Indonesia: Participatory Irrigation Sector Project
ABBREVIATIONS

ADB – Asian Development Bank
DMF – design and monitoring framework
DGWR – Directorate General of Water Resources
EIRR – economic internal rate of return
ha – hectare
KOMIR – an irrigation commission in Indonesia
O&M – operation and maintenance
PCMO – project coordination and monitoring office
PCR – project completion report
PPMS – project performance management system
RP2I – Rencana Pengembangan dan Pengelolaan Irigasi (district irrigation management plan)
WUA – water users association
WUAF – water users associations’ federation

NOTE

In this report, “$” refers to US dollars and Rp refers to rupiah.

Key Words

decentralized development, dgwr, indonesia, irrigation, irrigation sector, komir, participatory irrigation, pcmo, rp2i, water users association, water users associations’ federation, wua, wuaf

The guidelines formally adopted by the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) on avoiding conflict of interest in its independent evaluations were observed in the preparation of this report. To the knowledge of IED management, there were no conflicts of interest of the persons preparing, reviewing, or approving this report.

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Rationale

1. Despite progress made in increasing production, the agriculture sector of Indonesia at the time of project preparation was characterized by inadequate and dilapidated infrastructure, especially in relation to irrigation. Hence, the government continued its irrigation management reform program, seeking to further increase food production, create rural employment, and reduce poverty. Irrigation management reforms focused on the physical and fiscal sustainability of irrigated agriculture. Earlier studies had indicated that major constraints to sustainable irrigation in Indonesia included (i) policy and institutional arrangements, (ii) weak and low level of stakeholder participation, and (iii) inadequate assessment and funding of operation and maintenance (O&M). Hence, the government launched the farmer-managed irrigation system project in 1995 with direct involvement of local governments and beneficiaries. This was followed
by a World Bank-assisted pilot program. The results of these investments were encouraging and underpinned the rationale of this Participatory Irrigation Sector Project\(^1\) approved in 2003.

**B. Expected Impact**

2. The expected impact of the project was increased economic growth and reduced poverty in 25 districts of rural Indonesia in the provinces of Banten, Central Java, East Java, Lampung, South Sulawesi, and West Java. The indicators were an increase in the income of 1.5 million farm families by 15%–20% by 2012, and a one-third reduction in poverty incidence among project beneficiaries by 2012.

**C. Objectives or Expected Outcome**

3. The expected outcomes were the development of a sustainable decentralized management of irrigation systems and increased yields in irrigated crops. The indicators and targets for these outcomes were (i) to provide 456,000 hectares (ha) with an adequate level of routine O&M by 2012 (ii) to avoid deferred maintenance for 456,000 ha by 2012, and (iii) to increase average paddy yield from 3.5 metric tons per ha in 2002 to 4.0 tons per ha (14.3% increase) by 2012. At appraisal, the original coverage area for the project was 625,000 ha, but this scope was reduced to 456,000 ha (73% of original target) because of delays in project implementation caused largely by changes in the broad policy and regulatory environment in Indonesia (paras. 13 and 17). Slow progress and price inflation from 2004 until 2008 rendered the available project funds inadequate to cover the original scope. This validation notes as well that the three outcome indicators used in the design and monitoring framework (DMF) did not monitor the decentralization progress of irrigation management (e.g., delegation of decision making or in the use of budget).

**D. Outputs**

4. The project envisaged four outputs: (i) the upgrading of district capacity for the management of devolved irrigation responsibilities; (ii) improvement in irrigation performance at scheme level; (iii) rationalization and development of district agricultural services, strengthening and empowerment of water users’ associations (WUAs), and improvement of farmers’ access to agricultural services and inputs; and (iv) the improvement of the water resource management information system. Corresponding to these outputs, a number of targets were identified in the DMF, which are briefly described below. Project activities were grouped into three components: A–irrigation management, B–water resources information and asset management, and C–project coordination and monitoring.

5. The upgrading of district capacity for managing irrigation responsibility had three indicators: (i) effective functioning of the 25 strengthened district governments, as focal points for irrigation management; (ii) 5,000 district staff trained in irrigation planning and management by 2007; and (iii) preparation of a district irrigation management plan (Rencana Pengembangan and Pengelolaan Irigasi [RP2I]) for the project districts by 2005 (2 years after project implementation started).

6. The performance of the irrigation schemes (output 2) was to be measured by a set of indicators, such as (i) 5,000 WUAs on government-managed irrigation schemes established or

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\(^1\) ADB. 2003. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loans to the Republic of Indonesia for the Participatory Irrigation Sector Project.* Manila.
strengthened by project closing; (ii) WUAs within a scheme or in schemes on the same river within close proximity federated into water users associations’ federation (WUAFs); (iii) O&M in the 456,000 ha project area to be jointly managed by the government and WUAs, as agreed in the participatory irrigation agreements; and (iv) full O&M cost recovery for the primary and secondary systems by the government, and for the tertiary systems by WUAs by 2012.

7. The progress in the rationalization of district agricultural services (output 3) was to be measured by these three indicators: (i) adoption of improved irrigation agronomy techniques by members of the 5,000 WUAs, (ii) adoption of improved technology packages developed under other projects by farmers belonging to the 5,000 WUAs, and (iii) the successful completion of a pilot study on the role of WUAs to improve farmers’ bargaining power and to make services- and input-providers more accountable to farmers in five districts by 2011.

8. Finally, the performance of the water resource management information system (output 4) was to be measured by these three indicators: (i) the water resource data management unit already institutionalized at the Directorate General of Water Resources (DGWR) Central Office by June 2004; (ii) decision support systems have been strengthened at the DGWR Central Office by 2005; and (iii) water resources information and data gathering, processing, and quality control have been improved in the project districts and integrated into the DGWR Central Office decision support system by 2008.

E. Provision of Inputs

9. The total project cost was $127.5 million, slightly higher than the $126.0 million estimated at appraisal. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) financed $20.4 million from the Asian Development Fund (ADF) loan (appraised at $19.0 million), and $53.9 million from the ordinary capital resources of ADB (appraised at $54.0 million). The grant of $15.0 million from the Government of the Netherlands was fully utilized. The remaining $31.9 million was funded by the central and regional governments while $6.2 million came from community and/or farmers’ contribution to enhance the incremental O&M of irrigation (see table on Project Basic Data). By expenditure category, the realized project spending did not diverge substantially from allocations at appraisal. The balance between hardware spending (civil works, vehicles, equipment, and consulting services) was maintained with software spending (capacity building, studies, surveys, audit, and nongovernment organization services).

F. Implementation Arrangements

10. The project was planned to be implemented over 7 years, but was extended by 18 months. The project had three executing agencies: (i) the Ministry of Public Works (previously Ministry of Settlement and Regional Infrastructure) through the DGWR, (ii) Ministry of Home Affairs through the Directorate General of Regional Development, and (iii) Ministry of Agriculture through the Directorate General of Agricultural Facilities. The implementation responsibilities were to be shared among the national government ministries and the subnational governments at the provincial and district levels.

11. A national steering committee was to provide overall policy guidance and oversee the project coordination and monitoring office (PCMO). Each executing agency was to establish a

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2 In line with the reduction in the project area, the target number of WUAs supported under the project was reduced from 6,250 to 5,000.
national project management unit, and each participating province and district was to establish a provincial PCMO and a district coordination and monitoring office.

12. Each district was to establish an irrigation commission (called KOMIR) comprising government and nongovernment members to plan and manage irrigation within their respective districts. WUAs were to be assisted in developing irrigation management plans for their schemes. These plans were to be reviewed and approved by the KOMIR before being implemented by WUAs. Rehabilitation and upgrading works of irrigation schemes were to be carried out by WUAs and WUA federations through (i) direct contracting for schemes with minor rehabilitation needs, and (ii) work-sharing agreements with local contractors for rehabilitation of larger irrigation systems (project completion report [PCR], paras. 16–17).³

13. Generally, the project was implemented based on the implementation arrangements spelled out in the report and recommendation of the President (RRP). However, the project faced start-up problems as the project only became effective in June 2005, some 18 months after the Board approval in December 2003 (PCR, para. 35). There was a change in government while the Water Law No.7 was only issued in 2004. In the initial years after the project’s effectiveness (2005 and 2006), implementation was slowed down by institutional adjustments needed to implement the Water Law, a broad review of intergovernmental fiscal relations, and the issuance of a new Government Regulation No. 20 in 2006 on irrigation management. The pace of project implementation was further hampered by the shortage and/or late releases of counterpart funds in 2007 and 2008. These delays, and the consequent increases in the unit costs, led to a scope reduction in 2009. The project was to be implemented in 25 districts but ended up being implemented in 27 districts and the targeted six provinces due to reorganization and splitting of the project districts.

14. As a result of time slippage, project completion was delayed by 18 months and closed in December 2012. However, it required one more financial reallocation before closing to reconcile the overcommitted expenditure with the provisions under the project.

II. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AND RATINGS

A. Relevance of Design and Formulation

15. The PCR rated the project *highly relevant*. This assessment was largely based on the consistency of the project goals with the government’s development plans, especially in decentralizing development administration, improving food security, and reducing poverty. The project was noted to be also consistent with the ADB country partnership strategy, poverty reduction strategy, and ADB thematic strategies such as gender and development, and the environment.

16. This validation notes that the project design was formed by nearly 2 decades of earlier work by ADB, the World Bank, and a number of development partners including the Government of the Netherlands, which cofinanced the project. The project was formulated to accommodate anticipated irrigation management reforms according to the new Government Regulation 20/2006 on participatory irrigation management, following the issuance of the new Water Law 7/2004. The project design introduced a number of new practices in Indonesia, such as (i) the introduction of WUA direct contracting for light repairs (sustainable replacement

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of rehabilitation), (ii) the development of the district irrigation management plan (RP2I) and asset management system, and (iii) the establishment of KOMIRs.

17. The original design faced issues during implementation. First, the PCR (para. 35) reported that project implementation was slow during 2007–2008 due to the late availability of counterpart funds (para. 13) to the Directorate General of Regional Development, which were made available only in the third quarter. Timely counterpart funds provision was a known risk but not sufficiently mitigated at the design stage. During the elapsed time, the unit costs had substantially changed due to price fluctuations. It resulted in the reduction of the project scope (PCR, para. 7).

18. Second, the financial plan's design of using prorated financing across the three sources of funds—ADF loan, OCR loan, and the Netherlands' grant funds—for every expenditure category made fund disbursement cumbersome (PCR, para. 58, item ix) and rendered coordination and implementation cumbersome. This also represents an issue in project design. This validation rates the project relevant.

B. Effectiveness in Achieving Project Outcome and Outputs

19. The PCR rated the project's achievement of outcomes effective. Largely by virtue of completing rehabilitation on 457,220 ha (1,614 irrigation schemes), the project achieved its intended outcome to avoid deferred maintenance on the target of 456,000 ha. At project completion, average rice yield had increased by 18%, exceeding another outcome target of 14%. Yields during the wet season were estimated to have increased by 0.96 ton/ha (from 5.47 tons to 6.43 tons), and during the dry season by 0.91 ton/ha (from 5.08 tons to 5.99 tons). On the third and last outcome indicator (adequate level of routine O&M), there was a concern. O&M funding at completion for the national and provincial irrigation schemes were adequate (above $19/ha per year), but still inadequate for schemes assigned to the districts (covering less than 1,000 ha) (PCR, Appendix 1, p. 16).

20. The project largely achieved the revised output targets, including the completion of (i) capacity-building activities for targeted subnational agencies and farmers (WUAs), and (ii) the rehabilitation work on 457,220 ha (which met the envisaged area coverage of 456,000 ha). Although rice yield, income growth, and poverty reduction data showed substantial improvement in the project areas (paras. 19 and 26), the project indicators did not track how capacity-building activities—which were largely training, studies, and changes in regulation—had contributed to upgrading skills and changing behavior, thus, contributing to progress observed in the higher-level results. This is a challenge generally encountered in assessing effectiveness of capacity building.

21. Nonetheless, given the outcomes and outputs achieved at completion, this validation rates the project effective.

C. Efficiency of Resource Use in Achieving Outcome and Outputs

22. Although the PCR indicated that the project utilized its resources efficiently, and cited a high average economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 74% to support this, it did not rate the project efficiency criterion explicitly. Economic reevaluation was based on a sample of 21

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4 This delay came after another delay during 2004–2006 mainly caused by more exogenous (i.e., non-design) issues, such as the issuance of Law No. 7 of 2004 (Water Law) and Government Regulation 20/2006 on irrigation management.
schemes surveyed, which included 16 rehabilitation schemes and five sustainable replacement of rehabilitation schemes. The PCR reported that these were selected based on a random stratified sampling (PCR, Appendix 12), but cautioned that the sample may not adequately represent the total 1,614 schemes improved under the project. Only 15 schemes were used in the final economic reevaluation. The weighted average EIRR for these 15 schemes analyzed was 74%, which was significantly higher than the average EIRR of 29% estimated at appraisal. The PCR identified a number of reasons for the relatively high EIRRs (PCR, para. 49). These include the following: (i) targeted for civil works were only the major constraints in the systems with the highest marginal returns from small investments, (ii) severely degraded tertiary canal systems were improved with farmer inputs (perhaps without factoring in their full foregone earnings), and (iii) improvements in the agricultural yields were better than expected because appraisal estimates for increase in yields were too low at 3.6% (PCR, Appendix 12, para. 14). Finally, EIRR could also have been high because the economic reevaluation used only 2013 economic prices instead of projected prices over time, which it found to be showing a gradual decline.

23. On process efficiency, this validation notes that the PCR mentioned a few limitations. For example, imprest account balances were insufficient, and the Ministry of Finance had to provide prefinancing for project activities (PCR, para. 43) to prevent further delays. Although the covenant on the provision of counterpart funds was fulfilled, the provision of funds for the Directorate General for Regional Development’s activities in districts and provinces was late throughout project implementation (PCR, para. 37). Funds for many activities were “significantly delayed” in 2007 and 2008. These delays had a knock-on effect and contributed to delayed project implementation. Irrigation management funds mechanisms envisaged at appraisal were not introduced till project completion, pending the issuance of the national irrigation management fund guidelines.

24. The highest amount of disbursements was achieved in 2011, the penultimate year before the project closed. Ten withdrawal applications under loan 2065 for $0.69 million and 12 withdrawal applications under the Netherlands grant for $0.22 million could not be paid due to (i) disbursement delays, (ii) excessive expenditures on certain items, and (iii) cost increase on account of expanded consulting requirements. In terms of process efficiency, the project should be assessed as less than efficient. However, combining the economic reevaluation and process efficiency together, this validation rates the project efficient.

D. Preliminary Assessment of Sustainability

25. The PCR rated the project benefits likely sustainable. It described the enhanced level of O&M during the implementation period. From the institutional perspective, there were signs that the project initiatives were being sustained. After project closing, the Lampung Selatan district has continued to institute direct contracting with WUAs (PCR, para. 41). A total of 1,404 WUAs or WUAFs in the project’s 1,614 schemes have signed participatory irrigation management agreement with district agencies for O&M for the primary and secondary canals (Appendix 1, p. 21). However, resource and/or budgetary provision remains a concern. While the average allocations for O&M improved during the project implementation period, the PCR noted that these did not increase by as much as sought in the RP2Is. Further, budget allocation to the schemes, which were the responsibility of the districts (i.e., smaller than 1,000 ha) remained inadequate (PCR, Appendix 1). This is an important concern. Within each irrigation scheme, O&M cost of primary and secondary canals are the responsibility of the government, supported by WUAs or WUAFs. However, the full cost of O&M for the tertiary canal systems is the responsibility of WUAs. There was no clear assessment on the extent the
WUAs can independently maintain the tertiary systems. This validation rates the project less than likely sustainable.

E. Impact

26. The PCR described the impact of the project but did not rate it explicitly. As mentioned earlier, family incomes increased from Rp10.2 million before the project to Rp23.4 million with the project, an increase of about 130% in nominal value. The overall poverty rates in the project area fell from 24.4% in 2008 to 6.8% in 2012, exceeding the target of one-third reduction.

27. The project enabled the participation of more women in irrigation management, although not to the extent envisaged by the gender action plan. Despite the fact that women are active participants in the cultivation of irrigated rice fields, they are seldom represented in the management of irrigation schemes or in committees, or assume decision-making roles. The project registered progress, although slowly, in this direction. The PCR noted that while women’s representation in the boards of 931 WUAs and 235 WUAFs exceeded the project target of 15%, the remaining 4,145 WUAs and 408 WUAFs did not have women on their boards. Under the project, women were invited to participate in training, but their participation remained below the target of 33%. Greater participation of women had been incorporated in the legal documents, such as local government irrigation regulations, and decrees on the establishment and functions of KOMIRs.

28. Based mainly on the progress in beneficiary incomes and poverty reduction at completion, this validation rates the project’s impact significant. Rehabilitated and improved irrigation and other water services in the project area were likely to play a part in enhancing the impact results. Moving beyond completion, however, this validation highlights a concern over the sustainability of project benefits, including a continuing enhanced ownership and adequate irrigation O&M by the district and WUAs.

III. OTHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

A. Performance of the Borrower and Executing Agency

29. The PCR rated the performance of the borrower and the executing agencies satisfactory. The project design was quite comprehensive and elaborate, involving a number of government agencies at different administrative levels and farmers. Project implementation, thus, required good horizontal and vertical coordination at the time when the public administration system itself was changing to become more decentralized. Examining the project implementation, the borrower’s performance was less than satisfactory as changing policies and institutional conditions, and the lack of counterpart funds, delayed project implementation from 2004 until 2008. This also caused the project’s inability to cover the extent of area (625,000 ha) envisaged at appraisal. This validation notes that the three executing agencies overcame challenges, which were caused largely by factors beyond their control, and ensured the delivery of the revised project work plan. They responded to changes in costs and prices by revising the project scope and increased prefinancing when imprest account funds were found to be limited. Given the above observations, this validation rates the combined performance of the borrower and the executing agencies satisfactory, although this is a borderline rating.
B. Performance of the Asian Development Bank

30. The PCR rated ADB performance satisfactory. The project was generally well designed although its implementation was impeded by start-up issues and by the long time gap between appraisal and the project’s inception. ADB responded realistically by revising the scope of the project in 2009 and extended the project’s closing. ADB fielded 14 review missions and carried out site visits with local government officials, WUAs, and WUAFs. ADB was also responsive to the need for quicker disbursements and increased the amount of the imprest account balance to 10% of the respective plan and grant amounts, thus, ensuring the completion of the project. This validation rates the performance of ADB satisfactory.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Overall Assessment and Ratings

31. The project was important as it contributed to food security and helped reduce poverty in the project districts. It supported institutional arrangements for a decentralized public sector administration, and improved environment and water management.

32. The PCR assessed the project performance highly relevant, effective, and likely sustainable. On efficiency, the PCR described its assessment but did not provide a rating. This validation considers the project relevant, effective, and efficient. However, this validation highlights a concern over the project sustainability. Its overall project rating is successful.

Overall Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>PCR</th>
<th>IED Review</th>
<th>Reason for Disagreement and/or Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Highly relevant</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>Project implementation suffered from delays during 2007–2008 due to delayed availability of counterpart funds. This risk was recognized but was not sufficiently mitigated at the design stage. Loan and grant disbursement arrangements were also found to be too cumbersome, contributing to slow implementation (paras. 17–18).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness in achieving project outcome and outputs</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency in achieving outcome and outputs</td>
<td>Not rated</td>
<td>Efficient</td>
<td>Average allocations for O&amp;M did not increase by as much as sought by RP2Is, and allocation to the schemes that are the responsibility of the districts remained inadequate. There was also no clear information on the extent WUAs can independently provide adequate O&amp;M for the tertiary canals (para. 25).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary assessment of sustainability</td>
<td>Likely sustainable</td>
<td>Less than likely sustainable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall assessment</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Not rated</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>See paras. 26–28.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Borrower and executing agency** | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |  
---|---|---|  
**Performance of ADB** | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |  
**Quality of PCR** | Less than satisfactory | See para. 37. |  

ADB = Asian Development Bank, IED = Independent Evaluation Department, O&M = operation and maintenance, PCR = project completion report.

Note: From May 2012, IED views the PCR rating terminology of "partly" or "less" as equivalent to "less than" and uses this terminology for its own rating categories to improve clarity.

Source: ADB Independent Evaluation Department.

### B. Lessons

33. The PCR identified a number of lessons derived from the implementation of the project. While all of these are appropriate, this validation highlights mainly two of these as they have wide applicability across developing countries and within ADB. The first lesson deals with the reinforced conviction that WUA and/or WUAF-guided participatory irrigation management can be successfully implemented at the district level and in the lower levels in developing countries. The participation of farmers in these schemes improved project implementation as compared to the situation when there was exclusive reliance on administrators and contractors. The second lesson relates to the need to avoid overwrought arrangement for project disbursements. In this project, prorated financing arrangements from three different fund sources across each category of expenditure constrained the flow of funds. The size of imprest accounts should also be large enough to provide adequate cash flow for the executing agencies to operate while disbursement applications are being processed. This is particularly applicable for sector projects.

### C. Recommendations for Follow-Up

34. The PCR has made a number of recommendations and some are highlighted in this validation. In the 27 project districts, only about one-third of the irrigation areas enjoyed the support of the project. Building on the experience gained, it may be expedient and useful to extend coverage to the uncovered irrigated areas within the project districts via a follow-on investment. Such a replication will not only have higher chances of success due to demonstration effects, but would be economical as the capacity of the local agencies, contractors, and others are already built. More importantly, it will also serve as an incentive for the government agencies to sustain the policy reforms undertaken and the gains achieved.

35. Another general recommendation is on the scope of irrigation projects. It is suggested that future projects should also include the following: (i) prevention of illegal conversion of agricultural land to other uses, (ii) support for the protection of water catchment areas, and (iii) assistance to the agriculture sector outside irrigation concerns (e.g., agriculture value chain and crop diversification). Doing so will make these irrigated agriculture projects more in step with the current emphases on conservation and climate change.

### V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

#### A. Monitoring and Evaluation Design, Implementation, and Utilization

36. The PCR did not provide information on how the project monitoring and evaluation system was developed, but reported that a project performance management system (PPMS) was put in place. Additional information received by this validation clarified that the project’s component C (project coordination and monitoring) supported the development of the PPMS
at the national, provincial, and district levels. The national PCMO utilized the PPMS. Provincial and district PPMS reports were used as inputs to the government’s PCR. It is not clear, however, how much the PPMS contributed to project decision making during the course of its implementation.

B. Comments on Project Completion Report Quality

37. The PCR was generally well written. It is logical and broadly followed the Project Administration Instructions 6.70A guidelines. The lessons identified are pertinent and recommendations are consistent with the analysis. However, it has a number of substantive gaps. For example, it did not explicitly rate the subcriteria of efficiency, although it provided the necessary write-ups on the themes. Likewise, it did not analyze nor mention anything about the project design under the section on relevance. It also lacked details on the monitoring and evaluation of project implementation. This validation rates the PCR less than satisfactory.

C. Data Sources for Validation

38. The following documents have been used in the preparation of the evaluation: the PCR, RRP, the government PCR, and reports of the project review mission.

D. Recommendation for Independent Evaluation Department Follow-Up

39. At the time of this validation, the Government of the Netherlands, the project cofinancier, has expressed an interest in evaluating the project jointly with ADB. This would allow for a deeper assessment of project impacts and progress in participation, both at the level of beneficiaries (farmers) and the subnational governments. The latter has implications on the evaluative assessment on the project’s sustainability prospects. A project performance evaluation would also help refine the design of a follow-on project that is under preparation. This validation, therefore, recommends that a project performance evaluation be undertaken jointly with the Government of the Netherlands.