



Environmental Conservation and Poverty Reduction Programme Ningxia and Shanxi

Project Performance Assessment (2015)

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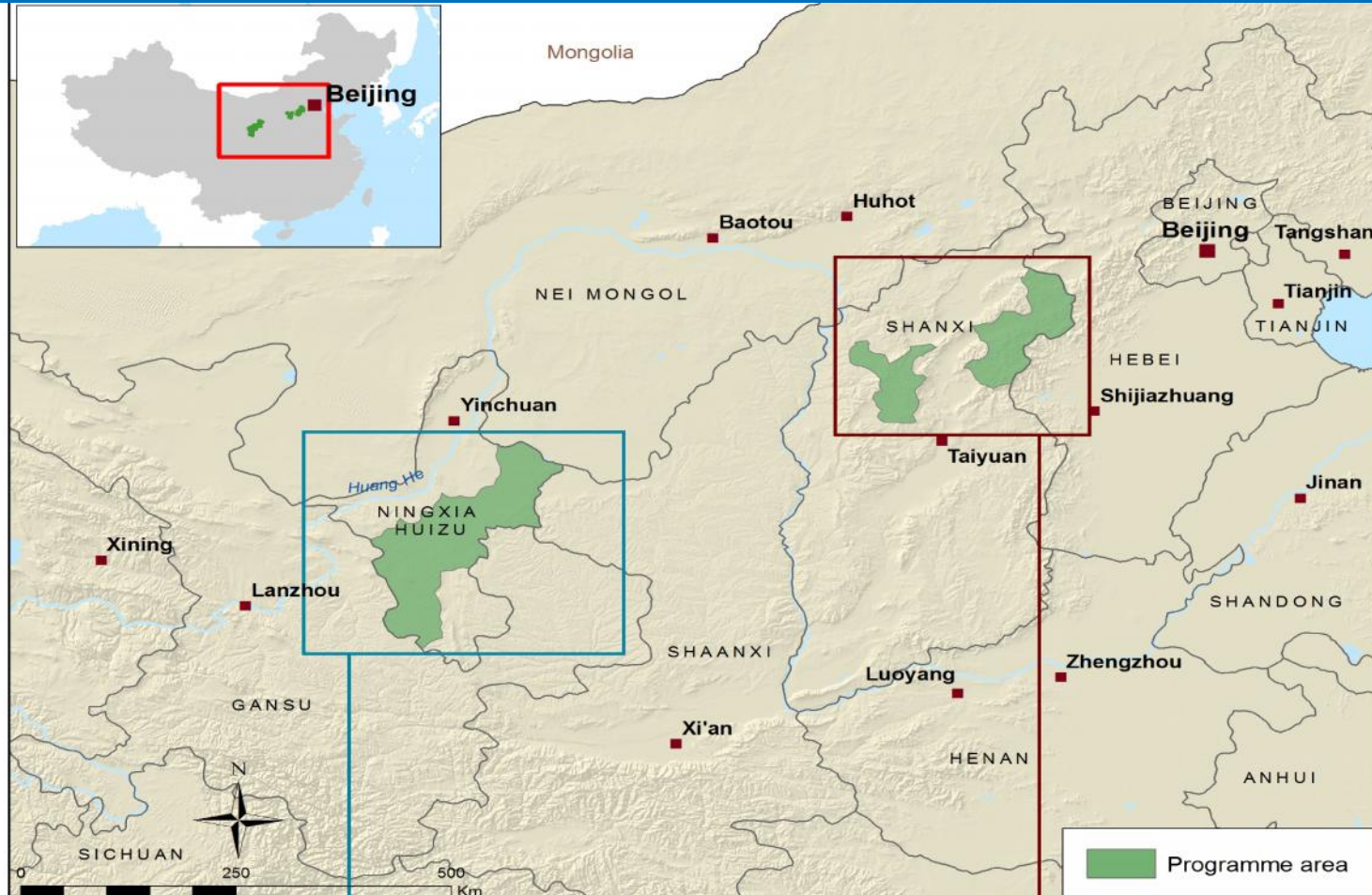


Investing in rural people

Project basic facts

			Approval (US\$ m)		Actual (US\$ m)	
Approval	11 December 2002	Project costs		90.3		100.3
Loan signature	21 February 2003	IFAD loan	28.97	(32.9%)	33.84	(33.7%)
Effectiveness	11 February 2005	Borrower	46.94	(50.8%)	46.83	(46.7%)
Loan amendments	25 March 2009 20 April 2011	WFP	7.28	(8.3%)	6.68	(6.7%)
Loan closure	30 June 2012	Beneficiaries	7.12	(8%)	13	(13%)
		No of beneficiaries		300,000 hhs 466,855 people		261,282 hhs 419,661 people
		IFAD loan disbursement at project completion (%)				97.95%

Project Area



Project objectives and scope

- **Programme objective:** *“achieve sustainable increase in productive capacity, both on- and off-farm, and to offer households increased access to economic and social resources, including financial services, education, health and social networks”*.
- Comprehensive poverty reduction programme including land-based activities, financial services and social development component
- Aligned to **2001-2010 Outline for Poverty Reduction**,
- Designed with WFP, but implemented after WFP exit from China.

Overall achievements

- Well implemented project;
- Contributed to **multiple poverty** objectives (agricultural productivity, food security, rural income, education, health, environmental protection, women's development).
- Most activities achieved their **physical output targets**.
- **Project completion report** overstates achievements and understates challenges and shortcomings.
- Large **government programmes** and **demographic trends** more important drivers of poverty reduction.
- Efforts to establish comprehensive M&E system

Poverty targeting

- **Multisectoral approach** relevant at time of design (2000-01);
- But had lost its relevance when bulk of IFAD financing was finally disbursed (2009 -2012).
- Coordination of multisectoral approach was challenging.
- **Geographic targeting** of poor township and villages satisfactory.
- Targeting of ethnic minority people (Ningxia)
- Targeting of households through **participatory development planning** not followed through.

Efficiency

- Negative effects of **long implementation period**
- Three periods of different implementation guidelines, procedures and supervision (from WFP, to UNOPs and finally IFAD).
- Changes of management and staffing
- Significant changes in unit prices between design and implementation
- Slow disbursements of some components and activities (financial services, tree planting and women's development)

Effectiveness

- **Sequencing of activities** not implemented as planned due to long delays.
- **Thin stretch** over large programme area
- **Insufficient coverage** of targeted villages
- Most effective: Health and education because of better coverage and infrastructure provided (WFP).
- **Moderate contribution** to rural poverty reduction and environmental conservation, given the overall scale of government investments.

Poverty and environmental impact (1)

- Programme's main added value: **extensive training**; met the existing demand.
- Contribution to food security and agricultural productivity
- Education and health services (**mobile health service**)
- **Net per-capita income growth**, but below county average
- Households incomes and assets increased mainly as a result of Government programmes and overall economic and social progress
- **Human development indicators** improved in line with general trend

Poverty and environmental impact (2)

- IFAD support came **at a very late stage of the transformation** of Loess Plateau area.
- Government programmes (land retirement, grazing prohibition, reforestation, etc.) played **primary role** in the environmental recovery across the Loess Plateau.



Gender equality

- Programme mobilised large numbers of women
- Training and Microloans well received
- Poor women from **ethnic minorities** not specifically targeted.
- **Feminization of agriculture** considered at a late stage



Conclusions

- **Complexity** of the approach and programme **stretch**
- Missed opportunities to address **environment-poverty linkages** in a strategic way.
- Late start-up and **slow implementation** eroded relevance and undermined effectiveness and efficiency
- Limited impact on local institutions, **insufficient institutional linkages** and support to consolidate emerging good practices
- **Missing strategic partnerships** after WFP's exit

Recommendations

- **Targeting.** Continue focus on chronic poverty and ethnic minorities, but develop more sophisticated strategies to ensure that the economically active poor benefit.
- **Partnerships.** Stronger engagement in partnerships, to improve performance on the ground and learn from partners' experience.
- **M&E:** PMD should (a) design key performance indicators that are linked to the intervention logic at realistic levels and that can actually be monitored and evaluated at programme level; (b) build on national data systems; and (c) secure credible data and statistics at the point of completion.