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FOR AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT

Enabling the rural poor
to overcome poverty

Republic of the Philippines

Completion Evaluation

Executive summary and Agreement at Completion Point of the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project

Evaluation Committee — Forty-seventh Session
Rome, 13 April 2007

For: **Review**

Note to Evaluation Committee members

This document is submitted for review by the Evaluation Committee.

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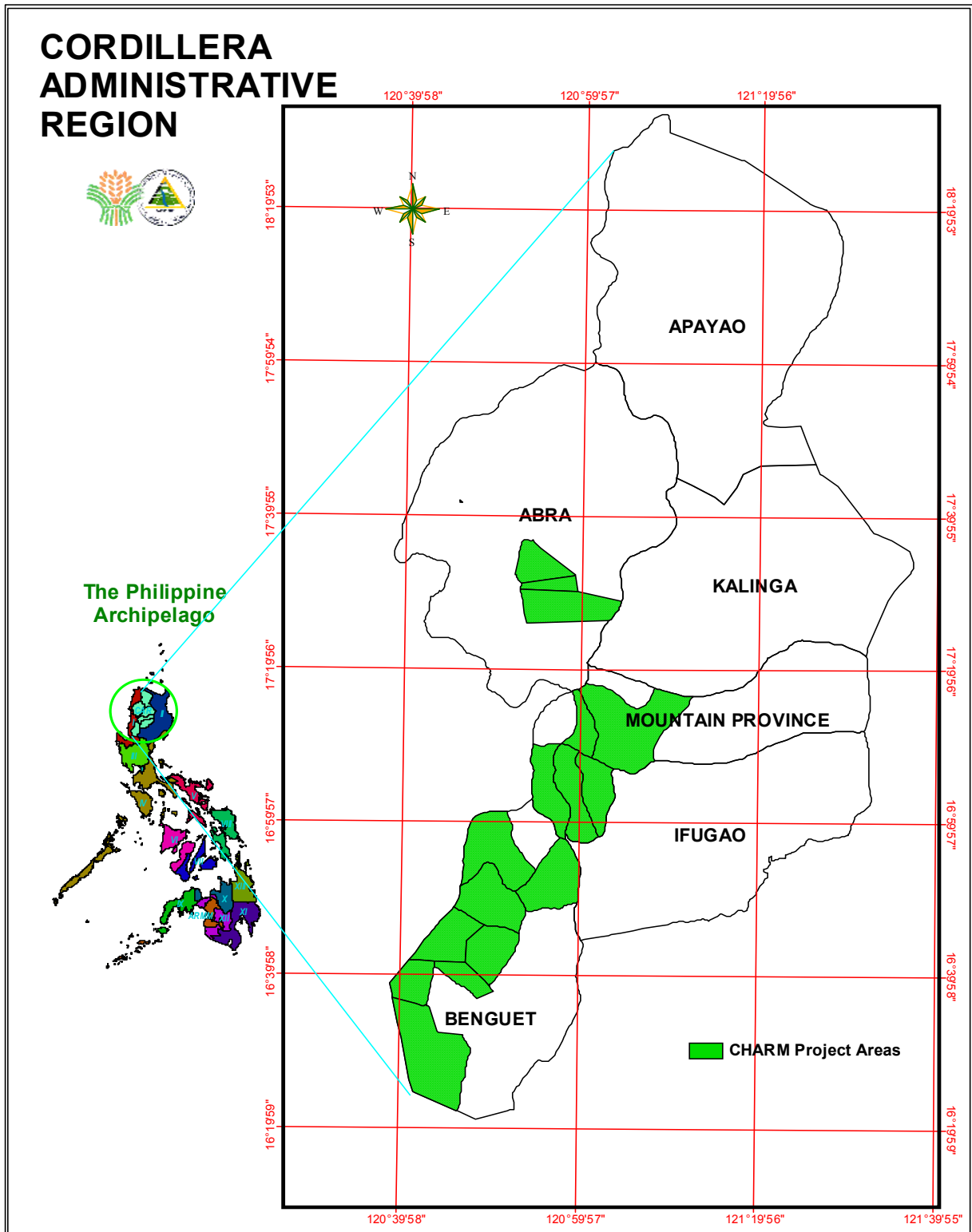
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Abbreviations and acronyms

AsDB	Asian Development Bank
ADSDPP	Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan
CADT	certificate of ancestral domain title
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
OE	Office of Evaluation
PCR	project completion report

Map of the project area



Source: Project Support Office

Completion Evaluation

Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project

Part A – Executive summary

I. Introduction

A. Country background¹

1. The Republic of the Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands. The country spans three main island groups: Luzon, Mindanao and the Visayas. The estimated population in 2004 was 86.4 million. The population growth rate for 2000-2005 is relatively high for South-East Asia, at an estimated 2.2 per cent per year. This high population growth, along with geographical and climatic challenges, contributes to the continuing high rate of poverty in the Philippines. Poverty is predominantly rural and, although it varies by region, it is pervasive throughout the southern Philippines, particularly in Mindanao and the mountainous areas of Luzon. The most recent official poverty statistics (2003) estimated the annual per capita poverty threshold nationwide to be US\$676. Per capita GDP increased from US\$1,031 in 2004 to US\$1,157 in 2005. The national deficit has been a continuous constraint on economic growth. Two thirds of the population live in rural areas and are dependent on subsistence agriculture for their household income. Despite the more than one million jobs that were generated by this sector, over one million rural workers remain unemployed and over three million are underemployed.

B. The project

2. The Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) Project targeted indigenous communities in three provinces of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in northern Luzon. The project was executed by the Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Agriculture, and was jointly funded by the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) and IFAD. Running from 1997 to 2004, the project was a follow-up to the Highland Agriculture Development Project, which was implemented between 1987 and 1994 and was also funded by IFAD and AsDB.
3. The primary aim of the CHARM project was to reduce poverty in three target provinces through agricultural productivity improvements and sustainable natural resource management. The project was implemented in 82 barangays² (with a combined population of 850,000) located in 16 municipalities within Abra, Benguet and Mountain Provinces. Ninety-two per cent of the target population belong to indigenous communities.
4. More specifically, the project aimed to increase the average annual income of farm families from about US\$820 to at least US\$2,170 in real terms by 2006, and reduce the number of families living below the poverty line³ in target municipalities from about 33,000 to about 12,000 households (or from 70 per cent to 25 per cent) by 2006. The project had four main components, namely: (i) community mobilization and resource management; (ii) rural infrastructure development; (iii) agricultural support services; and (iv) project management and coordination.
5. The project's total budget amounted to US\$41.5 million: AsDB, US\$19.1 million; IFAD, US\$9.2 million; the Government, US\$10.8 million; and local beneficiaries,

¹ Official website of the Republic of the Philippines: <http://www.gov.ph/aboutphil/general.asp>.

² A barangay is the smallest administrative unit of government (i.e. village or neighbourhood within a municipality).

³ National poverty lines are defined as follows: the rural poverty line: US\$130 (3,353 pesos) per household per month and the urban poverty line: US\$170 (4,365 pesos) per household per month.

US\$2.4 million. The IFAD loan was provided on highly concessional terms. At project closure, about 60 per cent of the IFAD loan had been disbursed.

C. Objectives and methodology of the evaluation

6. The evaluation was part of the 2006 work programme of the Office of Evaluation (OE) and the main fieldwork for the evaluation was carried out in July-August 2006.

Objective

7. The main objectives of the evaluation were to: (i) assess the performance and impact of the CHARM project; and (ii) generate a series of findings and recommendations that would serve IFAD and the Government of the Philippines in designing and implementing similar projects and programmes in the future. The evaluation also aimed to provide an opportunity for learning and exchanging views with multiple partners on issues related to the Cordillera region, and to indigenous people, land tenure and the contribution to broader rural poverty alleviation efforts in the Philippines.

Methodology

8. The evaluation followed OE's guidelines for project evaluations.⁴ The evaluation team⁵ visited the three provinces of Abra, Benguet and Mountain, which cover nine municipalities and 15 barangays. The evaluation acknowledges the wide range of reports and other documents available through the project and partners. These documents provided an extensive source of secondary data for the evaluation. Project completion reports (PCRs) had been produced internally by the project, AsDB and IFAD. A benefit monitoring and evaluation (BME) survey had been carried out in 2004 as an input to the PCR process, following on from an interim BME in 2002. The PCRs focused on the physical outputs of the project, while the BMEs explored project impact. As per standard OE practice, a core learning partnership⁶ was constituted for the evaluation, which provided critical inputs and views at key stages of the evaluation process.
9. The approach used by the evaluation therefore included: discussions with AsDB staff and with Government officials in Manila and at the provincial level; field visits to the project area; intensive interaction with beneficiaries in focus group discussions and with individual households and project personnel; and a comprehensive review of secondary data and information.

II. Project performance

A. Design features

10. The design for the CHARM project followed on from the Highland Agriculture Development Project that was implemented from 1987-1994, and for which IFAD had provided US\$4.6 million and AsDB US\$18.8 million. The Highland project was found to be successful in achieving its goals in terms of poverty reduction.

⁴ This included assessing the project against internationally recognized evaluation criteria, namely: (i) project performance, including relevance, effectiveness and efficiency; (ii) impact on rural poverty; and (iii) performance of partners involved in the project, including IFAD, AsDB, government institutions, and others. As per OE's project evaluation methodology, a six-point scale has been used to attribute ratings to each of the aforementioned evaluation criteria. On the six-point scale, 6 represents the best score. For example, in assessing project impact, the scale would read as follows: Ratings: highly successful (6), successful (5), moderately successful (4), moderately unsuccessful (3), unsuccessful (2), highly unsuccessful (1).

⁵ The team included Dorothy Lucks (consultants team leader, institutions and community development), Mary Ann P. Botengan (natural resource management and indigenous peoples), Clovis Ike Payumo (rural infrastructure), Jerry E. Pacturan (agriculture and agribusiness). Andrew Brubaker was the Evaluation Officer from OE responsible for the evaluation and Ayurzana Puntsagdavaa (research associate, OE) also took part in the evaluation.

⁶ Members of the partnership included: Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, National Irrigation Administration, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, National Economic and Development Agency, the NGO consortium, TEBTEBBA (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education), Upland Marketing Foundation Inc., South East Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, Director of the CHARM project, and the IFAD country programme manager.

11. The design of the CHARM project was highly relevant to the needs of the targeted communities. The substantial support for indigenous practices not only was appropriate to the community, but also contributed to national policies and practices related to indigenous land and cultural integrity. The combination of sustainable agricultural development and natural resource management reflected the specific conditions and needs of poor communities in the region. Component and subcomponent design was generally appropriate, apart from the weak rural financial services subcomponent, which combined a microenterprise savings concept based on Grameen Bank principles with an agrifinancing focus. A number of key design features that had appeared in the June 1994 project feasibility study, including post-harvest facilities and tramlines,⁷ were later dropped in the project appraisal document and the final logical framework. This led to major gaps in design.

B. Implementation and outputs

12. The extensive sources of data on the project provide a composite picture of a successfully implemented project. Initial project start-up was slow, mainly because of delays in the establishment of coordination mechanisms and in harmonization among implementing agencies of policies and procedures, and issues with contracting and planning. Supervision reports show consistent and satisfactory performance throughout the project period. Physical targets were largely achieved, and some were exceeded. However, results were mixed across specific project components. A summary of the key project results by component is provided below.

Community mobilization and resource management

13. This component had two distinct subcomponents: (i) community mobilization and participatory planning to identify and plan programme and investment priorities through a community participatory approach; and (ii) natural resource management – subdivided into (a) land tenure improvement, initially undertaken through the issuance of land certificates by the Department of Agrarian Reform, and then – as policies and processes changed – through the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), using ancestral domain titling processes; and (b) reforestation, including the planting of denuded areas and assisted natural regeneration/enrichment planting, where necessary.
14. **Community mobilization and participatory planning subcomponent.** The physical achievement rate for this subcomponent was 99.5 per cent, with indicators covering the generation of planning documents – such as household and barangay profiles and barangay natural resource management plans – and the formation of people’s organizations. Planning activities were initially delayed because of contracting issues with the NGOs responsible for community mobilization. These delays affected the effective scheduling of other project activities.
15. **Land tenure improvement subcomponent.** The land tenure improvement targets were fully achieved, and, in fact, surpassed. The Department of Agrarian Reform ceased major involvement in project implementation once the NCIP took the lead in land transfer processes. This came about when the certificates of ancestral domain title (CADTs) – which are authorized by the NCIP – became the appropriate tenurial instrument for indigenous communities. Initiatives to support the formulation of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPPs),⁸ as a precursor to CADT approval,⁹ were not initially identified as implementation targets,

⁷ The project rightly decided not to introduce large funiculars for transporting people up and down the mountains. However, low-tech funiculars for moving rice sacks and other produce could have been useful.

⁸ These were prepared for Bucloc, Abra; Bakun and Kibungan, Benguet; and Sagada, Sabangan and Tadian in Mountain Province. Remaining work on the CADTs for Buguias and Masadiit revolves around boundary conflict resolution, which is being pursued by the NCIP.

⁹ CADTs were issued to the Bago-Kankanaey Tribe of Bakun, Benguet – the first to be issued in the country, and to the Kankana-ey Tribes of Kibungan and Atok, Benguet. CADTs for the Buguias, Benguet and Bucloc-Boliney-Sallapadan in Abra have yet to be completed.

but became significant in achieving physical targets for the promotion of indigenous peoples' concerns.

16. **Reforestation subcomponent.** Most natural resource management activities exceeded the expected targets. However, within the reforestation activities, weak implementation and design¹⁰ led to allegations by community members of irregularities and project mismanagement related to the survival rates of planted seedlings in three communities. In these cases, because of the lack of reporting it was difficult to identify the reason (legitimate or not) for lower-than-expected reforestation survival rates. However, the evaluation found that in each case, appropriate action to investigate the claim had been taken by the project support office.

Rural infrastructure development

17. This component consisted of three subcomponents: (i) farm-to-market access, for the rehabilitation of roads, reinforcement of concrete bridges and building of spillway river crossings and footbridges; (ii) community irrigation, for the construction and rehabilitation of irrigation systems; and (iii) domestic water supply, to develop springs to provide water for domestic use.
18. The component exceeded its targets in terms of road rehabilitation (100.7 per cent of target), and the construction of spillways (215 per cent) and footbridges (125 per cent). Under the rural infrastructure subprojects: community irrigation generated substantial benefits for the community, although maintenance is crucial for continued effectiveness.

Agriculture support services

19. This component had four subcomponents: (i) agribusiness services for capacity-building of the related units of the region's Department of Agriculture and of farmers and their organizations; (ii) extension services, to improve agricultural support services at various levels and increase the awareness of farmers' organizations with regard to available investment options and the implications of technology adoption on farm resource allocation; (iii) adaptive research services to strengthen agricultural research planning, implementation and review processes; and (iv) rural financial services to form and develop over 1,530 savings and credit groups,¹¹ support them in becoming members of existing and new cooperatives and assist them in strengthening their linkages with financial and non-financial institutions.
20. Overall, the component met its targets. However, agricultural development activities were not sufficiently field-oriented, which reduced the potential impact. Notably, rural finance achievements did not reach expected targets,¹² and this specific subcomponent is rated as unsatisfactory.

C. Attaining project objectives

Targeting

21. The IFAD PCR estimated that the project would reach between 34 and 51 per cent of the total population in the targeted barangays (47,683 households),¹³ which is in

¹⁰ The logical framework for the CHARM project stipulated 80 per cent as the acceptable (national standard) survival rate for reforestation and agroforestry. This figure was the basis for release of labour payments to the peoples' organizations. In reality, extreme slopes in most project areas prevented attainment of such a standard. Where standards were not met, payments to participants for work completed were delayed. The evaluation mission could not verify the survival rates reported in project documents and there were clear indications that there had been disagreements between reforestation peoples' organizations and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on the survival rates achieved.

¹¹ The mid-term review (2000) reduced the target number of savings and credit groups to be formed from 1,530 to 164.

¹² The original target of 1,530 savings and credit groups was not achieved. At project completion, 172 were reported to be in operation. At the time of this evaluation, only 92 active groups are recorded and very few of those visited were considered to be operational.

¹³ Using data from 1994, indications from municipal governments were that barangay population has increased by an average of approximately 5 per cent. The improved access roads were stated as a factor in stimulating migration to the barangays targeted by the project.

line with the appraisal estimates. In terms of coverage of population, particularly through the rural infrastructure activities, the evaluation found this estimation to be valid. However, internal targeting to reach the poorest inhabitants within the participating barangays was not well developed.

Community mobilization

22. Participation of barangay members in planning and implementation was passive rather than active, tending to take the form of representation by political leaders in Government processes, rather than broad-based community development processes. Cultural practices played a significant role in the extent of participation in some areas.

Land tenure

23. The gains in land tenure improvement were significant and contributed to attaining not only the project objectives in terms of improved resource management, but also IFAD's broader objectives of strengthening local ownership and increasing access to land.

Reforestation

24. While the area planted with trees was substantial (6,580 hectares), certain hazards resulted in final survival rates falling short of expectations. There is a conflict between extending farmland to increase incomes, and replanting areas with trees. Encouraging agroforestry was an effective strategy to address both objectives, but the long maturation period for trees can act as a barrier to changes in farming systems. Contracts between the Government and people's organizations were a legitimate, transparent finance-based arrangement for undertaking reforestation activities. Yet, these contracts were often seen by participants as a short-term employment opportunity rather than a long-term, community-based development initiative.

Rural infrastructure development

25. Better access to markets through improved roads and footbridges led to greater transportation of available products. Cropping intensity increased and idle areas were developed as a result of the construction and rehabilitation of community irrigation. Unfortunately, substantial typhoon damage has led to a reduction or even a complete loss of the economic gains made under the project.

Agriculture support services

26. In terms of the initiatives in agriculture, the project did not systematically support critical market elements such as providing price information, holding trade fairs or promoting the other market linkage activities needed for strengthening production and marketing. Moreover, the results relative to the provision of training services were low, as participation was largely confined to local elites. The highest level of adoption of technology training, information kits, agribusiness activities or technology transfer reached only 5 per cent at best, apart from integrated pest management, where adoption rates ranged between 15 and 25 per cent.
27. Tangible results from the agricultural research activities were not evident because the studies did not include mechanisms for applying the recommendations of the research. Consequently, the potentially useful new technology was not adopted by farmers. Similarly, the indigenous knowledge systems and practices of the traditional communities covered by the project were not clearly embedded in the design of the research activities, thus reducing relevance to indigenous communities.

Rural financial services

28. The disappointing results in rural financing are attributed to a weak and non-viable design, which combined a microenterprise savings concept based on Grameen Bank principles with an agrifinancing focus. Significantly, at the time of project

implementation, IFAD and AsDB were also supporting a successful nationwide rural finance project,¹⁴ yet there is no record of coordination between the projects. There were also an increasing number of other small saving and credit schemes emerging in the project area that could have acted as a conduit for credit funds for the farmers.

Institutional strengthening

29. Improved coordination was a key focus in the design of the project. The coordination activities of the project support officer led to much better liaison between regional and provincial partners and to the formation of active partnerships with agencies working in the project areas. Harmonization of bureaucratic arrangements led to improved processes, particularly in support of land-titling activities. However, progress was limited with respect to the strengthening of community organizations.

D. Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency

Relevance

30. The evaluation awarded a score of 5 to the project for relevancy, noting that the design was relevant to the needs of the targeted communities. The substantial support for indigenous processes and practices not only was appropriate for the community, but contributed to national policies and practices related to indigenous land and cultural integrity. The project could have been highly relevant through a more participatory approach, which would have resulted in activities that were more closely aligned with community priorities in terms of the selection of infrastructure and identification of reforestation/ agroforestry species.
31. At the strategic level, the project was consistent with the IFAD regional strategy for Asia and the Pacific, and the Philippines country strategic opportunities paper (COSOP)¹⁵ in that it supported marginalized groups and vulnerable areas. The project was relevant within the national poverty reduction agenda, as it firmly supported the Government poverty reduction strategy and medium-term development plan 2004-2010.

Effectiveness

32. The evaluation's overall assessment is that the project was moderately effective, with a rating of 4. That said, the land tenure improvement and rural infrastructure development objectives were particularly effective (see paragraphs 15 and 17). Also, in general, participation processes of partners with local leadership were effective, even though wider community participation would have led to greater effectiveness. However, the quality of design affected the effectiveness of implementation, especially the departure from the feasibility study recommendations (see paragraph 11). Delayed contracting of NGOs during the early stages of the project reduced the effectiveness of planning and participation (see paragraph 14). Consequently, the production of barangay natural resource management plans by the communities – which was facilitated by the NGOs – followed rather than preceded the development of detailed operational workplans, making the incorporation of community priorities impossible. Greater participation by the wider community would have increased the effectiveness of all components.

Efficiency

33. At the time of the evaluation, the project was considered to be moderately efficient. Thus, the rating for this evaluation criterion is 4. The evaluation team confirmed, based on assessing the rural infrastructure and agricultural support components, the IFAD 2004 PCR economic internal rate of return estimate of 20.06 per cent, which exceeded the project appraisal estimate of 18.4 per cent. However, overall efficiency

¹⁴ The Rural Micro-enterprise Finance Project.

¹⁵ The CHARM project was designed and implemented under the 1999 COSOP. The new COSOP, formulated during 2005/2006, also recognizes the importance of working with indigenous communities to promote sustainable agriculture.

was reduced because the actual cost of infrastructure rehabilitation exceeded appraisal estimates, and efficiency varied across components, which reduced overall efficiency.

E. Performance of IFAD and its partners

Performance of IFAD

34. IFAD's performance was moderately unsuccessful with a rating of 3. IFAD was engaged in the design phase of the project, but thereafter was largely absent¹⁶ until the latter years of the project, partly a result of the rapid turnover in IFAD country programme managers for the Philippines during the project period. IFAD did not participate in any supervision mission nor did it have a role in the mid-term review,¹⁷ despite regular invitations by AsDB. As a consequence, the project lost the opportunity for guidance in IFAD's areas of expertise such as participation, microcredit and empowerment. Recent initiatives have been more effective and the project greatly appreciated IFAD's support in knowledge management and environmental service.

Performance of AsDB

35. AsDB's performance was successful both as a cofinancier and as IFAD's cooperating institution, which earned it a rating of 5 for performance. In particular, AsDB conducted six implementation review missions during the project period, each lasting one month. The reports emanating from these missions were thorough, providing clear analysis and follow-up recommendations that served to keep the project on track and meet its targets.

Performance of the Government and its agencies

36. The Government's performance was moderately successful with a rating of 4. It provided effective support to project operations through allocation of sufficient counterpart funding. The regular coordination activities of the project, particularly at higher levels, became important forums for integrated action by partners that extended beyond the scope of the project alone and contributed to other governance activities. Local partnerships have seen some improvement, with Government agencies working more effectively at the local level within their respective subcomponents. However, more productive partnerships could be established between the various local government units and people's organizations.

Performance of NGOs/people's organizations

37. The performance of NGOs and people's organizations was moderately successful with a rating of 4. The involvement of NGOs was a challenging process, in which NGOs were contracted to perform specific services. Delays in procurement meant that these services became available when implementation was already underway and participatory processes were retrofitted to subprojects that had already been identified. Consequently, while NGO performance was adequate, it did not lead to the realization of full potential which could have been achieved through a partnership approach.

III. Project impacts

A. Rural poverty reduction impact

38. The overall rating provided by the evaluation for rural poverty impact is 4, or moderately successful. In this regard, however, the evaluation noted that the measurement of income has not been consistently applied, and consequently, substantially different results are reported depending on the source of information.

¹⁶ Similarly, the 2002 evaluation of the Rural Micro-enterprise Finance Project in the Philippines found that "After project approval the role of IFAD in the project weakened considerably."

¹⁷ An IFAD representative was contacted regarding this mission, and an IFAD presence is recorded in the mid-term review report; however, the actual contract for the consultant did not materialize and the consultant did not participate in the mission.

39. The indicators reviewed and validated in the field by the evaluation showed that: (i) substantial increases in income had been achieved in areas with infrastructure installation, except where there had been maintenance issues; (ii) some increase in income as a result of agricultural support can be seen, but this was mainly experienced by higher income families; (iii) an estimated 5,504 person/year of employment was generated during infrastructure construction and a further 4,161 person/year during operation¹⁸ which substantially contributed to income gain for a large number of households, albeit for a limited period. The PCRs of both AsDB and IFAD recognized that the project targets in relation to income increases were overambitious, and that the results achieved had not reached the level targeted in project design.
40. Impact on social capital and empowerment was modest. Decision-making remained in the hands of the leaders and decisions were communicated to the barangay members for validation only. In barangays, where there were more frequent assemblies and the process was more traditional, consultative and consensus-based, a higher degree of empowerment could be seen. Similarly, the failure of the rural financial services subcomponent limited the impact of the project.
41. However, the extent of project impact should not be underestimated. For example, the progress made in land-titling contributed to improving the lives of indigenous peoples in the Cordillera. Moreover, the project was successful in promoting policy dialogue, partnership-building, and introducing innovative approaches to land tenure systems, none of which were explicit objectives of the CHARM project.

B. Sustainability

42. Unfortunately, processes to build capacity for sustaining project gains were not pursued until the end of the project. Assumptions throughout the project documentation that the communities, people's organizations and local government units would be able to continue project activities without further support did not eventuate. At both the municipal and the barangay level, a continuing attitude of institutional dependency among all the people's organizations was observed. The sustainability of the completed rural irrigation facilities was found to be uncertain, because of the weakness of the irrigators' associations and the Barangay Waterworks and Sanitation Association that were organized under the project. Similarly, reforestation groups were largely dormant as they were contractual in nature, thus, when the payments ceased, so did the groups. Roads are already showing serious signs of deterioration. The local government units had no specific programme for routine road maintenance, budgeting only for repairs as required.
43. The evaluation rated project sustainability with a score of 3, which implies that that project is probably not sustainable. This is partly due to the absence of a rigorous exit strategy.

C. Innovation, replicability and scaling-up

Innovation

44. Innovation was especially seen in the achievements in policy dialogue. Although not an explicit objective of the project, the impacts achieved in this area¹⁹ have been impressive. Innovation therefore is rated as highly successful, although other aspects of the project have had minimal impact on innovation and are rated lower. The CHARM project assisted the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the process of recognizing the indigenous system *lapat* as a valid management

¹⁸ Final Benefit Monitoring and Evaluation Survey, which was based on a sample of 300-500 direct project participants per province.

¹⁹ The project acted as facilitator with partners to address significant policy issues such as the issuance of ancestral domain titles and preparation of the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP), and has even advocated successfully that the ADSDPP be recognized as the formal Comprehensive Land Use Plan that is required by all local government units under the Local Government Code. The Cordillera Administrative Region is now considered the leader nationwide in practical implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act.

system, and promoted the establishment of nurseries and watershed management programmes with the National Irrigation Authority and the CAR region. The impact of innovation on other activities in the barangays was difficult to assess. Although there was a substantial budget for research and development activities in agriculture and agribusiness, benefits were not borne out in the minimal impact achieved. All in all, the evaluation rates the project with a score of 5 (successful) in the area of promoting innovations.

Replicability/scaling up

45. The main project output being replicated is the ADSDPP process. Guidelines have not yet been developed and the process is still in its infancy, but the basic processes are already being followed in other areas. The full results of an IFAD regional grant, working in coordination with the CHARM project, for developing mechanisms to reward the upland poor of Asia for environmental services have yet to be assessed, but there appears to be considerable potential for replication. The agriculture support services component did not achieve the expected level of replication: there has been as yet virtually no application beyond individual cooperators for field research/demonstrations. The evaluation attributes a rating of 3 (moderately unsuccessful) for replication and scaling up.

IV. Overall assessment

46. The overall performance of the project was moderately successful,²⁰ and receives a rating of 4. Broadly speaking, project performance was on a par with the average scores presented in the 2005 annual report on results and impact of IFAD operations (ARRI), with the exception of the categories of physical and financial assets; social capital and empowerment; and sustainability where the CHARM project underperformed slightly (as seen in the table below).
47. Project performance has been generally satisfactory in achieving physical targets and attaining goals. However, impact has been lower than expected as a result of the project's overambitious targets. Several key weaknesses such as the failure of the rural financial services subcomponent and variability of participation adversely affected performance. Therefore, the overall rating was only moderately successful. The effective coordination by the project support office provided a platform for agencies to work together on broader governance and policy development issues. The substantial contribution of the project to the national agenda and that of indigenous peoples for promoting indigenous rights in accordance with the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, and to the building of partnerships between the Government and communities towards practical implementation of major policy changes, deserves particular commendation.
48. The table below shows the project ratings for performance, impact and overarching factors as compared with the ratings given in the 2005 ARRI report.

²⁰ The overall project rating was not calculated numerically by averaging scores, but rather by using an overall team assessment based on OE's standards for rating.

Performance ratings of the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project compared with average ratings in the 2005 ARRI report

	<i>Score for 2005 evaluation</i>	<i>ARRI 2005^a</i>
Project performance		
Relevance	5.0	5.0
Effectiveness	4.0	4.0
Efficiency	4.0	4.0
Impact (overall)^b	4.0	4.0
Physical and financial assets	3.5	4.0
Food security	4.0	4.0
Environment and natural resources	4.0	4.0
Human assets	4.0	4.0
Social capital and empowerment	3.0	4.0
Institutions and policies	5.0	4.0
Overarching factors		
Sustainability	3.0	4.0
Innovativeness, replication, and scaling up	4.0	4.0

Source: Evaluation Team

^a ARRI scores have been rounded off to facilitate comparison.

^b A new methodology was applied in the CHARM project evaluation, which included nine impact indicators compared with the six used in the ARRI report.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

49. The CHARM project was implemented during a critical period for the indigenous people of the Philippines. The policy and sociocultural changes that took place during implementation provide an important backdrop to the project outcomes. During implementation, all communities in the CAR region were involved in the complex task of self-determination and legal delineation for communal and individual land-titling, establishing their own local administrative processes and balancing the conflicting demands of sustainable natural resource management and agricultural productivity. Policy dialogue, partnership-building and innovation in local administrative practices were not explicit objectives of the project. Nevertheless, implementers were proactive in the process leading to national recognition of indigenous land ownership and in working with different government agencies to harmonize policies, procedures and practices related to self-determination among indigenous peoples.
50. The successful coordination by the project support offices of the various CAR agencies involved in the project resulted in the effective implementation of project activities. It also provided a platform for agencies to work together on broader governance and development issues. The conducive environment enabled project partners to link processes and lessons learned from specific activities related to indigenous peoples with larger policy issues.
51. The project took on a role of facilitator with its partners to establish land tenure processes for indigenous communities. It supported the preparation of ADSDPPs as an important step in the issuance of land titles or CADTs. Through the national commission, indigenous communities in the region were able to produce the first ADSDPPs and CADTs in the country, thus providing the country with a model for practical implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act.
52. However, the project was not as successful as it could have been because of its weak performance – which was below the ARRI average rating – in terms of the IFAD key priority areas of community participation, rural finance and sustainability. For greater success in the next phase, IFAD will need to play a more active role in supporting implementation to ensure that these issues are adequately addressed throughout the project cycle.

53. The project could also have been more effective by responding to the issues raised in the 1994 project feasibility study, which was based on lessons from the Highland Agriculture Development Project. Many of these issues – such as including post-harvest facilities in the project design – remain relevant, as do the solutions proposed. However, these were not adequately incorporated into the appraisal report for the CHARM project. It is interesting to note that the 2002 evaluation of the Rural Micro-enterprise Finance Project in the Philippines came to a similar conclusion.²¹
54. The conflict between sustainable natural resource management and agricultural productivity created rivalry between the income-generation and natural resource management objectives of the project. For example, initiatives in one component had the potential to impact adversely on the initiatives of another. Similarly, the thrust towards increasing income was not seen as fully compatible with the sociocultural objectives of the targeted communities.

B. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Proceed with a second phase of the project, with the following recommendations:²²

55. **Increase involvement from IFAD.** IFAD needs to be more active in project implementation. If AsDB is a partner in the next phase, IFAD and AsDB need to coordinate their support more effectively to ensure IFAD's participation in supervision missions and all aspects of implementation. If AsDB is not a partner, IFAD may consider direct supervision, given the large number of IFAD priorities being addressed by the project, such as indigenous peoples' issues, participation, empowerment and policy dialogue.
56. **Broader definition of poverty.** A definition of poverty that incorporates the needs of the community regarding quality of life and their capacity to ensure sustainability should be used, rather than one based solely on income levels.
57. **Improved integration of objectives and implementation.** Clarity is required in formulating objectives to resolve any conflict that may arise in the simultaneous pursuit of social, economic and environmental goals. The focus must be on balanced sustainable development. There is a good opportunity to build on the valuable regional and provincial partnerships that have been formed, and to consolidate the advances made with respect to policies and procedures under the project.
58. **Strengthen and extend existing approaches.** Processes used under the project – particularly related to the strong agency coordination component, the attempts made to integrate components, the focus on policy dialogue and advocacy for indigenous peoples and the provision of critical infrastructure – are still required in the region. Support for the emerging policies and best practices for indigenous peoples should continue. An emphasis on outcome rather than on physical and financial targets is needed, with built-in flexibility through the annual workplan and budget to allow for adjustments during implementation. More explicit grievance procedures to address allegations of project mismanagement and a more analytical and participatory monitoring process should be introduced.

²¹ The evaluation found that useful conclusions from a 1993 study on microfinance in the Philippines had not been included in the President's report for the project.

²² At the time of selecting the CHARM project for evaluation, the Asia and the Pacific Division had not decided to prepare a follow-up phase. As such, the evaluation was approved by the Executive Board as a completion evaluation, even though in reality it should be considered as a classic interim evaluation in light of its recommendations and the subsequent decision by the division to design a second phase.

59. **A learning approach.** The opportunity that a second phase provides for building on the substantial knowledge that has been gathered on the region is unparalleled. Stronger analysis and links between subcomponents, e.g. agriculture and agroforestry at the local level, is likely to encourage local learning and innovations that would enhance knowledge related to poverty reduction.
60. **Opportunity for innovation.** The indigenous communities in the region have already shown that there are many local innovations that can advance the development agenda of communities. A wider menu of small production infrastructure, infrastructure and support for information and communication technology, and partnerships with the private sector will provide an opportunity for new partnerships and sharing of ideas and for combining local innovations with new technology.
61. **Improved focus on sustainability and exit strategy from the design stage.** If sustainability measures and processes are instituted from the outset, over time these processes are more likely to be sustained after project completion.

Recommendation 2: Balance project objectives towards greater sustainability

62. **Environmental best practice.** Within the project, sustainable agricultural development should be balanced by the promotion of indigenous knowledge systems and practices, natural resource management and enrichment planning. A second phase of the CHARM project, and other planned projects in the CAR region, should include an initial environmental examination during preparation and an environmental management and monitoring plan for every proposed subproject to be financed.
63. **Recognize the uniqueness of CAR.** Higher cost parameters should be set on critical access infrastructure, given the topography of the agricultural areas in the CAR region and this would also provide the required flexibility for project design and specifications to fit local conditions. One particular area of innovation in need of attention is risk mapping for environmental hazards and risk management to assist in building risk scenarios and mitigation plans.

Recommendation 3: Improve participation and capacity-building processes

64. **Focus on local implementation.** Existing local institutions should be strengthened as a foundation for field interventions. Rather than create new institutions (as with the rural financial services subcomponent), it would be preferable to involve existing institutions, at the municipal level such as rural banks, cooperatives, microfinance institutions and trading organizations to assist in local development. Relationships between partners should be emphasized rather than relying solely on contractual services, as was the case with the reforestation activities. This would serve to increase positive participation at the community level. Research should be targeted to local conditions, markets and technical issues. Municipal governments should have a greater role in implementation to support decentralization initiatives. Local ownership should be encouraged by broader participation and use of participatory methods to spread benefits more widely across communities.
65. **Capacity-building.** The reliance on consultants for much of the project implementation meant that a proportion of experience and knowledge gained through the project was lost at the expense of those who were left to implement development initiatives over a longer time-frame. Greater capacity-building for existing agency and local government unit staff would help build local resources for development.

Part B – Agreement at Completion Point

I. Background

1. The CHARM Project targeted Indigenous communities in three provinces of the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines. The CHARM project was executed by the Government of the Philippines through the Department of Agriculture and jointly funded by Asian Development Bank and IFAD between 1997 and 2004. The evaluation of the CHARM project was conducted in 2006 by OE.
2. As per usual practice for OE evaluations, a Core Learning Partnership was established providing critical inputs at key stages in the evaluation, including towards the preparation of the Agreement at Completion Point (ACP).
3. This ACP reflects an understanding between the Government of the Philippines represented by the DA and the National Economic and Development Agency and IFAD represented by the Asia and Pacific Division) on the key findings from the evaluation, and to adopt and implement the evaluation's recommendations, according to the set timeframes.

II. Main evaluation findings

4. **Design features.** The combination of sustainable agriculture development and natural resource management reflects the specific conditions and needs amongst poor communities in CAR. The components and subcomponents were generally appropriate, apart from the Rural Finance subcomponent which had various design weaknesses. A number of key design features that had appeared in the project feasibility study were later dropped in the Project Appraisal document and final logical framework which led to design gaps.
5. **Implementation and outputs.** There are extensive sources of data for the project which provide a composite picture of a successfully implemented project. Supervision reports show consistent and satisfactory performance throughout the project period. Physical targets were largely achieved, with some targets being exceeded. However, there are mixed results across the different component activities.
6. **Attaining project objectives.** The rural infrastructure sub-projects resulted in increased yields and reduced input and marketing costs in most instances but on-going maintenance is an issue. Reforestation activities provided opportunities for short-term local employment. Agriculture development activities were not sufficiently field-oriented so the potential in scope and outputs was lower than expected. Notably, rural finance achievements did not attain the expected results and the subcomponent is rated unsatisfactory. People's organizations and Local Government Unit training did not achieve the expected results due to topics not being relevant and multiple training being accessed by leaders rather than spread across the community. Planning activities drew the partners together in identifying and addressing local priorities in a coordinated way. Implementation activities provided opportunities for government agencies to harmonize policies, procedures and practices, particularly in relation to Indigenous self-determination.
7. **Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.** The CHARM project design was relevant to the needs of the targeted communities. The substantial support for Indigenous processes and practices was not only appropriate to the community but contributed to national policies and practices related to Indigenous land and cultural integrity. The project was largely effective; however, delayed contracting of Non-Governmental Organizations during the early stages of the project reduced the effectiveness of planning and participation. Participation processes of partners with local leadership were very effective but wider community participation has

consistently been raised in reports as insufficient. The CHARM project can be considered a fairly efficient operation. For example, the Economic Internal Rate of Return estimates (20.06 per cent) have exceeded project appraisal estimates (18.4 per cent).

8. **Performance of IFAD and its partners.** The regular coordination activities of the project, particularly at higher levels, were important forums for integrated action by partners that extended beyond the scope of CHARM activities alone and contributed to other governance activities. IFAD's involvement in implementation was minimal through much of the project, but increased in latter years. The GOP and AsDB performed satisfactorily.
9. **Rural poverty reduction impacts.** A positive impact on project participants has been achieved. Yet, the target of reducing the level of poverty from 70 per cent to 25 per cent across all targeted municipalities was overly ambitious and did not adequately take into account the unique situation in CAR. The impact on poverty is considered only modest. However, the extent of project impact should not be underestimated. There were impacts for the Indigenous People in the Cordilleras that have far reaching effects for improving their lives in the future. Policy dialogue, partnership building, and assisting in innovation in land tenure processes were not explicit objectives of the CHARM project. Nevertheless, the project investments have resulted in opportunities for partners in CHARM to strongly engage in institutional development opportunities that are considered highly important in the region.
10. **Sustainability and ownership.** CHARM was implemented during a critical period for Indigenous People in the Philippines. The aspirations of the local Indigenous Communities in terms of poverty reduction, the changing policy context, and the unique challenges faced in the Cordilleras were considered and supported proactively by CHARM implementers. Assisting national recognition of Indigenous land ownership has built significant foundations for future appropriate development.
11. Unfortunately, foundation processes to build capacity for sustaining project gains were not pursued until the end of the project. At this stage POs were still weak. At both the municipal and barangay level, a continuing attitude of institutional dependency amongst all POs was observed²³. Improved participation, ownership and wider capacity-building could have contributed to a greater likelihood of sustainability.
12. **Innovation, replicability and scaling-up.** CHARM supported the formulation of some of the first Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans in the country. The ADSDPP is intricately linked with land tenure processes for Indigenous Communities. CAR is now being promoted as a national model in Indigenous land tenure processes. As most POs are weak and there has been little orientation towards replication systems, no replication or scaling up could be discerned.
13. **Overall assessment.** In sum, CHARM has been an important project for CAR and the Indigenous communities that it reached. Project performance has been satisfactory in achievement of physical targets and in attainment of goals. Outcomes and impact have been lower than expected due to the fact that targets were over-ambitious, but there is strong justification for continuing IFAD and AsDB support for the processes in CAR. There are important lessons to be learned from CHARM that will benefit targeted communities in a follow-on project and also provide potential for further policy dialogue and improved processes.

²³ Dependency was manifest by consistent requests from LGUs and POs for basic operational inputs and for maintenance funds.

14. **Strengths.** The main strengths of the project have been in the improved coordination between the implementing partners in CAR. The project activities have provided a means for interagency and Government/NGO collaboration. The gains in LTI were significant and contributed to attaining not only the project objectives in terms of improved resource management but also to IFAD broader objectives of strengthening local asset ownership. Barangay natural resource planning assisted in identifying areas for reforestation, as well as contributing to broader land use planning initiatives of the local government units. The rural infrastructure installation has been a major contributory factor to improved market access and improved facilities in most project areas.
15. **Weaknesses.** The main area of weakness was in the technical services delivered through the Agriculture Services Support Component. The level of adoption from technology training, information kits, agri-business activities or technology transfer reached only 5 per cent at best, apart from Integrated Pest Management, where adoption rates ranged between 15-25 per cent. The low uptake rate seems to be related to perceived lack of relevance of topics, and method of training. Tangible results from the research activities were also not evident. Comprehensive studies on the "Key Commodity System" concept and agro-forestry based technology synthesis did not include mechanisms for applying the recommendations of the research. Consequently utilization of proposed new technologies at the farmers' level did not eventuate.
16. Other weaknesses include: existing indigenous practices in the traditional communities covered by the project have not been clearly embedded in the design of the research activities. The actual cost of access infrastructure rehabilitation, though within the acceptable range of unit cost parameters during the implementation year, exceeded the appraisal estimates. This was due to the underestimated cost at appraisal given the topography of the project sites.
17. **Lessons learned.** An overall lesson learned is that National Standards cannot apply in CAR. The standards for rural infrastructure, agriculture and reforestation did not match the local conditions. Consequently there is a need for a more flexible approach at local level in line with community needs. Local knowledge and locally appropriate designs could have had greater support. The tenuous link between enhanced agricultural support services and results at the farmer level particularly highlights lower than expected effectiveness in training and other extension services.

III. Key recommendations agreed by partners

18. The following recommendations from the evaluation have been agreed upon by the concerned partners. They have also benefited from discussions during a final CHARM project evaluation stakeholders' workshop held in Manila on 26 January 2007.
19. **Recommendation 1. Proceed with CHARM 2.** There is opportunity to build from the successful processes in CHARM and consider a second phase project. This is important for both the sustainability of the CHARM interventions and expanding the project to other deserving communities.
20. **Actions.** *Incorporate learning from the evaluation.* Recommendations for project design include: (i) a revised definition of poverty reduction incorporating community values of quality of life and sustainability considerations rather than only income increase; (ii) sustainable agriculture development should be balanced with IKSP, natural resource management and enrichment planning; (iii) broader participation and equity focused on comprehensive community development and a local learning approach including a participatory M&E system; (iv) an outcome rather than target orientation should be taken with built-in flexibility through the annual work plan and budget to allow adjustment to changing context; and (v) a

clear exit strategy with a mainstreaming of project components into local institutions and processes.

21. *Build on existing information.* The preparation for CHARM 2 should strongly consider the issues raised during the CHARM feasibility study, based on lessons learned from HADP. Many issues remain relevant, as do the solutions proposed that were not adequately incorporated into the CHARM Appraisal design.
22. *Strengthen and extend existing approaches.* The opportunity that CHARM 2 provides for building substantial knowledge in CAR is unparalleled. The project support office already has an extensive library and staff with vast amounts of intellectual knowledge related to project implementation in CAR, and wider development issues such as Indigenous Peoples Development and Land Tenure Improvements. DA has an established Project Coordination Office with a core of experienced staff that holds the intellectual and institutional knowledge of CHARM. The current processes include inter alia: a well-staffed PSO within the CAR Department of Agriculture; strong agency coordination; integrated components; a strong focus on policy dialogue and advocacy for IKSPs, and provision of critical infrastructure. CHARM took a proactive approach to innovating in administrative procedures and policies related to IP concerns. The limiting factor in the level of policy impact is that these are still fledgling processes which are still subject to conflict, unclear guidelines and delays in implementation. Thus CHARM 2 should both solidify gains made in existing project areas and look to expand to new areas of CAR not served by HADP or CHARM.
23. *Improve partnerships.* The partnership between the GOP, AsDB and IFAD should be continued, although communication and cooperation between IFAD and AsDB should be improved. IFAD needs to have a greater role in providing implementation support. If AsDB is a partner in the next phase, IFAD/AsDB need to better coordinate to ensure IFAD's participation in supervision and implementation support missions. If AsDB is not a partner, IFAD should consider direct supervision and implementation support given the number IFAD priorities being addressed in the project such as IP concerns, participation, empowerment, and policy dialogue. Stronger analysis and building links between subcomponents e.g. agriculture and agroforestry at the local level is required to encourage local learning and innovations that would progress learning related to poverty reduction. Building on the social capital available within the project itself and a more analytical and knowledge management approach could build CHARM into an international model for Indigenous and watershed development.
24. *Use CAR specific approaches.* Support for the emerging IP policies and best practices should continue to be supported. Continued lobbying is required to consider CAR as a "special case" for national standards in recognition of the unique environment is still required to assist in effective development of the target areas and to consolidate the gains achieved through CHARM.

Time frame. Immediately, starting from the Appraisal Report.

Partners involved. Relevant GOP agencies, Regional governments, IFAD, NGOs, POs and AsDB (if it participates in CHARM 2).

25. **Recommendation 2. Balance project objectives towards greater sustainability.** Clarity in objectives is required to balance the potentially conflicting objectives in social, economic and environmental activities. A follow on project should aim to achieve greater alignment of support at component and subcomponent level to achieve coordinated and multiplier effects in each project site. Development of systems for valuation and payment for environmental services is an innovative area that needs to be continued. This would not only give greater recognition of the value of the Cordillera watershed to the Northern Luzon super-region, but also pilot systems for replication by other communities in watershed

areas. While most rural infrastructure packages under CHARM are categorized as “small scale” and are not considered as Environmentally Critical Projects, they may cause negative environmental impacts because they are located in CAR an environmentally critical area. The Indigenous communities in CAR have already shown that there are many local innovations that are appropriate to the development agenda of the local communities that could be incorporated into a more relevant and innovative approach.

26. **Actions.** *Formalize environmental processes.* The level of environmental best practice should be further developed by continuing work on valuing environmental services, improving environmental assessment for infrastructure construction, and strengthening the link between sustainable agriculture and forest management. A CHARM 2 should include an Initial Environmental Examination during the Project preparation stage and an Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan for every proposed sub-project to be financed.
27. Sustainability measures and processes should be instituted at commencement of project to build processes during the project operations that will be more able to be sustained by the participants themselves. Operational activities such as improved orientation, adoption of results-based management approaches, developing long term partnerships, more focus on transparency, use of Information-Education-Communication, community-based monitoring, using Indigenous systems and greater reliance on local knowledge management systems would all contribute to a project that has greater local ownership and a higher understanding of roles and responsibilities in sustaining project investments.
28. A wider menu of small productive infrastructure, Information Communication Technology infrastructure and support, partnerships with private sector would provide an opportunity for new partnerships and sharing of ideas, as well as combining local innovations with introduced technology. Higher cost parameters should be allowed on critical access infrastructure given the topography of agricultural areas in CAR and to allow flexibility on design and specifications to fit local conditions. One particular area of innovation that needs attention is that of enviro-hazard mapping and risk management to assist in building risk scenarios and mitigation plans.

Time frame. Immediately, starting from the Appraisal Report.

Partners involved. Relevant GOP agencies, Regional governments, IFAD, NGOs, and POs.

29. **Recommendation 3. Improve participation and capacity-building processes.** Improved coordination was a key focus of the CHARM design. The coordination activities of the PSO did result in significantly improved liaison between regional and provincial partners and formation of active working agency partnerships in the project sites. Local implementation now needs to be focused at the municipal and barangay level, with greater emphasis on building engagement and self reliance of the local government units and community groups. The LGUs were largely bypassed in the rural infrastructure and agriculture services components. There were positive initiatives through the ADSDPP formulation processes, municipal staff training and in other specific activities. Many barangay plans were used to contribute data towards the Ancestral Domain planning processes, as well as the Municipal Development Plans, Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Provincial Development Plans.

30. **Actions.** *Increased participation at the local level.* These initiatives need to be given greater prominence in a follow-on project, with the Barangay Development Council as a focal point for broader community participation. Broader community participation must be encouraged by poverty profiling, local capacity-building, and strategies to have a more equitable spread of benefits through out each barangay locality or *sitio*.
31. Greater capacity-building for existing agency and LGU staff so that they can conduct the required activities would be a more sustainable approach rather than the extensive use of consultants that occurred in CHARM. This can include exposure trips to other areas in the country to assess how successful processes might be applied in the CAR context.
32. *Introduce a capacity development component.* In CHARM 2, a specific Capacity Development component/unit is required that has the specific role of synchronizing training activities of the different agencies, as well as the different project components so that they clearly contribute towards the overall project outcomes. The tasks for the unit would include: (i) improving training needs assessment so that training provided is tailored to the specific needs of the participants; (ii) improved training delivery methods, particularly increasing the number of courses delivered within the communities, (iii) improve relevance of training design and including re-entry plans for participants to increase the likelihood that learning will be applied; and, (iv) conduct post-training assessments. Clearer systems to support application of training and replication within the communities could considerably increase the level of impact. More hands-on trainings are required for all components but especially agriculture technology and infrastructure operation and maintenance.

Time frame. Immediately, starting from the Appraisal Report.

Partners involved. Relevant GOP agencies, Regional governments, LGUs, IFAD, NGOs, and POs.

