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Three Decades of Rural Development Projects in Asia, Latin America, and Africa

Learning From Successes and Failures

Annelies Zoomers*

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Abstract

This article aims to contribute to the discussion about how to make development interventions more effective by analyzing the factors contributing to the success or failure of rural development projects. We made an aggregate level analysis of 46 projects in the field of agricultural research (AR), water management (WM), natural resource management (NRM), and integrated rural development (IRD), financed by the Netherlands' Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) and carried out between 1975-2005 in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Making a distinction between the successful projects and failures, we showed the possibilities and limitations …/

Keywords: rural development, donor policy, project evaluation
JEL classification: O1, Q0, Q1, Q2, R0

*Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA), and Radboud University of Nijmegen.

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of evaluating projects on the basis of the official criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact and/or using criteria such as poverty, gender, institutional development, governance and environment). We learned that project performance very much depends on whether interventions 'keep track' with local priorities and trends. This is much more important than 'measuring output' (are results in line with the project goal?) which is wrongly presented as a priority in monitoring and evaluation practices.

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UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER)
Katajanokanlaituri 6 B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland

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1 Introduction: the changing policy context

For many years, rural development has been one of the priority goals of Dutch development co-operation. Rural development projects were seen as important drivers of development, as they provided the inputs for industrial development and increased export earnings, and contributed to food security. Stagnating agricultural production, environmental degradation, and the concentration of poverty in the countryside were considered obstacles to further national development. Consequently, large investments were made in agricultural research and extension services, water management, natural resource management, and integrated rural development.

Since the mid 1990s, it was increasingly acknowledged that isolated projects would not result in sustainable results, unless they were embedded in a sound macroeconomic situation and a supportive policy environment (Schulpen 2001; DGIS 2003a). The often mentioned negative consequences of the project based approach include the patchwork management of development assistance, inadequate local ownership, the overloading of local capacity to co-ordinate donor relationships, and the lack of sustainability and institutional development, all of which result in a waste of development resources (Euforic 2004; Grinspun 2001; Foster et al. 2000: 31; Mayhew 2002). Against a backdrop of increasing aid fatigue and heightened concern about development performance and results, aid agencies began to move resources from project funding to sector-wide approaches (SWAps), which required donors to pool their funds and make development intervention part of the receiving countries' 'normal' government policy. Instead of carrying out development projects, donors nowadays come together to pool their funds rather than supporting separate programmes. Donors and recipient governments jointly agree on targets and strategies for allocating the pooled funds and implementing defined priority projects (DGIS 2003b).

An example of a donor that moved from project funding to the SWAps is the Netherlands' Directorate-General for International Co-operation (DGIS). The DGIS forms part of the Dutch foreign ministry and is responsible for development co-operation policy which is based on an annual budget of 0.8 per cent of the Netherlands' GNP (in line with internationally agreed standards). The DGIS decided to introduce the sectoral approach in 1999, '[t]o boost the effectiveness and sustainability of Dutch aid'. This has meant reducing both the number of countries receiving aid and the number of beneficiary sectors within recipient countries. This sectoral approach is not an end in itself but a process by which sector-based assistance can be lent more effectively. 'It is a way of integrating aid into the sectoral policies of recipient countries' (Minbuza 2000: 3).

The Netherlands has selected 36 partner countries on the basis of 'good governance' and provided budget support and assistance to sector-wide programmes. The DGIS is giving emphasis to working with other donors to devise a more cohesive aid package

and ultimately to move towards sectoral budget aid. These efforts are largely guided by the key policy aims of poverty reduction, gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental protection, good governance and institutional development, which are collectively expressed by the Dutch acronym 'GAVIM'. Priority is given to policy fields that contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development goals, with half of the budget going to Africa (DGIS 2000: 3).

While making attempts to implement the SWAps, the DGIS decided to carry out a field evaluation of rural development projects realized in the period 1975-2005, in order to learn from earlier experiences and see how the lessons could be used to improve the implementation of the new programme-oriented strategy. They took a representative sample of 46 projects in the field of water management, natural resource management, agricultural extension and integrated rural development,[1] and asked separate teams to use a similar format in making an assessment of the results, and identify the underlying success and failure factors.[2] Successes and malfunctions were expressed in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of project interventions,[3] while also taking into account the orientation of projects on poverty, gender, institutional development, governance and environment (the GAVIM-goals, prioritized by DGIS).

This study is an attempt to learn from experience, i.e., making an aggregate level assessment of the factors contributing to the success or failure of development projects in contributing to sustainable development. Insofar as lessons are drawn from development projects, emphasis is often put on the reasons for failure: Projects will not contribute to sustainable results, due to the limited scale of intervention (islands of wealth), the lack of ownership, and the lack of connection between the micro and macro level (Foster 2000: 41; Mayhew 2002). Little is known about why similarly designed projects, with similar aims, produce differential results in different settings. Making a distinction between the successful projects and failures on the basis of DAC and GAVIM performance, what types of factors explain the different results; what can we learn to make future policy more effective?

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1 This selection was made by the DGIS staff, based on project goals, location, duration, and budget size. The selected projects represent almost 50 per cent of the total budget spent on agricultural research and extension services, water management, natural resource management, and integrated rural development (1975-2005), and covers about 25 per cent of the total number of projects. The sample is restricted to project support (i.e., not including programme and/or budget support). No further details are available for reasons of confidentiality, but the sample contains the more important projects in terms of budget and duration. The representativeness issue did not consider, however, when projects were instigated (1975-2005), and there is some over-representation of the more recent projects.

2 This article is based on these 46 reports. The author participated in a consultancy assigned to analyse patterns explaining the success and failure of projects; see for the final reports, van Dijk et al. (2005).

3 For instance, the official Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria.

- To facilitate an aggregate-level assessment of the factors contributing to the success or failure of the projects, we compiled a database on the basis of the 46 evaluation reports containing the following information.
- Background to the context of the projects at country level and, if possible, at the level of the intervention area (HDI, life expectancy, literacy rate, GDP, macro-structural reform, political situation, ecological problems, and climate).
- Basic project characteristics, namely duration, budget, type of activities, mission or goal, donor collaboration, etc.
- Project results (as formulated in the evaluation reports), namely the indicators used, and the assessment of critical success and failure factors as mentioned in the report; also the scores on the GAVIM goals and the DAC indicators.

This study first presents a summary of the characteristics of the 46 projects under review, followed by a description of the DAC and GAVIM results. An attempt is then made to establish patterns of factors that contribute to the success or failure of development projects. Finally, it identifies a number of hidden problems which are often neglected in policy debates. We will show that DAC and GAVIM criteria help to understand what type of factors play a role in the success or failure of projects; the outcome will finally depend on more general factors such as how projects are strategically linked in broader policies, their local embeddedness (i.e., how to respond to or anticipate complexities), and whether they are in line with the short- and long-term strategies of the people who are supposed to benefit from the project interventions. These dimensions are often not sufficiently taken into account in current discussions about learning in development co-operation.

2 General characteristics of the projects under review

Since the 1980s, DGIS has been actively trying rural development by implementing development projects in various fields, notably agricultural research (AR), water management (WM), natural resource management (NRM), and integrated rural development (IRD). The DGIS has implemented these projects in a large number of countries which were usually confronted by adverse economic, political, and environmental circumstances (Table 1). Using the HDI ranking as an indicator for the socioeconomic situation, we see that many projects were carried out in the poorest countries (Mozambique, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia), although there were also interventions in relatively richer countries (Ecuador, Philippines, Costa Rica). Most countries were in a post-conflict or even war situation (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, El Salvador); experienced a lot of political turbulence during the period of project implementation (Pakistan, Philippines, Mali, Kenya, Nepal, India) and/or had to deal with adverse climatic/environmental conditions, namely a combination of hurricanes and earthquakes (Bangladesh, Nepal, Mozambique, Honduras, El Salvador), drought (Burkina, Ethiopia, Mali), or a combination of hurricanes, droughts, and floods (Kenya, Nicaragua).

Table 1: Selection of the projects included in the sample, per country and per continent

	Agricultural research (AR)	Water management (WM)	Natural resource management (NRM)	Integrated rural development (IRD)	Total	HDI rank
Pakistan	1		2	2	5	138
India	-	2	1	1	4	124
Bangladesh		4			4	145
Nepal			2		2	142
Philippines			1		1	77
Asia	1	6	6	3	16 (35%)	
Burkina				4	4	169
Ethiopia				4	4	168
Mali	2				2	167
Kenya	1		1		2	134
Egypt		2			2	115
Benin	1				1	158
Cape Verde				1	1	100
Mozambique	1				1	170
Africa	5	2	1	9	17 (37%)	
Bolivia	2	1		2	5	114
Nicaragua			2	2	4	118
Honduras				1	1	116
Costa Rica			1		1	43
El Salvador			1		1	104
Ecuador				1	1	93
L. America	2	1	4	6	13 (28%)	
	8 (17%)	9 (19%)	11 (24%)	18 (40%)	46 (100%)	

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix), and *Human Development Report 2004*.

Of the projects under review, most of the AR and IRD projects were carried out in Africa (for example, Mali, Kenya, Benin, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia). WM projects were mainly concentrated in Asia (for example, Bangladesh, India), while the NRM projects, although more dispersed, were mostly found in Central America (for example, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador) and Asia (for example, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Philippines). Even though it is difficult to make a strict distinction between the different categories,[4] the goals and scope of activities (described later in Table 2) can be summarized as follows.

[4] In making a classification of the projects, it is important to realize that there is a lot of overlap of goals. Seven projects fall between IRD and NRM projects; four projects classified as WM have the characteristics of IRD projects; and five projects classified as IRD were mainly focused on institutional development (which is not mentioned as one of the administrative categories). Project classifications are often arbitrary.

3 Agricultural research projects

Most of the AR projects under review were initiated in an attempt to fill the vacuum in agricultural research that was created during the neoliberal period when many of the national research institutes and the extension services were closed down, and no further investments were made in agricultural development. Many are national projects with dispersed intervention areas, and the major concern is to deal with the problem of low agricultural returns.

In many projects, attempts were made to introduce farming-system research (to replace the 'old-fashioned' crop-related research), and much emphasis was put on developing new packages more suitable for the poor and with more concern for environmental factors. Initially, many AR projects paid little attention to economic aspects and often had a top-down orientation. In the course of time, along with the tendency to give more priority to extension (rather than research), more attention was paid to linking up with the target group and introducing a more participatory approach. Institutional linkages were rather weak, even though the gap between policy making and research was often seen as a bottleneck.

4 Water management projects

Water management has been on the DGIS agenda for some time, and was often presented as a necessary ingredient for agricultural modernization. Interestingly, whereas many donors (and the DGIS) had refrained from intervening in politically sensitive issues, such as land reform, large sums of money have been invested in the construction of irrigation systems, the feasibility of which was expressed in cost-benefit relations. Little mention was made of the political dimensions of the water project, namely the distribution of water.

As regards the WM projects under review, it is important to distinguish between irrigation projects (which help farmers to improve production/solve salination problems) and flood-control projects (which help farmers to prevent flooding). In these two types of projects, infrastructure plays a more important role than it does in the other projects, but in the course of time important changes have taken place: Instead of infrastructure/production goals, more attention is paid to the environment. Whereas most WM projects initially had direct links with the national level (line ministries), in the course of time more attention was given to the local level (watershed management, integrated water management). Social aspects and environment were increasingly considered important as a direct consequence of shifting development agendas.

5 Integrated rural development projects

Integrated rural development projects were very popular in the 1980s as the best instrument for alleviating the situation of the rural poor in the most marginalized areas of the developing world (Livingstone 1979; Zoomers and Geurten 1991). Growing disillusionment with technocratic and bureaucratic approaches to rural development (green revolution, agricultural colonization, land reform, etc.) resulted in the conclusion that it was not appropriate to attack single constraints through top-down planning and narrow sector programmes. It was recognized that rural development comprises the interaction of a large number of interrelated activities, and most IRD projects are relatively broad. Attention is paid to agriculture, but also to roads, irrigation, schooling, sanitation, credit and/or small-scale industrialization. 'IRD involves all the things that can most improve the living conditions of the rural masses' (Gebregziabher 1975, cited in Zoomers and Geurten 1991: 195).

The IRD projects under review were often carried out in marginal and isolated regions, concentrated in dry desert areas with problems of famine and ecological degradation. Projects aim at supporting subsistence farmers in guaranteeing food security, usually in combination with a wide range of other activities. Most IRD projects use a bottom-up approach, aimed at simultaneous development of different activities in accordance with local needs and circumstances. Many IRD projects developed in isolation from national policy (IRD being too broad to be covered by a single ministry).

6 Natural resource management projects

Many of the NRM projects were introduced in the early 1990s, in response to a call by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to pay more attention to environmental sustainability. Although environmental problems (erosion, overgrazing, climate change, etc.) affect large parts of the developing world, all NRM projects reviewed have a direct link with forest resources, and were located in subtropical rainforests, often in old colonization areas.[5] Whereas earlier DGIS interventions had been aimed at helping governments to carry out colonization projects (settlement of colonists), most NRM projects focused on reducing deforestation and environmental degradation, while helping small colonist farmers to improve forest

[5] In the 1970s and 1980s, governments, and especially Latin American governments, often supported by international donor organizations, carried out a policy of agricultural colonization policy. The expansion of the crop farming area was seen as an appropriate strategy for economic growth; in addition it would provide landless workers with new land, thus solving the social problems in the countryside. Some years after their initial cultivation, however, many colonization areas started to show severe problems: Forest areas were not very suitable for permanent cultivation, and in many of these zones, land conflict appeared between different groups (cattle herders, agro-industries, indigenous groups, colonists, lumber enterprises, etc.).

management.[6] Many of the NRM projects underwent changes during their lifetime; the focus shifted from tree planting to forest management. Later, many of these projects broadened their scope, and paid more attention to the economic dimensions and/or social aspects (including gender) while introducing a more participatory approach; there was some shift from nature to economic activities and people. Because of the institutional weakness in the field of natural resources (no specialized ministries), many of these projects were rather isolated in the beginning; but in the course of time—along with decentralization policies in the countries involved—the projects developed closer relationships with the local government.

There is some differentiation between AR and WM projects (more 'technical' and specialized) on the one hand, and IRD and NRM projects (more 'social' and broader) on the other[7]. The IRD and NRM projects also have in common that they are usually carried out in the more marginal, most deprived areas, are often isolated from state interventions, and/or have to deal with emergency situations. This is in contrast to the WM and AR projects, which are usually based on specialized knowledge and are aimed at helping crop farmers to improve production in areas with relatively more potential; WM and AR projects are often aimed at increasing production, and NRM and IRD projects at environmental and livelihood improvement (Table 2).

Most of the projects have relatively small areas of interventions: 38 projects only covered one single municipality, a district, or a watershed (with a limited target population); only eight projects (AR) were national projects with scattered intervention areas. In our sample, but also in other cases, there are no examples of projects working together within the same project area.[8] DGIS-funded projects are in general mostly dispersed, and there is little or no geographic clustering.

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[6] It is striking that relatively little attention is given by DGIS to environmental problems in other types of areas, such as deserts, mountains, etc. NRM interventions show a strong bias in favour of forest areas.

[7] Initially, IRD projects were broad but they became more focused; NRM projects started with an environmental focus, but the scope widened in the course of time.

[8] All the projects were aimed at different regions (i.e., no overlap in area of intervention between WM-NRM-AR-IRD projects. All seem to have had their own target area, with the exception of the Malakan Division (Pakistan) and the Bluefield region (Nicaragua).

Table 2: Characterization of the projects

	Field of activities	Dominant goal	Type of problem	Type of target group	Location (also Table 1)
40% (N=18) IRD (> 5 activities) with tendency to become more restricted	IRD-related range of activities	Disaster prevention and food security Livelihood improvement Institutional strengthening	Famine and marginalization Ecological degradation	Subsistence farmers, marginalized, support related to food crops	Often in dry-desert areas of sub-Saharan Africa
24% (N=11) NRM (2-5 activities) with tendency to become broader	Range of activities related to agro-forestry/social forestry	Environmental goals, combined with livelihood improvement, settlement, land distribution	Deforestation and 'cattleization' Environmental problems	Crop producers, diversified, often in combination with migration, support related to agro-forestry	Mainly in old colonization areas; forest frontiers of Central America
19% (N=9) WM (< 2 activities), relatively specialized	Watershed management, irrigation and flood control, often with infrastructure development	Agricultural production, livelihood improvement, settlement, land distribution Institutional strengthening	Water logging and salination Flooding and groundwater problems	Crop producers, diversified and specialized, support related to WM and irrigation.	Mainly in Asian watersheds
17% (N=8) AR (< 2 activities), relatively specialized	Farming systems research and crop development, often related to dry land farming	Agricultural production Institutional strengthening	Low agricultural returns	Crop producers. Diversified, crop-specific support, related to cotton, soya, potatoes, rice,	Dispersed, often national projects

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

There are considerable differences in geographical characteristics of the project areas (Table 3): 22 per cent of the projects were carried out in the savannahs of the Sahel, and 11 per cent in the high mountains of the Andes; 37 per cent of the projects focused on deforested areas in the tropics/subtropics, while 22 per cent were carried out in watersheds and/or on flood plains; in 8 per cent of the cases the project area was not specified. In the project documents little information is usually available about the characteristics of the target group: 23 per cent of the projects focused on subsistence farmers; the rest speak about 'smallholders' (that is, a very diverse group of people). It is striking, however, that little or no attention is given to other groups as fishers, cattle herders, landless people, or non-sedentary groups (nomads), even though these often form a considerable part of the rural population, also within the project areas.

Table 3: Type of intervention area

	AR	WM	NRM	IRD	Total (%)
Deforested area in lowland/tropical/subtropical areas	-	-	10	7	17 (37)
Desert area and savannah (Sahel)	3	-	-	7	10 (22)
High mountain areas (Andes)	1	1	-	3	5 (11)
Flood plains and irrigated areas	1	8	1		10 (22)
No specific project area	3			1	4 (8)

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

A noticeable characteristic of the projects under review is their long duration. The average duration of the projects under review was 10.7 years (range: 3-25 years); almost 50 per cent lasted between 8 and 11 years which was often not foreseen in the original design. Many of the projects experienced a chain of extensions. The project team stayed longer than planned, in response to disappointing results or to problems related to transferring the results to counterpart organizations. In spite of being extended several times, 52 per cent of the projects ended without a clear exit strategy; 20 per cent ended 'unexpectedly' as a direct consequence of changing donor policy (including projects that were stopped with the introduction of the SWAp policy).

During the lifetime of the projects, important transformations took place in 80 per cent of the cases. These transformations concerned the aims of the project (65 per cent of cases, for example shifting from environmental to social goals); the approach (50 per cent; e.g., with more participation, more attention to gender relations), the delimitation of the project area (35 per cent; often a reduction for reasons of efficiency); changes in counterpart organizations (52 per cent), and/or in donor structure and funding situation

(13 per cent). Most of the DGIS projects were carried out bilaterally, without the involvement of other donors.[9] Almost all DGIS projects were traditional in the sense that 83 per cent were directed by expatriates, usually under the guidance of a specialized Dutch consultancy firm or development organization. Salary costs (project staff and missions) form the bulk of the budget, although there were considerable differences between the different projects. In WM, for example, large sums were spent on infrastructure, whereas in IRD much was also spent on credit programmes, sanitation, and/or education. There was considerable diversity in the project budgets.[10]

As regards the extent to which the projects worked in isolation and/or had links with the government and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), there is a clear difference between AR and WM projects on the one hand (direct contact with line ministries, central level) and IRD and NRM projects on the other (networking mainly with NGOs and community organizations, local level). The 'vertical integration' of most projects was very weak. It is only during the final period (along with the introduction of the SWAps) that projects became incorporated into the policy structure—projects started to link up with ministries, and this had positive implications for their capacity to influence mainstream policy.

7 Assessing the project results: successes or failures?

7.1 DAC and GAVIM evaluation criteria

Reviewing the characteristics of the Dutch development projects, we see a reflection of the various deficiencies that are often mentioned in the literature (Euforic 2004; Grinspun 2001; Foster et al. 2000; Mayhew 2002). Fragmentation, lack of ownership, and a lack of sustainability appear as important bottlenecks—but instead of further focusing on the weakness of the individual projects, we make an aggregate-level analysis of why some projects become a success and others end up as failures.

In order to make a distinction between the projects on the basis of failure or success, we first made an assessment on the basis of the DAC evaluation criteria (see Box 1) and the GAVIM goals (see Box 2) both adopted by DGIS as guidelines for field evaluations in the early 1990s. The DAC criteria give an impression of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the individual project results (OECD/DAC 1991). The GAVIM criteria help to assess whether the projects gave sufficient priority to dimensions such as poverty, environment, gender, governance, and institutional

[9] Exceptions are projects where co-financing took place with the UN World Food Organization, UNDP, International Fund for Agricultural Development, EU, and the World Bank.

[10] NRM and AR projects were relatively low cost, as opposed to the IRD and WM projects.

BOX 1: DAC CRITERIA FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

Relevance: The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor: Are the objectives valid? Are the activities and outputs consistent with the overall goal and with the attainment of the objectives? Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Effectiveness: A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives: Were the objectives achieved? What were the major factors influencing achievement/non-achievement?

Efficiency: Measures the outputs, both qualitative and quantitative, in relation to the inputs: Were the activities cost-efficient? Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to the alternatives?

Impact: The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended: What has happened as a result of the project? What real differences have the activities made to the beneficiaries? How many people have been affected?

Sustainability: This is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable: What happened to the benefits of the project after funding ceased? What were the major factors that influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the program or project?

Source: OECD-DAC (1991).

BOX 2: GAVIM CRITERIA FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

The Dutch acronym 'GAVIM' spells out the key policy aims and themes targeted by Dutch Development Co-operation. *Poverty reduction, gender equality and women's empowerment, protection of the environment, natural resources and nature conservation* are the core themes. *Good governance* was recently added, and because these aims can be achieved only through a process of broad institutional development, *institutional development* became the fifth theme. Moreover, good governance and institutional development are prerequisites for effective and sustainable development cooperation.

These GAVIM goals provide a key reference framework for annual plans and macro-economic programs and are used as a reference framework when analyzing the sectors to be assisted and when deciding on methods and objectives, not just to help meet the stated goals but also to boost the effectiveness and sustainability of aid. The emphasis on GAVIM is based on international agreements reached at conferences like United Nations Summit on environment and development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, the Cairo World Population conference, the social summit in Copenhagen, the Beijing World Conference on Women and the Habitat Conference in Istanbul. The GAVIM policy goals are also brought together in the form of international development targets in the OECD's *Shaping the 21st Century* (OECD-DAC 1996).

Source: Working Document GAVIM and the Sectoral Approach (source from www.minbuza.nl).

development. These dimensions are considered important by DGIS for achieving positive results (DGIS 2003a; Schulpen 2001). For the purpose of this evaluation, the consultants were asked to give scores for each of these dimensions for every project (here used as an input for further analysis). An assessment was made of the 46 projects in terms of DAC and GAVIM scores, using different ratings (1=very positive; 2=positive; 3=negative; 4=very negative).[11] A low DAC rating indicates a project's

[11] The rating process, presented here as very straightforward, was in practice very complex and rather subjective. We took the ratings given by the different teams, but had to make adaptations based on differences in interpretation (each team having their own reference framework) but also the lack of consistency between the teams. By making an assessment of the ratings in comparison with the contents of the reports, the author tried to eliminate subjectivities and make the information more comparable. The

success, namely it was relevant, effective, efficient, had a good impact and led to sustainable results. A low GAVIM rating indicates that sufficient priority was given to goals such as poverty alleviation, environment, gender, and so forth. Higher DAC scores indicate a negative performance, and a high GAVIM rating shows that insufficient attention was paid to the GAVIM dimensions.

Table 4: Mean DAC scores in different types of projects

DAC	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Relevance	Sustainability	DAC total
AR	2.19	1.94	2.13	2.00	2.81	11.06 (10-12.5)
WM	2.28	2.28	2.22	1.94	2.44	11.17 (9.5-15)
NRM	2.67	2.50	2.86	1.81	2.86	12.78 (9-18)
IRD	2.36	2.21	2.62	1.44	2.77	11.36 (6-17)
Total	2.38	2.24	2.51	1.73	2.73	11.58 (6-18)

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

Table 4 shows that the best DAC results were achieved in terms of relevance and effectiveness (1.73 and 2.24, respectively); the results for sustainability, impact, and efficiency are less favourable (2.73, 2.51, and 2.38). With respect to the GAVIM goals (Table 5), the scores for environment, gender, and poverty are relatively favourable (2.14, 2.17, and 2.19), while those for institutional development and governance are less favourable (2.40, 2.55).

Table 5: Mean GAVIM scores in different types of projects

GAVIM	Governance	Poverty	Gender	Environment	Institutional development	GAVIM total
AR	2.00	2.38	2.69	2.43	1.88	9.36 (7-11)
WM	2.50	2.21	2.40	2.00	2.19	9.17 (8-10.5)
NRM	2.61	2.59	2.36	2.32	2.86	10.14 (7-13)
IRD	2.75	1.82	1.74	1.93	2.44	7.91 (5-10.5)
Total	2.55	2.19	2.17	2.14	2.40	8.96

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

ratings give some indication of the performance of the projects and is used as a starting point of further analysis.

The best GAVIM results were achieved by the IRD projects (in spite of relatively negative scores for governance and institutional development); this positive picture is supported by a rather positive DAC score for relevance (but negative scores for effectiveness, impact, and sustainability). AR projects have relatively positive results for DAC (relevance and effectiveness), in spite of showing a rather negative score for sustainability; these projects also show rather positive GAVIM scores for institutional development and governance (but negative for gender, environment, and poverty).

Table 6: Mean DAC scores in different continents

DAC	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Relevance	Sustainability	DAC total
Asia	2.35	2.06	2.31	1.88	2.56	11.27 (6-15)
sub-Saharan Africa	2.19	2.09	2.44	1.59	2.66	10.94 (9-13.5)
Central/South America	2.68	2.65	2.85	1.73	3.04	12.87 (9-18)
Total	2.38	2.24	2.51	1.73	2.73	11.58

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

Table 7: Mean GAVIM scores in different continents

GAVIM	Governance	Poverty	Gender	Environment	Institutional development	GAVIM total
Asia	2.56	2.34	2.36	2.23	2.29	9.46 (5-13)
sub-Saharan Africa	2.43	1.93	2.07	1.92	2.13	7.96 (6-11)
Central/South America	2.75	2.27	2.08	2.23	2.85	9.42 (7-11.5)
Total	2.55	2.19	2.17	2.14	2.40	8.96

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

WM projects have scores for environment (GAVIM) and relevance (DAC), but negative GAVIM scores for governance and gender. The NRM projects were the least successful projects: They have negative scores for efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability (DAC), and negative ratings for all GAVIM goals (Tables 4 and 5). As for the different regions, Tables 6 and 7 show that the projects in Africa achieved relatively favourable GAVIM scores (poverty and environment), and DAC scores (relevance). At the other extreme, projects in Central and South America have negative GAVIM scores for governance and institutional development, as well as negative DAC scores for impact and sustainability (in combination with a relatively favourable score for relevance).

7.2 Successes versus failures

For the purpose of this study, we divided the projects into two groups: namely the successful projects (i.e., projects with DAC *and* GAVIM scores of less than 11 and 8, respectively) and the unsuccessful projects (projects with DAC and GAVIM scores higher than or equal to 11 and 8) (see Table 8). These cut-off points were chosen because they allowed us to make a selection of the top 20-30 per cent of the most and least successful projects (reflected by consistent patterns of extreme negative and positive scores, respectively). Projects with mixed results were not taken into consideration.[12]

The most successful projects (a group of 10) have positive DAC scores for relevance (1.45), efficiency (1.85), and effectiveness (1.90), and favourable GAVIM scores for environment (1.67), gender (1.75), and poverty (1.80). At the other extreme, the failures (16 projects) have negative DAC scores for sustainability (3.16), impact (2.90), efficiency (2.90), and effectiveness (2.63), and unfavourable GAVIM scores for governance (2.81) and institutional development (2.70). As for the characteristics of the more successful projects, there is some concentration of IRD projects carried out in relatively marginal and isolated areas in poor countries (three in Ethiopia, one each in Burkina, Honduras, and India): Successful projects were relatively strong in helping subsistence farmers to improve their food security situation, in contributing to disaster prevention, and in working with the poorer groups of subsistence farmers; other successful projects were in Pakistan (2 x NRM), and in India and Bangladesh (2 x WM).

At the other extreme (the failures), there is some over-representation of NRM projects carried out in the colonization areas of Central America (three in Nicaragua, and one in Costa Rica) that were aimed at solving the problems of deforestation and/or overgrazing (introduction of cattle); most involved working with farmers with diversified livelihoods (farming combined with migration, partly as an exit strategy). Other failed NRM projects were in Nepal, India, and the Philippines. Also the IRD projects carried out in Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia (2 x), and Burkina Faso were not a success; other failures were found in India and Bangladesh (3 x WM), and in Benin and Pakistan (2 x AR). The best results were thus found in the most deprived regions in Africa; this is mainly

[12] We only looked at the projects showing extreme scores; and did not take into account the projects with 'opposite' DAC and GAVIM scores. This decision was made to reduce subjectivities and inconsistencies (see footnote 11). We decided to select 26 cases with the clearest and most consistent results, and used this as an input for further analysis.

Table 8: Ten most successful and 16 least successful projects on the basis of mean DAC-GAVIM scores

Most successful projects				Least successful projects			
Name of project	Country	Type of project	DAC+ GAVIM	Name of project	Country	Type of project	DAC+GAVIM
ERP	Pakistan	NRM-institutional development	16	SARC-TSARDD	Philippines	NRM-IRD	22.5
PDI/Z -PDL/Z	Burkina Faso	IRD	17	CHOROTEGA	Costa Rica	NRM-IRD	22.5
BAREAP	Ethiopia	IRD	16	PRODES	Nicaragua	IRD-NRM	24.5
GIRPDP	Ethiopia	IRD	16.5	PROCODEFOR	Nicaragua	NRM-IRD	24
LEMPIRA	Honduras	IRD	17.5	PSB/PB	Burkina Faso	IRD	22
ADTDP	India	IRD	11	Chuquisaca Centro	Bolivia	IRD-NRM	20
SUPAK	Ethiopia	IRD-institutional development	16	Fortalecimiento org.	Bolivia	IRD-Inst. Dev.	23.5
MALAKAND	Pakistan	NRM	18	Servicio postcosecha	Ecuador	IRD-Inst. Dev	26
CDSP	Bangladesh	WM/IRD	19	NRAP-ISWASRI	Pakistan	AR	23.5
BENGAL TERAI	India	WM/IRD	18	Bundelkhand	India	NRM/WM	27
				Mechi Hill	Nepal	NRM-IRD	26
				PIE Monte	Nicaragua	NRM	29
				RAMR-PARP	Benin	AR	21.5
				SRP	Bangladesh	WM	21.5
				CPP	Bangladesh	WM	21.5
				HOPP	India	WM	25

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

reflected by the higher scores for poverty (GAVIM) and relevance (DAC). The most negative results were in the colonization projects in Central and South America.

Even though DAC and GAVIM criteria help to get a global picture of projects' successes versus failures, there are several limitations in the use of such indicators. A negative evaluation in terms of DAC or GAVIM will not necessarily mean that the original project goals were not achieved: In many cases, DAC or GAVIM criteria are used *ex-post facto* for purposes of evaluation, while in the original project document no mention was made of aspects such as gender or environment. Also the opposite is true; a positive evaluation in terms of DAC and GAVIM will not necessary mean that the project was in line with the livelihood priorities of the population (or were appreciated by the population). Projects aimed at improving farm income might be called a success in terms of DAC criteria or GAVIM goals, but this view is not necessarily shared by the majority of the population who might have had a preference for other, non-agricultural, activities (Reardon et al. 2001). There might have been better, more effective solutions or a shorter road to poverty alleviation. In many cases, the scores are not so much a reflection of the performances of the project, but much more a reflection of the complexity of context: GAVIM and DAC criteria tend to evidence more favourable results in settings that are subject to climatic disaster or political upheaval, given that the scores for poverty (GAVIM) or relevance (DAC) will show more striking, positive results. At the same time, however, improvements in the local situation will not necessarily be a proof of the 'success' of the project; improvements may be nothing to do with the project, but with political peace or stability, or recovery after a war or a natural disaster. In addition, it is myopic to make an assessment of the success or failure of projects without taking into account cost-benefit aspects of project implementation. Although natural resource management projects might have generated less positive results than other projects, how much money was spent, and who benefited? Low-cost failures cannot be automatically compared with high-cost failures. It is important to take such dimensions into account when referring to DAC and GAVIM scores in evaluations.

8 Searching for an explanation

An important aim of this study was to make an aggregate-level assessment of the factors contributing to the success or failure of a project. To do so, an investigation was made into what patterns could be identified regarding the factors affecting the success or failure of activities, and the extent to which these factors are region- or theme-specific. There are a number of interesting correlations between DAC and GAVIM scores and other variables available in the data material that give an indication of the kind of factors that explain the success or failure of project interventions.

First, there is correlation between DAC and GAVIM scores, even though they measure different things (the correlation between the total DAC and GAVIM score amounts to

572**). There is a strong correlation between the effectiveness of projects (DAC) and the GAVIM score for governance (710**); there is also correlation between the total DAC score with GAVIM scores for governance (626**), institutional development (505**), and poverty (427**); there is less correlation with GAVIM scores for environment (351*) and gender (no correlation). Other correlations were found for the total GAVIM score and the DAC scores for efficiency (550**) and effectiveness (403**), impact (395*), and sustainability (376*); no correlation was found with the DAC score for relevance. In spite of measuring different dimensions, DAC and GAVIM scores often point in similar directions and seem to be mutually linked.

Table 9: Analysis of correlations

	Significant at the 0.01 level (**)	Significant at the 0.05 level (*)
The project context:		
HDI scores (and underlying variables)		GAVIMtotal (-339) GAVIMinstitdev (-336) DACeffectiveness (-310)
Project characteristics:		
Networking/ (horizontal linkages with NGOs, local government etc.)	GAVIMtot (-413)	GAVIMgender (-370) GAVIMenvironment (-365)
Integration micro-macro/ (vertical linkages with regional and national levels)	DACimpact (406)	GAVIMgovernance (508) DACrelevance (-353)
Stability-flexibility/ Process approach/ (changes during project life)	GAVIMgovernance (585)	DACtotal (313) DACimpact (310) DACsustainability (305)
Project focus/range of activities/ (broad versus specialized)	DAC relevance (422)	GAVIMpoverty (-322)
Monitoring and evaluation/ (yes versus no)		DACefficiency (-393) DACtotal (-386)
DGIS contribution/ (high versus low budget)	DACrelvance (-398)	DACimpact (349)

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

Second, there are significant correlations between the GAVIM and/or DAC scores and a number of project characteristics; Table 9. The most *relevant* projects are well focused (422**) and sufficiently large (DGIS-contribution; -398**). The *impact* of a project seems to depend mainly on the degree of vertical integration and/or the availability of micro-macro linkages (406**), as well as on the level of investments (not too large; 349*) and the degree of flexibility (allowing for timely adaptations without losing their focus; 310*), and are relatively small and inexpensive (DGIS-contribution; 349*). The *effectiveness* of projects are mainly related to the context (HDI score; -310*). Finally, *efficiency* is linked with the availability of systems for monitoring and evaluation (-393* and -386*, respectively).

The achievement of GAVIM goals seem to be related to the horizontal linkages/networking capacity (-413**, -370*, -365*), and a sufficient degree of stability-flexibility (585**), as well as to the project focus (not too specialized; -322*). Also the degree of vertical integration (micro-macro; 508*) and the context (HDI: -339* and 336*) are important for the GAVIM scores. Projects active in networking show a good performance on *gender* and *environment.* Projects carried out in complex situations show positive results for *institutional development.* Stable and well focused

Table 10: Critical success and failure factors

Success factors (+)	Critical factors for success +	Critical factors for failure -	Total
A. Human resources of project team/ internal organization: 22			
composition of team/expertise		4	4
professionalism of team	1	4	5
continuity of team/staff turn over		9	9
organizational capacity	1	3	4
B. Project design, planning and implementation: 52			
process approach at project level	9		9
conceptual set up/ consistency	6	21	27
appropriateness of technologies	7	7	14
monitoring and evaluation	1	1	2
C. Target group orientation: 60			
target group focus	16	9	25
activities aimed at strengthening target group	10	12	22
tangible benefits for target group	8	4	12
process approach at target group level	1		1
D. Institutional characteristics/organizational set up: 56			
local ownership	7	10	17
local embeddedness/involvement of crucial actors/counterparts	10	16	26
professionalism of the (local) counterpart		8	8
tangible benefits in terms of institutional strengthening	2	3	5
E. Policy environment: 54			
consistency between project goals and national policy	16	19	35
donor policies/donor co-ordination	4	15	19
F. Sociopolitical environment: 14			
heterogeneity of target group	2	6	8
civil unrest/political conflicts		5	5
human rights/civil rights/democratization		1	1
G. Economic environment and infrastructure: 23			
poverty of the target group		7	7
macroeconomic conditions/pricing	1	11	12
availability of supportive institutions/infrastructure		4	4
H. Ecology: 16			
availability of natural resources/ environmental	1	9	10
climatological conditions/drought and natural disasters		6	6

Source: Database containing information from 46 evaluation reports (see Appendix).

projects with a sufficient degree of vertically integration show positive scores for *governance*. And broader projects (no specialization) have the best *poverty* scores. The correlation between the HDI rank and the DAC and GAVIM scores confirms the earlier conclusion that in more problematic situations (with lower levels of human development according to the HDI), the DAC and GAVIM scores are more positive than in countries with lower rankings. This picture of patterns of factors explaining the success or failure of projects is confirmed by a more detailed analysis of the critical success and failure factors mentioned in the different evaluation reports. The following list reflects the kind of factors identified; Table 10.

- *Target group orientation* (mentioned 60 times in the evaluation reports). Successful projects are said to have a homogeneous and clearly defined target group, with sufficient attention paid to empowerment and tangible benefits.
- *Institutional characteristics and organizational setup* (mentioned 56 times). Successful projects are locally embedded: They involve all the crucial actors and counterparts with a sufficient level of involvement of the grassroots level (bottom up). Staff quality and continuity are also very important.
- The *policy context* (mentioned 54 times). In successful projects often there is consistency between project goals and national policy with a minimum of donor-driven changes
- The *sociopolitical circumstances* (mentioned 14 times*), economic environment/ infrastructure* (23 times), and *ecology* (16 times*)*. Project results are often negatively influenced by the unfavourable macroeconomic conditions and pricing, and by a poor ecological situation.
- *Project design, planning, and implementation* (mentioned 52 times) play an important role; successful projects show consistency between goal and activities, and have appropriate technologies. It is also important to have a process approach with a sufficient degree of flexibility.
- The *human resources and project team organization* (mentioned 22 times). Successful projects have a professional staff with sufficient continuity (staff turnover is often a problem).

More specifically, the most important determinants of success or of failure are the consistency between project goals and national policy (E, mentioned 35 times; 19 times as a reason for failure; 16 times as a reason for successes), the conceptual setup and/or lack of consistency (B, mentioned 27 times; 21: failure, 6: success), the local embeddedness/involvement of the crucial actors or counterparts (D, mentioned 26 times; 16: failure, 10: success), target group orientation (C, mentioned 25 times; 16: success, 9: failure), and empowerment activities (C, mentioned 22 times; 12: failure, 10: success).

More specifically, success was mainly attributed to: Having a clear target group focus and paying sufficient attention to empowerment (C); local ownership and the involvement of crucial actors/counterparts (D); consistency between project goals and national policy (E); and having a process approach/sufficient flexibility in project implementation (B). The failure of projects was mainly explained in terms of inappropriate project design and lack of consistency (B), an unfavourable policy environment (E), and/or other unfavourable external circumstances (F, H, G) and lack of continuity of staff/high staff turnover (A).

8.1 The hidden dimensions: priorities for learning

The above indicates that the DGIS projects have changed considerably over the last period, and that many projects are wrongly described as static and fragmented. Many projects show rather positive results, even though performance depends very much on the local circumstances (target group, available actors etc.). The performance of projects will very much depend on the project design, the institutional landscape, human capacities, etc. At the same time, however, the move from projects to SWAps seems a step in the right direction. This new policy context will offer better opportunities to apply more co-ordinated, multisectoral approaches, with more ownership and a better degree of vertical integration. In some cases change is the result of DGIS reacting to external changes and in other cases is a result of lessons learned. In many cases there is not a strict separation between the project and programme approach. Many projects during their lifetime moved into the direction of a SWAp (became more focused, adopted a process approach, were active in networking, strengthened 'local' ownership etc.).

In the current debate about how to improve the performance of development co-operation, much emphasis is given to the subject of organizational learning—the lack of solid knowledge about the impact of aid' is nowadays mentioned as problematic, having a negative impact for the effectiveness of aid (Grinspun 2001). According to Carlsson and Wohlgemuth (2000: 7), learning in development co-operation is difficult due to five factors that seem to be particularly prominent: political constraints; the unequal nature of aid relationship; problems internal to the organization of the aid agency; organization and capacity of the recipient; and sources of knowledge and quality of information. In order to improve the learning experiences of the stakeholders active in development co-operation ('do we learn from our experiences and do we feed that knowledge back into improved practices?'), much will depend on the availability of data collections systems.[13] Much priority is given to social analysis: improving feedback and

[13] Only 13 per cent of the reviewed projects had some kind monitoring system. To the extent that information is available about the DGIS projects, this mainly consist of simple output variables (e.g., number of people trained, improvements realized, settlements helped, hectares under irrigation, trees planted, roads improved, etc.), but there was no systematic collection of information about the impact

communication practices to promote an evaluation culture and to implement country programmes and joint evaluations; and to promote partnerships in evaluations, design and implement performance measurement systems (OECD-DAC 1998:2; Bamberger and Hewitt 1986).

Even though these kinds of transformations will be important inputs for learning, we would like to raise a number of 'hidden' issues that are often neglected in the current debate, and which need to be solved in order to improve the performance of development co-operation.

9 A strategic mission?

An important bottleneck to successful development policy is the lack of a clear mission. Many DGIS projects focused on supporting agriculture, without establishing whether this was in line with the livelihood strategies of the people (who often invested in exit strategies) and/or assessing the long-term viability at the macro level. While the DGIS supported neoliberal policies, it financed a large number of projects in the field of rural development (helping the poor to survive neoliberalism). Development projects helped to keep people on the land, but there was no vision about whether this would help people in their attempts to escape from poverty. The DGIS worked in AR, WM, NRM and IRD; interventions were mainly related to agriculture, neglecting such other activities as migration, cattle ranching, and fishery. Little attention was paid to the landless groups, including nomadic people. There was not much strategic thinking about target groups, and there was no priority given to particular project areas. In the decades under review, rural development policy was rather fragmented (with separate AR, WM, NRM, and IRD projects); each project had its own project area: There are no examples of combined efforts where different projects focused on the same project area. Each project had its own goals and its own area of intervention; co-ordination often involved different sections of the ministry (DGIS) and various sector specialists working at the embassies.

9.1 Consistency between goals and activities?

Looking at the goals and activities of the various projects, it is striking that project aims are usually very vague, and it is not so clear why priority was given to a particular strategy (instead of alternative ways to achieve poverty alleviation). In addition, during the final decade the consistency between goals and activities even deteriorated, amongst others due to the multiplication of evaluation criteria (for example GAVIM, etc.). Many projects in the 1990s moved away from their original project goals, without adjusting the strategy how they wanted to contribute to poverty alleviation. Projects which, according to their mission statement, were mainly aimed at 'helping farmers to improve their income situation' focus on activities such as tree planting or institutional development even though this will probably not be the shortest way to poverty alleviation. Projects aimed at supporting the rural poor to escape from poverty (still)

focus on introducing new crop varieties or improving irrigation as a strategy for agricultural development. There are no interventions related to migration even though this would have helped people to accumulate capital in a much easier way. There was often no systematic search for the best solution given the whole range of opportunities and the aspirations of the population.

9.2 Neglecting the problematic context?

In project documents, little attention is usually given to the context, or more specifically the reality that most of the projects concentrate in areas where floods, hurricanes, etc., are part of normal life (people will have to deal with such situations, even though they are calculated as a risk). The projects under review were carried out in post-conflict regions, or in areas hit by natural disasters, but in almost all the project documents targets are set on the basis of the 'lucky' situation (no disasters as the 0-situation). In evaluations, the war situation, conflicts, or the incidence of drought or flood, are mentioned as reasons for not achieving the expected results, which is often the reason for prolongation. In areas of development co-operation work, situations of war, drought and hurricanes are insufficiently seen as 'normalities'; project goals are formulated in terms of poverty alleviation, even in circumstances where priority should be given to earlier goals (such as political stabilization). Given the complexity of the project situation, it is striking that so little attention is paid in most projects to disaster prevention. Every time a new hurricane occurs donor funds are spent on reconstruction as if it were mere bad luck and not as part of the normal life situation.[14] Many projects have negative results as a direct consequence of setting unrealistic goals. It is important to mention the problematic context in a more explicit way, and to see how interventions could help people to better anticipate future emergencies (preventing problems, instead of solving them).

10 Final reflections

In order improve the performance of development co-operation, it is important to take into account the various lessons that can be drawn from the analysis of DAC and GAVIM scores (the importance of target group orientation, vertical integration, and so on). At the same time, however, these kinds of evaluation criteria are restricted in the sense of not giving sufficient attention to the context (successes and failures being a reflection of the external situation), and do not necessarily give an indication of the ability of projects to respond to the needs of the population: Many of the projects under review originally did not have GAVIM goals, and the use of GAVIM scores ex post facto for evaluation purposes does not say much about real successes or failures. More

[14] Only in the case of WM (flood control) and IRD (food security) is there some reflection on how the project could help people to better cope with such misfortunes.

attention should be given to how to make development co-operation more strategic and strengthening the link with the local context.

Development co-operation should preferably target broader development programmes (SWAps) instead of isolated projects—that the success will finally depend on the kind of projects that will be implemented. Rather than suggesting a contrast between the 'isolated' projects and the 'broader' SWAps, it is clear that it is a continuum. Many projects during their lifetime adopted SWAp elements and it is not realistic to expect that programmes will per se produce better results than projects. The success of sectoral programmes will finally depend on the kind of projects being implemented in the context of the SWAp; the outcome will very much depend on the degree in which projects fit the local context and local trends, and the underlying strategy. In the current discussion about how to generate significant and sustainable outcomes too much attention is given to 'procedures' and 'tangible results' and too little to the contents and significance. Modern SWAps (aimed at infrastructure development) will often search for tangible results (how many kilometres of road improvement) without discussing that many roads will most probably be flooded or destroyed by severe weather. Sectoral programmes (for example, aimed at educational reform) often lack strategic goals, such as stopping out-migration. In the current debate, much value is given to the subject of organizational learning in development co-operation. Aid effectiveness is expected to improve if aid agencies, and their counterparts on the receiving end, devote more attention to the collection of information.[15] Large investments are made in monitoring systems and the design of project performance systems which will allow visible and tangible results.

However, *learning* is not a matter of data collection or measurement of output indicators, but a matter of better *understanding* the dynamics of daily life. Rather than spending much time on having internal discussions about organizational learning between institutions, more priority should be given to having regular meetings with the common people in the countryside. Grassroots participation and dialogue are important elements of bringing development interventions better in line with the livelihood priorities of the population. In order to improve the performance of development co-operation it is important that interventions keep track (are interventions still in line with local priorities and trends?). This is much more important than measuring output (are results in line with the project goal?) which is wrongly presented as a priority in monitoring and evaluation practices.

15 'In the ideal learning situation there is a substantial amount of information created on both sides. This information is often scattered among different sources, which does not make it easy to access it and obtain a good overview. The information needs to be aggregated and synthesized in order to provide a comprehensible and available picture of the current situation' (Carlsson and Wohlgemuth 2000: 9).

Appendix

List of reviewed projects

Natural resource management	
Country	**Name of project**
Philippines	SARC-TSARDD
Pakistan	ERP (Environmental Rehabilitation Project) in Malakand Division
	Malakand Social Forestry Project
Costa Rica	Agroforestry Project Chorotega Consolidación del Uso Adecuado de los Recursos Forestales en Comunidades Rurales de la Región de Chorotega y Pacífico Central
El Salvador	Sustainable Agriculture On Sloping Lands (Agricultura Sostenible en Zonas de Ladera)
Nicaragua	Conservation and Sustainable Forest Development project (PROCODEFOR)
	Pie de Monte Reforestation Project Jalapa
Kenya	Kenya Woodfuel Agro-Forestry Programme
India	Bundelkhand Integrated Water Resources Management Project
Nepal	Mechi Hill Development Programme
	Mahottari Natural Resource Management Project

Agricultural research	
Country	**Name of project**
Bolivia	Optimización de la Fijación Biológica de Nitrógeno para la Agricultura en Bolivia, “Rhizobiología”
	Seed potato project (PROSEMPA)
Mozambique	Consolidation of the household food security and nutrition information network for policy formulation and development planning
Pakistan	Netherlands Research Assistance Project (NRAP) at the International Waterlogging and Salinity Research Institute (IWASRI)
Mali	Division de Recherche des Systèmes de Production Rurale
	Projet Riz Irrigué
Benin	Projet Recherche Appliquée en Milieu Réel (RAMR/PARP)
Kenya	National Agricultural Research Programme Kenya

Water management	
Bolivia	Mink'a Potosi (Mink'a III)
India	Operational Pilot Project for Reclamation of Waterlogged and Saline Lands (HOPP)
	North Bengal Terai Development Project (NB-Terai)
Bangladesh	System Rehabilitation Project (SRP)
	Early Implementation Project (EIP)
	Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP)
	Compartimentalization Pilot Project (CPP)
Egypt	Drainage Executive Management Project (DEMP)
	Fayoum Water Management Project (FWMP)

Integrated rural development	
Country	**Name of the project**
Philippines	SARC-TSARDD Sustainable Agrarian Reform Communities in the Philippines – Technical Support to Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
Nicaragua	Rural Development Project in the area of Nueva Guinea, Muelle de los Bueyes y El Rama
	Apoyo al Desarrollo Humano Sostenible de la Comunidades Indígenas y Campesinas de la Zona Norte de la Región Autónoma Atlántico Sur (PRORAAS II(
Burkina Faso	Integrated Development Programme of the provinces Sanguié and Boulkiemdé (PDISAB)
	Programming and Implementation of Integrated Development in Kaya (PEDI-Kaya)
	Burkinabè Sahel Programme (PSB/PB)
	Zoundwéogo Integrated Rural Development Programme (PDI/Z, now PDL/Z
Bolivia	Sub-regional Development of Chuquisaca Centro, Management of Natural Resources
	Fortalecimiento de organizaciones económicas de base (Strengthening of economic base organisations
Ethiopia	Bugna Integrated Rural development programme (BIRDP)
	Gidan Integrated Rural development programme (GIRDP)
	Meket Integrated Rural develop-ment programme (MIRDP)
	Sustainable Poverty Alleviation in Kafa Zone (SUPAK)
Cape Verde	Programme de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Santo Antao (PADESA, Support to the development of Santo Antao
Ecuador	Centros de referencia para la oferta de servicios poscosecha (Reference centres for post-harvest services)
Honduras	Desarrollo Rural del Sur de Lempira, Phase II, (Rural development of South Lempira)
India	Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project (APTDP – IN/90/023),
Pakistan	Animal Husbandry In-service Training Institute, Phase III (AHITI)
	Provincial Administrated Tribal Areas Integrated Agricultural Development Project (PATA)

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