars. In such situations, projects should move away from aiming for their mere participation, through outreach percentages or outputs, and awareness-raising to ensuring that women and youth are structurally mainstreamed and that the activities are suitable for them. This should start early, from the design phase, ideally through a needs assessment plan. In the case of women, a logical and more effective approach would be to start with awareness-raising early in the project (through systems such as GALS), followed by a move to empowerment, through well-directed activities.
191. **In fragile contexts, make exit strategies a central part of project designs and monitor following the strategies during implementation.** Fragile contexts as in Sierra Leone, which often come with low institutional capacities and

budgets, have an adverse effect on the sustainability of benefits that flow from IFAD-supported projects. Sustainability of infrastructure is a prime example of an activity that requires funds for regular maintenance. In this regard, adequate attention is to be paid at the design stage through a well-designed and detailed exit strategy. One such strategy can be to formalize activities and responsibilities through memorandums of understanding to ensure that all stakeholders know and execute their roles after the project's end. Other such avenues are partnerships with other development partners or scaling up the activities to ensure sustainability. During implementation, adherence to the planned responsibilities and the likelihood and feasibility of future handover need to be checked and agreed at regular intervals, and changes to the strategy should be made if so required.

192. **Where adaptation to climate change is specifically pursued, treat it as an intrinsic part of the project design and not merely as an accessory.** In some countries, such as Sierra Leone, climate change is an issue that is too important to be covered merely by a relatively small component introduced at a later stage of the project. Climate change adaptation should be an intrinsic part from the design phase, designed in such a way so as to blend in with or be of consequence to other project activities and appropriately costed. It should form part of the project's theory of change. Moreover, in concert with awareness, the focus should be equally on measures for adaptation and mitigation.

## Basic project data

			Approval (US\$ million)		Actual (US\$ million)	
Region	West and Central Africa Division (WCA)	Total project costs	50.67		46.15	
Country	Sierra Leone	IFAD loan and percentage of total	42.9	84.7%	42.9	93%
Loan number	619-SL/DSF-8074-A-SL; 619-A-SL/DSF-8074-A-SL	Borrower	4.02	7.9%	0.66	1.4%
Type of project (subsector)	Agricultural production	Cofinancier 1 (GEF)	2.6	5.1%	2.6	5.6%
Financing type	Loan and grant	Beneficiaries	1.1	2.3%	-	
Lending terms*	Highly concessional	Other sources:				
Date of approval	18-Dec-2003					
Date of loan signature	20-Feb-2004					
Date of effectiveness	02-Mar-2006					
Loan amendments	N.A.	Number of beneficiaries: (if appropriate, specify if direct or indirect)	20,000 households direct		24,920 households direct; 149,520 households indirect	
Loan closure extensions	N.A.					
Country programme managers	Mohamed Tounessi Hubert Boirard Ndaya Beltchika	Loan closing date	30-Sept-2011		30-Sept-2017	
Regional director(s)	Mohamed Beavogui Ides de Willebois	Mid-term review	24-Jan-2009		24-Jan-2009	
Lead evaluator for project performance evaluation	Hansdeep Khaira	IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)			100%	
Project performance evaluation quality control panel		Date of project completion report			21-Apr-2017	

Source: GRIPS; IFAD Flexcube; PCR.

## Definition and rating of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Criteria	Definition*	Mandatory	To be rated
<b>Rural poverty impact</b>	Impact is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions. <i>Four impact domains</i>	X	Yes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>		No
<b>Project performance</b>	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
<b>Other performance criteria</b>			
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; workload balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods.	X	Yes
Innovation	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction.	X	Yes
Scaling up	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have been (or are likely to be) scaled up by Government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other 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

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Definition*</i>	<i>Mandatory</i>	<i>To be rated</i>
<b>Overall project achievement</b>	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, scaling up, as well as environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.	X	Yes
<b>Performance of partners</b>			
• 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<sup>a</sup>

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Programme Management Department (PMD) rating</i>	<i>Project performance evaluation rating</i>	<i>Rating disconnect</i>
<b>Rural poverty impact</b>	5	5	0
<b>Project performance</b>			
Relevance	5	5	0
Effectiveness	5	5	0
Efficiency	4	3	-1
Sustainability of benefits	4	4	0
<b>Project performance<sup>b</sup></b>	4.5	4.5	0
<b>Other performance criteria</b>			
Gender equality and women's empowerment	5	4	-1
Innovation	6	5	-1
Scaling up	5	4	-1
Environment and natural resources management	4	4	0
Adaptation to climate change	4	4	0
<b>Overall project achievement<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Performance of partners<sup>d</sup></b>			
IFAD	5	5	0
Government	5	5	0
<b>Average net disconnect</b>			<b>-0.25 (-4/12)</b>

<sup>a</sup> 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.

<sup>b</sup> Arithmetic average of ratings for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of benefits.

<sup>c</sup> 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, scaling up, environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change.

<sup>d</sup> The rating for partners' performance is not a component of the overall project achievement rating.

### Ratings of the project completion report quality

	<i>PMD rating</i>	<i>IOE rating</i>	<i>Net disconnect</i>
Scope	n.a.	5	n.a.
Quality (methods, data, participatory process)	n.a.	4	n.a.
Lessons	n.a.	5	n.a.
Candour	n.a.	5	n.a.

Overall rating of the project completion report: 5

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

## Approach paper (extract)

### I. Introduction

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IOE) will undertake a project performance evaluation (PPE) of the IFAD-financed Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP) in Sierra Leone. The main objectives of the PPE are to: (i) provide an independent assessment of the results achieved by the project; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in the country.
2. This approach paper is the point of departure in the preparation of the PPE. It presents the overall scope and design of the PPE. It also outlines the evaluation objectives, methodology, process and time frame of the PPE. It identifies certain key areas and issues that will be assessed in the PPE.

### II. Project overview

3. **National context.** Sierra Leone is a least developed country with GDP per capita of US\$675, placing it at 167th position out of 186 countries.<sup>1</sup> The country is in a recovery phase after being severely affected by an 11-year civil war (1991-2002), which resulted in widespread degradation of infrastructure and displacement of the population. The effect of the conflict on agriculture was very extensive. Many farms and rural areas were abandoned and villages were burned down and looted. Although remarkable economic and social progress has been made since then, the country still features in the 50 most fragile states of the world (2018 Fragile States Index).<sup>2</sup>
4. The Ebola virus disease outbreak in 2014 and the steep price decline in iron ore, a major commodity export for Sierra Leone, are two exogenous factors that had an adverse effect on its GDP.<sup>3</sup> Prior to these two factors, Sierra Leone had one of the highest economic growth rates in the world. Its GDP grew steeply from 3.1 per cent in 2009 to 20.1 per cent in 2013, but fell steeply to minus 20.5 per cent in 2015. It finally recovered to 6 per cent in 2016.<sup>4</sup> Real GDP growth is projected to increase to 5.6 per cent in 2019 and 5.8 per cent in 2020. The main drivers of economic growth will be increased private agricultural and mining investment amid business climate reforms.<sup>5</sup>
5. Until the outbreak of Ebola, Sierra Leone had been seeking to attain middle-income status by 2035. However, the country is faced with challenges of high youth unemployment, corruption and weak governance. The country continues to face the daunting challenge of enhancing transparency in managing its natural resources and creating fiscal space for development. Problems of poor infrastructure and widespread rural and urban impoverishment persist despite remarkable strides and reforms.<sup>6</sup>
6. Agriculture has an important role to play in the country's economy. It contributed to 59 per cent of GDP in 2015<sup>7</sup> and employed 62 per cent of the labour force.<sup>8</sup> However, the sector is dominated by subsistence farming and productivity is low, characterized by poor extension services, low capital investment, lack of credit and microfinance facilities, and weak farmers' organizations. Lack of rural infrastructure including farm to market roads is also a key challenge. Commodity chains and

<sup>1</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, October 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018), States of Fragility 2018.

<sup>3</sup> From US\$139.87 per metric ton in 2013 to US\$41 per metric ton by 2015. Commodities booms and busts report - relevance to Sierra Leone, United Nations Development Programme, May 2016.

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2017&locations=SL&start=2000>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/sierra-leone/sierra-leone-economic-outlook/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sierraleone/overview>

<sup>7</sup> Economic Intelligence Unit, Country Report 4th Quarter, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> International Labour Organization et al, Sierra Leone 2014 Labour Force Survey Report, 22 September 2015.

entrepreneurial activities in rural areas are fragmented and often inefficiently connected. The country's staple crops are rice and cassava. Cash crops are produced mainly for export and include cocoa, coffee and oil palm. The Government has initiated several reforms; the country's Roadmap for the National Agricultural Transformation (2018) identifies four enablers to increase rice self-sufficiency, livestock development, and crop diversification: improving the policy environment; promoting women and youth in agriculture, setting up private-sector-led mechanization; and sustainably managing biodiversity.<sup>9</sup>

7. Poverty is widespread but particularly acute and concentrated in rural areas where 62 per cent of the population live, with 49.8 per cent of rural households food insecure.<sup>10</sup> Poverty is also concentrated among smallholder farmers, women and youth,<sup>11</sup> with about 70 per cent of youth unemployed or underemployed. Poverty in Sierra Leone has several interrelated causes, including an absence of income sources, limited access to financial services, lack of inclusive land rights, and frail governance institutions. Sierra Leone's human development index (HDI) was 0.419 in 2018, ranking 184 out of 188 countries.<sup>12</sup>
8. **Project goals and objectives.** RCPRP was to be an integrated response towards rehabilitating and sustaining the essential services and restoring the basic production capacity to pre-conflict levels. The **development goals** of RCPRP were to reduce post-conflict poverty and food insecurity, and to improve livelihoods and living conditions of rural communities. This was to be achieved through the **project objective** of support to the short-term recovery of rural communities and their farming systems, while laying the basis for long-term rehabilitation and participatory development.
9. Rapid changes in the socio-economic and political environment in the country led to shifting Government priorities, gradually moving from rehabilitation, resettlement, and reconstruction to sustainable economic development. The Government and IFAD reacted to these changes a result a number of changes were made including an increase in funding, modification in the project's components and expansion in project areas. The project lifespan can be divided into two broad phases: the first phase focusing on rehabilitation of the agricultural sector with emphasis on raising production and productivity, and the next phase focusing on commercialization and support to decentralization of local government structures.
10. **Project components.** The original design of the project, that mainly aimed at rehabilitation and reconstruction after the civil conflict, had four technical components: (i) restored and improved agricultural production capacity and household food security; (ii) strengthened community and farmer-based organizations; (iii) established mechanisms for participatory community development; and (iv) rehabilitated and expanded rural infrastructure.
11. In recognition of impressive economic growth and transformation in the economy as a whole, refocusing of activities and outputs was proposed. There was a growing recognition that development in the form of increasing production and productivity would not succeed if market access were denied because of bad roads and a lack of storage and drying facilities. With a substantially increased funding, RCPRP was revised to expand opportunities in rice (inland valley swamps [IVS]) and tree crop production, to improve access to markets with an up-scaled feeder and trunk road rehabilitation programme and an expanded component on community development and decentralization to ensure sustainability and good governance. As part of these changes, the project's components were condensed to two technical components:

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/sierra-leone/sierra-leone-economic-outlook/>

<sup>10</sup> Sierra Leone comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Aged between 15 and 35.

<sup>12</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SLE>

- Component 1: Support to smallholder agriculture and commercialization.
  - Component 2: Support to community development and decentralization.
12. **Component 1** targeted the root causes of persistent low yields and low income levels in the targeted rural communities. The aim was to increase production, productivity, rural household incomes and create employment, on an economically and environmentally sustainable basis, through better access to services, technical skills, land, irrigation and markets. Through three subcomponents, the strategy focused on: (i) rehabilitation of tree crops; (ii) rehabilitation of inland valley swamps (IVSs); and (iii) rehabilitation of feeder roads coupled and intensive capacity-building.
  13. **Tree crop rehabilitation.** This subcomponent focused on rehabilitating three tree crops that had been neglected during the civil war: coffee, cocoa and oil palm. Interventions supported by RCPRP were: weeding, pruning and replanting and capacity-building (farmer field schools). The project provided 60 per cent of the investment costs as a grant and in the form of assistance for making fermentation boxes, provision of plastic sheeting for solar drying tables, and training for farmers. Farmers were expected to pay back 40 per cent of investment costs including labour for the rehabilitation and expenses for the establishment of and care for village nurseries.
  14. **IVS rehabilitation.** Under this subcomponent, the project supported the rehabilitation/development of existing IVSs that were technically, socially, economically and environmentally viable, and local agroprocessing capacities. IVS associations were formed to serve as key implementing partners through which the interventions were carried out (water management and maintenance of infrastructure, training on association management). The incentives introduced to capitalize IVS groups were subsidized seasonal loans (for seeds and fertilizers) and development loans (60 per cent subsidies on tools and labour), and service providers with subsidized equipment loans (40 per cent subsidies on equipment for IVS development and cultivation). In doing so, farmer-based organizations (FBOs) were linked with financial services associations (FSAs) and community banks (CBs) supported by another IFAD-supported project (Rural Finance and Community Improvement Project [RCFIP I]) to access credit. As part of value-addition promotion, small-scale entrepreneurs were supported with agroprocessing equipment (rice mills, oil palm pressers and cassava graters) and the project provided training for operators. Finally, in terms of marketing linkages, rice and cocoa commercialization were strengthened with the development of cooperatives and a rice marketing company. Oil palm commercialization was supported through linking farmers with the private sector-company, Goldtree.
  15. **Road rehabilitation.** Main outputs under this subcomponent were: selection of roads according to set criteria; design and specifications of the roads and structures; contracting and capacity-building of contractors and local council (LC) staff; and supervision. A Road Maintenance Fund Administration was created, and road maintenance units equipped with machinery in the target districts were established.
  16. The expected outcomes from component 1 were: increased yields and quantities of marketable produce; improved profitability and sustainability of the supported enterprises; and a specific number of beneficiaries disaggregated by sex and age reached.
  17. **Component 2** focused on strengthening decentralized institutions in the four districts, in particular the LCs, the ward development committees, the district agriculture offices (DAOs) and youth, including people with disabilities, in service delivery to their respective clientele. Outputs included the capacity-building of staff at the LC and ward levels in various skills, such as communication and financial

management, and in administration and planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), conflict management, leadership, gender issues, HIV and also Ebola awareness and prevention. It included construction of DAO and ward offices and youth centres, the provision of logistics, equipment and material and support in revenue collection at LC level.

18. The expected outcomes were: the existence and increased level of implementation of development plans at district and ward levels, a good perception (access, use and satisfaction) of communities on service delivery by local government and the degree of transparency and accountability.
19. In addition, in 2010 a programme financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was integrated into RCPRP to support the farming communities to adapt to climate change. Main outputs were: a network of agriculture meteorological weather stations; the climate proofing of IVSs; and several pilot projects including water harvesting, greenhouses, water dams for irrigation, and honey production.
20. **Project area.** Initially, the project area comprised two districts, Kailahun and Kono in Eastern Province. The selection was based on criteria such as vulnerability (these two districts had been hardest hit by the civil war and have the highest concentration of vulnerable farm families in Sierra Leone, according to the PCR), accessibility, agricultural potential (both districts have suitable gravel soils for tree plantations), geographical spread and avoidance of overlap with other donor operations. Later on, two adjacent districts, Kenema and Koinadugu, were included to broaden the impact of the project. Thus, the project was active in four districts.
21. **Project target group.** Based on the ex ante poverty and livelihood analysis, and in concurrence with national and IFAD strategic interests, five core groups were targeted to benefit from this project's interventions: (i) smallholder farmers; (ii) women; (iii) youth particularly unemployed youth; (iv) people with disabilities; and (v) micro and small-scale entrepreneurs.
22. Specific activities under the subcomponents were targeted for the different groups. For example, smallholder farmers were to be provided with support in terms of farming knowledge and inputs, organizational capacities and linkages with agroprocessing and marketing opportunities. Under the IVS rehabilitation, the digging of boreholes and fixing of pumps to supply water to non-perennial swamps during the dry season were largely meant to benefit women who were producers of vegetables and groundnuts during off-season. For the youth, the project focused on: (i) creating employment opportunities; (ii) fostering entrepreneurial spirit and skills in youth; and (iii) supporting youth organizations, particularly those with social, productive and advocacy roles. Similar activities targeted micro and small-scale entrepreneurs as well as people with disabilities. Under tree crop rehabilitation, young farmers were trained in best agronomic practices and linked to buyers of Fresh Fruit Bunches.
23. The target for the number of beneficiaries was initially 20,000. With the addition of Kenema and Koinadugu, the number of beneficiaries doubled to 40,000. With the top-up funding in 2012 for the scaling up of the rehabilitation of infrastructure (ward offices and roads), it was expected that an additional 100,000 rural poor people would directly or indirectly benefit from improved local public services and increased economic opportunities.
24. **Project costs and financing.** The project received a total financing of US\$50.7 million in three tranches. The first tranche of US\$8.5 million covered the period 2006-2011, the second tranche of US\$21.4 million covered the follow-on RCPRP+ from 2011 to 2016, and a final top-up of US\$13 million (RCPRP++) was provided in 2012 for the scaling up of certain outputs of RCPRP+. In 2011, a cofinancing of US\$2.6 million was granted by GEF to integrate measures for the adaptation to climate change into project interventions. The project also received

US\$4 million in contributions from the Government of Sierra Leone, and US\$1.1 million of beneficiary contributions. Disbursements at completion totalled US\$45.8 million.

25. **Time frame.** RCPRP became effective on 2 March 2006, with an initial project completion date of 31 March 2011. At the end of the first phase, additional financing was provided for a second phase, with an initial revised completion date of 31 March 2016. However, with the disruption of project activities as a result of the Ebola virus disease epidemic, a no-cost extension of 12 months was granted until 31 March 2017.
26. **Implementation arrangements.** The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) was the lead agency, having the responsibility to coordinate and manage RCPRP as well as the Agricultural Sector Rehabilitation Project (ASREP) funded by the AfDB. A Joint Programme Portfolio Coordination Unit (JPPCU) was set up in 2006 for both projects, and IFAD selected the AfDB as the cooperating institution. After an initial slow start and little field implementation in the first two years, the 2009 IFAD Mid-term Review (MTR) Mission proposed a number of significant changes in implementation. IFAD took over direct supervision of RCPRP in January 2009, refocusing the project, decentralizing the project coordination unit (PCU) in the field, and effectively ensuring strong implementation support and field supervision. From then on, the progress made was remarkable.
27. The National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) became the semi-autonomous executive arm of MAFFS for IFAD-funded projects, responsible for the day-to-day implementation. District Project Coordination Units (DPCUs) in Kailahun and Kono, and later in Kenema and Koinadugu, were set up and were responsible for field implementation. The NPCU and DPCUs were staffed with management and administration staff and subject-matter specialists. The project coordinator reported to MAFFS, the National Steering Committee and IFAD. The National Steering Committee with members from all relevant ministries met twice a year, approved annual work plan and budgets (AWPBs) and reports presented by the NPCU, and gave policy guidance.

### III. Evaluation objectives and scope

28. **The objectives of the PPE** are to: (i) assess the results of the project on the basis of the standard evaluation criteria; and, (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the design and implementation of ongoing and future operations in Sierra Leone.
29. **The scope of the PPE** has been identified based on the following criteria: (i) areas identified through a desk review (the PPE will review additional evidence and propose a complete list of consolidated ratings); (ii) selected issues of strategic importance for IFAD in Sierra Leone; and (iii) limitations set by the available time and budget (the PPE will be selective in focusing on key issues where value can be added, given the limited time and budget).
30. Analysis in the PPE will be assisted by **the theory of change (ToC)**. The ToC shows the causal pathway from project activities to project impacts and the changes that should take place in the intermediary stage i.e. between project outcomes and impact. External factors which influence change along the major impact pathways, i.e. assumptions on which the project has no control, are also taken into account. The ToC is reconstructed in that any deviation from the project design, in terms of objectives and/or activities that may have occurred during the course of project implementation are taken into account. These changes were identified on the basis of a desk review. The ToC will be adjusted after consultations with project stakeholders during the country visit.
31. The PPE exercise will be undertaken in accordance with IFAD's Evaluation Policy<sup>4</sup> and the IFAD Evaluation Manual (second edition, 2015). The PPE will evaluate the

project performance with regard to the standard evaluation criteria. These criteria are detailed in appendix 1.

#### **IV. Key issues for further analysis**

32. **Implementation model.** The project design encompassed a wide range of interventions and, in this regard, the project's implementation model involved working with a host of institutions, including Government institutions, service providers and marketing organizations. Many of these institutions were trained by the project as they did not have the required experience and expertise. The project's effectiveness and sustainability of its benefits depended to a large extent on the quality of these institutions, and in turn the service they provided to the end beneficiaries. Working with institutions in a fragile context can be a challenge on many fronts, not least because of their lack of capacity. In fact, there are concerns raised in the PCR about the lack of coordination among institutions, which hurt the technical sustainability of investment. Similarly, the sustainability of the local structures created by the project depends on the financial support from the Government, which may be under risk after the end of the project, especially in a Least Developed Country. The PPE will assess the effectiveness and sustainability of these institutional arrangements.
33. **Strengthening of grass-roots organizations.** The project encompassed a number of strategic actions that led to the strengthening of grass-roots institutions (IVS associations [IVSAs]). As indicated in the project document, these strategic actions were to bring about the social preparation, mobilization, organization and empowerment of community institutions as a foundation for social advancement and economic development. The PPE will assess whether these groups have the capacity to operate as effective and cohesive producer groups, and also whether they have become mature organizations (they have successfully implemented other socio-economic development initiatives, for example).
34. **Market linkages.** Improving incomes and food security of farmers was the development goal of the project. This was to be achieved through increasing production and linking farmers with markets. For example, market linkages were to be created for cocoa and oil palm producers through private-sector players, and for rice through cooperatives. The PPE will assess how effective these linkages have been in terms of helping farmers achieve better (and fair) farm-gate prices. The PPE will attempt to distinguish between the two types of crops promoted by the project, i.e. rice and tree crops, in assessing the effectiveness of the linkages as they are unique to each type. Moreover, feeder roads were constructed/rehabilitated for linking farmers to markets. The PPE will also assess the effectiveness of roads in connecting the farm gate to the market.
35. **Rural finance.** As per the project completion report, the availability of facilitating finance, through the project, cooperatives, farmer organizations or rural banks, was a critical element. Moreover, access to credit and liquid assets was one of the main constraints for marketing cooperatives to maintain and increase their activity levels and their profitability. The PPE will assess whether availability of finance was a particular impediment for beneficiaries to finance their activities and whether or not the loans were repaid. In this regard, it will also assess whether or not linkages between financial and non-financial areas were created, for example, between business development plans and access to finance. Moreover, linkages were established between RCPRP and the IFAD-supported RFCIP I by which beneficiaries of the former were supported under the latter. The PPE will also attempt to better understand the synergies (scope, relevance and effectiveness) with the RFCIP I.
36. **Value addition.** The project aimed for the improvement of agroprocessing and employment through provision of small-scale, post-harvest, agroprocessing operating units, including rice mills and oil palm presses to communities. However, only a limited number of processing units were provided. The PPE will assess

whether this investment provided sufficient upgrading capacity along the value chain; and also whether farmers were able to equally share the usage of the equipment among FBO members. The PPE will also assess whether or not appropriate mechanisms were put in place to ensure effective maintenance of the equipment by ensuring availability of suppliers and the recruitment and training of persons (especially young people from the beneficiary communities) to operate and maintain them at satisfactory emoluments.

37. **Youth.** Youth was an important focus of RCPRP, and creation of employment for young people are also among the top priorities of the Government. The capacities of young people were expected to be built by the project through training as contractors for supervising the rehabilitation of IVSs, tree crops and roads. The PPE will assess the current status of youth beneficiaries in the project areas, especially with regard to the sustainability of their incomes that were generated from their direct involvement with the project.

## V. Analytical framework and methodology

38. **Information and data collection.** The first phase of the PPE is the desk review. This will cover a variety of project-related documents, including annual project status reports (along with project supervision ratings), MTR, supervision reports, and the PCR prepared at the end of a project jointly with the Government, which also includes a set of ratings. The Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) includes a menu of indicators used to measure and report on the performance of IFAD projects – at the activity, output and impact levels – and these are used for effectiveness and impact criteria. In this regard, M&E data will be important. M&E data are also needed to plan the mission’s visits to project areas, for example, data on what kind of activities were carried out in different areas, what were the results, etc.
39. The PPE will crosscheck findings from the PCR and triangulate data and information from different sources. In order to obtain further information, interviews will be conducted both at IFAD headquarters and in country. During the in-country work, additional primary and secondary data will be collected in order to reach an independent assessment of performance and results.<sup>13</sup> The project has a baseline study, but insofar as impact study at completion is concerned, the PCR states that it is to be undertaken. The PCR alludes to a Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment 2015 joint publication by the Government of Sierra Leone, WFP, International Development Association, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and AfDB, and uses the data obtained from this study to assess the impact of the project on incomes and food security. However, no further information is disclosed in terms of the areas covered by this study and the methodology.
40. Data collection methods by the PPE mission will mostly include qualitative techniques. The methods deployed will consist of individual and group interviews with project stakeholders, beneficiaries and other key informants and resource persons, and direct observations.
41. The ToC annexed to this approach paper has highlighted assumptions that would have been crucial to attaining the desired outputs and outcomes. The PPE will investigate whether some of these assumptions held, and if not, then what the impeding factors were. This will help the evaluation to answer the “why” questions underpinning the results.
42. **Selection of sites for field visit.** The PPE will attempt to visit all four districts covered by the project. In view of time constraints, sites will be chosen based on consideration of distance, and an attempt will be made to give preference to sites where there have been a multiplicity of interventions. Thus, an informed decision

<sup>13</sup> In this regard, J-PAL, which was involved in RCPRP, will also be contacted for data.



on areas to be visited will be taken based on: the team's logistical needs; the number of beneficiaries in each area (preference to areas with more beneficiaries); and the need to cover a diverse range of stakeholders. The full range of project stakeholders – farmers groups (tree crops), IVSAs (rice), local councils, agroprocessors, service providers and implementing partners – will be visited. The PPE mission will also visit feeder road sites that were rehabilitated under the project. In Freetown, the mission will meet the development partners, importantly, FAO.

43. Geospatial analysis (tentative). Rehabilitation of IVSs was intended to lead to increases in agricultural (rice) production. The PPE will attempt to employ satellite imagery in the areas where IVS rehabilitation occurred and calculate the normalized difference in vegetation index in order to see the effect of this intervention with regard to the change in area dedicated to rice production before and after the project. However, use of this method will depend on the availability of geographical coordinates of the areas to be considered.
44. **Rating system.** In line with the practice adopted in many other international financial institutions and United Nations organizations, IOE uses a six-point rating system to score the project performance on a set of standard criteria,<sup>14</sup> where 6 is the highest score ("highly satisfactory") and 1 is the lowest ("highly unsatisfactory").
45. **Stakeholder participation.** In compliance with the IOE Evaluation Policy, the main project stakeholders will be involved throughout the PPE. This will ensure that the key concerns of the stakeholders are taken into account, that the evaluators fully understand the context in which the project was implemented, and that opportunities and constraints faced by the implementing institutions are identified. Regular interaction and communication will be established with IFAD and the Government. Formal and informal opportunities will be explored during the process

## VI. Process and timeline

46. Following a desk review of the PCR and other project key project documents, the PPE will undertake following steps (table AI.1).
47. **Country work.** The PPE mission is tentatively scheduled from 8 to 27 March 2019. It will interact with representatives from the Government and other institutions, beneficiaries and key informants, in Freetown and in the field. The mission will begin with a kick-off meeting with the Government on 8 March, which will also be attended by the country programme manager (CPM). At the end of the mission, a wrap-up meeting will be held in Freetown to summarize the preliminary findings and discuss key strategic and operational issues. The IFAD CPM for Sierra Leone is expected to participate in the wrap-up meeting through Skype.
48. **Report drafting.** The draft report will be prepared based on results from the desk review, field visit and feedback from the stakeholders, including from the wrap-up meeting.
49. **Quality assurance.** The draft report will be submitted for an internal (IOE) peer review for quality assurance before sharing with other relevant parties.
50. **Comments by regional division and the Government.** The draft PPE report will be shared simultaneously with the West and Central Africa Division (WCA) and the Government of Sierra Leone for factual review and comments. IOE will finalize the report following receipt of comments by WCA and the Government, and prepare the audit trail.

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<sup>14</sup> These include: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, rural poverty impact, women's empowerment and gender equality, sustainability, innovation, scaling up, environment and natural resource management, adaptation to climate change, IFAD and Government performance, and overall project performance.

51. **IFAD Management response.** A written Management response on the final PPE report will be prepared by the Programme Management Department. This will be included in the PPE report, when published.
52. **Communication and dissemination.** The final report will be disseminated among key stakeholders, and the evaluation report will be published by IOE, both online and in print.

Table AI.1

**Tentative timetable for the PPE process**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activities</i>
January-February 2019	Desk review and preparation of Approach Paper
8-28 March 2019	Mission to Sierra Leone
April-May 2019	Data collection activities
May-June 2019	Preparation of draft PPE report
4th week of June 2019	Report sent for IOE peer review
1st week of July 2019	Draft PPE report sent to WCA and Government for comment
4th week of July 2019	Comments received from WCA and Government
September 2019	Final report and audit trail sent for IFAD Management response
November 2019	Publication and dissemination

## VII. Evaluation team

53. The team will consist of Mr Hansdeep Khaira, IOE Evaluation Officer and lead evaluator for this PPE, and Ms Herma Majoor, IOE senior consultant. Ms Majoor will prepare the draft evaluation report, with the overall responsibility for the execution and quality of the evaluation resting with Mr Khaira. Ms Shijie Yang, IOE Evaluation Analyst, will provide inputs to the approach paper and technical support, including data collection activities. Ms Manuela Gallitto, IOE Evaluation Assistant, will provide administrative support.

## VIII. Background documents

54. The key background documents for the exercise will include:

### **Project-specific documents**

IFAD President's Report (2003)

Design Report (2003)

Medium Term Report (2013)

Supervision Mission and Aide Memoire Reports (2006-2017)

Project completion report (2017)

GEF Integrating Adaptation to Climate Change into Agricultural Production and Food Security design document

Design report of the AFDB-funded Agricultural Sector Rehabilitation Project (ASREP)

IFAD COSOP (2010)

Design document of the RFCIP

### **General and others**

IFAD (2011). IFAD Evaluation Policy.

IOE (2012). Guidelines for the Project Completion Report Validation (PCRVR) and Project Performance Assessment.

IFAD (2015). Evaluation Manual – Second Edition

Various IFAD Policies and Strategies, in particular, Strategic Framework (2002-2006), Rural Finance, Rural Enterprise, Targeting, Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment.

## Appendix 1: Evaluation criteria for the PPE

1. **Relevance.** The PPE will assess to what extent the project was relevant to the Government of Sierra Leone's strategies for the transformation of agriculture and with IFAD's focus in Sierra Leone as articulated in the Sierra Leone Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 2003 and COSOP 2010-2015.
2. **Effectiveness.** The PPE will review the existing evidence base, including the data collected by the M&E system and supervision reports, to establish the results achieved by the project in terms of targets, and conduct further analysis on which parts of the project have been more effective, and how and why project activities have achieved the intended results. The PPE will assess how integrated the watershed management system and process was, as a measure of the project's effectiveness in this regard.
3. **Efficiency.** The PPE will examine the process and system that underpinned the disbursement of funds. It will also assess whether the physical and financial resources were adequate for successful execution of project activities. Moreover, the internal rate of return (IRR) will be checked to identify reasons for the higher-than-estimated rate of project at its closing.
4. **Rural poverty impact.** The PPE will examine the methodology used in the impact assessment study conducted by the project in 2016 and the validity of results. Additional evidence will be collected from the field in order to validate these results, where possible.
5. **Sustainability of benefits.** The PPE mission will visit selected project sites to verify the current situation with regard to the sustainability of benefits, and will examine the different aspects of the value chain, for example, feeder roads and the training imparted to farmers groups. It will also assess the watershed management plans with regard to the status of their implementation after project completion.
6. **Gender equality and women's empowerment.** The PPE will examine to what extent the project's interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment. With regard to the project's impact on women's incomes, the PPE will examine, for example, the status of the key gender-related activities that were planned to be continued beyond the project.
7. **Innovation.** With regard to the project, the PPE will assess, for example, whether the application of proven agricultural technology options, specifically, hillside irrigation, was truly innovative, and its results.
8. **Scaling up.** The PPE will examine project documentation and rely on key informant interviews to assess the extent to which the interventions under the project have been scaled up by Government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies.
9. **Environment and natural resources management.** Watershed management was an important objective of the project. The PPE will examine this criterion with regard to the new agricultural practices and technologies that were proposed and implemented as part of project interventions with regard to soil and water conservation, and the results of implementing watershed management plans. Using remote sensing, if possible, the extent of reforestation cover will be assessed.
10. **Adaptation to climate change.** Sierra Leone faces the threat of climate change, particularly concerning rainfall variability. The PPE will consider the documented threat of climate change in the country and project areas (if possible), and assess the contribution of the project to increase climate resilience and increase beneficiaries' capacity to manage short- and long-term climate risks.

11. **Overall project achievement.** The PPE will provide an overarching assessment of the intervention, drawing upon the analysis and ratings for all above-mentioned criteria.
12. **Performance of partners.** The PPE will assess IFAD's performance in terms of inter alia supervision and disbursement responsibilities. It will also examine the role of Government in undertaking responsibilities towards project management and implementation.

## Evaluation framework

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Source of information</i>
<b>Relevance</b>		
Relevance of objectives	1) How were RCPRP's objectives consistent with, the needs and priorities of the rural poor?	Desk review of documentation
	2) How did the objectives reflect Government priorities of agriculture and poverty?	Government officials
	3) How were they relevant to the rural poor?	
	4) Was there coherency with other donor projects (including with AfDB)?	FAO, United Nations Development Programme
Relevance of design	5) Was the design process participatory? How?	Beneficiaries; project staff
	6) Did it take into account the needs, potential, livelihoods, asset bases and development opportunities of the rural poor? How?	Project staff
	7) Was the project going to complement other Government donor initiatives (or was it in isolation)?	Government; Project staff
	8) How were RCPRP's components intended to achieve the desired objectives?	IFAD; Project staff
	9) The logistical framework is an important aspect as it shows the intervention logic to attain the broader goal. Was there a proper flow and link between activities, outputs and outcomes?	IOE team analysis
	10) What were the design assumptions for achievement of objectives? Were these realistic?	IFAD; Project staff
	11) Did RCPRP adapt well and sufficiently to changes in national context, policies, etc. during project implementation?	Project staff
	12) Were the initial implementation arrangements well defined and adequate to ensure a smooth, cost-efficient project implementation, especially given that the fragile context of the country? Were the changes in these arrangements appropriate and timely?	IFAD; Government; Project staff
	13) Did the project develop any specific outreach strategies to reach women and youth? Were these based on any analysis of the needs, potentials and priorities of intended target groups and the poverty dynamics in the project target area?	IFAD; Project staff
<b>Effectiveness</b>		
Effectiveness of targeting	14) Did RCPRP reach all targeted groups (women, youth, war-disabled) in the targets intended?	M&E
	15) If not, why? Were targets miscalculated? Were there flaws in the targeting strategy or was implementation to be blamed?	IFAD; Project staff
Effectiveness of objectives	16) For each project objective, did it provide all expected benefits to all intended targeted groups? (outreach: planned vs actual )	M&E
	17) What factors in project design and implementation accounted for the results in terms of effectiveness?	Project staff
	18) Was the project implementation well monitored? Are all results at all levels properly measured, quantified and documented? Is this information reliable?	M&E
	19) Were all results achieved within the original time frame and budget?	M&E
<b>Efficiency</b>	20) What were the main expenditure patterns? Were financial and budgetary resources spent as initially anticipated? Were there deviations from original cost estimates and, if so, what were the reasons? Was the budget significantly amended during the implementation phase?	Accountant

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Source of information</i>
	21) Were there timely and adequate financing contributions from all project financiers, including in-kind contributions from beneficiaries?	Accountant
	22) For the resources spent, was the number (and quality) of outputs optimal? Could the project have produced more with the same resources, or the same results with less money? Could other approaches have produced results more efficiently in terms of costs, time and resources?	Accountant
	23) What is the cost ratio of inputs to outputs and is it comparable to local, national or regional benchmarks?	Accountant
	24) What are the loan costs per beneficiary?	IOE
	25) What are the main internal or external factors that may have had a negative or positive impact on costs or benefits?	Project staff
<b>Rural poverty impact</b>		
Household income and net assets	26) Did the project contribute to positive changes in households' incomes?	Documentation; Project staff; Beneficiaries
	27) Did the composition of incomes change or was there a diversification in means of livelihood?	
	28) Did the project improve ownership, or security of access, to land, water or productive resources?	
	29) Were there positive changes in households' assets, and if so, what were the main changes?	
	30) Were market linkages created that helped increase incomes?	
Human and social capital and empowerment	31) Did the project influence the knowledge and skills of the rural poor?	Documentation; Project staff; Beneficiaries
	32) Did the rural communities gain access to better health, education facilities, safe water sources and other social facilities?	
	33) Did the project enhance social capital and cohesion in the communities? Reduced conflicts?	
	34) Did the project affect the capacity of the rural poor to influence decision-making and access to institutions (social services, local development actors, national authorities) either on an individual or collective basis?	
Food security and agricultural productivity	35) Did RCPRP improve food availability, whether self-produced or purchased, to ensure a minimum necessary intake for all households members?	Documentation; Project staff; Beneficiaries
	36) Do project beneficiaries have an improved and more regular access to enough or more nutritious food?	
	37) Is there a reduction in the occurrence, or duration, of lean periods?	
	38) Did training lead to increased agricultural productivity?	
	39) Did the rural poor improve their access to input and output markets that could help them enhance their agriculture productivity?	
Institutions and policies	40) Are there changes in the capacities of the various grass-roots organizations supported during project implementation?	Documentation; Project staff; Beneficiaries
	41) Are there changes in the institutional capacities of the main institutions involved in project implementation?	
	42) Are there changes in the quality or range of services delivered for the rural poor by the Government as a result of the project?	
	43) Are there changes in local governance or in the behaviours of local institutions due to the project?	
	44) Are there changes in the policy or institutional framework as a result of project-led policy dialogue activities (e.g. changes in the laws, statutes, rules, regulations, procedures, national quality standards or norms)?	

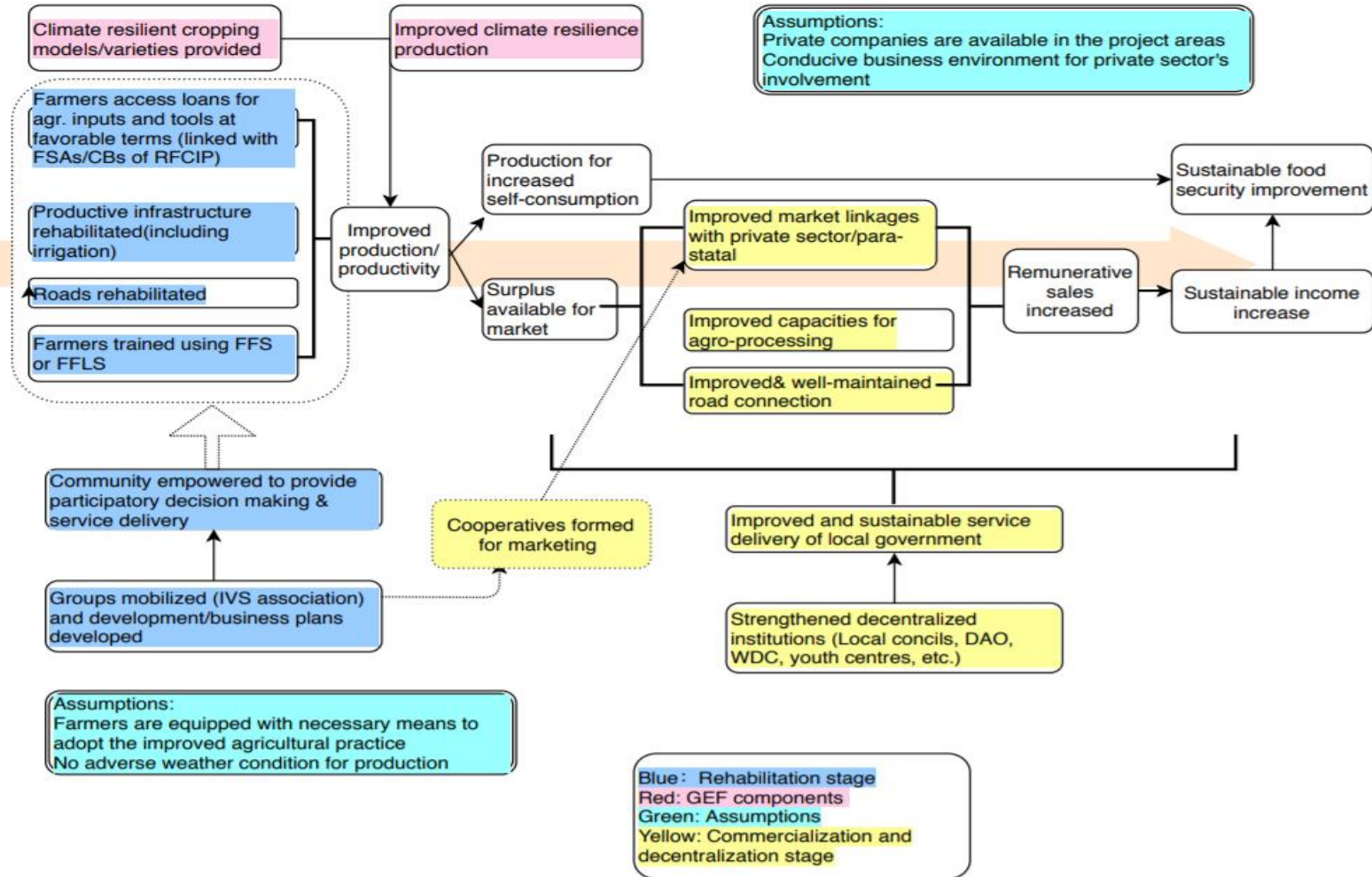
Criteria	Questions	Source of information
Sustainability of benefits	45) Social sustainability: Do project beneficiaries have the necessary <u>capacities and skills</u> , individually or collectively, to continue the approaches or manage the investments promoted by the project?	Beneficiaries
	46) Is there sufficient local <u>ownership</u> for these approaches or investments?	
	47) Is there interest and willingness, among the communities concerned, to continue with promoted approaches or investments after project completion?	
	48) Economic and financial sustainability: Are project investments economically and financially viable? If not, what are the constraints?	Project staff
	49) Technical sustainability: Are the approaches promoted by the project viable from a <u>technical</u> point of view?	Project staff
	50) Do beneficiaries have the necessary <u>technical capacities</u> to operate and maintain the investments promoted by the project?	Beneficiaries
	51) Do they have access to adequate funds for operation and maintenance?	Project staff; Beneficiaries
	52) Institutional sustainability: Are the institutions supported by the project self-sufficient and viable?	Project staff
	53) Are the approaches or practices promoted by the project mainstreamed within normal Government operations?	Project staff
	54) Is there a clear indication of Government commitment after the loan closing date in terms of follow-up actions?	Project staff
Innovation	55) Was the project designed specifically to test or lead to innovation, for example, by piloting new concepts or technologies?	IFAD; Project staff
	56) If not, did it still test and introduce innovative ideas in the project target area?	
	57) What are the characteristics of innovations? Are they consistent with the IFAD definition of the concept? Are these approaches truly innovative with regard to the local or national contexts?	
	58) Were these innovative approaches carefully monitored and documented?	
	59) Were these innovative approaches successful?	
	60) Did these innovations address relevant needs of the rural poor and are these viable?	
Scaling up	61) Were these innovations adopted by the rural poor, local implementation partners, Government entities or any other actors?	Project staff; IFAD
	62) How strong is the possibility that the project – or some of its activities, approaches or innovative technologies – will be replicated in other localities or at the national level by the Government or other donors?	
	63) Has any component or activity of the project already been replicated beyond the target area or target group?	
Gender equality and women's empowerment	64) How proactive was IFAD or project management, or other stakeholders, in discussing future scaling up with the Government or other development partners? What are the prospects or obstacles?	Project staff; Beneficiaries
	65) Did the project generate changes in gender roles or gender relation – are there changes in women status at the community level (participation in local elections or decision-making processes, representation in rural producers' groups), or at the household level (workload, nutrition status, women influence on decision-making)?	
	66) What is the impact of capacity-building activities on individual women or on women's groups?	
	67) Are there changes in the institutional or legal framework that were made in favour of women as a result of project policy dialogue activities?	

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Source of information</i>
<b>Environment and natural resources management</b>	68) Are farmers applying improved or more sustainable farming practices?	Project staff; Beneficiaries
	69) Are the approaches and investments promoted by the project environmentally friendly? Are they having any negative impact on the environment or the natural resources base?	
<b>Climate change</b>	70) What specific climate change challenges does agriculture in Sierra Leone face?	Project staff
	71) What measures were promoted by the project to help beneficiaries adapt to these climate change challenges?	
	72) Were these agricultural approaches suitable in a context of a rapidly changing climate?	
	73) Can recurrent natural hazards endanger prospects of sustainability?	
<b>IFAD</b>	74) To what extent did the services and support provided by IFAD ensure a sound project design and an efficient project implementation? Did IFAD mobilize the adequate technical expertise and resources in project design and implementation?	IFAD; Project staff
	75) Did IFAD provide adequate support through direct supervision and/or country presence? Were supervision missions useful and timely? Did IFAD ensure proactive problem identification, follow-up and resolution?	
	76) How efficient was IFAD in handling loan administration, procurement reviews and AWPB reviews? Were there any delays in transfers of funds?	
	77) Was IFAD proactively engaged in policy dialogue activities at different levels in order to ensure, inter alia, the replication and scaling up of pro-poor innovations? Was IFAD active in creating effective partnerships?	
<b>Government</b>	78) How well did the project management unit (PMU) coordinate and manage project activities, i.e. were implementation timetables adequately met?	Government; Project staff
	79) Was the project management responsive to changes in the environment or to the recommendations made during the various supervision missions?	
	80) Was the PMU adequately staffed at all times?	
	81) Were the various project management tools (AWPB, procurement plan, M&E plan) and the management information system (MIS) developed during implementation properly used by the project management? How?	
	82) Were there appropriate arrangements in place for sound financial management, flow of funds, financial record-keeping and the timely preparation of financial reports? Were there any issues?	
	83) How efficient was the project M&E in providing reliable, timely information on output delivery, outcomes and impact? Was M&E information adequately analysed and used by project management for planning and decision-making purposes? Did the project's M&E system track gender-disaggregated data?	
	84) Was the Project Steering Committee useful and proactive to help resolve problems and guide project implementation?	
	85) Did the project produce any knowledge products?	

Source: Survey.



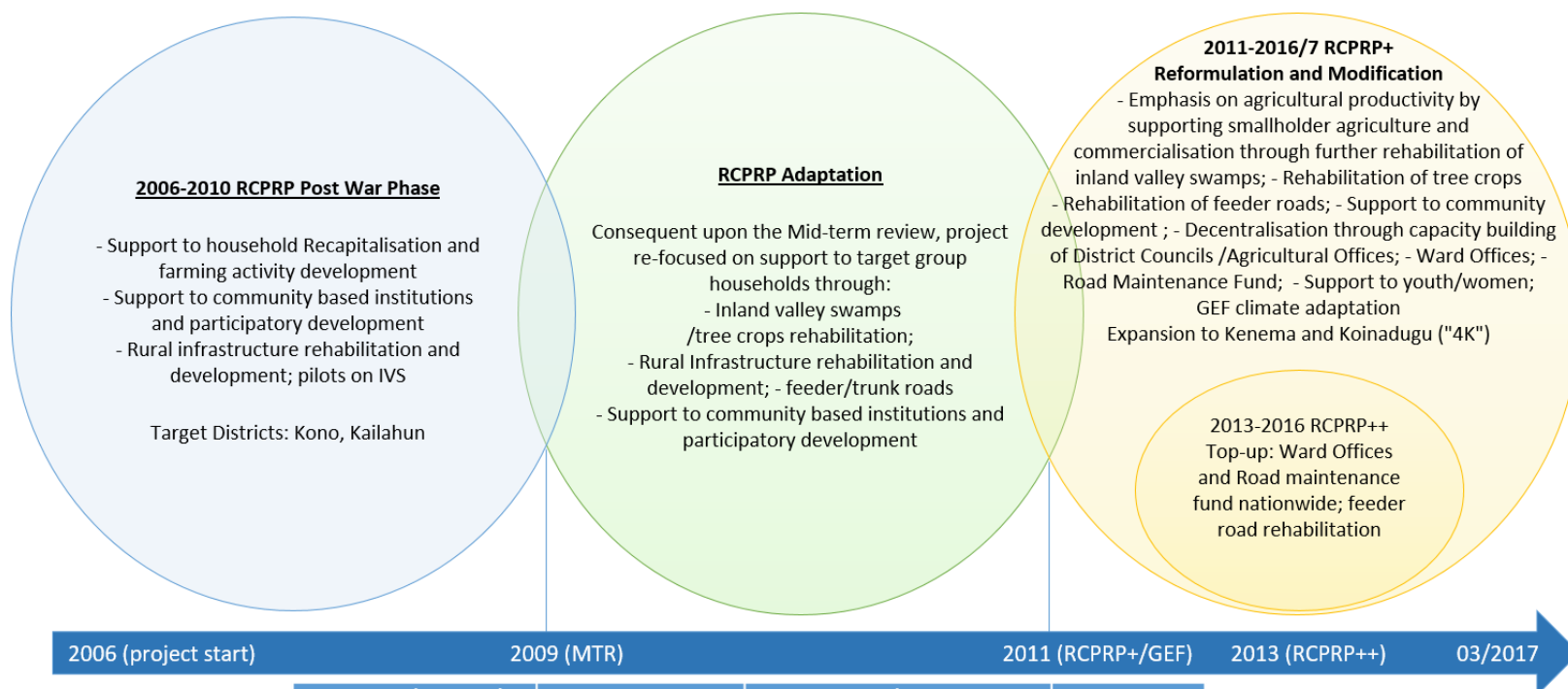
# Theory of change (reconstructed for the PPE)



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Source: Evaluation team elaboration.

## Evolutionary transformation of RCPRP 2006-2017



Approval (Duration)	Project	Loans/Grants	USD
2004 (2006 – 2011)	RCPRP	619-SL/DSF-8074-A-SL	8.5 Mill.
2010 (2011 – 2017)	RCPRP+	619-A SL/DSF-8074-A-SL	21,4 Mill.
2010 (2011 – 2017)	GEF/IACCAPFS	GEF/LDCF	2.6 Mill.
2012 (2013 – 2017)	RCPRP++	Top-up 619-A-SL/DSF-8074-SL	13.0 Mill.
2006 - 2017	GoSL		4.0 Mill.
2006 - 2017	Beneficiaries		1.1 Mill.
<b>Total</b>			<b>50.7 Mill.</b>

Source: PCR.

## Project financing by component and by source of funds; at appraisal and actual expenditure

Component	IFAD Original Loan (RCPRP)			IFAD Supplementary Loan and Grant (RCPRP+)			IFAD Additional Supplementary Loan and Grant (RCPRP++)			GEF			Government			Beneficiaries			Total		
	Appraisal	Actual	%	Appraisal	Actual	%	Appraisal	Actual	%	Appraisal	Actual	%	Appraisal	Actual	%	Appraisal	Actual	%	Appraisal	Actual	%
1. Support to Smallholder Agriculture Commercialization	5,635	4,858	86%	14,200	12,871	91%	7,500	6,712	89%	2,600	2,386	92%	3,124	133	4%	1,149	-	-	34,208	26,961	79%
2. Support to Community Development & Decentralization	1,800	587	33%	3,200	2,552	80%	4,160	2,121	51%				696	39	6%	-	-	-	9,856	5,300	54%
3. Program Management	1,073	3,533	329%	4,000	5,461	137%	1,340	1,768	132%				200	486	243%	-	-	-	6,613	11,247	170%
Initial Deposit	-	56			515	0%		1,495	0%	214									-	2,280	
	<b>8,508</b>	<b>9,034</b>	106%	<b>21,400</b>	<b>21,399</b>	100%	<b>13,000</b>	<b>12,096</b>	93%	<b>2,600</b>	<b>2,600</b>	100%	<b>4,020</b>	<b>658</b>	16%	<b>1,149</b>	<b>-</b>	0%	<b>50,677</b>	<b>45,788</b>	90%

Note: Figures in percentage denote actual expenditure as a percentage of commitments at appraisal.

Source: PCR.

## Project logical framework at completion

<i>Results hierarchy at appraisal RCPRP and RCPRP+ (combined)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline (a)</i>	<i>Targets<sup>1</sup> (b)</i>	<i>Achievements (c)</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
<b>Goal</b> Reduce food insecurity and poverty of poor rural people in Sierra Leone leading to strong national economy	% of households reporting improvements in household assets ownership	Not applicable	20%	17.1% <sup>2</sup>	(c) Terminal Evaluation Report, October 2017
	% reduction in the prevalence of child malnutrition	Underweight: w/a: 21.0% Stunting: h/a: 36% Wasting: w/h: 10%	10% reduction	w/a: 12.9% h/a: 28.8% w/h: 4.7%	(a) Sierra Leone Demographic Survey 2008  (c) Sierra National Nutrition Survey, 2014
	% of households report an improvement of food security	55% of population food secure	20% improvement	50% of population food secure.	(a) Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) 2011 & 2015 Joint publication by the Government of Sierra Leone, WFP, IDA, FAO and AfDB.
<b>Project objective</b> Rural empowered to increase their food security	Number of households receiving project services	Not applicable	20,000	26,662 households	(c) RIMS Report 2016-17
	% of beneficiaries report increase in incomes	Not applicable	25%	<b>72.3%</b> <sup>3</sup>	(c) RCPRP Terminal Evaluation, October 2017
	Number of people employed for rehabilitation of tree crops, roads and IVSs	Not applicable	1,500	6,572	(c) Project Progress Reports 2009-2015 Service Providers Reports
<b>Outcome Component 1</b> Smallholder farmers' access to irrigation, technical skills and markets is improved, and reduced rates of post-harvest losses	% increase in rice yield for 50% of farmers	0.563 metric tons/ha 1.44 metric tons/ha <sup>4</sup>	30%	3.22 metric tons/ha  3.38 metric tons/ha <sup>5,6</sup>	(a) RCPRP Baseline Study 2012 (c) Rice Yield Study 2015 PEMSD, MAFFS
	% increase in cocoa yield for 50% of farmers	0.29 metric tons/ha 0.43 metric tons/ha <sup>7</sup>	30%	0.82 metric tons/ha	(a) RCPRP Baseline Study 2012 (c) Cocoa Yield Study Report, Jan 2016 by PEMSD, MAFFS (a <sub>1</sub> )
	% of farmers have increased revenue	Not available	20%	78% <sup>8</sup>	(c) RCPRP Terminal Evaluation, October 2017
	% of supported farmer/groups have increased quantities of marketable produce	Not available	20%	60%	(c) Impact assessment of fair-trade certification on rural cocoa farmers, PEMSD 2015

<i>Results hierarchy at appraisal RCPRP and RCPRP+ (combined)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline (a)</i>	<i>Targets<sup>1</sup> (b)</i>	<i>Achievements (c)</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
	% of farmers trained report having adopted improved farming practices	Not applicable	60%	81%	(c) Impact assessment of fair-trade certification on rural cocoa farmers, PEMSD 2015
	% reduction in transport cost and travel time on rehabilitated roads	Cost: SLL 8,095 Time: 1.8 h	15%	Cost: SLL 7,882.35 <sup>9</sup> Time 0.3 h	(a) RCPRP Baseline Study 2012 (c) Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Feeder Roads Feb 2015 (NPCU) RCPRP Terminal Evaluation, October 2017
	% of rehabilitated roads viable all year round	Not applicable	40%	81%	(c) Impact Assessment of Rehabilitated Feeder Roads Feb 2015 (NPCU)
<b>Outputs Component 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IVSs and tree crops rehabilitated</li> <li>• Farmers trained in intensified production</li> <li>• Road rehabilitation</li> </ul>	Area of tree crop rehabilitated	Not applicable	9,000 ha	9,000 ha	(c) Project progress reports; RIMS report
	Area of IVSs rehabilitated	Not applicable	3,000 ha	2960 ha	(c) Project progress reports; RIMS report
	Feeder roads rehabilitated*	Not applicable	1,500 km	1284.5 km	(c) Project progress reports; RIMS report
	Community groups formed/strengthened (FBOs, IVSAs, etc.)*	Not applicable	Not specified	351	(c) Project progress reports; RIMS report
<b>Outcome Component 2</b>  The rural poor increase their level of participation in the management of local decentralized institutions	% of ward offices functional at project completion	Not applicable	100%	42% <sup>10</sup>	(c) RCPRP Terminal Evaluation
	% of districts have adopted a development plan elaborated through a participatory process involving rural poor	24.6%	50%	56.5%	(a) Baseline survey of the population's awareness on the national decentralization programme 2012 (c) RCPRP terminal Evaluation, October 2017
	% of rural poor are aware of the activities financed through the district annual budget, of which at least 30% are female, 50% are youths and 20% are female youths	14.8%	50%	60%	(a) Decentralization Baseline Survey Report 2012 (b) Terminal Evaluation Report, October 2017
	% of the rural poor are aware of the first three priorities of the district plan	< 5 %	60%	46.2% <sup>11</sup>	(a) Decentralization Baseline Survey Report 2012 (c) Terminal Evaluation Report, October 2017
	% of the district budget is dedicated to local development investment	18.1	70%	Not reported <sup>12</sup>	(a) Decentralization Baseline Survey Report 2012

<i>Results hierarchy at appraisal RCPRP and RCPRP+ (combined)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline (a)</i>	<i>Targets<sup>1</sup> (b)</i>	<i>Achievements (c)</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
<b>Outputs</b> <b>Component 2</b> Capacity-building and support to: i. District councils ii. Ward development committees iii. DAOs iv. Youth Centres v. Own-source revenue generation of councils vi. Road maintenance equipment	No. of ward offices constructed	Not applicable	294	224	Project Progress Reports.
	No of WDC staff trained	Not applicable	1,221	1,060	(c) Assessment of the Functionality of Ward Offices, Final Report, Oct 2014, Project Progress Report and LC and DC reports.
	No. of LC staff trained	Not applicable	Not specified	60	(c) Project Progress Report Training Reports
	No. of youth centre constructed	Not applicable	Not specified	3	(c) Project Progress Report
	No. of youths trained in business management, leadership and conflict resolution	Not applicable	Not specified	80	(c) Project Progress Report Training Reports
	No. of DAO constructed	Not applicable	2	2	(c) Project Progress Report
	No. of DAO staff trained	Not applicable	Not specified	28	(c) Project Progress Report Training Reports
	No. of vehicles provided to DAOs and district councils	Not applicable	Not specified	8	(c) Project Progress Report

<sup>1</sup> The targets and the achievements reflect the combined result of the three financing phases, RCPRP, RCPRP+ and RCPRP++.

<sup>2</sup> The calculation is based on the number of households acquiring additional assets during the lifetime of the project by comparing both the treatment and the control groups.

<sup>3</sup> The perception of beneficiaries was determined in terms of whether income levels have been increasing, decreasing or remained constant. The results obtained are shown in the table of the main narrative.

<sup>4</sup> PEMSD 2012 Yield Studies.

<sup>5</sup> RCPRP Rice Yield Study 2016, PEMSD.

<sup>6</sup> Comparing data from the same methodology is statistically acceptable; and in this case the crop cutting methodology was used. RCPRP baseline yield data for both rice and cocoa was based on farmers' memory recall, and using such data would overestimate project achievements.

<sup>7</sup> 2013 RCPRP cocoa yield study by PEMSD.

<sup>8</sup> RCPRP Terminal Evaluation, October 2017, also confirms that revenue from the sale of rice increased for 78% of the farmers.

<sup>9</sup> Cost per head at completion.

<sup>10</sup> Functionality was based on the frequency of meetings, and information availability at the ward level in terms activities of the district council.

<sup>11</sup> The first three priorities of the district development plan are known by beneficiaries taking part in the planning process.

<sup>12</sup> The terminal evaluation did not investigate this indicator.

## RCPRP achievements against planned indicators

	Activities/output	Baseline	Target	Achievement	%
<b>Goal</b>					
Reduce food insecurity and poverty of poor rural people in Sierra Leone leading to strong national economy	% of households reporting improvements in household assets ownership	Not applicable	20%	17.1%	86
	% reduction in the prevalence of child malnutrition	Underweight: 21.0%		Underweight: 12.9%	355
		Stunting: 36%	10% reduction	Stunting: 28.8%	200
	Wasting: 10%		Wasting: 4.7%	530	
	% of households report an improvement of food security	55% of population food secure	20% improvement	50% of population food secure	20
<b>Project objective</b>					
Rural empowered to increase their food security	Number of households receiving project services	Not applicable	20,000 households	26,662 households	133
	% of beneficiaries report increase in incomes	Not applicable	25%	72.3% <sup>1</sup>	289
	Number of people employed for rehabilitation of tree crops, roads and IVSs	Not applicable	1,500	6,572	438
<b>Outcome Component 1</b>					
Smallholder farmers' access to irrigation, technical skills and markets is improved, and reduced rates of post-harvest losses	% increase in rice yield for 50% of farmers	0.563 metric tons/ha 1.44 metric tons/ha <sup>2</sup>	30%	3.22 metric tons/ha 3.38 metric tons/ha <sup>3,4</sup>	449
	% increase in cocoa yield for 50% for farmers	0.29 metric tons/ha 0.43 metric tons/ha <sup>5</sup>	30%	0.82 metric tons/ha	130
	% of farmers have increased revenue	Not available	20%	78% <sup>6</sup>	390
	% of supported farmer/groups have increased quantities of marketable produce	Not available	20%	60%	300
	% of farmers trained report having adopted improved farming practices	Not applicable	60%	81%	135
	% reduction in transport cost and travel time on rehabilitated roads	Cost: SLL 8,095 Time: 1.8 h	15%	Cost: SLL 7,882 <sup>7</sup> Time 0.3 h	18 1800
	% of rehabilitated roads viable all year round	Not applicable	40%	81%	205
	<b>Outputs Component 1</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IVSs and tree crops rehabilitated</li> <li>• Farmers trained in intensified production</li> <li>• Road rehabilitation</li> </ul>	Area of tree crop rehabilitated	Not applicable	9,000 ha	9,000 ha	100
	Area of IVSs rehabilitated	Not applicable	3,000 ha	2,960 ha	99
	Feeder roads rehabilitated*	Not applicable	1,500 km	1,284.5 km	86
	Community groups formed/strengthened (FBOs, IVSAs, etc.)*	Not applicable	Not specified	351	-
<b>Outcome Component 2</b>					
The rural poor increase their level of participation in the management of local decentralized Institutions	% of ward offices functional at project completion	Not applicable	100%	42% <sup>8</sup>	42
	% of districts have adopted a development plan elaborated through a participatory process involving rural poor	24.6%	50%	56.5%	104
	% of rural poor are aware of the activities financed through the district annual budget, of which at least 30% are female, 50% are youths and 20% are female youths	14.8%	50%	60%	110
	% of the rural poor are aware of the first three priorities of the district plan	< 5 %	60%	46.2% <sup>9</sup>	77

	<i>Activities/output</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Achievement</i>	<i>%</i>
	% of the district budget is dedicated to the local development investment	18.1	70%	Not reported <sup>10</sup>	-
<b>Outputs</b>					
<b>Component 2</b>					
Capacity-building and support to:	No. of ward offices constructed	Not applicable	294	224	76
	No. of WDC staff trained	Not applicable	1,221	1,060	87
• District councils	No. of LC staff trained	Not applicable	Not specified	60	-
• Ward development committees (WDCs)	No. of youth centre constructed	Not applicable	Not specified	3	-
• DAOs					
• Youth centres	No. of youths trained in business management, leadership and conflict resolution	Not applicable	Not specified	80	-
• Own-source revenue generation of councils					
• Road maintenance equipment	No. of DAOs constructed	Not applicable	2	2	100
	No. of DAO staff trained	Not applicable	Not specified	28	
	No. of vehicles provided to DAOs and district councils	Not applicable	Not specified	8	-

<sup>1</sup> The perception of beneficiaries was determined in terms of whether income levels have been increasing, decreasing or remained constant. The results obtained are shown in the table of the main narrative.

<sup>2</sup> PEMSD 2012 Yield Studies.

<sup>3</sup> RCPRP Rice Yield Study 2016, PEMSD.

<sup>4</sup> Comparing data from the same methodology is statistically acceptable; and in this case the crop cutting methodology was used. RCPRP baseline yield data for both rice and cocoa was based on farmers' memory recall, and using such data would overestimate project achievements.

<sup>5</sup> 2013 RCPRP cocoa yield study by PEMSD

<sup>6</sup> RCPRP Terminal Evaluation, October 2017, also confirms that revenue from the sale of rice increased for 78% of the farmers.

<sup>7</sup> Cost per head at completion.

<sup>8</sup> Functionality was based on the frequency of meetings, and information availability at the ward level in terms activities of the district council.

<sup>9</sup> The first three priorities of the district development plan are known by beneficiaries taking part in the planning process.

<sup>10</sup> The impact evaluation did not investigate this indicator.

Source: PCR.



## Performance history of RCPRP as rated by supervision missions

<i>Status</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>
			MTR							
<b>Fiduciary aspects</b>										
Quality of financial management					4	4	4	4	3	4
Acceptable disbursement rate					4	5	2	5	3	4
Counterpart funds					5	4	3	3	3	3
Compliance with loan/financing covenants					4	4	4	4	4	4
Compliance with procurement					4	4	4	4	4	5
Quality and timeliness of audits					4	4	4	3	4	5
<b>Project implementation progress</b>										
Quality of project management					3	4	4	5	4	4
Performance of M&E					3	4	4	4	4	4
Coherence AWPB & implementation					4	5	4	5	4	4
Gender focus					5	5	5	5	5	5
Poverty focus					4	4	4	4	4	5
Effectiveness of targeting approach					4	4	4	4	4	5
Innovation and learning					5	5	5	5	6	6
Climate and environment focus							4	4	5	4
<b>Outputs and outcomes</b>										
Agricultural rehabilitation					4	4	4	4	5	4
Community development					4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Sustainability</b>										
Institution building					5	4	4	4	4	4

<i>Status</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>
			MTR							
Empowerment					4	4	5	5	5	5
Quality of beneficiary participation					4	4	4	4	4	4
Responsiveness of service providers					5	5	4	5	5	5
Exit strategy					4	4	5	5	4	3
Potential for replication and scaling up					5	5	4	5	5	5
<b>Project implementation progress</b>										
Physical/financial assets					4	4	4	4	3	4
Food security					4	4	4	4	3	4
Quality of natural asset improvement and climate resilience							4	4	5	4
Overall implementation progress					5	5	4	4	4	4
Likelihood of achieving the development objectives					4	4	4	5	4	5

Source: Supervision mission reports.

## **List of key people met**

### **Government**

#### **Ministry of Planning and Economic Development**

Nabeel F. Tunis, Minister

#### **Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry**

Samking Koihinah Braima, Deputy Minister  
Fatmata S. Mustapha, Permanent Secretary  
Alimani Kargbo, M&E Officer  
Patrick Sundifu, Deputy Secretary

#### **Ministry of Finance**

Mohamed Samboh, Senior Economist  
Issa Mbriwa, Disbursement Officer  
Isha Kamara, Senior Assistant Secretary

#### **Sierra Leone Roads Authority**

Amara Kanneh, Director General

### **National project staff**

#### **National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU)**

Mohamed Kella, Programme Coordinator  
Brima Kamara, Head, M&E  
Emmanuel Gbekie, Communications and KM Officer  
Lionel Shanu-Wilson, M&E Assistant  
Salbay Sheriff, Technical Assistant Civil Works  
Michael Turay, Financial Controller

#### **Smallholder Commercialization Programme Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme**

Peter Kaindaneh, Programme Manager  
Patrick Komba, Youth Officer

### **Other national institutions**

#### **Bank of Sierra Leone**

Alfred Gbekie, Senior Manager

#### **Meteorological Institute**

Gabriel Kpaka, Deputy Director General  
Patrick Musa, Head of Climatology  
Saiku Bah, Accountant  
Manbu Koromo, Assistant Accountant

#### **Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute**

Mathew Gboku, Managing Director

#### **Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Company**

Henry Kamara, Managing Director

### **International organizations**

#### **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

Nyabenyi Tipo, FAO Representative  
Joseph Brima, Assistant FAO Representative

#### **International Fund for Agricultural Development**

Jakob Tuborgh, Country Programme Manager, Sierra Leone  
Patrick Bao, Country Programme Officer, Sierra Leone

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