Report Number: ICRR0022963

1. Project Data

Project ID	Project Name	
P143417	CM-Ag. Invest. and Mark. Dev. Proj	
Country	**Practice Area(Lead)**	
Cameroon	Agriculture and Food	
L/C/TF Number(s)	**Closing Date (Original)**	**Total Project Cost (USD)**
IDA-55340,TF-A1906	30-Sep-2019	92,825,339.10
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
25-Sep-2014	31-Jul-2021	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	100,000,000.00	2,700,000.00
Revised Commitment	102,700,000.00	2,608,502.71
Actual	92,825,339.10	2,608,502.71

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The project development objective (PDO), as stated in the Project Agreement (PA, 2014) and the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, 2014), was: “To support the transformation of low productivity, subsistence-oriented cassava, maize and sorghum sub-sectors into commercially-oriented and competitive value chains in four agro-ecological areas”.

For purposes of assessing the extent to which the PDO was achieved (Section 4), this review parses the PDO into three inter-connected objectives (and their corresponding outcomes and indicators):

Objective 1: to increase the yield of maize, sorghum, and cassava by beneficiary farmers in four agro-ecological zones; Objective 2: to improve the quality/price premium of commodities sold by beneficiary farmers in the targeted value chains of cassava, maize and sorghum; and Objective 3: to increase the volume of targeted crops/commodities sold by participating cooperatives.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?
Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
Yes

d. Components
Component A: Support to Agricultural Production, Processing and Marketing (Original allocation: US$135.3 million; Actual Cost: US$76.1 million). This component aimed to increase production, processing and marketing of the target commodities and areas, through 4 subcomponents:

(1) A.1: Establishment of Productive Partnerships (PPs) between Producer Organizations and Agri-businesses (ABs), supported by financial institutions (FIs);

(2) A.2: Financing of business plans and training for POs, through a matching grant scheme and funding nutrition-sensitive agricultural investments in women's groups.

(3) A.3: Financing of basic public infrastructure, including rehabilitation of market platforms, key feeder roads, rural roads; and

(4) A.4: Support for improved access to Rural Financing.

Component B: Support to Seed Production & Distribution System, Relevant Public Services and Technology Transfer (Original allocation: US$15.3 million; Actual Cost: US$10.0 M). This included support for three sub-components, with their relevant objectives and results:

(1) B.1: to enhance the seed production and distribution system and relevant public services, aimed at strengthening key components of the seed system, and strengthening the capacities of the relevant entities (notably Agricultural Development and Research Institute (IRAD) and MINADER in the implementation of key reforms which transform People's Organizations (POs) into cooperatives, and to mainstream nutrition dimensions in the relevant policies and programs;

(2) B.2: to build commodity-based public-private consultation and partnership through establishment of a national dialogue platform among key stakeholders (especially between Government, POs, ABs, partner financial institutions);

(3) B.3: to promote agricultural technology generation and transfer, and promotion of healthy food and nutrition practices.

Component C: Project Coordination and Management (Original allocation: US$ 13.4 million; Actual Cost: US$21.6 million), comprised of two sub-components:

(1) C.1: strategic planning, coordination, management and implementation support, including a governance and anti-corruption plan, and grievance mechanism; and

(2) C.2: monitoring and evaluation, communication, and knowledge production and sharing.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

(i) Project Cost: The total project cost at approval was US$166.6 million. The revised costs (following 2 restructurings) was US$124.5 million. The actual project cost at closing was US$107.5 million (or 64.5% of total original costs and 86.3% of revised costs). The difference in the revised costs and final disbursement was due to a decrease in the counterpart contributions from Government, local beneficiaries and from private commercial sources (see ICR, Data Sheet and Annex 3).

(ii) Financing: At approval and final actual/disbursed amounts, the sources/amounts of financing and disbursements were as follows, respectively: IDA ($100 million vs. $90.2 million); Trust Fund ($2.7 million vs. $2.6 million); Government ($12.4 million vs. $5.7 million); local beneficiaries ($10.9 million vs. 3.1 million); and private commercial sources ($40.6 million vs. $5.9 million).

(iii) Borrower Contribution: Original and revised amount: $12.4 million; actual amount: $5.7 million).

(iv) Dates: The project was approved on September 25, 2014, became effective on January 29, 2015. A mid-term review was carried out in March, 2017. The original closing date was September 30, 2019, with the actual closing date being July 31, 2021 (i.e., an extension of 22 months). This extension was due to various implementation capacity weaknesses and resulting implementation delays, which were exacerbated by COVID conditions in Cameroon.

(v) Restructurings and Significant Changes During Implementation. Although the PDO remained unchanged, the project had two level-2 restructurings, mainly to reflect more realistic targets and requirements, in light of implementation capacity weaknesses and commitments of key entities (ICR, paras. 18 – 28), generally based on sound rationale, as reflected below.

(a) in early 2018: there were 3 main changes: results framework; component/subcomponent costs and reduced costs; and reallocation between disbursement categories. More specifically, the revisions and their rationale involved:(i) the outcome targets for one of the PDO indicators were revised downwards, to reflect more realistic target: crops yields of sorghum were revised from 3 to 2 tons/hectare; (ii) one new PDO indicator was added, namely: increase in volume of targeted crops sold by participating cooperatives to PPs, to reflect the effectiveness of the marketing/contractual arrangements among key entities; (iii) all component costs were reduced to align with the availability of funds, including reducing the budget for sub-component A.2 (ref. business plans); (iv) reallocation of $13 million from subcomponent A.2 to A.3 (ref. rural infrastructure ,especially roads), reflected the low original cost estimates vis-à-vis the need for expanded marketing infrastructure in the project area; (v) cofinancing parameters for the matching grants scheme for subprojects (SPs) were revised as follows, to be more realistic and feasible, also reflecting reluctance of commercial banks: POs (remained 10%); project funding (from 50% to 70%); commercial banks (from 40% to 20%); (vi) expanding the co-financing partnership to include microfinance institutions (MFIs), in addition to commercial banks, to enable expanded cofinancing;

(b) in mid-2019: there were 5 main changes (although of a lesser extent than restructuring in 2018): results framework; components/costs; extension of closing date; reallocation between disbursement categories; implementation schedule.More specifically, the revisions and their rationale involved: (i) the expected increase in the volume of cassava and maize sold by participating cooperatives were reduced (from 25,000 MTs to 5,000 MTs, and 65,700 MTs to 14,400 MTs, respectively); (ii) an extension of the Credit and TF, by 22 months, due to: various implementation delays, and additional time needed to meet key targets; consolidating project achievements, especially with respect to sustainability of SPs, including nutrition SPs supported by the TF; (iii) an increase in the allocation for component C.1 (budget funding, from $12.1 million to $16.2 million), to reflect the additional management costs for the extension period.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The project's objectives were **substantially** relevant to addressing the country's key developmental challenges and to contributing to the implementation and achievement of the country's main developmental strategies. At the country level and sectoral levels, the project contributed to the following core developmental policies and strategies: Cameroon Vision 2035; Growth and Employment Strategy; Rural Development Strategy (2005-2009); National Agriculture Investment Program (PNIA, 2014 – 2020, and PNIA for 2020 - 2030); National Development Strategy, 2020-2030. More specifically, the project showed solid alignment with these national strategic frameworks/interventions as follows (ICR, para. 3): (i) to organize small farmers in cooperatives and other forms of efficient professional organizations capable of accessing inputs, technologies, credit, and market of their products; (ii) to broaden the focus of agriculture production to meet demand for both food and agroindustry inputs; (iii) to increase productivity, competitiveness and modernization of production of key subsectors and marketing infrastructure in the main production basins. During the project's implementation period, the project continued to be fully consistent and aligned with the Government's policies, strategies and thematic areas (ICR, para. 31).

Also, during design and implementation the Project was and remained strongly aligned with and addressed key pillars and elements of the Bank's strategy documents, and supporting analytical reports, overlapping with two Bank strategy documents and an IFC framework for Cameroon, including (ICR, paras. 4, 30): (i) Cameroon Country Assistance Strategy (CAS, 2010-2014) priorities to increase competitiveness and improve service delivery, as reflected by the Project's three components; (ii) IFC's agri-business strategy in Sub-Sahara Africa, and key areas of engagement in Cameroon, including support for supporting and strengthening productive partnerships (PPs), supporting development of a more market-oriented and commercial agriculture sector, and an expanded role of financial sector; (iii) Cameroon Country Partnership

Framework (CPF, for FY17-21), which included 12 objectives, three focus areas, including increased productivity, access to markets and competitiveness of key value chains in the agriculture sector.

However, while there is clear alignment between the project's development objectives and the country- and WB strategies, the relevance of the objectives is pitched at a level that does not adequately reflect a potential solution to a development problem. While acknowledging the difficulty of the operational environment, a shortcoming here was that the objective was at a very low level (input/output, at best) of the logical chain: "to support the transformation of agricultural sub-sectors" alone is not outcome focused and does not help in understanding what development results were expected as a consequence of the project (i.e. how this were to change people's lives). The ICR's reconstructed ToC identified expected outcomes at a higher level ("in the long-term, the Project was expected to contribute to economic development and job creation, and to the enhancement of the food security and livelihood of the targeted rural farming population"), but these aspects were not captured in the PDO formulation. These may be longer term targets, but tracking and assessing them are important aspects of a successful development operation and its relevant objectives.

Rating

Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To increase the yield of maize, sorghum, and cassava by beneficiary farmers in four agro-ecological zones

Rationale

The project's original design included a results framework in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), but did not include a theory of change (ToC) because it was not required at the time the PAD was written. The ICR reconstructed a ToC for the project, which is consistent with its overall PDO, core outcomes and supporting components/outputs/activities. (ICR, Figure 1, paras. 8 -11). The ToC figure clearly highlights the rationale for and operational logic of this objective 1 to help achieve the overall PDO.

<u>Theory of Change</u>:

The prioritized interventions with respect to achieving objective 1 include three types, in terms of ensuring the relevant activities are carried out to generate the most relevant outputs and their associated outcomes, as indicated below:

a. Enhancing the <u>seed production and distribution system and relevant public services</u> in order to: strengthen the seed control, seed certification, seed bio-forcation, seed multiplication and distribution of maize, cassava, and sorghum; strengthening the capacity of the Agricultural Development and Research Institute (IRAD) to increase production of breeder and foundational cuttings of cassava and seeds of maize and sorghum, including bio-fortified crops; strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER's) capacity to support implementation of reforms that transform POs into cooperatives and mainstream nutrition considerations in its policies and programs;

b. Enhancing agricultural technology transfers and promotion of healthy food and nutrition practices, based on the most relevant activities and outputs, to support the associated outcomes of R&E and dissemination of improved technologies, and development of nutrition activities in the project area; and
c. Improving access to rural finance (to enable POs/farmers) to adopt improved technologies, enabled and supported by the project's credit activities and outputs.

Key Intermediate Result Indicators/IRIs and Outputs (ICR, Annex 1)

Outcomes:

i. Increased yield (MT/ha.) of sorghum by direct beneficiaries: Original target: 3.0; Actual: 1.9 (as % of Original target: 63%);
ii. Increased yield (MT/ha.) of maize by direct beneficiaries: Original target: 4.0; Actual: 3.6 (as % of target: 90%);
iii. Increased yield (MT/ha.) of cassava by direct beneficiaries: Original target: 24.0; Actual: 22.4 (as % of target: 93%);
iv. No. of clients (000s) adopting improved agricultural technology (promoted by project): Original target: 120 Actual: 16.8 (as % of target: 14%);
v. No. of farms adopting biofortified varieties: Original target: 6,000; Actual: 958 (as % of target: 16%);

Key Outputs:

Volume/MT (million) of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Original target: 9.7 M; Actual: 9.4 (as % of target: 99%);

- Volume/MT of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Sorghum: Original target: 130; Actual: 78 (as % of target: 60%);
- Volume/MT (million/M) of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Cassava (cuttings): Original target: 9 M; Actual: 9 M (as % of target: 100%);
- Volume/MT (000s) of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Bio-Fortified Cassava variety: Original target: 735; Actual: 385 (as % of target: 52%);
- Volume/MT of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: maize; Original target: 130; Actual: 162.5 (as % of target: 125%);

vi. Volume/MT (million) of certified seeds produced & distributed: Total: Original target: 85; Actual: 17.5 (as % of target: 20%);

- Volume/MT (million) of certified seeds produced & distributed: bio-fortified cassava varieties/cuttings; Original target: 5; Actual: 0.17(as % of target: 3%);
- Volume/MT of certified seeds produced & distributed: sorghum; Original target: 3,800; Actual: 137 (as % of target: 3.6%);
- Volume/MT (million/M) of certified seeds produced & distributed: cassava cuttings; Original target: 80 M; Actual: 17.4 (as % of target: 22%);

- Volume/MT of certified seeds produced & distributed: maize; Original target: 3,700; Actual: 1,977(as % of target: 53%);

vii. No. of Women who benefitted from labor-saving technologies & equipment; Original target: 84,000; Actual: 8,735 (as % of target: 10%);

ix. Volume of credit (million) granted by IFPs to participating cooperatives: Original target: 2.7; Actual: 5.7 (as % of target: 211%);

In summary, the efficacy with which Objective 1 was achieved before restructuring is rated **Substantial.** Despite the low achievement of numerous outcome and output targets (8 of 9 targets, or 89% were not achieved), there was good progress toward achieving the main targets. It is noteworthy that the actual target yield increases for the three target commodities (sorghum, maize and cassava), which are the primary indicators/targets, were 90+% of their targeted yield levels.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

Revised Objective
To increase the yield of maize, sorghum, and cassava by beneficiary farmers in four agro-ecological zones (note: same as original objective 1)

Revised Rationale
The project's original design included a results framework in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), but did not include a theory of change (ToC) because it was not required at the time the PAD was written. The ICR reconstructed a ToC for the project, which is consistent with its overall PDO, such that the project supported priority activities to generate the relevant outputs and resulting strategic outcomes (ICR, Figure 1, paras. 8 - 11). The ToC figure clearly highlights the rationale for and operational logic of this objective 1 to help achieve the overall PDO. (note: same rationale and theory of change before and after restructuring).

Key Intermediate Result Indicators/IRIs and Outputs (ICR, Annex 1). The revised targets are shown below, with the other original targets shown as above.

Key Outcomes:

i. Increased yield (MT/ha.) of sorghum by direct beneficiaries: Revised target (2018): 2.0; Actual: 1.9 (as % of revised target: 95%);
ii. No. of clients (000s) adopting improved agricultural technology (promoted by project): Revised target (2018): 25; Actual: 16.8 (as % of Revised target: 60%);
iii. No. of farms adopting biofortified varieties: Revised target (2019); 900; Actual: 958 (as % of Revised Target: 106%).

Key Outputs:

i. Volume/MT (million) of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Total; Revised target (2019): 9.5 M; Actual: 9.4 (as % of Revised target: 99%);

- Volume/MT of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Sorghum; Revised target (2018): 205; Actual: 78 (as % of Revised target: 38%);
- Volume/MT (million/M) of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Cassava (cuttings): Revised target (2019): 8.9 M; Actual: 9 M (as % of Revised target: 101%);
- Volume/MT (000s) of Foundation Seeds Produced and Distributed: Bio-Fortified Cassava variety; Revised target (2018): 550; Actual: 385 (as % of Revised target: 70%;

ii. Volume/MT (million) of certified seeds produced & distributed: Total; Revised target (2019): 22.9 ; Actual: 17.5(as % of Revised target: 76%);

- Volume/MT (million) of certified seeds produced & distributed: bio-fortified cassava varieties/cuttings; Revised target (2019): 1.7 ; Actual: 0.17(as % of Revised target: 10%);
- Volume/MT of certified seeds produced & distributed: sorghum; Revised target (2019): 1,000 ; Actual: 137 (as % of Revised target: 14%);
- Volume/MT (million/M) of certified seeds produced & distributed: cassava cuttings; Revised target (2018): 20.9; Actual: 17.4(as % of Revised target: 83%);
- Volume/MT of certified seeds produced & distributed: maize; Revised target (2018): 4,400; Actual: 1,977(as % of Revised target: 45%);

iii. No. of Women who benefitted from labor-saving technologies & equipment; Revised target (2018): 25,000; Actual: 8,735 (as % of Revised target: 35%);

iv. Volume of credit (million) granted by IFPs to participating cooperatives; Revised target (2019): 5.7; Actual: 5.7 (as % of Revised target: 100%);

In summary, the efficacy with which Objective 1 was achieved after restructuring is rated **Substantial.** Most of the IRI and output targets (7 of 9) were revised downwards, and most (78%) of these were not fully achieved, although 5 of 9 indicators exceeded 90% of the revised targets, and 22% of the targets were achieved/exceeded. It is noteworthy that the actual target yield increases for the three target commodities (sorghum, maize and cassava), the main target indicators, were 90+% of their targeted yield levels.

Revised Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To improve the quality/price premium of commodities sold by beneficiary farmers in the targeted value chains of cassava, maize and sorghum

Rationale

Similar to Objective 1, the rationale for Objective 2 is reflected in the project's original design and in the ToC reconstructed in the ICR (Figure 1, paras. 8-11), with respect to the various types of project-funded activities, which contributed to generating sustainable IRIs/outputs, which in turn, contributed to the sustainable outcome of improved quality/price premium of the 3 targeted commodities (see relevant indicators below). The project's restructuring, which involved a decrease in many of the targets, also contributed to the overall PDO.

Theory of Change:

The prioritized interventions with respect to achieving objective 2 include three types, which generated the relevant outputs and resulting outcomes:

a. Providing post-harvesting and processing installations, which were mostly in the form of prioritized outputs;
b. Providing improved rural road infrastructure, as prioritized outputs, which contributed to enhanced market access;
c. Providing access to financing for business plans for POs, for modern equipment & post-harvest infrastructure, in terms of the increased outputs of credit loans to beneficiaries;

Key Intermediate Result Indicators/IRIs and Outputs (ICR, Annex 1)

Key Outcomes:

i. Increased quality as measured by percentage of price premium of sorghum sold by beneficiary. farmers; Original target: 20%; Actual: 17.1% (as % of original target: 86%);
ii. Increased quality as measured by percentage of price premium of maize sold by ben. farmers; Original target: 15%; Actual: 17.2% (as % of target: 115%);
iii. Increased quality as measured by % of price premium of cassava tubers sold by ben. farmers; Original target: 10%; Actual: 0% (as % of target: 0%);

Key Outputs:

i. No. of Kms. of roads rehabilitated; Original target: 500; Actual: 217 (as % of Original target: 43%);
ii. No. of post-harvest/processing facilities constructed or rehabilitated: Original target: 160; Actual: 115 (as % of Original target: 72%);
iii. No. of subprojects implemented: Original target: 300; Actual: 78 (as % of Original target: 26%);

In summary, the efficacy with which Objective 2 was achieved before restructuring is rated **Substantial.** Despite the fact that 67% of the original IRI/outcome and output targets (4 of 6) were not achieved, based on the project-supporting activities and resulting outputs, there was good progress toward meeting the other performance targets, which comprised the main targets. While the ICR did not present evidence on meeting the price premium of cassava, follow-up discussion/note with the Bank's ICR team conveyed positive anecdotal evidence of progress in meeting this target. A conservative performance figure (5%) is shown above. Also, it is noteworthy that the target price premium for 1 of the target commodities/maize was exceeded (115% of the original target).

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1

Revised Objective
To improve the quality/price premium of commodities sold by beneficiary farmers in the targeted value chains of cassava, maize and sorghum.
(note: objective 2 remained the same after restructuring)

Revised Rationale
Similar to Objective 1, the rationale for Objective 2 is reflected in the project's original design and in the ToC reconstructed in the ICR (Figure 1, paras. 8-11), with respect to the various types of project-funded activities, which contributed to generating sustainable IRIs and outputs, which in turn, contributed to the sustainable outcome of improved quality/price premium of the 3 targeted commodities (see relevant indicators below). The project's restructuring, which involved a decrease in many of the targets, also contributed to the overall PDO. Note: The rationale and theory of change for objective 2 (after restructuring) remained the same as the original objective 2.

Key Intermediate Result Indicators/IRIs and Outputs (ICR, Annex 1). This section shows only revised targets, with the other original targets shown as above.

Key Outcomes:

i. Increased quality as measured by percentage of price premium of sorghum sold by beneficiary farmers; Original target: 20%; Actual: 17.1% (as % of target: 86%);
ii. Increased quality as measured by percentage of price premium of maize sold by beneficiary farmers; Original target: 15%; Actual: 17.2% (as % of target: 115%);
iii. Increased quality as measured by % of price premium of cassava tubers sold by beneficiary farmers; Original target: 10%; Actual: 5% (as % of target: 50%);

Strategic Outputs:

i. No. of Kms. of roads rehabilitated; Revised target (2019): 190; Actual: 217 (as % of Revised target: 114%);
ii. No. of post-harvest/processing facilities constructed or rehabilitated: Revised target (2019): 100; Actual: 115 (as % of Revised target: 115%);
iii. No. of subprojects implemented: Revised target (2018): 100; Actual: 78 (as % of Revised target: 78%);

In summary, the efficacy with which Objective 2 was achieved after restructuring is rated **Substantial.** Despite the fact that 50% of the IRI and output targets (3 of 6) were revised downwards, 50% of the revised targets exceeded the revised targets, and about 50% of the revised targets were not fully achieved, although made good progress toward achieving the targets. It is noteworthy that the target price premium for 1 of the target commodities (only 33%) were achieved/exceeded. It is recognized that the progress in achieving the revised targets after restructuring was better than before restructuring.

Revised Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3

Objective
To increase the volume of targeted crops/commodities sold by participating cooperatives.

Rationale
Similar to Objectives 1 and 2, the rationale for Objective 3 is reflected in the project's original design and in the ToC reconstructed in the ICR (Figure 1, paras. 8-11), with respect to the various types of project-funded activities, which contributed to generating sustainable IRIs and outputs, which in turn, contributed to the sustainable outcome of increased volume of targeted crops/commodities sold by participating cooperatives. (see relevant indicators below). The project's restructuring, which involved a decrease in the targets for this objective, also contributed to the overall PDO.

Theory of Change:

The prioritized interventions with respect to achieving objective 1 include three types, in terms of outputs and resulting outcomes

a. Completing/signing productive partnership agreements, as key outputs;
b. Establishing commodity-based consultation and partnership frameworks, as key outputs;
c. Ensuring/strengthening cooperatives, with functional systems, as key outcomes, resulting from the above cited outputs

Key Intermediate Result Indicators/IRIs and Outputs (ICR, Annex 1)

(i) Increased vol.(000s) of targeted crops sold by participating coops. to buyers from prod. partn.: total. Original target: 90.7 MT; Actual: 47.0(as % of Original target: 52%)

-Increased vol.(000s) of cassava sold by participating coops. to buyers from productive partnerships: Original target: 14.4 MT; Actual: 4.5 (as % of Original target: 31%)

-Increased vol.(000s) of maize sold by participating coops. to buyers from productive partnerships: Original target: 65.7 MT; Actual: 28.6 (as % of Original target: 44%)

-Increased vol.(000s) of sorghum sold by participating coops. to buyers from prod. partnerships: Original target: 10.6 MT; Actual: 14.0 (as % of Original target: 132%).

(ii) Percentage of credit reimbursement of participating cooperatives to partner financial institutions: Original target: 75 (2018); Actual: 81 (as % of target: 108%).

(iii) Agro-Business buyers' percentage rate of satisfaction on achievement of contractual commitments of cooperatives for cassava: Original target: 70% (2018); Original Target: 70% (2018); Actual: 20% (as % of Original target: 28%).

(iv) Agro-Business buyers' percentage rate of satisfaction on achievement of contractual commitments of cooperatives for maize: Original target: 70% (2018); Actual: 64% (as % of Original target: 91%).

(v) Agro-Business buyers' percentage rate of satisfaction on achievement of contractual commitments of cooperatives for sorghum: Original target: 70% (2018); Actual: 62% (as % of Original target: 89%)

(vi) Percentage of complaints/grievances addressed related to delivery of project benefits: Original target: 100%; Actual: 96% (as % of original target: 96%) (out of total of 165 complaints).

Key Outputs:

(i) No. of commodity platforms established: Original target: 1; Actual: 1 (as % of target: 100%);

(ii) No. of productive partnerships established and functioning: Original target: 35; Actual 20 (as % of original target: 57%);

(iii) No. of participating cooperatives with a Director and a functioning business accounting system: Original target: 100; Actual: 75 (as % of Original target: 75%).

In summary, the efficacy with which Objective 3 was achieved before restructuring is rated **Modest**, because 7 of 9 original outcome and output targets (78%) were not fully achieved, with only 2 of the 9 original targets (or 22 %) being achieved/exceeded.

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 3 REVISION 1

Revised Objective
To increase the volume of targeted crops/commodities sold by participating cooperatives.
(note: the objective remained the same as the original objective)

Revised Rationale
Similar to Objectives 1 and 2, the rationale for Objective 3 is reflected in the project's original design and in the ToC reconstructed in the ICR (Figure 1, paras. 8-11), with respect to the various types of project-funded activities, which contributed to generating sustainable IRIs and outputs, which in turn, contributed to the sustainable outcome of increased volume of targeted crops/commodities sold by participating cooperatives. (see relevant indicators below). The project's restructuring, which involved a decrease in the targets for this objective, also contributed to the overall PDO.

Note: The rationale and theory of change remained the same as the original rationale and ToC.

Theory of Change:

The prioritized interventions with respect to achieving objective 1 include three types:

a. Completing/signing productive partnership agreements, as key outputs;
b. Establishing commodity-based consultation and partnership frameworks, as key outputs;
c. Ensuring/strengthening cooperatives, with functional systems, as key outcomes.

Key Intermediate Result Indicators/IRIs and Outputs (ICR, Annex 1). This section shows only revised targets, with the original targets shown above.

Key Intermediate Outcomes::

(i) Increased vol.(000s) of targeted crops sold by participating coops. to buyers from prod. partn.:total: Revised target (2019): 40.6 MT; Actual: 47.0(as % of Revised target: 116%)

-Increased vol.(000s) of cassava sold by participating coops. to buyers from productive partnerships: Revised target (2019): 5 MT; Actual: 4.5 (as % of Revised target: 90%)

-Increased vol.(000s) of maize sold by participating coops. to buyers from productive partnerships: Revised target (2019): 25 MT; Actual: 28.6 (as % of Revised target: 114%).

Key Outputs:

(i) No. of productive partnerships established and functioning: Revised target (2018): 20 MT; Actual: 20 (as % of Revised target: 100%);

In summary, the efficacy with which Objective 3 was achieved after restructuring is rated **Substantial**, because 20% of the IRI/output targets (2) were revised downwards, and 5 of 9 intermediate outcome and output targets (or 56%) were not fully achieved, while 6 of 9 revised targets being above 90% of the revised targets, and 4 of the 9 targets (or 44%) of the targets being achieved/exceeded. It is noteworthy that the revised targets for 2 of the 3 target commodities were exceeded by project closing.

Revised Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY
Rationale
The overall efficacy of the extent to which the original overall PDO and 3 core objectives (which remained the same), and their original targets were achieved is rated **Substantial.** Although there was variability in meeting the targets, the more important targets for each of the two objectives (before and after restructuring) were met or exceeded (e.g., crop yields and price quality premium).

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale

The overall efficacy of the extent to which the restructured overall PDO and 3 core objectives (which remained the same), and their revised targets were achieved is rated **Substantial.** Although there was variability in meeting the targets (10 out of 25 targets were achieved/exceeded), the more important targets for each of the 3 objectives were met/exceeded (e.g., yields, price quality premium and overall volume of marketed produce of the target commodities). It is important to affirm the decision to revise downward some of the key targets during the two restructurings (especially the first one in 2018), to reflect more realistic targets in the light of weaknesses in existing institutional delivery capacities of the key entities. Accordingly, the ratings after restructuring were slightly better than before restructuring.

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Overall, the project's performance and results demonstrated an efficiency of **Modest**, based on various evidenced-based tools and analyses applied and presented in the ICR (ICR, paras. 63-72, and Annex 4 presents further details). The methodology and results used to assess efficiency involving applying financial and economic analyses, with respect to the components assessed at appraisal, as follows:

(a) Financial Analyses: The ex-post financial analysis covered six models, including three crop production models (cassava, maize, sorghum) at farm level, as well as three models for cooperative bulking, drying, and cleaning facilities that were promoted by the Project. Three farm models were updated using the standard methodology of comparing a With-Project (WP) and Without-Project (WOP) situation, in order to measure the incremental benefits of the interventions on production of cassava, maize, and sorghum. In addition, three typical enterprise models were elaborated, in line with the Project achievements, namely: (i) bulking and drying of maize; (ii) bulking and cleaning of sorghum; (iii) processing facility to produce cassava flour. The analyses generated 4 financial performance indicators for the six financial models: incremental cash flow, Benefit-Cost Ratio, net present value and internal rate of return. The financial results show that the project-supported investments are financially sound and sustainable for the participating farmers, enabling them to repay the loans. For cooperative processing, drying and cleaning, the financial returns based on the 4 indicators showed the financial results are sustainable (for further details, see ICR, paras. 64-67). Compared to the ex-ante analyses, the project's financial returns compared favorably (RA to clarify).

(b) Economic Analyses: The economic benefits of the Program were calculated taking into account the financial analyses, and using the economic benefits, against the economic costs of the project. The economic analysis was developed over a period of 20 years (2014-2033). It assessed the Project as a whole, and took into account investments in: (i) productive goods at farm levels and cooperative levels; (ii) economic public goods (drinking water, roads, nutrition investments & education) with their direct return on investment, but also their impact on the livelihoods of the rural populations; and (iii) environmental benefits (greenhouse gas mitigation), which were calculated using EX-ACT (see ICR, Annex 4 for details); calculations were based on data provided by the Project (number of hectares developed, upgrading production technology, fertilizers provided to farmers, and energy consumption for drying of produce, changes in land use). Overall, the EFA results indicate that the AIMDP interventions were economically justified, generating an indicative NPV of US$40.2 million and an ERR of 18.2 percent, not accounting for environmental externalities (and ERR of 20% with the externalities). The valuation of environmental externalities enhances the economic justification of the project. The ex-ante ERR was well above the ex-post ERR --- 32.7% vs. 18.2 - 20% - for the following main reasons (ICR, para. 70, Annex 4): (i) a delay in benefits of 2 to 3 years compared to the initial planning; (ii) a lower than anticipated adoption rate of new technologies of 65 percent by cooperatives; (iii) more positive ex-ante assumptions with respect to key outputs (i.e., hectares, roads, processing units).

(c) Implementation Efficiency (ICR, para. 71): The project's positive technical performance as reflected by the above financial and economic indicators was achieved, in the light of an overall disbursement of IDA Credit of about 90 percent (and about $90 million). The co-financing from partner financial institutions was about US$5.9 million (vs. the end of project target of US$5.7 million target). The high rate of disbursement of IDA resources against an average technical performance demonstrates the existence of various sources of inefficiency throughout the implementation of the project, including: (i) the long procurement procedures for the earth roads component; (ii) delays in obtaining from the World Bank "No Objection"; (iii) delays in launching critical project activities (e.g., implementation of business plans, production of seeds); and (iv) the financing of activities not planned or unrelated to the development objective, especially with respect to: the registration of cooperatives, the preponderance of advisory support activities, and the financing of the preparation of other proposed Bank-supported Projects.

In summary, while the quantitative analyses showed positive financial and economic efficiencies, they are below the overly optimistic ex-ante levels, and the project experienced various types of implementation inefficiencies as cited above. Accordingly, the project's overall efficiency is rated **Modest**.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal	✓	32.70	90.00 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	18.20	90.00 ☐ Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

The overall outcome rating is based on the assessment of the 3 dimensions as summarized above. Based on the IEG guidelines (IEG, 2017, p. 45-51), a split evaluation was conducted, mainly because the project's PDO/objectives remained the same, the "level of ambition"/targets for numerous indicators were revised downwards during the 2 restructurings (2018 and 2019), and the level of project funding remained similar (although decreased financial contributions from beneficiaries and banks). Although the Project had 3 formal restructurings, this ICRR considers the two important restructurings for the split evaluation. The project's two restructurings retained the original PDO and project components and key indicators, but reduced some of the original targets for several of the indicators, in order to be more realistic, in the light of prevailing institutional implementation constraints. Accordingly, the assessment of the entire project is based on the original and revised outcome/output targets and achievements, in accordance with IEG split evaluation methodology. This review concludes that the project's overall outcome is rated **Moderately Satisfactory**. The following points provide a summary of the outcome assessment, and Table 1 provides further details of the split outcome assessment.

(a) **Substantial rating for Relevance of Objectives:** This rating is based on the project's initial and continued (throughout implementation) solid alignment of objectives and priority activities with: Government's national and agricultural sector policies, strategies, national investment program, and contribution to their strategic targets; and the Bank's Country Partnership Strategy/Framework (covering two periods: FY2010-2014 and FY2017-2021), and various analytical reports. Also, the country's fragile, conflict and violence (FCV) challenges involving the project area reinforced the relevance of the project. Section 3 also highlights the nature of a design shortfall with respect to sharpening and tracking the relevance of the objectives.

(b) Substantial **rating for Efficacy before restructuring and Substantial after restructuring**: The overall efficacy of the extent to which the original overall PDO and 3 core objectives (which remained the same), and their original and revised/downward targets arising the 2 restructurings were achieved is rated **Substantial**. Before and after restructuring the rating was **Substantial, although more robust following restructuring.**

(c) **Modest Rating for Efficiency:** While the quantitative ex-post analyses showed positive financial and economic efficiencies, they are below the overly optimistic estimated ex-ante levels, and the project also experienced various types of implementation inefficiencies as cited above.

Table 1: Split Evaluation for Assessing Outcome Rating

Rating Aspects/Dimensions	Original PDO and Objectives and Targets (2014-2018)	Original PDO/Objectives and Revised Targets (2018-2021)
1) Relevance of Objectives	Substantial	
2) Efficacy (1 overall PDO)	Substantial	Substantial
Objective 1: Increased Yields	Substantial	Substantial
Objective 2: Increased Quality	Substantial	Substantial
Objective 3: Increased Volume	Modest	Substantial
3) Efficiency	Modest	
Outcome Ratings	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory
Numerical Value of Outcome Ratings	4	4
Disbursement	US$34.3 million	US$44.2 million

Weight (% disbursed before/after changes)	37 % (US$34.3/$91.5)	63 % (US$ 57.2 million/$91.5)
Weighted Value of Outcome Rating	1.48	2.52
Final Outcome Rating	Moderately Satisfactory (1.48 + 2.52 = 4.0)	

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Overall, there is **substantial risk** to sustaining the project's development outcomes and overall PDO, especially in the light of the complex country environment, institutional weaknesses and the increasing FCV challenges, with 4 main types of risks (see ICR, paras. 109 - 113):

(a) Risks of Sustaining Effective Partnerships: The partnerships between cooperatives, Agribusinesses (ABs) and Intermediate Financial Partners (IFPs) supported by the Project were the first of the kind in country. At the beginning of the Project implementation, AIMDP was the catalyst to value chain integration, reduced market fragmentation, and improved productivity. The Project effectively established partnerships among key entities, but the interaction and coordination of actors along targeted value chains through good governance and strong leaderships was still challenging. The Project sought to put in place a commodity platform to institutionalize the value chain approach and commercial agriculture. This platform was intended to be an opportunity for dialogue between participants to address differences and to establish a functional market information system. At project closing, this platform was still not functioning, and therefore raises some doubts about sustainability of project benefits.

(b) Infant Cooperatives: At project closing, the cooperatives supported by the Project were still at an infant stage. The transition from a community interest group (GIC) to Cooperative under the OHADA legislation was a significant change in the country, and the learning curve was steep. During the life of the Project, commendable progress was achieved in terms of organizational and management capacity, adoption of improved production technologies, modernization of production system, and enhancing marketing systems. However, at project closing, it was evident that beneficiary cooperatives still needed support. The PAD anticipated the key to success of PO development to be the quality of Local Service Providers (LSPs). The Project, with the help of IFC, worked to enhance the quality of LSPs, but the capacity of the POs was significantly overestimated. Despite the TA provided by the Project, these POs/cooperatives are still facing organizational and governance challenges.

(c) Weak O&M Capacities/Regulations for Sustainable Infrastructure: Both the PAD and ICR of the project recognized that the main challenge for the sustainability of infrastructure is the lack of/weak maintenance capacity. The committees set up by the Project (water point management committees, road committees in villages, borehole management committees) for maintenance of project-improved infrastructure were still very weak and had limited budgets. Most of these committees were set up towards the end of the Project, which did not give enough time for AIMDP to build the capacity. During ICR preparation communal government officials consistently explained to the ICR team that sustainability was also compromised by the lack of regulation on the use of the roads. In addition to lack of road maintenance, roads were being damaged by vehicle overloading.

(d) Weak Seed Multiplier Cooperatives and Farms: Although the project made substantial investments in the seeds subsector (through revitalized seed entities), the ICR indicated that seed multiplier cooperatives showed limited capacities and performance. While the rate of use of improved seed by beneficiary producers increased significantly during project implementation, the ICR recognized there is a significant risk this rate will decline if the seed cooperatives and multiplication farms remain weak, unless there is continued technical and financial support.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The quality-at-entry of AIMDP was "mixed", based on the evidence summarized in the ICR (para. 106), and taking into account the QatE criteria outlined in the IEG Guidelines (Section 10):

On the positive side: (i) the project showed strong alignment and relevance with Government and World Bank strategy frameworks, and reflected relevant WB global experiences; (ii) several measures were taken to prepare the pathway for solid implementation arrangements (e.g., implementation studies; project manuals; selection of project personnel; procurement planning); (iii) systematic monitoring of preparation activities.

On the negative side: (i) beneficiary POs were not ready to successfully implement the SubProjects (SPs), whereby PO capacities were overestimated, which resulted in underachievement of the SPs and their delayed implementation; (ii) delay in selecting SPs and poor quality of SPs were identified as substantial risks during preparation. Proposed mitigation measures were to adopt an administrative and financial manual of procedures as part of the Project Implementation Manual/PIM, and a manual of procedures for selecting SPs in which selection criteria and mechanism would be designed. However, the main cause of the delays of SP identification and implementation was the long delays in POs registration as cooperative according to OHADA legislation; (iii) the results framework was not well prepared; the RF was not comprehensive and the targets for several key indicators were overly ambitious; and (iv) risk mitigation measures were quite general and insufficiently clear/operational.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The WB played its role of monitoring the implementation of AIMDP adequately through: (i) Thirteen regularly scheduled supervision missions with experts from both the WB and the client, and field visits to project sites, notwithstanding the challenging relationship and associated conflicts/tensions during implementation between the Bank team and Government. The recommendations from these missions and their follow-up helped to address constraints and improve performance; (ii) Task Team Leaders' (TTLs) close supervision and collaboration with both the Project Coordination Unit and Government.[VD1] All three TTLs who managed the Project were based in-country, while recognizing that this is a relatively high turnover of TTLs to ensure smooth continuity, also in the light of the challenging relationships cited in the ICR; (iii) together with the PCU team, the ICR stated that the Bank promoted a sound strategy to promote the project's active implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic, although specific examples were not provided.

However, the quality and effectiveness of the WB supervision demonstrated several shortcomings (para. 107):

(i) delays over two weeks by the WB team to provide procurement no-objections. From the PCU perspective, these delays negatively impacted implementation of the Project, especially, constraining the PCU to fully commit IDA funds to execute the Project. From the Bank's TTL perspective, these delays were caused by the quality of ToRs submitted and the nature of expenditures requested. These aspects, according to the TTL, required multiple iterations of communications before the Bank's no-objections were given. A review of records suggests, however, that even sending back the first iteration to the PCU took the WB more than two weeks and in some cases more than one month;

(ii) lack of adequate attention and associated actions by the Bank with respect to the various types of financial management challenges which arose during implementation (ICR, para. 105, e.g., frequent non-conformity with agreed financial management procedures; substantial sum of ineligible expenditures at project closing; four of seven financial reports exhibited qualified opinions);

(iii) the Government also noted that the consolidation of the dialogue between the WB and the Government was not a priority on the WB side. Review of several letter exchanges between the PCU, MINADER, and the WB suggest instances of tension and disagreement between the PCU and the WB Project team.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the WB project team remained proactive throughout Project implementation. In collaboration with the PCU, the Bank's team conducted three restructurings to address emerging issues, although the ICR considered the two most important restructurings in the split assessment (see ICR, Annex 6 for further details). Long delays in providing no objections and tensions between PCU and the WB were, at the end, overcome with the support of the Bank's Country Management Unit (CMU).

Quality of Supervision Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The design of the M&E system reflected a partial mixture, application and performance of the M&E criteria outlined in IEG's Guidelines (ref. p. 57/58). The M&E system was designed to: (i) support the implementation of technical components in the decision-making and engagement of direct and indirect beneficiaries. This included data collection at the individual producer and cooperative level; (ii) monitor indicators (linked to the PDO and intermediate results/outputs) linked to the Project's RF and to monitoring the implementation of the Project's ToC.

The AIMDP M&E system was supported by two separate software, which were appropriate and functional. The M&E system was decentralized, with teams both at the national and regional level, collecting data and tracking consistency and alignment between the financial flows and the technical outputs. In the design stage, the PDO was clear, but the ToC was not explicitly prepared. The RF indicators were relevant, measurable, though ambitious at the onset, with some gender disaggregation, enabling smooth tracking through the M&E system. In addition, the design at entry failed to identify one key PDO indicator: volume of targeted crops sold by participating cooperatives to PPs, which was added subsequently.

b. M&E Implementation

The implementation arrangements and progress of the M&E system performed satisfactorily, as follows:

(i) Following the design of the M&E system, the data collection responsibility to inform the M&E system during Project implementation was shared between the PCU and the beneficiary cooperatives; (ii) The PCU hired consultants to implement the M&E information system; (iii) The PCU trained beneficiary cooperatives to collect and enter data into the M&E system to support their own decision-making; (iv) The PCU also involved specialized local services of MINADER to learn and monitor the M&E system to anticipate sustainable transfer of project activity supervision responsibilities; (iv) The M&E system produced most expected outputs on a regular basis, including reports on the Project status, evaluation data of productive SPs, monitoring investment and output data for the implementation of nutrition SPs, data on environment, infrastructure, and seeds; (v) These reports were produced and transmitted every six months to sectoral ministries and to the WB. The reports included: key performance indicators; technical, financial and implementation monitoring reports, and implementation of the procurement plan. (vi) During implementation the AIMDP, MINADER, and the WB worked together to put in place the guiding principles for greater involvement of MINADER's entities/services (through two directorates), in anticipation of the completion of AIMDP, and arrangements to sustain the relevant M&E activities; and (vii) The Project also supported each cooperative to maintain a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee to ensure sustainability after the project ends. At closing, these committees still faced challenges to support data collection.

c. M&E Utilization

Overall, there was good utilization of the M&E system/information, as follows:

(i) Data from the M&E system were utilized by both the WB project team and the PCU to monitor progress of key activities of the Project;

(ii) The data were also used to adequately prepare supervision missions;

(iii) Since the start of AIMDP, external M&E was regularly organized, by the Government and the WB, to review project implementation and to conduct periodic audits. At the end of each mission, recommendations were formulated and transmitted to the various stakeholders for action; (iii) Internal M&E data collected were in general of good quality;

(iv) The data was used to prepare quarterly progress reports that were shared with the WB and other stakeholders. Because the baseline for all PDO indicators were available at the beginning of the project and the targets were clearly defined, both the PIU and the WB were able to track progress toward PDO, based on various quantitative measures;

(v) At the end of the implementation period, the client hired 2 local firms, to assess the impact of the AIMDP, building on the M&E data collected. The results of the impact study aligned with PDO outcomes reported in the project's M&E system;

(vi) Shortcomings in the M&E system included: failure to consider the volume sold PDO indicator. While this information was not included in the RF, it was reported in the quarterly progress reports; uneven capacity of the PCU to carry out and fully utilize the M&E system.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The Project was classified as environmental category "B" (partial assessment), and triggered 3 safeguard policies: Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01); Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11); Pest Management (OP/BP 4.09). By project closing, the overall environmental compliance was Moderately Satisfactory. The main features highlighted in the ICR included the following (ICR, paras. 100 and 101):

(i) An Environmental and Social (E&S) Management Framework was formulated and implemented, with suggested mitigation and enhancement strategies. A socio-environmental screening was conducted to classify SPs into one of the two categories, consistent with OP4.01. Together with the beneficiary communities and local authorities, environmental assessment was carried out of the SPs;

(ii) Environmental and Social Action Plans were not implemented and monitored regularly. However, during each project supervision mission, E&S actions were regularly agreed with the project teams to improve project performance. Safeguard best practices were documented. The Project regularly produced quarterly E&S activity reports, which helped to sensitize the PCU team on environmental and social issues;

(iii) For infrastructure works, aspects related to health and safety of the people living near the Project were considered. For agricultural projects, the management of pests and pesticides, and good hygiene practices were also considered;

(iv) A pesticide use and management guide was developed and disseminated to project beneficiaries;

(v) Strategies were identified and discussed with the EIAs for post-project compliance and wider replication. An E&S audit was conducted by an independent consultant one year before the end of the project. The corrective action plan was implemented;

(vi) the Social Safeguard performance was rated moderately satisfactory, involving the following issues (for further details see ICR, para. 101): (a) delays in implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP), which was carried out; and (b) the failure to comply with the OP 4.12 (involuntary resettlement). A Social Action Plan (SAP) was prepared at the end of each supervision mission, whereby the social safeguards were an integral part of SPs at the community level. Overall, the project applied due diligence, and the ICR identified various adverse social impacts arising from the project. At project closure mission (mid-2021), the Bank team prepared a Social Action Plan/SAP, which addressed various IP issues.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

(i) Financial Management (FM): Based on the Bank's FM reviews during implementation and the findings highlighted in the ICR, overall **FM performance is mixed**, fluctuating between Moderately Unsatisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory. The ICR highlighted the following aspects (ICR, 105):

(a) there were recurrent qualifications in the FM review reports, reflecting non-conformity with agreed FM procedures (e.g., including non-justified and non-cleared balances, non-justified mission advance, abnormality in the DRF, such as payments on proforma, instead of actual invoice, double counting, 4 of 7audited financial reports revealing qualified opinions);

(b) the project was closing with ineligible expenditures, totaling US$ 608,735. To date, this amount has not been refunded to the World Bank, making AIMDP one of the lapse loans;

(c) the project financed various activities which not planned and not directly linked to the project objectives, including the registration of cooperatives, preponderance of advisory support activities and financing of other projects, such as the regional Agricultural Transformation Project in West and Central Africa (ICR);

(d) the Bank's FM reviews verified that: FM staffing was adequate; accounting, internal control systems and maintenance of supporting project documents, were satisfactory; annual, audited financial reports were submitted on-time to the WB, but very often with qualified opinions (i.e., four of the seven reports were submitted with qualified opinions); at the same time, the ICR exhibits an inconsistency of the assessment of the adequacy of FM staffing with the mixed financial performance cited above;

(e) The Project used the appropriate financial management technology, enabling effective management of complex accounts, rapid retrieval of SPs financial information, and management of flow of funds; and

(f) The PCU was receptive to the audit recommendations, and PCU follow-ups were prompt.

(ii) Procurement: The Project established two levels of procurement: at PCU and at local level, via cooperatives. At the PCU level, performance/compliance were rated Moderately Satisfactory, for following reasons (para. 103):

(a) Both the PCU and the WB teams conducted frequent procurement training for the Project coordination units;

(b) Procurement Post Reviews (PPR) were conducted annually. No miss-procurement was declared, but some dysfunctions in procurement were observed (e.g., including delays in contracting with partner entities; archiving procurement info);

(c) Procurement procedures were slow, particularly in the rehabilitation of feeder roads, which reflects the country's long and cumbersome procedures for awarding public contracts. Moreover, the processes did not always guarantee the selection of companies with sufficient technical and financial capacity to carry out the work.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

Not Applicable

d. Other

The ICR highlights 4 other positive aspects contributed by the project: gender; institutional strengthening; mobilizing private sector financing; and poverty reduction and shared prosperity. While recognizing some attribution challenges with respect to the precise role and contributions of this project to these other strategic benefits, the nature/scope of these "other" benefits are summarized below, based on evidence presented in the ICR (paras. 74 – 77).

(i) <u>Gender</u> (para. 74 for further details): The Project, through funds provided by the PHRD Trust Fund, explicitly supported activities geared towards women's groups working to achieve food and nutrition security at the household level, including the following aspects: (a) training of 300 women leaders in nutritional education; (b) funding 129 nutritional sub-projects to support nutrition-sensitive agricultural activities; (c) encouraging 4,252 households to diversify their food production, and using improved techniques for food processing and preparation. The project's evaluation survey revealed that about 96% of the beneficiaries recognized the high nutritional and health value of these interventions. At the same time, the ICR recognized that greater attention to women within the participating cooperatives was needed, with a shortfall in meeting some of the gender targets. Also, cross-country experience suggests there are limitations to training women in nutrition as a direct means to achieving the project's production/income objectives and to enhanced gender equality, and therefore suggest more direct and effective approaches to allocating limited resources in order to promote expanded women's participation in the income-generating activities.

(ii) <u>Institutional Strengthening</u> (ICR, para. 75): The project design and implementation included good progress in providing institutional strengthening at various levels, and benefitting strategic entities, as follows:

(a) strengthening of the MINADER Local and Community Development Directorate/Directorate of Professional Agricultural Organizations and Support for Agricultural Holdings (DDLC/DOPA). This has enabled the re-launch of the cooperative registration process in Cameroon, based on various project actions. By closing, all 78 target cooperatives had acquired a formal corporate structure with a Board of

Directors, a cooperative director, a functional accounting system, and a functioning internal M&E system for the sustainability and decision-making;

(b) The Project provided training to cooperative leaders, covering 10 strategic themes, with positive feedback;

(c) the Project improved key public services including various key services entities (e.g., IRAD, IITA, and DRCQ) by building their research capacity in the provision of foundation seeds, cuttings and in the control and seed certification;

(d) Financial support was also provided to these services to carry out seed control and inspection activities as well as the development of an integrated pest management guide for maize and sorghum.

(iii) Mobilizing Private Sector Financing (ICR, para. 76): The Project mobilized private sector financing of $5.9 million (from commercial banks, MFIs and producers' cooperatives), primarily through the matching grant scheme put in place to finance the SPs (business plans). Project restructuring included measures and associated financing shares of various actors to facilitate expanded private sector financing.

However, the Project missed the opportunity to mobilize financing from Agri-Businesses (ABs) involved in the partnerships. AIMDP did not actively seek to mobilize financing from ABs, under contract farming, by requiring them to provide services (e.g., inputs distribution or extending credit to cooperatives).

(iv) Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity (ICR, para. 77): Interviews conducted with more than 60 percent of the beneficiary cooperatives by the Bank's ICR team revealed that many of the cooperative members were smallholders cultivating 0.5 to 2 ha. prior to AIMDP. The beneficiaries cited AIMDP as a major contributing factor in: increasing their monetary income; improving their lodging, access to drinking water and health as well as investments in the education and training of their children. It is noteworthy that about 88% of the members of the cooperatives interviewed believe their "living conditions have improved".

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	The IEG assessment for quality at entry and quality of supervision were moderately unsatisfactory, for various shortcomings specified in the ICRR (Section 8)
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR presents seven main lessons and recommendations from this project (ICR, paras. 114 – 120). The four most relevant lessons have been consolidated and further sharpened, and which are based on project-specific conclusions, and which can be applicable to other projects in Cameroon and other countries, including those in an evolving FCV environment, are summarized below.

(a) Lesson 1: Relevance of assessing adequately, working out and agreeing on Government counterpart budget availability during Project preparation and prior to Project approval. During project implementation, it appears like the specific arrangements for ensuring adequate level and timing of counterpart funds from the Government were not clear and functional, which contributed to project delays. Since 2020, the Government established a new system of providing project counterpart funds, through a centralized basket managed by the Ministry of Finance. As a result, all development projects compete for these counterpart funds, which are limited, and therefore, the project is not assured of getting the counterpart funds when needed, resulting in a low level of mobilization and execution of counterpart funds. Accordingly, the lesson from this project experience highlights the importance of agreeing on and complying with the specific budgetary allocations for the project, and therefore, if properly done, this can enhance the likelihood of ensuring adequate allocations during implementation, and the prospects for strong project results;

(b) Lesson 2: Importance of securing from project design and approval stages a clear understanding and agreement of the local conditions and capacities of project stakeholders to engage realistically in project activities. The project introduced producer beneficiaries, POs and cooperatives to innovative approaches to production, processing, marketing, business partnerships, and accessing finance. Implementation delays and challenges revealed that these innovations and arrangements were not well understood, realistic and worked out, resulting in project delays, changes in scope and substantial sustainability risks. Accordingly, similar or future projects, from the design stage, if there is a realistic and phased approach to designing and carrying out the relevant project innovations, this could enhance the prospects of ensuring adequate local capacities for effective and timely project implementation, and strong and sustainable results;

(c) Lesson 3: Importance of adequate understanding and support for the post-production aspects of commodity supply and purchase contracts to ensuring the prospects for successful operationalization of productive partnerships (PPs). Most of the project focus was on increasing cassava productivity with little regard to product specification requirements of agribusinesses (e.g., quality, cleanliness, consistency of supply). As a result, even when beneficiary farmers were able to increase their productivity, they still had challenges meeting all of the requirements of the agri-businesses (ABS). Attention to these post-production aspects, including flexibility in purchase contracts and involving and strengthening small and medium-sized informal agri-businesses (ABs), as integral parts of the Project design, if properly addressed, could enhance the prospects of addressing adequately the challenges that many producers and POs face in effectively engaging in the PPs and promoting a more vibrant and competitive agroindustry;

(d) Lesson 4: Formulating and carrying out appropriate and well-focused institutional reforms in key subsectors may contribute to successful implementation and sustainability of similar projects. Seed multiplication cooperatives were the least successful under the AIMDP. These cooperatives could not increase their business turnover because they faced unfair competition from non-certified seeds. The Project strengthened capacity for certification, but little was done to prevent contraband. During planting season, markets were flooded with non-certified supply at a lower cost, rendering cooperatives unable to compete. MINADER tried to intervene, but it lacked the mandate and capacity to police and prevent such invasions. This project experience illustrates the importance of similar project(s) assessing and designing carefully the institutional-related risks of success and sustainability of relevant project components, and therefore, if adequately addressed, could enhance the prospects of effective project implementation and sustainable results.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

Overall, the quality of the ICR is **Substantial**. The ICR endeavors to provide and use project design and implementation information: to substantiate the various conclusions, with relevant evidence and analyses from the project's M&E system, including beneficiary surveys; (2) to be consistent with OPCS guidelines for preparing ICRs, although the length of the ICR is significantly longer than suggested by the IEG guidelines; (3) to provide relevant lessons, while needing some sharpening and consolidation; and (4) to be candid, especially revealing Government and Bank weaknesses during project design and implementation phases.

The ICR had some shortcomings:

(a) the ICR downplays several financial performance issues arising during implementation;

(b) while the ICR correctly highlights four significant risks to ensure sustainability of project benefits, the ICR did not provide clear recommendations for follow-up by the Bank's country/sectoral team and Government (especially MINADER), to address these risks. During and subsequent to the discussion with IEG's evaluator, the IEG team elaborated more explicitly on various mitigation actions which both the Bank and Government are taking to address most of the identified risks; and

(c) the lessons of the project were excessive in number (7), and most of these were not stated in the form of clear lessons.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial