

PAKISTAN: SIND LAND LEVELLING PROJECT

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The Project

The project consisted of the supply of 250 75 HP bulldozers, spares, ancillary equipment and technical cooperation to the Directorate of Agricultural Engineering (DAE) of the Government of Sind Province, between 1977 and 1981. The machines were hired out to farmers as part of a continuing programme of land levelling for irrigated agriculture.

The cost of the bulldozers plus equipment was £7.16m in historical prices (£14.47m in 1990 prices). The estimated cost of the TC is £136,200 in 1990 prices.

The Evaluation

The evaluation took place in two stages in 1989/90. A three months agro-economic survey of project beneficiaries was followed by the main evaluation conducted by a team comprising a member of Evaluation Department, an agricultural engineer, a social anthropologist and the economist who had responsibility for conducting the agro-economic survey.

Overall Conclusion

The project was *successful*, particularly in economic terms, although performance could have been improved in various ways.

The Main Findings

- The project produced an ERR of 30%. Its major achievement was the levelling of 249,000 acres of land up to the time of the evaluation, 104,000 of which were previously uncultivated. This has contributed to the maintenance of a constant stock of cultivable land in Sind in the face of land loss due to salinity and waterlogging.
- However, an agreed project condition, which required the progressive elimination of a subsidy to farmers, was not met and as a result the project did not realise its full economic potential. Land which would have been uneconomic to level under full cost charging was levelled. The bulk of project benefits flowed to the wealthy landowners who used the service, whereas under full cost charging a proportion of the benefits would have flowed to the DAE.
- An expected 50,000 new jobs for sharecroppers on newly levelled land were not created. Land was levelled in pockets throughout the province, not in large tracts

in previously undeveloped riverain areas as expected. The overall amount of land available for cultivation in Sind did not rise because newly levelled land was balanced out by land lost through waterlogging and salinity. The project did, however, contribute to maintenance of overall levels of employment amongst sharecroppers and without the project some 17,000 tenancies may have been lost through waterlogging and salinity.

- The sharecropping system of land tenure made an inequitable distribution of benefits between landlord and sharecropper inevitable but more smallscale landowners and self-cultivators could have been reached if restrictions on availability of bulldozer time had been enforced.
- The TC components of the project, which were intended to strengthen the DAE, achieved very little, largely because their purpose and objectives were not made clear and management of the equipment input was allowed to overshadow TC requirements.

Lessons

- The experience of this project underlines the now-recognised need for multi-disciplinary appraisal, including social development advice, for all rural development projects.
- Project objectives should be the subject of detailed discussion and agreement with the recipient before the project starts. Where TC components are being provided alongside a large input of capital equipment, particularly where institutional development is involved, the objectives of each component should be clear and targets set accordingly.
- Where project conditions are set without reference to the wider institutional and policy framework they are unlikely to be achieved. Conditions requiring the reduction or removal of a particular subsidy should be investigated to make sure the condition does not conflict with pricing policy at a wider level.
- Adequate time for field testing of equipment should be allowed, particularly where equipment will be operating in difficult conditions in which it has not previously been used.
- Aid tying may impede the freedom of project planners to select the correct equipment for a project.
- Project designers should consider what type of information and level of detail is required from a project and how this will be produced. For agricultural projects, monitoring information should be collected not only about project outputs, but also about the nature and number of beneficiaries. Without such information project impact will be impossible to quantify. Provision of reporting proformas might help ensure that the correct information is produced.
- Monitoring plans require particular attention where monitoring will be managed from London rather than from a Development Division.