

PAN AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT – WEST AFRICA (PAID-WA)



CASE STUDY: RUMPI AREA PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENT (August 2002)

UA 1 = 88.736 FCFA

UA 1 = 1.32248 USD

USD 1 = 670.510 FCFA

Fiscal Year: January 1 to 31 December

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Fund
CCSP	Cocoa Coffee Seedling Project
CEAC	Community Education Action Centres
GOC	Government of Cameroon
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IRAD	Agricultural Research Institute For Development
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
RAPD	Rumpi Area Participatory Development
SOWEDA	South West Development Authority

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The South West Development Authority (SOWEDA) is a support structure of the Government of Cameroon (GOC) with the sole responsibility of instituting rural development projects in the South West Province. Since its creation in 1986, SOWEDA has been involved in a number of development projects. One of such projects, which is also our point of focus in this report, is the *Rumpi Area Participatory Development (RAPD) Project* at its planning/implementation stage.

The Project has four basic components: Capacity Building and Community Development; Agricultural Production and Productivity Enhancement; Access to Markets and Support to Local Initiatives; and Project Management.

The total cost of the Project is approximately 17,702.52 billion CFA, and financed by GOC 15%, African Development Bank (ADB) 75% and Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) 8% and the beneficiaries 2%.

The major partners in the execution of this project include: governmental agencies such as the Provincial Delegation of Agriculture and Rural Development, Provincial Delegation of Public Works, Provincial Delegation of Public Health, IRAD, CCSP, MIFED. There are also non-governmental organizations/associations, village development associations, rural councils, service providers (CIGs, etc), consultants/contractors, and other institutions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Poverty eradication is a fundamental objective¹ of the GOC's development strategy. In the process of elaborating a poverty reduction strategy within the framework of the HIPC initiative, GOC carried out participatory consultations and poverty studies in all its ten provinces in 2000. These studies concluded that both income and non-income indicators of poverty in the Rumpi area are below the national averages. The average annual income in Rumpi area is 145,000FCFA, as against the national average of 148,000FCFA. Based on this, GOC identified a new project that would contribute to poverty reduction for rural households of the area. In 2001, the GOC undertook a feasibility study for the identified project and submitted to ADB, a request for financial support to implement the project along with a feasibility study for the identified project. Following a review of the feasibility study report, a number of issues related to project consistency with GOC and ADB's policies and strategies, its design and linkage with the National Participatory Development Programme (a multi-donor sector investment programme) were identified for further analysis to be undertaken during a preparation mission. The ADB filed a mission in April 2002 to assist a national team formed by the GOC for the project preparation. The ADB appraised the project in August 2002.

EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

The Government of Cameroon (GOC) implemented the Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP) during the period 1992 – 2002 in the Rumpi area to improve the living conditions of the rural population. This Project, which was funded by ADB, was approved at a time when its beneficiaries and the GOC were facing difficult economic crisis. These difficulties affected the performance of the IRDP. The Project activities were frequently suspended and for prolonged periods, following sanctions imposed by ADB for arrears. Also, because of lack

¹ Project Global Objective: Poverty is sustainably reduced in South West Province

of resources, beneficiaries' participation in project activities were limited. Consequently, most planned investments (improvement of feeder roads, water schemes and health care centres in particular) were cancelled.

Moreover, in the process of elaborating a Poverty Reduction Strategy paper within the framework of the HIPC initiative (GOC carried out participatory consultations and poverty studies in all its ten provinces in 2000). The major findings of this study for the Rumpi area, was that although well suited for agricultural production, the area presents the following unique development challenges: (i) agricultural production and productivity are low; (ii) economic (feeder roads and markets) and social (health centres) infrastructures are poor; (iii) increasing demands for farm land, fuel and construction wood is a risk to deforestation; and (iv) both income and non-income indicators of poverty in the area are in all cases (below the national averages, with an average annual income of 145,000FCFA against the national averages of 148,000FCFA).

Based on the above, the GOC identified a new project that would contribute to poverty reduction for rural households of the Rumpi area. In 2001, the GOC undertook a feasibility study for the identified project and submitted to the ADB a request for financial support to implement the project. The Bank appraised the project in August 2002.

Hence, the Rumpi Area Participatory Development Project came up as a result of the pitfalls of the Integrated Rural Development Project during the period 1992 – 2002. The Rumpi Project was initially designed to start in 2004, to run for six years but it actually took off in June 2005 and is slated to run until June 2010. However, between 2006/2007, the Project underwent a 17-month suspension from ADB due to the fact that the GOC was not fulfilling her own part of the obligations towards the Project.

Due to this suspension and the devaluation of the US Dollar, the budget was cut by about 3 billion FCFA.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out with the aid of a checklist and a group discussion with the heads of the respective components of the Project.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

2.1. This group based its study on two of the four* components² of the Project:

- *Component C: Access to Market and Support to Local Initiatives*
- *Component D: Project Management*

2.2. Component C: Access to Market and Support to Local Initiatives

2.2.1 Goals and Objectives

This Component seeks to increase small holders' access to agricultural inputs and outputs markets and improve their socio-economic conditions through improvement of agricultural marketing infrastructures (spot improvement/rehabilitation of feeder roads, rural markets, development and management of a Market Information System), and support to local initiatives that may contribute to improving the living conditions of the target groups.

2.2.2 Activities

The activities under this component fall under two main areas:

- *Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Improvement*
- *Local Initiative Support*

^{*2} Project Components: Capacity Building & Community Development, Agricultural Production and Productivity Enhancement, Access to Markets and Support to Local Initiatives and Project Management

A. Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Improvement

Essential activities planned under this sub-component include spot improvement/rehabilitation of 237km feeder roads, community roads (including bridges and swamp crossings) linking production areas and villages with market facilities and transit storage. Other market access improvement activities include testing and diffusion of post-harvest loss reduction technologies and dissemination of information on crop prices and other related market information through mass media. The Market Information System will consist of collecting and disseminating prevailing market prices for farm inputs and outputs, information on major produces, traders and exporters, within 72 hours of collection. Dissemination of such information would allow the target groups, particularly smallholders to make sound decision regarding when and where to sell their produce, in what form to sell, what prices to negotiate, where to buy inputs and at what price. Staff of the Provincial Delegation of Agriculture, in collaboration with councils, will undertake this activity.

B. Local Initiatives Support

The Project will make available partial and conditional financing for eligible investments that would contribute to improving the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiary communities. Following a review of existing community development programmes and the achievements of IRDP, budgetary provisions have been made for the rehabilitation of 34 potable water supply schemes, 14 basic health care centres and 4 Community Education and Action Centres (CEACs). The Project will also support malaria control activities including reduction of mosquito breeding sites using recurrent application of larvicides and drainage of filling places where water accumulates, conduct of educational programmes related to the use of insecticides-treated mosquito nets as preventive measures. Types of investment to be supported through the project include rehabilitation/construction of water supply schemes, improvement of

sanitation, and support to basic health services including construction and equipment of health centres. Proposed investments will have to satisfy pre-specified eligibility criteria, which include: (i) technical feasibility and an acceptable economic rate of return; (ii) a completed environmental impact assessment and inclusion of adequate mitigation measures where necessary; (iii) full beneficiary involvement and effective participation starting with project identification and a prior commitment to contribute 20% of the costs, including a minimum of 3% in cash; and (iv) a demonstrated ability and plan to operate and maintain the investment. Having identified investments eligible for funding, communities will include the investments in their annual work programme and budget, make adequate arrangements to ensure that the required contribution is raised, ensure that the infrastructure will be operated and maintained over the long-term by organizing beneficiaries participation in their construction/rehabilitation and maintenance, and supervise all on-going community-level investment contracts financed under the Project.

2.2. Component D: Project Management

This is the implementation unit of the Project and is divided into 3 departments i.e. **Operations, Disbursement** and **Accounting**.

2.2.1 Goal and Objectives

This component oversees smooth functioning and running of the whole Project i.e. general administration and supervision, supervised by the Project Coordinator.

2.2.3 Responsibilities

This component seeks to oversee all other components to make sure that they do their jobs properly to ascertain its main goals and objectives of the Project. It ensures that the Project maintains a reasonable and progressive relationship with other institutions like SOWEDA, ADB, implementing partners and supervisory ministry. In addition, Project Management signs protocol agreements with partners every year, and based on these, ADB does disbursement of funds. This component also handles the procurement of services, goods and works. It handles the general constraints of the project.

2.3 SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

The project is designed on demand-driven and participatory approach. Through the training programmes under the project, farmers, women traders, managers of the village banks, community based organizations will build upon their experience and strengthen their capacity to undertake their own development activities. In line with existing national strategies, they will form users committees to develop village development plan, manage and monitor their implementation as well as participate in their evaluation.

2.3 General Constraints of the Project

- ❖ A baseline study was done in 1999 but the Project kicked off in 2005. Hence no actual baseline study was conducted before the kick-off of the actual project in 2005. As a result, the six-year gap was too wide, and within that time there would have been economic changes, environmental changes, etc. which have caused disparities from the time of the baseline study to the time of the actual project start. During the mid-term review in December 2007, ADB emphasized the need for another baseline study to be conducted.

- ❖ During the appraisal of the Project, there was no procurement expert on the team. Now at the implementation stage, there are difficulties in the procurement of services, goods and work.
- ❖ The procurement procedure is too long. There is a lot of bureaucracy on the part of ADB. Any minor error or omission in the procurement process results in cancellation by ADB, and hence takes you back to square one.
- ❖ The Project kicked off without an M & E officer attached to it, per se. SOWEDA has one and ADB assumed he would cover the Rumpi Project as well. However, an internal M & E officer had just assumed duty at the Rumpi Project office and was 4 days old in service at the time of this study.
- ❖ The present M & E officer is facing a lot of difficulties due to the fact that tools and indicators to be used in M & E were not spelt out in the log frame.
- ❖ The GOC is not honoring its financial obligations towards the Project.
- ❖ A good number of the Project staffs are not used to Project environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The Rumpi Area Participatory Development Project is of great importance to the South West Province, and will go a long way to improve on the livelihoods of its inhabitants. So far, a lot of time and money has been invested in the Project but with little significant output. The Project was designed using the demand-driven and participatory approach. All stakeholders were involved in the identification and designing of the Project. So far, the Project is still at its implementation phase, and as such, we cannot yet tell if the Project is a success or not.

However, from the on-going activities, provision of new technologies³ and expertise put in place, we can assume that the RAPD Project will outdo the IRDP from which it derives its origin by putting in place a sustainable system.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore suggested that in order to improve on the quality of performance of the RAPD project the following measures should be taken into consideration;

- A new baseline studies should be conducted in accordance with ADB's proposal (taken from the last mid-term review conveyed in November 2007)
- ADB should review its procurement procedures to relate with the country's political, legal and socio-economic policies.

³ Installation of a Geographical Information System, GIS, Marketing Information System, MIS

- Workshops, Seminars and Trainings should be conducted on a regular basis to keep team members abreast and familiar with the project environment.

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Field Studies – Rumpi Project at its Planning Stage

Team 2 Checklist

Introduction

- Background of the organization
- Mission and vision of the organization (goals and objectives of the organization)
- Components of the organization
- Scope of the organization (i.e. the area of study)
- How many projects have been implemented?
- How many have failed and how many have been successful?
- What is the present project all about?
- What are the goals and objectives of the present project?
- What is the design of the project?
- What are the stakeholders of the project?

1. Duration:

- a. What is the duration of the project?
- b. At what stage is the project now?
- c. Have you been able to achieve all you have planned so far?
- d. What are the reasons for the delay (if any)?
- e. Is the remaining time sufficient to meet all the objectives or will you request for an extension?

2. Activities

- a. What are the main activities you carry out in this project?
- b. How have the activities been designed and planned (participatory or conventional)?
- c. Do the activities have a direct relationship with the objectives and goals of the project? If no, why? And if yes, how?

3. Resources

- a. What is the total cost of the project?
- b. Who are the main funding agents / bodies?
- c. What resources are available in terms of materials, finance, and human?

4. Indicators

- a. Based on the activities planned, what has been put in place to see that the activities have been carried out and have attained their objectives?
- b. How were these indicators decided upon?
- c. How was the quality of the indicators decided upon?
- d. The decision on the indicators, how participatory was it?
- e. How are the indicators linked to each stage/level of the activities?

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. Does the project have an M & E Framework?
- b. Is the M&E external or internal?

Suggest to have an internal M&E to guide at each stage of the project.

- c. At what intervals do you carry out M&E?

General Questions

- a. Is there any software package used in the project?
- b. Is there any secondary data available i.e. logical framework?