

# **Technical, Utilization, and Beneficiary Satisfaction Assessment 2018**

Poverty Reduction Fund Project (PRF)



## **Final Report**

## **Findings and Recommendations**

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## Technical, Utilization, and Beneficiary Satisfaction Assessment, PRF, 2018

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## **Technical, Utilization, and Beneficiary Satisfaction Assessment, PRF, 2018**

### **Executive Summary**

The Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) was established in 2002 with support from the World Bank. Additional financial credits were received from the WB and the Swiss Cooperation for Development to extend the project to 2011. The second phase, PRF II, was again supported by these agencies along with investments from the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) and the Australian Agency for International Development.

The objective of this independent beneficiary assessment and technical evaluation is to assess the community's satisfaction with the execution of the PRF SPs, the technical quality of the infrastructure, and the cost effectiveness/sustainability of the rural works financed by the PRF Project. Evaluation teams also took note of best practices observed and lessons learned at SP sites, in order to make recommendations for future project implementation improvements.

The cost effectiveness of PRF investments was determined by confirming the measurements of each of the sampled infrastructure in order to calculate an approximate unit cost (averaging all common infrastructure types). These figures were compared to the 2016 technical audit's conclusions.

Neil Neate, P.Eng, led the technical evaluation and audit. Neil was assisted by members of ESDS Consulting Ltd. ESDS provided five personnel who were trained by Neil before performing the fieldwork.

The selection of 36 PRF sub-projects was performed using a random sampling method, using the following criteria:

- Approximately half of the SP were in the north of the country and half in the south;
- There was proportional representation of SP by infrastructure type; and
- Greater than 50% of the selected sites were considered remote.

Five types of sub-projects were evaluated: Building; Bridge; Water Supply; Road; and Irrigation. Each SP type was evaluated using a set of Field Tools that were similar in scope and style but differed from one another in the type of information gathered. The Building Technical Rating Field Tool, for example, collected data in regards to concrete practices, wall and column information, etc., while the Water Supply Tool examined piping, reservoirs and public tapstands. There were five Field Tools for each SP type: Field Tool 1 – SP Location and Information; 2 – Beneficiary Assessment; 3 – Technical Evaluation of Infrastructure; 4 – Cost Effectiveness –; and 5 – SP Description and Notes.

### Quality of the Design

Village SP Committees were questioned about the relevance and quality of the design, as well as the suitability of the SP's location and resilience to disastrous conditions.

Villagers rated the SPs very highly, giving positive assessments for between 83% and 100% of these criteria.

#### Procurement

Village committees were quizzed about the procurement methodologies used as well as bid opening and evaluation. They answered with positive answers 81% and 97% of the SPs, respectively. The auditors judged the committees' procurement capacity based on these conversations and rated the 53% of the committees capable with another 44% moderately capable.

#### Social and Environmental Safeguards

The audit team found a great majority of SPs to have been successfully managed with respect to the social and environmental safeguard issues (94% Safeguards Appropriately Applied). Appropriate mitigation had been applied in 86% of the SPs evaluated.

The Feedback and Resolution Mechanism was also seen to be functioning as it was intended, with an average of 2 feedback messages/SP. All solutions or responses to feedback messages were presented during meetings in the villages. All villager committee members (100%) felt that the FRM is a useful tool.

All village committees stated that there were some DRM activities associated with their SP and that the community as a whole participated in mitigation measures. Two SPs were in areas where no UXO clearance is required; all other SPs received proper clearance certificates. A single UXO was located and removed at one of the bridge sites.

#### Sub-project Implementation / Supervision

The auditors found that village committee books were in good order at all of the SPs evaluated.

Contractors constructed almost all of the SPs and brought their own labour forces. Community contributions included donated labour for all SPs evaluated.

The VIT was found to have been most responsible for inspections, performing roughly three to four times as many visits to the SP sites as the other levels of bureaucracy. Coordination and accountability meetings were well attended by all levels and records of discussions kept in good order for the majority of SPs.

Approximately 69% of SPs are completed on time or earlier.

### Quality of the Infrastructure

The current condition of the sampled SPs: **92% of the infrastructure was considered to be in Good condition, with the remaining 8% being rated Fair. There were no SPs rated in Poor condition.**

The technical quality rating of the separate components of the infrastructures, using similar methodologies as from 2016 audit, found that 74% of the sub-projects have been constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications contained in the Sub-project Proposals and considered to Meet Specification, with a further 25% rated Slightly Below in terms of meeting the intent of the sub-project proposal. Only 1% of technical ratings were Below Specification.

### Access and utilization of the infrastructures / service delivery

Schools: The average number of students at new school buildings is 84 children. Where schools are constructed to replace an older structure, these new replacements experienced an average increase of 27 students after construction was completed.

Water Supply: An average village equipped with a new water supply system will realize a timesaving of about 500 hours/day, while also having the use of more water.

No useful data was acquired for the other types of rural infrastructure.

### Sub-project maintenance

Committees felt that the relevance of the maintenance plan for activity planning, scheduling and cost estimation was high, between 58% to 89% of committees consider these resources relevant to their needs.

The quality of the maintenance at the SPs themselves was assessed by the auditors, and found to be Highly Satisfactory (58% of SPs) to Satisfactory (39%). Only 1 SP was considered Moderately Satisfactory. Community members were found to have performed the bulk of this ongoing O&M work (72% of SPs).

The capacity of the O&M Committee members was assessed for financial management, technical knowledge and ability to mobilize their fellow villagers. The committees were found to be Highly Capable of this work between 36% to 56% of the time, with the rest rated Capable (save for 1 SP rated Not Capable).

Only 28% of SPs collect user fees, although 92% of SPs report that user contributions are collected for specific repairs or rehabilitation work. 97% of the SPs use voluntary labour from amongst the user group. Only 18% of SPs have regularly scheduled voluntary labour efforts.

Government inputs are mentioned in O&M plans for 83% of the SPs, while 78% of the sites actually receive these inputs on a timely basis.

### Costs of the infrastructures

The cost effectiveness field tool from the 2016 technical audit was used in order to replicate the methodologies used in that effort. The unit costs derived for the SPs examined and measured in this audit can be compared to the results and conclusions from the 2016 audit, where possible.

It was found that the PRF building development program continues to produce structures that are cost effective with an average unit cost of 2.23M Kip/sq.m. (compared with 2.8M in 2016).

Bridges were also shown to be cost effective, with an average unit cost of 4.1M Kip/sq.m (2016: 7.7M and 9.3M Kip/sq.m. for slightly different types of bridges).

Gravity-fed water systems were found to cost 2.3M Kip/Household (HH), a cost effective unit cost when compared with the 2016 audit (2.6M Kip/HH). Borehole SPs also were cost effective, costing approximately 320,000 Kip/beneficiary, where the 2016 audit realized a cost of about 375,000 Kip/beneficiary.

Current PRF roads are costing about 23,500 Kip/sq.m, while the 2016 audit found several comparable roads (by KDP in Khamouane) to be worth approximately 21,000 Kip/sq.m.

The single irrigation scheme evaluated during this audit did not offer any characteristics that would allow it to be compared with the 2016 study.

Community material and labour contributions were 100% and 97%, respectively, entered into SP logbooks and accounted properly, all by VIT members. 94% of committees stated that villagers were satisfied with their wages. An equal number believed that all budget transfers had been completed according to agreed plans and in a proper manner.

### Costs of the approach / method used

All SP administrative costs were managed by the VITs, who for the most part followed the procedures laid out in PRF manuals (86%). 81% of village committees felt that the administrative costs budget was sufficient. Most village committees consisted of 9 people.

VIT time and costs associated with PRF SPs were seen to be much greater than those borne by government, PRF, and Kum Ban Facilitators.

## Capacity Building

The number of training sessions differs for infrastructure types, from irrigation SPs receiving 9 sessions to road SPs receiving only 2 or 3. Most village committees feel, however, that the training sessions are adequate (61%) or somewhat adequate (39%). They also are of the opinion that the course materials are of high quality (42%) or good quality (58%). Most villages felt that the training courses were adequately responding to the village's capacity (53%, adequate; 47% somewhat adequate).

Villagers were, for the most part, happy with the quality of the training approach and methodology (69%, Good Quality; 31% Moderate Quality), while their assessment of the entire training process was slightly higher (42% High Quality; 58% Good Quality).

Villagers recognized that the government concerned sector staff attended fewer training sessions, an average of 1 or 2 for all SPs. They felt that the training curriculum was adequate for these people (78% Adequate) and that the course materials and tools were of High Quality (81%). 78% felt that the training materials were adequate, with a similar number thinking that the quality of the training program and approach used was of Good Quality. 61% of SP Committees believe the training to be of High Quality for the government sector staff.

## Beneficiary satisfaction

Village committee members were asked about their satisfaction levels for six areas of interest: PRF staff and services; contractor; VIT; government sector staff and services; the infrastructure itself; and their ongoing O&M responsibilities.

All areas received mostly positive responses, with only 2 SPs voicing some displeasure. The combination of the six questions shows that the great majority of PRF SP committees are fully satisfied with the process (90%), many highly so (a full 50% of the total). Moderate satisfaction comprises the bulk of the rest with only 2 SPs indicating moderate dissatisfaction.

## Gender

Gender data from the Village Assessment Survey show that the leadership of Village Authorities and People's Organizations are male dominated except that of the Lao Women's Union which is a female organization. This is the same in all other village organizations, although it is claimed that there are female memberships. It is worthwhile to note that there are female Deputy Village Chiefs.

## Supporting documents

All village committee documents display evidence of use for all of the key elements of PRF methodologies: drawing, BoQ, site journal, minutes of meetings, technical manual and guideline, and monitoring forms. Almost all village committees feel that this

documentation is highly relevant to their work (92%); they are satisfied with its quality (67% High Quality; 33% Good Quality); and the documentation is kept in a tidy and proper manner (92%).

A large majority of village committees feel that the SP supporting documentation is appropriate to their community's capacity to use it (72%, Good and Appropriate). Village committees were judged to be of High Capacity for 44% of the SPs. Good Capacity for 17%, and Moderate Capacity for 39% of the SPs.



## **Technical, Utilization, and Beneficiary Satisfaction Assessment, PRF, 2018**

### **Final Report – Findings and Recommendations**

#### **1 Background**

The Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) was established in May 2002 under the guidance of the Government of Lao PDR and is currently in its third phase (2016-2020). The PRF project's main role is to help local Government and communities in the poorest, most remote districts of the country to work together, improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of poor people in isolated and poor rural villages.

The PRF uses a Community Driven Development (CDD) approach, whereby communities themselves decide on how resources are allocated, manage sub-project funds, and implement sub-projects. Extensive facilitation and training is provided through the Program to ensure that all community members, including women and members of different ethnic groups, participate in the decision-making process and benefit from the Program.

The Poverty Reduction Fund has a budget of over US\$ 180 million (US\$ 54 million for PRFIII), and PRF has been one of Lao PDR's largest multi-sectorial programs focused on rural poverty reduction. The project development objective (PDO) is to improve access to basic services for the Project's targeted poor communities. The PDO would be achieved through inclusive community and local development processes with emphasis on ensuring sustainability.

The PRF has implemented sub-projects in ten provinces, with 90 to 95% of sub-project (SP) budget expended on construction-related activities. PRF I and II have supported the development of schools, public buildings, bridges, health dispensaries, potable water systems, irrigation schemes and rural road upgrades. PRF II was designed around six core principles: Simplicity; Community Participation and Sustainability; Transparency and Accountability; Wise Investment; Social Inclusion and Gender Equality; and Siding with the Poor.

The objective of this independent beneficiary assessment and technical evaluation is to assess the community's satisfaction with the execution of the PRF SPs, the technical quality of the infrastructure, and the cost effectiveness/sustainability of the rural works financed by the PRF Project. Evaluation teams also took note of best practices observed and lessons learned at SP sites, in order to make recommendations for future project implementation improvements.

The cost effectiveness of PRF investments was determined by confirming the measurements of each of the sampled infrastructure in order to calculate an approximate unit cost (averaging all common infrastructure types). These figures were compared to the 2016 technical audit's conclusions, which included similar evaluations of 'comparable' infrastructure by other agencies.

## 2 Technical, Utilization, and Beneficiary Assessment Scope

The Key Objectives of the assessment are as follows, copied from the Terms of Reference. They are lettered and numbered for ease of reference.

### A. Sub-project preparation

#### Quality of the design

- A1 Reference of the design vs. utilization by the community
- A2 Quality of the design (understandable by all stakeholders, level of details)
- A3 Design adherence to sector standards and certification
- A4 Relevance of the sub-project location
- A5 Resilience to natural disasters (Is the sub-project design relevant to the geography of the site and the potential natural risks of the sub-project surrounding?)
- A6 Level of community involvement in the survey-design steps

#### Procurement

- A7 Relevance of the procurement methodology used (how was the sub-contractor selected?)
- A8 How was the community involved in the bid opening and in the bid evaluation?
- A9 What is the capacity level of the community to do procurement by themselves for future sub-projects?

#### Social and Environmental Safeguards

- A10 How the social and environmental safeguards have been applied in the different steps from survey-design up to sub-projects operations and maintenance?
- A11 Were there any adverse social or environmental impacts and how they have been mitigated (land donation, trees plantation, etc.)?
- A12 Are the FRM known by community members and being used (number of feedback received, type of feedback, source of feedback, how were they solved)?
- A13 Were there any activities promoting environmental protection during the sub-project preparation, sub-project implementation or sub-project operations and maintenance?

A14 How was the DRM activities implemented and what was the role of the community in the process

A15 Was UXO clearance carried out?

B. Sub-project implementation / supervision

B1 How was the community involved in the sub-project implementation?

B2 How was the community contribution organized, executed and monitored (number of households participating, number of man day, daily fees, payment methods)?

B3 How was the community paid for their work after the community contribution completed (daily rate, method of payment, frequency)?

B4 Were all households given equal chances to participate?

B5 How was the VIT involved in the sub-project supervision (frequency of visits, meetings)?

B6 How was the Kum ban Facilitators involved in the sub-project supervision (frequency of visits, meetings)?

B7 Type and nature the support received by the community from the concern sector (frequency of visits, quality of the visits, monitoring tools, technical knowledge / competence)

B8 Type and nature of support received by the community from the PRF staff (frequency of visits, quality of the visits, monitoring tools, technical knowledge / competence)

B9 What was the Coordination mechanism between the different stakeholders and was it applied according to plan (frequency of coordination meeting, who was involved, what was discussed)?

B10 How many Accountability meetings have been organized, who joined these meetings, what were presented and discussed during these meetings, what decisions have been made (minutes of meetings)?

B11 Was the sub-project construction implemented according to the plan (any advance or delay)?

C. Sub-project utilization

Quality of the infrastructure

- C1 Current condition of the infrastructure (good, fair, poor) based on list of key criteria developed for each major type of sub-projects
- C2 Infrastructure compliance with the design approved by the concern sector
- C3 Quality of the construction materials/inputs used and consistency with BOQ in the bidding document
- C4 Defects found during construction and how they have been addressed

Access and utilization of the infrastructures / service delivery:

- C5 Utilization rate (before and after the sub-project construction (school enrollment, road users, etc.)

D. Sub-project maintenance

- D1 Relevance of the maintenance plan (requirement, planning, costs)
- D2 Quality of the maintenance on the ground (what has been done so far, when, by who, how was it organized)?
- D3 Maintenance methods (RMG, all community members from time to time, Village Operation and Maintenance team, concerned sector)
- D4 Capacity of the O&M committee (financial management, technical knowledge, capacity to mobilize the community members)
- D5 Community participation to O&M (financial contribution (monthly fees, level of contribution per households), labor contribution, etc.)
- D6 Concern sector involvement and responsibility in the sub-project maintenance (according to plan, realized)

E. Budget / financial management

Costs of the infrastructures

- E1 Review unit costs (was the sub-project cost estimate reasonable and realistic according to standard design and sub-project location)?

E2 Community contribution (calculation, value, manner, equity, monitoring, daily payment rate, financial management)

E3 Community labor payment (calculation, value, manner, equity, monitoring, daily payment rate, financial management)

E4 How was the sub-project budget managed (by who, following which mechanism, budget transfer frequency, modalities)?

E5 Did the budget was transfer according to plan?

Costs of the approach / method used

E6 How was the administrative costs budget managed (by who, following which mechanism, budget transfer frequency, modalities?)

E7 Was the administrative costs enough regards to the support provided (number of people involved, man/days)

E8 Efficiency of the different steps from sub-project preparation to sub-project operation and maintenance including trainings, meetings and field visits (time and costs for the support provided by the concerned sector, the PRF staff, the Kum ban Facilitators, the VIT)

F. Capacity Building (to PRF staff and to community)

To PRF staff To community

F1 Number of training delivered to the community (survey-design, planning, supervision, operation and maintenance)

F2 Adequacy of the training curriculum

F3 Quality of the contents / IEC/ materials / tools

F4 Adequacy of the contents regards to community capacity

F5 Quality of the approach / methodology used

F6 Training assessment / evaluation (theory and practice during the different sub-projects steps from survey design up to sub-project maintenance)

To Government counterpart

F7 Number of training delivered to the concerned sector staff (survey-design, planning, supervision, operation and maintenance)

- F8 Adequacy of the training curriculum
- F9 Quality of the contents / IEC/ materials / tools
- F10 Adequacy of the contents regards to concern sector staff capacity
- F11 Quality of the approach / methodology used
- F12 Training assessment / evaluation (theory and practice during the different sub-projects steps from survey design up to sub-project maintenance)

G. Beneficiary satisfaction perception (inputs, outputs and outcomes)

- G1 Community degree of satisfaction towards the support received by the PRF during the sub-project preparation, supervision / implementation and operation and maintenance (sub-project design and costs, community contribution, quality of the meetings organized (confirmation meeting, kick off meeting, accountability meeting, frequency of the visits, quality of the visits, quality of the training received, quality of the IEC tools (posters, manual), decision making approach, community participation, current capacities developed, gaps still existing, etc.);
- G2 Community degree of satisfaction towards the support received by the sub-contractor during the sub-project supervision / implementation (technical quality of the infrastructure delivered, community participation during construction and supervision, interaction and behavior of the sub-contractor and outside labors, sub-project costs, community contribution, etc.)
- G3 Community degree of satisfaction towards the work done by the Village Implementation team from the sub-project preparation to the sub-project Operations and Maintenance (Organization of the meetings and trainings, quality of the translation and information received, frequency of visits, etc.)
- G4 Community degree of satisfaction towards the support received by the concerned sector (technical support and advice received during the sub-project survey-design, sub-project supervision and sub-project operation and maintenance.);
- G5 Community degree of satisfaction towards the infrastructure (do the infrastructure correspond to one of the priority identified in the Village Development Plan, do the infrastructure respond to the need of the community, do all community members can access the service provided, etc.)
- G6 Community satisfaction towards the maintenance approach and community role and responsibilities versus concerned sector

H. Gender

H1 How was gender taken in to account in the different steps from sub-project survey design up to sub-project maintenance?

I. Supporting documents

I1 What are the different tools used during the different steps from the survey-design up to the sub-project maintenance (drawing, BOQ, site journal, minutes of meetings, manual and guideline, monitoring forms)?

I2 Relevance of these documents

I3 Quality of the documentation (are the documents filled properly, do they include all the information required)?

I4 Were the documentations kept in a proper way?

I5 How far the community manual and guideline are appropriate to the audience and community capacity?

I6 How is community capacities assessed?

All questions are repeated within the reporting sections below.

Recommendations of the Technical Evaluation are presented throughout the text of this report, associated with each item under discussion/analysis, and gathered together in Annex 1 for convenience.

### 3 Technical Evaluation Team Members

Neil Neate, P.Eng, led the technical evaluation and audit. Neil was assisted by members of ESDS Consulting Ltd. ESDS provided five personnel who were trained by Neil before performing the fieldwork.

The ESDS consultants were divided into two teams. Team 1 was Mssrs. Sengdavanh Inthavong and Phayvanh Keochampa; Team 2 was Mssrs. Bounphengphachanh Sayathichack and Kongkham Inamphai. The two teams were watched over and advised by Mr. BounNhaeng Bounleuxay. They traveled together to each province and divided the SP site inspections between the two teams.

Dr. Soumountha Youtitham, also of ESDS, provided support to the teams in regards to the social aspects of the Beneficiary Satisfaction interviews.

The CVs for the qualitative research team members, plus a company brochure for ESDS, is included in Annex 2.



## 4 Technical Evaluation Methodologies

### 4.1 PRF Sub-Project Types

The desire that this audit's results be compared and contrasted with the 2016 audit obliged this audit to use the same classification system for the SPs. The SP types identified for the PRF menu are as follows:

Table 1: PRF Technical Evaluation 2015 Sub-project types

Type	Sub-Project Type Descriptor	PRF MIS Sectors Represented Within This Sample
A	Building	ED, HL, WS, AF
B	Bridge	PT
C	Water Supply	WS
D	Road	PT
E	Irrigation	AF

The analysis within this report is based upon the above sub-project types, and the findings for each specific sub-project type apply across all sectors in which such infrastructure (or component/aspect of infrastructure) is found. For example, the technical evaluation's conclusions regarding reinforced concrete practices will apply equally to buildings, to concrete bridges, road structures and retaining walls, to concrete reservoirs, and to concrete drainage channels, etc. Thus this evaluation's findings for each sub-project type should be viewed and applied with equal interest across the PRF sectors featuring such infrastructure.

### 4.2 Technical Evaluation Field Instruments

The technical evaluation teams used unique field instruments for each SP type, several of them developed for this audit. The field instruments consisted of a set of five checklists that were to be completed at each village where the subject SP was located. The five topics of the Field Tools were: 1 SP Location and Information; 2 Beneficiary Assessment; 3 Technical Evaluation of Infrastructure; 4 Cost Effectiveness; and 5 Brief SP Description and Notes.

The Field Tools were developed in consultation with the PRF, prior to and during the first week of the assignment and submitted to the PRF for comment and further input (particularly the answers laid out in multiple-choice style). Valuable advice was received and the Field Tools were finalized.

A sample of one of the Field Tools is attached to this report in Annex 3 – Sample Beneficiary Assessment Field Instrument.

## 5 Sub-Projects Evaluated

### 5.1 PRF Sub-Project Sampling Criteria and Audit Sample

There were 35 PRF SPs evaluated in three provinces of Lao PDR, 7 in Savannakhet, 12 in Luang Prabang, and 16 in Oudomxay. A complete list of the sub-projects that were evaluated is provided in Annex 4. Following is a table providing a summary of the SPs evaluated according to infrastructure type.

Table 2: Number of Sub-Projects by Type in Each Province

	Building	Bridge	Water Supply	Road	Irrigation	Total
Luang Prabang	4		3	5		12
Oudomxay	7	2	4	2	1	16
Savannakhet	3	1	4			8
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>36</b>

### 5.2 PRF Sub-Project Sampling Criteria vs. Audit Sample

- Geographical distribution of sub-projects by two different regions in the country (Northern and Southern): Audit sample was taken from two Northern provinces and one Southern.
- Distribution of sub-projects by sector type: Audit sample considered the infrastructure type distribution through the last two cycles in order to derive the sampling percentage for each type.
- Projects implemented under community, contractor and joint implementation modalities (as we want to compare among each type of implementation): Introducing implementation modality to the SP selection procedure was deemed too complicated. It was considered that the random selection process would provide a suitable sampling of the different implementation modalities.
- Location of project sites (remote areas will form at least 50% of the sample with the remaining from the non-remote areas): Selection of SPs within the target provinces was done with attention to the remoteness of villages. PRF classifies village within its MIS in three degrees of remoteness (Not Remote, Remote, Very Remote).

## 6 Technical, Utilization and Beneficiary Satisfaction Assessment – Findings

Following are the questions to be answered from the Terms of Reference and scope, with audit results presented in tables, charts or graphs. Each presentation of the field data is followed by discussion, analysis and recommendations as appropriate.

### A Quality of the design

#### A1 Relevance of the design vs. utilization by the community

Auditors were encouraged to ask villagers whether or not the SP has satisfied the need that they had originally identified. Was the SP big enough or too big? Could the design have been changed to better suit their needs? Probing questions of this nature attempted to have the villagers think critically about the SP design and how the community is using it.

Table 3: Relevance of Design vs. Utilization by Community

	Highly relevant *	Relevant	Not relevant
Building (14)	100% (14)		
Bridge (3)	100% (3)		
Water Supply (11)	91% (10)	9% (1)	
Road (7)	86% (6)	14% (1)	
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>6%</b>	

\* to 5 provides the criteria and advice that was issued to the auditors during training. These notes were translated in Lao.

Discussion:

**All SPs have been deemed relevant to the villagers' needs and requirements, most of them Highly Relevant.** The auditors heard many stories where villagers told of their collective deprivations before the PRF investment had been made, whether for children walking many kilometers to the nearest school before construction of a local building, the many hours of water-carrying spent by mainly women and children before a GFWS system had brought water into a village, or the difficulties of pedestrian or vehicle travel before local road improvements.

#### A2 Quality of the design (understandable by all stakeholders, level of details)

Auditors questioned the villagers about their level of comprehension of the construction drawing set, manuals, instructions, etc. Special attention was focused on details of the design and the villagers' understanding of these aspects of the SP.

Table 4: Quality of Design

	High quality	Good quality	Poor quality
Building (14)	79% (11)	21% (3)	-
Bridge (3)	100% (3)		-
Water Supply (11)	73% (8)	27% (3)	-
Road (7)	100% (7)	-	-
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>	

## Discussion:

The **majority of the design document sets that the auditors examined, \_ , were judged of High Quality** with a smaller percentage determined as Good Quality. None were rated below this. No villagers complained about the design or mentioned significant items missing. It would appear, from this finding, that the PRF's technical design drawing delivery system is working well.

## A3 Design adherence to sector standards and certification

The auditors examined the PRF design drawings for indications that senior PRF engineering personnel had checked and signed-off on the drawings, an indication that the senior PRF officers had certified the design meets current standards.

Table 5: Design Adherence to Sector Standards

	High quality	Good quality	Poor quality
Building (14)	100% (14)	-	-
Bridge (3)	100% (3)	-	-
Water Supply (11)	100% (11)	-	-
Road (7)	100% (7)	-	-
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Discussion:

**All designs and drawings were found to fully meet their relevant sector standards, and all drawings were certified.** The auditors are mostly civil engineers of differing specialties (road, building, water supply, etc.) and as such were generally able to judge the expected quality and design standard for all sectors. The scheduling of the two-person teams attempted to have an engineering specialist of the SP's type attend the evaluation visits. This was not possible for all SPs, but at least half of the SPs were evaluated by a relevant sector specialist.

## A4 Relevance of the sub-project location

Auditors quizzed the village committee members (normally the VIT, sometimes with other interested individuals) about the selected SP site and whether it has proved to be a good choice. For buildings and bridges, this question provoked smiles, but for

water supply and road it prompted discussion and many times thoughtful discussion.

Table 6: Relevance of SP Location

	Relevant	Could be improved	Not relevant
Building (14)	100% (14)	-	-
Bridge (3)	100% (3)	-	-
Water Supply (11)	91% (10)	9% (1)	-
Road (7)	86% (6)	14% (1)	
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>6%</b>	

#### Discussion:

There were no notes made to explain the circumstances and how the road and water supply SP might have been located differently, perhaps improving the situation. These SPs should be further investigated in this context so that the site difficulties can be understood and avoided in the future. It is noted that these two ratings were recorded in adjacent villages (Huay Tho, LPB and Long Lath, LPB).

A5 Resilience to natural disasters (Is the sub-project design relevant to the geography of the site and the potential natural risks of the sub-project surrounding?).

Auditors examined the SP and its surroundings in order to understand the impact that disastrous events might have upon the infrastructure.

Table 7: Disaster Risk Management (DRM)

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Is the SP safe from flooding?	93% (13)	67% (2)	91% (10)	57% (4)	100% (1)
Erosion protection measures sufficient?	93% (13)	No	64% (7)	29% (2)	100% (1)
Low landslide risk; no steep slopes	86% (12)	No	73% (8)	43% (3)	100% (1)
Low forest fire risk; clear area between building and forest	100% (14)	100% (3)	100% (11)	71% (5)	100% (1)
Does the SP file contain a completed DRM checklist?	93% (13)	100% (3)	100% (11)	71% (5)	No

#### Discussion:

This question pertains to Disaster Risk Management issues and so was augmented by detailed queries that highlighted the differences between hazards experienced by the each infrastructure type.

The data reveals that **buildings are least affected by DRM issues with most SPs being at small risk. Both water supply systems and bridges have difficulties with erosion and slopes (indeed, two interrelated aspects of design).**

**Roads are at most risk and experience the highest number of problems within all four aspects of DRM assessment.** Erosion protection is noted as being quite problematic within the road infrastructure sector (Table 7, line 2, road: only 2 of 7 are deemed sufficient in these regards). Road erosion is normally worst at junctions with drainage features (small bridges, culverts, etc.). Slopes that will have moving water flow against them should be covered with protective rock or vegetation. Culverts should be equipped with appropriate headwalls, aprons and road-support wingwalls (each situation is different and requires a trained engineer/technologist with drainage experience).

Viewing the overall data, it can be seen that road and water supply SPs are more frequently affected by these natural, environmental (or sometimes man-made forest fires) events which can lead to disaster. Buildings are normally constructed in safe areas, usually within a village, although hazardous slopes were indicated for two structures sponsored by the PRF.

There may be notes recorded in the field tool for the sites where DRM issues were identified. This is particularly important for the water supply and bridge sites where erosion protection problems are the likely cause of these hazardous ratings. Photographs from these sites will also allow some judgments be made from Vientiane, although the finding may warrant a field visit to check and make recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** The PRF should investigate the SP sites where DRM issues were noted. Some of the issues can be solved in the future by altering the designs used or adding features. Erosion protection is noted as being problematic, so particular attention should be directed at this aspect. Appropriate slope steepness and surface armouring are key elements to be examined.

#### A6 Level of community involvement in the survey-design steps

Auditors asked the VIT and interested community members present about their experiences during the survey and design period. The ratings are based on villager statements that confirmed their active participation in the field survey and deliberations with PRF designers as the scope of the SP was being determined.

Table 8: Level of Community Involvement, Survey-Design

	High	Average	Low
Building (14)	93% (13)	7% (1)	-

Bridge (3)	33% (1)	67% (2)	-
Water Supply (11)	100% (11)		-
Road (7)	86% (6)	14% (1)	
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>	

#### Discussion:

Many village committees provided accounts of the cooperative effort that the survey would involve. Villagers knowledgeable about the proposed SP's intended purpose would step up and help. These individuals would advise the PRF engineering personnel who attended the village during the survey period.

#### Procurement

##### A7 Relevance of the procurement methodology used (how was the sub-contractor selected?)

Auditors asked the VIT and interested committee members if they actively participated during the procurement phase, how they interacted with contractors or subcontractors, and other general topics pertaining to financial considerations, etc.

Table 9: Relevance of the Procurement Methodology

	Highly relevant	Relevant	Not relevant
Building (14)	86% (12)	14% (2)	
Bridge (3)	67% (2)	33% (1)	
Water Supply (11)	82% (9)	18% (2)	
Road (7)	71% (5)	29% (2)	
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>19%</b>	

Table 10: Construction Implementation Methodology

	Community Force Acc't	Contractor	Joint Modality
Building (14)		100% (14)	
Bridge (3)		100% (3)	
Water Supply (11)	64% (7)	36% (4)	
Road (7)		100% (7)	
Irrigation (1)		100% (1)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>81%</b>	

#### Discussion:

Table 9 clearly shows that **a large majority of the SP committees felt that their selected procurement methodology was Highly Relevant to their needs** (see Annex 5 for a description of how the relevancy was determined). The next table provides a breakdown of the sampled SP's procurement methods, also clearly

showing that hiring a contractor is the preferred method of SP committees to undertake the construction work.

A8 How was the community involved in the bid opening and in the bid evaluation?

Village SP committee members were asked for details about their involvement during the preparation phase of the SP, concentrating on the tender and bid phase.

Table 11: Community Involvement During Tender Phase

	Highly involved	Consulted	Not involved
Building (14)	100% (14)	-	-
Bridge (3)	67% (2)	33% (1)	-
Water Supply (11)	100% (11)	-	-
Road (7)	100% (7)	-	-
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>3%</b>	

Discussion:

**All committees indicated that their procurement volunteers were heavily involved with all phases of the tender, bid reception, evaluation and contract award.**

There is a single SP identified where the community was merely 'consulted' during the tender phase. The auditor did not write down further details to explain why this was so (i.e. was it a question of lack of capacity, no one was available, of some other reason).

A9 What is the capacity level of the community to do procurement by themselves for future sub-projects?

Auditors were required to make a judgment for this question, based on the level of confidence that the village committee members displayed as procurement questions were being discussed. The procurement training assessment form was not used during this audit. If the villagers spoke confidently, offering information, stating problems encountered and solutions found, etc., the auditor would rate a committee more highly. If committee members appeared uncertain or confused about their responsibilities in their procurement roles, an auditor would rate this group lower. The auditors asked the committee members to rate their own capability on the four-point scale shown in Table 12, and used this self-rating to inform their own judgment about the capabilities of each individual committee. The auditors' entries were not visible to villagers.

Table 12: Capacity of Community, Procurement

	Capable	Moderately capable	Moderately incapable	Incapable
Building (14)	64% (9)	36% (5)	-	-



Bridge (3)	33% (1)	33% (1)	33% (1)	-
Water Supply (11)	45% (5)	55% (6)	-	-
Road (7)	43% (3)	57% (4)	-	-
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)			
<b>Total</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>3%</b>	

Discussion:

**Almost all village committees were judged either Moderately Capable (44%) or fully Capable (53%).** Only a single village committee was judged to be moderately incapable of performing the procurement process by themselves in the future. Note that the singular SP rated Moderately Incapable **is not the same** as the bridge SP where the village committee was only consulted (A8 above)

### Social and Environmental Safeguards

A10 How have the social and environmental safeguards been applied in the different steps from survey-design up to sub-projects operations and maintenance?

Auditors questioned the village committee members about different environmental aspects of the site. For example, if natural habitats were disturbed during the construction of the SP, were these changes minor and site specific, and were mitigation measures used afterward to restore the area?

Table 13: Application of Social and Environmental Safeguards

	Appropriately applied throughout	Applied with some gaps	Not applied
Building (14)	86% (12)	14% (2)	-
Bridge (3)	100% (3)	-	-
Water Supply (11)	100% (11)	-	-
Road (7)	100% (7)	-	-
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>6%</b>	

Discussion:

The audit team found a **great majority of SPs to have been successfully managed with respect to the social and environmental safeguard issues (94% Appropriate)** that had been identified. Social and environmental criteria had been appropriately handled or mitigated in almost all cases.

Two buildings were found to have the social and environmental safeguards unevenly applied. The auditors did not make specific notes on the Commentary section of the field tools to explain this rating.

A11 Were there any adverse social or environmental impacts and how they have been mitigated (land donation, trees plantation, etc.)

Table 14: Mitigation of Adverse Social or Environmental Impacts

	Appropriate mitigation applied	Some mitigation, with gaps	Adverse impacts not addressed
Building (14)	71% (10)	21% (3)	7% (1)
Bridge (3)	100% (3)	-	-
Water Supply (11)	91% (10)	9% (1)	-
Road (7)	100% (7)	-	-
Irrigation (1)	100% (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>3%</b>

Discussion:

**A large majority of SPs received appropriate mitigation for the social or environmental impacts that had been identified (86%).** A smaller portion of the sample displayed some problem areas where the auditors felt a gap remained between the work done and the mitigation that would truly restore or make good a social or environmental impact. A single SP in the sample displayed obvious social or environmental problems that have not been rectified or mitigated in an appropriate fashion.

**Recommendation 2:** The PRF should investigate the circumstances of the single SP where auditors noted adverse environmental impacts that have not been addressed. (The field team auditors did not include notes in their submissions to allow more details to be provided.)

A12 Are the FRM known by community members and being used (number of feedback received, type of feedback, source of feedback, how were they solved)?

The Feedback and Response Mechanism (FRM) functions well at the village level. Villagers were all generally aware of the service, understood its purpose, how to use it, and how official responses are received.

The number of messages (feedback) received by the audit sample SPs are shown in the following table.

Table 15: Feedback Messages and Responses

		Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Average (Feedback/SP)
1	Number of Feedback	20	26	19	13	1	2.2

Type of Feedback	Building	Bridge	Water	Road	Irrigation	Total
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		(14 SP)	(3 SP)	Supply (11)	(7 SP)	(1 SP)	
2	Via Feedback Box	3	16	2	7	-	28
3	Hotline call	-	-	3	1	-	4
4	Via meeting	19	10	16	16	1	62
5	Email	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Source of Feedback						
6	Villager	11	3	7	4	-	25
7	Village committee	4	-	6	3	1	14
8	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Feedback Solution						
9	Through a meeting	14	3	11	7	1	36
10	Letter to villager	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	Call to villager	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Face to face	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Numbers of messages, types, sources and feedback solutions do not add up and are not comparable across the sections of the table. Auditors reported that the village FRM files were not in good order, were inconclusive and unclear at times.

#### Discussion:

Line 1 in the table above shows that **the average number of feedback messages received by the Project is slightly more than 2/SP**. Building and bridge SPs represent a large proportion of these messages. The reason for this is unknown. Irrigation and road SPs receive fewer messages.

Lines 2 – 5 show that **the most popular method of feedback submission is during a meeting (66% of feedback messages delivered this way)**. It is interesting to note that road SPs receive the most feedbacks as well as the broadest use of delivery methods.

The magnitude of the numbers in Line 6 demonstrates that villagers are interested in the SP and are the source of the majority of feedback – an encouraging sign that the local population is aware of the work being planned and implemented, and willing to make use of the FRM to become involved.

**All local solutions or responses to feedback messages are presented during meetings in the villages.** No responses for the sampled SPs were delivered by other means. The PRF has encouraged the use of the FRM as a transparent tool to allow all villagers equal time and space for questions, grievances or statements regarding the work. It would appear as though the village committees have taken this to heart, making certain to give the FRM sufficient time during village meetings.

**All villager committee members (100%) felt that the FRM is a useful tool.**

A13 Were there any activities promoting environmental protection during the sub-project preparation, sub-project implementation or sub-project operations and maintenance?

Auditors described some typical activities that would be associated with environmental protection at implementation, particularly during the initial phase of preparation (see Annex 5 for list of activities).

Table 16: Environmental Protection Activities

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Yes	14	1	7	6	1
No				1	

Discussion:

Only a single SP committee admitted that no environmental preparation had been made or precautionary measures taken before the start of implementation and construction. The auditors were not environmental professionals and, as such, were not able to identify many gaps in the preparations by the village committees. Drainage issues were noticed at several of the SP sites, where erosion of soils and embankments were judged worthy of a note to the field tools. The auditors made no other notes regarding environmental matters.

A14 How were the DRM activities implemented and what was the role of the community in the process?

Auditors talked to the village committee about the preparatory phase of the SP, including the following topics: did committee members do all the work; were other villagers also volunteering; did they have any successful strategies to involve more people? These questions, while applicable to this section of the assessment, also inform Section B1, Community Involvement, below.

Table 17: DRM Implementation

SP Answering Yes	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Were there any DRM activities implemented?	14	3	11	7	1
If Yes, did the community participate?	14	3	11	6	1

Discussion:

**All village committees stated that there were some DRM activities** associated with their SP. Congratulations to PRF for promoting this topic as a priority for all village committees to consider. The committees also remembered that most of the DRM precautionary activities were carried out using village volunteer labour. There was only one village that reportedly did not participate during a road's DRM activities (the remarks recorded in the field tool did not provide an explanation for this village's inaction).

A15 Was UXO clearance carried out?

UXO clearance certificates are required before any groundbreaking implementation activities are carried out in hazardous areas. UXO LAO provides these services and has provided the PRF with a Sub-project Hazard Rating table to coordinate where their services are required.

Table 18: UXO Clearance

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Was UXO clearance carried out?	14	3	10	6	1

Discussion:

Two SPs were in areas where no UXO clearance is required (a water supply and road SP). Proper clearance certificates were obtained for all other SPs. A single UXO was located and removed at one of the bridge sites.

## B Sub-project Implementation / Supervision

### B1 How was the community involved in the sub-project implementation?

Table 19: Community Involvement

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Donated labour	14	3	11	7	1
Paid labour	1	-	-	2	1
Not involved	-	-	-	-	-

#### Discussion:

As can be seen from the table above, **contractors brought their own labour forces for the most part and used few locals** other than the volunteer labour provided as community contributions.

B2 – B4 How was the community contribution organized, executed and monitored (number of households participating, number of man day, daily fees, payment methods)? How was the community paid for their work after the community contribution completed (daily rate, method of payment, frequency)? Were all households given equal chances to participate?

Auditors closely examined the village committees' SP accounting books, forms and other records, asking questions of the various committee members to verify their familiarity with the material.

Table 20: Community Contributions

SPs Answering Yes to Questions	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Was the Contribution Record Form completed, updated and certified in a proper manner?	14	3	11	7	1
How was the community paid for their work after the community contribution completed?	1 SP Unit rates	-	-	2 SP Unit rates	1 SP Unit rates
Were all households given equal opportunities to participate?	14	3	11	7	1

## Discussion:

Auditors found that **the village committee books were in good order at all of the SPs evaluated**. When questioned about the fairness of the division of this paid labour, committee members uniformly felt that the process was transparent and that the available work was appropriately split between those available and interested. Having noted this, **there were actually very few SPs where the contractor hired local labour (only 11%)**, and when this occurred, villagers were paid by a unit rate for the work.

B5 – B8 How was the VIT involved in the sub-project supervision (frequency of visits, meetings)? How was the Kum ban Facilitators involved in the sub-project supervision (frequency of visits, meetings)? Type and nature the support received by the community from the concern sector (frequency of visits, quality of the visits, monitoring tools, technical knowledge / competence). Type and nature of support received by the community from the PRF staff (quality of the visits, monitoring tools, technical knowledge / competence).

The auditors were able to use the village committee's SP logbook which provided the details of each meeting, including who attended, the topics discussed, and sometimes a summary of decisions reached or advice offered by one or more of the inspectors. The period of construction could be roughly calculated using information from this record-keeping book.

Table 21: VIT, Kum Ban Facilitator and Government Sector Involvement

		Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
1	Period of Construction (Average, months)	2.4	10.9	1.2	2.2	2.8	
2	Number of Visits to SP Sites by VIT (Average, month)	13.1	29.7	9.3	36.6	2	91
3	Average Number of Visits/month by VIT	5.5	2.0	7.8	16.6	0.7	
4	Number of Visits to SP Sites by Kum Ban Facilitator (Average, month)	6.6	2.3	2.2	11.7	1	24
5	Average Number of Visits/ month by Kum Ban Facilitator	2.8	0.2	1.8	5.3	0.4	
6	Number of Visits to SP Sites by Gov't Sector (Average, month)	4.2	3.3	3.1	9.6	5	25
7	Average Number of Visits/month by Gov't	1.8	0.2	2.6	4.4	1.8	

	Sector						
8	Number of Visits to SP Sites by PRF Staff (Average, month)	5.7	3.3	2.5	14.7	2	28
9	Average Number of Visits/month by PRF Staff	2.4	0.2	2.1	6.7	0.7	
10	<b>Total Number of Visits/Month, All Supervision Missions</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10</b>	

Table 22: Quality and Usefulness of Visits by Government

		Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Building (14 SP)
11	High quality	12	1	9	4	1	27 (75%)
12	Good quality	2	2	2	3	-	9
13	Poor quality	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 23: Quality and Usefulness of Visits by PRF Staff

		Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Building (14 SP)
14	High quality	1	1	11	4	1	31 (86%)
15	Good quality	-	2	-	3	-	5
16	Poor quality	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Discussion:

Table 21 provides a comprehensive summary of the inspection visit schedules for the various infrastructure types and the visiting team members: VIT, Kum Ban Facilitator, PRF staff, and persons from the relevant government sector.

The frequency of inspection trips to the SP sites varies considerably between the inspecting bodies and between infrastructure types. Lines 2, 4, 6 and 8 provide some theoretical calculations of total number of visits by the four levels of bureaucracy that provide technical support to the village SP committees: the VIT, Kum Ban Facilitator (KBF), PRF staff, and relevant government sector employees. The number of visits/month for KBF, PRF and the government are roughly the same, while the VIT is seen to be three to four times as many visits to the SP site. The VIT visits all types of infrastructure on a greater frequency, so that one cannot compare infra-types against one another (as more- or less-benefiting).

It can be seen, on line 10, that building, bridge and road SPs consume much of the attention of inspectors, with these sectors being visited between 30 and >70 times/month by the four levels of bureaucracy. Water supply SPs receive lesser



visits on average, but still a reasonable number (17 visits/month). Irrigation SPs record the fewest visits/month (only 10), a situation that might only affect the single irrigation scheme assessed (and be an anomaly).

The tables 22 and 23 examine the quality of the visits by both the government sector forces and PRF staff. It is evident the majority of villager committee members interviewed by the auditors appreciate these visits. Most committees agreed that the visits were very useful to them (up to 86% for PRF), as the inspectors brought special skills to help villagers understand drawings and deal with the contractors.

**Recommendation 3:** The VIT should be supported in its role as the main provider of technical inspection for SPs during implementation. This support can take the form of additional training, provision of technical manuals or guidelines for use in the field, and other resources to aid them in this important work.

B9 What was the Coordination mechanism between the different stakeholders and was it applied according to plan (frequency of coordination meeting, who was involved, what was discussed)?

Table 24: Stakeholder Coordination Meetings

		Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
1	No. of Meetings (Average/SP)	24	6	26	7	3
	Regular Attendance?					
2	Government Sector	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	PRF	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Community	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Record of Discussion or Minutes in File?	14	3	11	6	1

#### Discussion:

All committees reported that Stakeholder Coordination Meetings took place on a regular basis with all parties attending as they were able (occasional responsibilities elsewhere would preclude attendance for government or PRF personnel). Line 1 shows that the meetings were most frequent for building and water supply SPs. Bridge and road SPs had only about a third as many meetings, and the irrigation SP held only 3 meetings.

Only a single road SP logbook did not contain examples of the minutes that should be taken at these meetings.

B10 How many Accountability meetings have been organized, who joined these meetings, what were presented and discussed during these meetings, what decisions have been made (minutes of meetings)?

The auditors checked SP documentation to see the minutes, amongst other documents.

Table 25: Accountability Meetings

		Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
1	No. of Meetings (Average/SP)	12	12	12	8	3
	Regular Attendance?					
2	Government Sector	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	PRF	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Community	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Minutes in File?	14	3	11	7	1

#### Discussion:

Similar to the question for Stakeholder Coordination Meetings, villagers felt that all important actors were properly involved in the Accountability Meetings also. Minutes to file were located in the village logbooks for all SPs

B11 Was the sub-project construction implemented according to the plan (any advance or delay)?

The village committees were asked about the implementation schedule that had been forecast by the PRF – did the construction activities finish on time?

Table 26: Implementation Schedule – Was the SP Completed on Time?

Committees Answering 'Yes'	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Completed on time or early?	6	3	9	6	1	69%
Delayed completion?	8		2	1		31%

#### Discussion:

**The majority of SPs (69%) are completed on time or earlier.** Village committees expressed no unfavorable opinions about those SPs that experienced delays, explaining in many cases that construction delays were caused by difficulties in the supply of materials (sometimes donated materials for which villagers themselves were responsible).

## C Sub-project Utilization

### Quality of the Infrastructure

C1 Current condition of the infrastructure (good, fair, poor) based on list of key criteria developed for each major type of sub-projects

The current condition of the infrastructure was rated using similar field tools as employed during the 2016 PRF technical audit, described in Section 5 above. This part of the tool looks closely at individual components of the infrastructures. At the conclusion of the technical audit portion of the study, however, the auditors were asked to complete a simple assessment of the condition of the SP in its entirety, using the ratings Good, Fair, Poor. Following is a table that provides the results of this question. The ratings are based on auditor judgments.

Table 27: Current Condition of the Infrastructure

% of SP (Number)	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Good	13	3	11	5	1	92%
Fair	1			2		8%
Poor						

#### Discussion:

The auditors' judgment of the current condition of the sampled SPs is that **92% of the infrastructure was considered to be in Good Condition, with the remaining 8% being rated Fair. There were no SPs rated Poor.** These ratings are shown in the following chart, subdivided into infrastructure types.

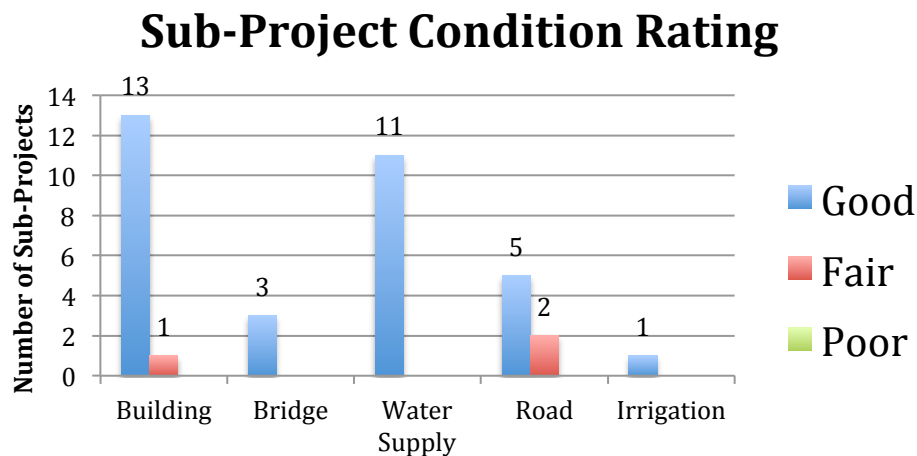


Chart 1: Sub-Project Current Condition Assessment

The technical quality of the infrastructure will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

### C1.1 Component Condition Evaluation

Field Tool 1 allowed each component or aspect of the individual SP types to be rated as being one of five choices: Meets Spec. (Specification); Slightly Below Spec.; Below Spec.; Not Inspected; and Not Applicable. The rating is a reflection of how the component/aspect has followed the SP specifications, the quality of its material composition/inputs, and its consistency with the bill of quantities (BoQ). Critical design elements such as toilet facilities, if dropped from a SP, would merit a Below Spec rating and a specific written comment on the field tool.

To understand how the entire PRF construction program is doing, on average, the technical quality ratings for all SP components and aspects can be aggregated. This procedure shows that **for ratings of technical construction quality, 74% of the sub-projects have been constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications contained in the Sub-project Proposals and considered to Meet Specification**, with a further 25% rated Slightly Below in terms of meeting the intent of the sub-project proposal. Only 1% of technical ratings were Below Specification. The chart below represents this finding, using an aggregate of the ratings from all of the sub-projects evaluated.

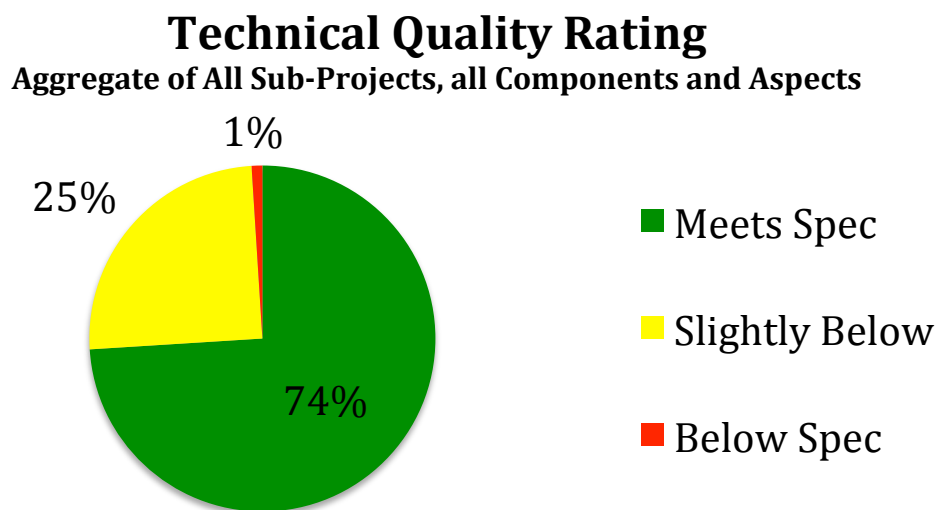


Chart 2: Technical Quality Rating of Sub-Project Construction

The following table presents separate totals for each of the sub-project types evaluated. It should be noted that there were only two bridge sub-projects inspected during this technical evaluation so that extrapolation of these technical findings over PRF entire portfolio of this sub-project type may be tenuous.

Table 28: Summary of Technical Construction Quality Ratings by PRF Sub-project Type

	Meets Spec.	Slightly Below Spec.	Below Spec.
Building (14)	65%	35%	%
Bridge (3)	96%	4%	%
Water Supply (11)	73%	26%	1%
Road (7)	65%	33%	2%
Irrigation (1)	77%	23%	0%
<b>Average (36 PRF sub-projects)</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>1%</b>

#### Discussion:

The data presented in Table 28 is slightly lower than as measured in the 2016 technical audit (2016: 76% Meets Spec, 22% Slightly Below, 2% Below Spec). This downward shift in conformance to specifications is of concern. The next paragraphs will highlight the components and aspects for each infrastructure type that were identified as Slightly Below. It is important to understand where and how these SPs were judged to miss the design, construction or maintenance intent or requirement. PRF can work to improve these specific items to improve the project's quality.

##### C1.1.1 Building

Ground beams, columns and ring beams were rated Slightly Below (SB) often. No specific or detail comments were recorded within the building infrastructure field tool for these components as to why this is so.

The structural assembly of the roof trusses was questioned at 3 buildings (27% of building sample). Plastering was rated SB at 64% of the buildings evaluated. The toilets had a few problems, but the septic tanks were considered SB at 88% (7 of 8) of the sites.

The average percentage of SB ratings for buildings is slightly below the national average.

##### C1.1.2 Bridge

The bridge infrastructure type has a high percentage of components and aspects conforming to the specification. No major problem areas were noted.

##### C1.1.3 Water Supply

Water system designs were deemed Slightly Below at 88% of the SPs visited (a finding that may be judged overly critical). Transmission pipes (those alignments

that bring water from a mountain reservoir to a village) were found SB 25% of the time. Some tapstand fixtures were leaky and their locations within villages found questionable at a number of sites. Adequate pressure for water systems was also found lacking in several systems.

The average percentage of SB ratings for water supply SPs is slightly above the national average.

#### C1.1.4 Road

The camber (cross section) of roads was found to be problematic in fully 50% of those inspected, many times a lack of adequate crown. Width of roads was less than as specified in 33% of roads visited, at least for portions of the works. Ditches were noted to be missing or considered inadequate at 100% of the SPs evaluated, again a comment directed at parts of the road SPs rather than the entire lengths.

The average percentage of SB ratings for roads is quite below the national average, indicating that some attention should be directed at corrective measures by the PRF's senior management. The importance of proper camber and drainage ditching should be stressed, as well as constructing road widths in accordance with the SP documentation.

#### C1.1.5 Irrigation

Ditches, culverts and pipes and erosion protection measures at a retaining wall were of concern to the auditors. The average percentage of SB ratings for irrigation SPs is well above the national average, indicating that this program is using proper designs and implementation techniques.

### C2 Infrastructure compliance with the design approved by the concerned sector

Section A3 of the Beneficiary and Technical Assessment provides the data that was gathered for this part of the evaluation. **All designs and drawings were found to fully meet their relevant sector standards, and all drawings were certified.** It is the responsibility of the PRF relevant sector specialist at the national office to ensure that all designs and drawings conform to national standards.

### C3 Quality of the construction materials/inputs used and consistency with BoQ in the bidding document

The findings, analysis, and discussions in Section C1, above, provide information about the quality of construction and its consistency with the BoQ and other SP construction specifications issued for the works evaluated.

#### C4 Defects found during construction and how they have been addressed

Auditors asked the village committee members about the issue of defective work by contractors (almost 100% of construction activities were carried out using this mode of implementation), how it was detected, and how the defects were corrected.

Regular inspections by the VIT, Kum Ban Facilitator, PRF and government sector staff provided this quality assurance safeguard. The final line 10 in Table 21, for Sections B5-B8 above, shows that an average SP would receive thirty or more visits/month (water supply and irrigation slightly less).

Defects that were detected during these inspection visits would oftentimes be noted in the village logbook for the SP. Inspectors would normally make brief written comments if instructions had been issued or corrective measures required (auditors saw many written notes or instructions from inspectors). The auditors were able to examine these documents and noted a reasonable number of inspection reports and recommendations at all sites visited. Villagers reported that all instructions or stipulations had been carried out.

#### Access and utilization of the infrastructures / service delivery:

#### C5 Utilization rate (before and after the sub-project construction (school enrollment, road users, etc.)

This section utilized a questionnaire that was originally developed for a similar technical audit in Myanmar, adapted to Lao circumstances. Annex 3 contains a sample of this questionnaire (Section B – Beneficiary Assessment field tool, section C5).

##### C5.1 Schools

The auditors asked school representatives for the attendance rate before and after the construction of PRF building. Four of the schools were new to the recipient village, meaning that their children no longer had to walk to an adjacent community. **The average number of students at the new locations is 84 children.**

Seven schools were new constructions to wholly replace older structures in the same village, normally on the same parcel of land. **These new replacement structures experienced an average increase of 27 students** after construction was completed (rising from an average of 50 students to 77).

## C5.2 Bridge

No useful utilization/economic analysis data was obtained from villagers for the three bridge SPs evaluated.

## C5.3 Water Supply

Auditors asked the village committee the following questions, seeking data for the scenarios 'Before Construction' and 'After Construction' of the water supply system.

Table 29: Water Supply Beneficiary Data (data from 11 villages)

	Before	After
Water consumed by average HH (litres/day)	180	300
Time spent fetching water (min./day)	138	5
No. of HH with access to potable water	0	249

Theoretically, an average village equipped with a water supply system will realize a timesaving of about 500 hours/day (approximately 2 hours/household), while also having the use of more water. Economic benefits must surely follow but were not measured during this assessment.

Villagers were asked how much they currently pay in user fees, if any. Five villages have instituted fees, four villages at 1,000 Kip/month/HH and one at 5,000 Kip/mth. The villagers estimated their average O&M annual costs to be 60,000 to 100,000 Kip/year. The lower of the user fees above should be sufficient for a sustainable system.

## C5.4 Road

Very little useful data was obtained from villagers for the six road SPs evaluated, and thus no firm or reliable conclusions can be made using it.

### D. Sub-project maintenance

#### D1 Relevance of the maintenance plan (requirement, planning, costs)

Auditors questioned the village committee members about how often they consulted the maintenance plan, whether it was useful to them for costing or scheduling of work or descriptions of required tasks, etc.

Table 30: Relevance of Plan for Maintenance Activities and Tasks

	Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
1	Highly relevant	12	3	7	7	1	83%



2	Relevant	2		3			14%
3	Not relevant			1			3%

Table 31: Relevance of Maintenance Plan for Scheduling and Planning

	Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
4	Highly relevant	12	3	9	7	1	89%
5	Relevant	2		1			8%
6	Not relevant			1			3%

Table 32: Relevance of Maintenance Plan for Cost Estimation

	Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
7	Highly relevant	7	2	6	5	1	58%
8	Relevant	5	1	4	2		34%
9	Not relevant	2		1			8%

#### Discussion:

As can be seen on line 1 in Table 30, **most village committees (83%) felt that the SP maintenance plan and its attachments were Highly Relevant in their outlines of required tasks and activities.** Only a single SP committee was of the opinion that the plan was not useful to them in this regard.

Line 4, Table 31 displays **a higher percentage of committees (89%) that felt the plan was useful for scheduling and planning required activities.**

Line 7, Table 32 shows that there is more dissatisfaction with the cost estimation sections of the maintenance plans. Villagers generally tend to be positive in meetings, giving “highly relevant” feedback for the two topics preceding the cost estimation. Contrasting the lower percentage delivered for cost estimation with the previous higher totals, one can infer that villagers have had doubts with or problems using the maintenance cost estimation portion of the Maintenance Plans.

**Recommendation 4:** NCDDP should review the standard cost estimation portion of the Maintenance Plans and then interview a select number of SP committees to ask and brainstorm how this section can be improved.

D2 Quality of the maintenance on the ground (what has been done so far, when, by whom, how was it organized)?

The field tool used a six-point rating system for this item to give the auditors a broader range of ratings for these maintenance efforts. The ratings are based on auditor judgments.

Table 33: Quality of Maintenance

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	7	2	6	5	1	58%
Satisfactory	7	1	4	2	-	39%
Moderately satisfactory	-	-	1	-	-	3%
Moderately Unsatisfactory	-	-	-	-	-	
Unsatisfactory	-	-	-	-	-	
Highly Unsatisfactory	-	-	-	-	-	

### Discussion:

It is evident that **the majority of SPs have been maintained in a very satisfactory manner (58% Highly Satisfactory)** with the remaining SPs on the satisfactory side of the scale.

Auditors were asked to make notes to explain what particular activities have been completed by maintenance committees, especially unique methods of organizing the work and the utilization of volunteer labour in large or small groups. A selection of these notes is provided in Annex 6.

D3 Maintenance methods (RMG, all community members from time to time, Village Operation and Maintenance team, concerned sector)

Auditors quizzed the village committee groups about who would normally do the bulk of the maintenance on the SP.

Table 34: Primary Responsibilities for Maintenance

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Relevant gov't sector forces	3	-	1	1	1	17%
Community members	9	3	10	4	-	72%
Village O&M team only	2	-	-	2	-	11%
Road Maintenance Group (RMG)	-	-	-	-	-	

## Discussion:

Table 34 shows that most SPs are maintained by recipient community members that include people outside of the O&M team (72% of SP). A lesser number of SPs depend wholly on government sector forces (17%) to provide this maintenance, and fewest villages depend only upon the O&M team (11%). This clearly shows that the PRF project has fostered an O&M environment where the collective populations of villages are putting in O&M efforts.

provides good evidence that **most SPs are maintained by the same community members that selected and use them (72% of SPs are maintained by volunteer community members)**. Lesser numbers of SPs are maintained by the government and even fewer are maintained by the O&M Committee members themselves. The small number of SPs that are maintained solely by committee members is a good thing, as this situation would tend to indicate high levels of community disinterest in the infrastructure, and likely thankless tasks for the volunteer committee members, prompting lesser efforts and a general decline in quality of infrastructure.

D4 Capacity of the O&M committee (financial management, technical knowledge, capacity to mobilize the community members)

Auditors examined the SP bookkeeping, noting if entries appeared neat and well organized. The committee was quizzed about who was responsible for and how payments were made. Technical aspects of the maintenance work were discussed, with auditors gauging the level of knowledge of the responsible committee members. Records of the volunteer laborer names and hours worked were studied and crosschecked with donation records where possible. The ratings are based on auditor judgments.

Table 35: O&M Committee Capacity – Financial Management

	Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
1	Highly Capable	7	1	6	5	1	56%
2	Capable	7	2	5	2	-	44%
3	Not Capable	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 36: O&M Committee Capacity – Technical Knowledge

	Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
4	Highly Capable	3	1	7	1	1	36%
5	Capable	11	2	4	6		64%
6	Not Capable						-

Table 37: O&amp;M Committee Capacity – Ability to Mobilize Community Members

	Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
7	Highly Capable	6	1	8	3	1	53%
8	Capable	7	2	3	4		44%
9	Not Capable	1					3%

## Discussion:

**All O&M Committees were judged to be Highly Capable or Capable with respect to financial, technical and labour resources**, with no committees rated Not Capable. Committees were surer of themselves when talking about the financial aspects of maintaining a SP or their capacity to mobilize fellow villagers (lines 1, 2 and 7, 8). The audit results show a lessened confidence when technical matters were discussed (lines 4, 5), although all committees are deemed to be capable.

D5 Community participation to O&M (financial contribution (monthly fees, level of contribution per households), labor contribution, etc.)

Auditors questioned the committee members in regards to how the community-at-large supports the infrastructure and the O&M Committee's efforts.

Table 38: O&amp;M Committee Capacity – Ability to Mobilize Community Members

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
User fee (Monthly)	2	-	6	2	-	28%
Specific repair amount	14	2	11	6	-	92%
Voluntary labour contrib.	14	3	11	6	1	97%
Scheduled labour contrib.	1	-	3	3	1	18%

## Discussion:

Only 28% of village committees (10 of 36) have set up a user fee system for collection of monies to support the ongoing O&M of PRF SPs. Most villages (92%) collect event-based operational fees for specific repairs or rehabilitation of infrastructure system components. It is interesting to note that 9 of the 10 villages which have user fees also needed to collect extra monies for repair works – apparently their user fees are not high enough to enable a sustainable system.

The voluntary labour contributions are mostly on an as-needed and sporadic basis (97% of SPs receive this), with some scheduled maintenance activities in the water

supply, road and irrigation sectors (18% of SPs) – these are regular tasks such as reservoir cleaning, road surface maintenance and vegetation removal from irrigation channels.

There were no other contributions for O&M maintenance reported by the village committees.

D6 Relevant government sector involvement and responsibility in the sub-project maintenance (according to plan, realized)

Auditors questioned the village committees about government sector involvement with O&M activities and whether the Plan's stated inputs from these sources have been received on a timely basis.

Table 39: Relevant Government Sector Involvement and Responsibility

Number of SP Answering "Yes"	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
O&M Plan shows relevant government sector inputs	12	2	11	4	1	83%
Government sector inputs received on timely basis	11	2	11	3	1	78%

#### Discussion:

A majority of the sampled SP O&M Plans contain reference to government sector inputs toward the village's maintenance activities (79%). A slightly less number of these SPs have received these maintenance input in a timely manner (71%).

It is significant that the road sector receives the least amount of government sector inputs (about 50% of SPs) and these supports are not received in a proper manner. Situations such as these might be alleviated through the use of local RMGs.

#### E. Budget / financial management

##### Costs of the infrastructures

E1 Review unit costs (was the sub-project cost estimate reasonable and realistic according to standard design and sub-project location)?

The cost effectiveness field tool from the 2016 technical audit was used in order to replicate the methodologies used in that effort. No comparable infrastructures by

other agencies or funding sources were examined in this audit. The unit costs derived for the SPs examined and measured in this audit are compared to the results and conclusions from the 2016 audit, where possible. As in the 2016 audit, each infrastructure type will be examined separately.

### E1.1 Building

A total of 14 buildings were visited and evaluated during this audit. The unit costs for these buildings were between 1.8M to 2.9M Kip/sq.m., with an **average unit cost of 2.23M Kip/sq.m.** The 2016 audit (auditing 19 PRF structures) derived an average unit cost of 2.4M Kip/sq.m. (Comparable structures in that 2016 study were calculated as costing 2.8M Kip/sq.m.)

**The PRF building development program continues to produce structures that are cost effective.**

### E1.2 Bridge

The audit team visited and evaluated 3 bridges during this assignment. Two of the bridges were constructed similarly of reinforced concrete. These bridges were built for unit rates of 3.5M and 4.6M Kip/sq.m, for **an average of 4.1M Kip/sq.m.**

The 2016 audit visited a PRF reinforced concrete bridge and a comparable structure funded by the development agency CIDA. These structures were constructed for approximately 7.7M and 9.3M Kip/sq.m, respectively.

Although there is a limited amount of data, it appears that **the current PRF bridge program is producing cost effective infrastructure.**

### E1.3 Water Supply

Water supply SPs are comprised of two types: gravity-fed systems (GFWS – conduiting water from hillside streams or aquifers to villages), or borehole schemes.

The audit examined 3 GFWS and 5 borehole SPs. The GFWSs were all in Luang Prabang where it is mountainous. This evaluation found that **average unit cost for a GFWS is 2.3M Kip/Household (HH).** This compares favorably with **the 2016 audit's finding of 2.6M Kip/HH** for PRF SPs. Further, the unit cost in Kip/beneficiary is now 350,000 Kip/beneficiary, reduced from 2016's 527,000 Kip/beneficiary. The comparable GFWSs examined in 2016 were found to give very much less service to rural villagers than did the PRF systems (less than half the number of tapstands/HH) resulting in a lesser unit cost.

**Boreholes** examined during this audit **were found to cost approximately 320,000 Kip/beneficiary**. The 2016 audit determined that PRF boreholes were costing about 375,000 Kip/beneficiary, so **the current investments are favorably comparable to earlier efforts**.

#### E1.4 Road

Roads were measured to confirm plan dimensions, both length and periodic spot-checks for width. The audit visited 7 roads, all but one were earthen road surfaces (there was a single graveled road). Drainage culvert(s) had been provided as part of the work for most of these roads.

The approximate unit cost for **current PRF earthen roads is 23,500 Kip/sq.m**. This is very much more than the 2016 audit unit cost of 7,700 Kip/sq.m and, in fact, in the range of the **2016 comparable road unit cost of 21,000 Kip/sq.m** (two KDP road SPs). An examination of the photographs of this audit's road SPs was necessary to understand the substantial difference in unit cost rates between the 2016 audit and this one.

Photographs of this audit's roads show a distinct difference when compared to those submitted from the 2016 audit. The current roadwork appears to be much improved from the 2016 standards, with more easily identified crown to the roads, proper cross sections, ditching and suitable cut slopes (for the most part). These heightened standards have increased the unit cost of PRF roads. The 2016 study found problems with the standards of low-cost PRF roads. This audit's increased unit cost may have increased the durability and longevity of the new roads. Proper O&M practices are key to maintaining these roads in their current good condition.

It appears that **the current practices being used in rural road improvement are reasonably cost effective** (when compared to the conclusions of the 2016 audit). Further study on this important facet of PRF's construction program may be warranted.

**Recommendation 5:** PRF should commission a further study of road SPs along with comparable road works to confirm current unit costs being experienced by the main actors in this sector. There may be GOL standard costs that can be obtained for contrast and comparison.

#### E1.3 Irrigation

There was a single irrigation SP evaluated during this audit, a stream control structure equipped with a 720 m irrigation channel. This installation had a unit cost of 220,000 Kip/beneficiary. Several irrigation schemes in the 2016 audit, PRF and

comparable, yielded theoretical unit costs in the order of 4,000,000 Kip/beneficiary. It would appear that the scheme evaluated during the current audit was small and not comparable to those studied in 2016. The command area that was irrigated for the single scheme in this audit was not recorded.

E2 Community contribution (calculation, value, manner, equity, monitoring, daily payment rate, financial management)

The auditors examined the communities' financial records in order to confirm the methods of calculation, daily rates and payment methodologies for local villagers' contributions of materials.

Table 40: Community Material Contributions – Accounting Audit (Cursory)

Number of SP "Yes"	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
Community contributions confirmed	14	3	11	7	1	100%

Discussion:

**All village committees (100%) displayed adequate control over the accounting practices** associated with community contributions. It should be noted that the auditors are engineers with little or no accounting education. Each team contained one member who had some experience with bookkeeping through previous employments.

E3 Community labor payment (calculation, value, manner, equity, monitoring, daily payment rate, financial management)

Similar to E2 above, auditors viewed the records of village committees.

Table 41: Community Labour Payments/Contributions – Accounting Audit (Cursory)

	Number of SP "Yes"	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
1	Community labour payments/contributions confirmed	14	2	11	7	1	97%
2	Are villagers satisfied with their wages?	14	2	11	6	No	94%

Discussion:

It can be seen at **almost all village committees' financial records were in good order with labour payments/contributions itemized and identified (97% of**



**SPs).** Most SP implemented by contractors used labour from outside the recipient villages, so that the data in line 2 above reflects the sentiments of very few villagers. Two SPs were identified as having disputes in regards to wages owing to labourers (one road and one irrigation SP); the auditors did not record if or how these disagreements were resolved.

E4 How was the sub-project budget managed (by whom, following which mechanism, budget transfer frequency, modalities)?

Table 42: SP Budget Management

Number of SP "Yes"	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
Was SP budget managed by VIT?	14	3	11	7	1	<b>100%</b>
Does VIT understand the budget process?	14	2	11	6	1	<b>95%</b>

Discussion:

Local **VITs managed all of the SP budgets**, according to the village committee members, and the **majority of them (95%) were seen to be in control of the situation** and managing the budget processes correctly. **Most SPs were tendered to contractors** and payments made to these entities (81% of SP were implemented by contractors, Table 10).

Two village committees (bridge and road SPs) thought that there were failings on the part of the VIT during administration of the SP (line 2 above). No notes were made to the audit field tools to reveal what concerns prompted this unhappiness.

**All village committee confirmed that the budget transfer frequency was tied to tasks completed rather than specific time periods.** Contractors were paid according to the work completed (i.e. infrastructure type 'milestones', such as foundation complete).

E5 Did the budget was transfer according to plan?

Table 43: SP Budget Transferral

Number of SP "Yes"	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
Did the budget transfer according to plan?	14	2	10	7	1	<b>94%</b>

Discussion:

**Almost all village committees (94%) felt that the VIT had transferred the budget amounts according to the plan.** No notes were made to explain the circumstances of the 2 SPs where transfers did not proceed according to the plan. Comparing these results with those shown in Table 26 (concerning SP delays), it can be seen that the delays (>50% of SPs experienced construction/implementation delays) must have occurred after the second budget transferal. No written explanations were provided by the auditors to explain this circumstance.

#### Costs of the approach / method used

E6 How was the administrative costs budget managed (by whom, following which mechanism, budget transfer frequency, modalities?)

Table 44: Administrative Costs Budget Management

Number of SP "Yes"	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
Was administrative cost budget managed by VIT?	14	3	11	7	1	<b>100%</b>
Did the VIT follow mgmt. procedures from manual?	12	2	10	6	1	<b>86%</b>

Discussion:

The local VITs managed all administrative cost budgets (100% of SPs). Similar to E5 above, several village committees expressed reservations about the management efforts of the VIT; it was recorded that five VIT did not follow all procedures from the manual (no details of these actions/inactions were recorded in the field tools).

Village committee members, for the most part, were uncertain of how the administration costs budget was transferred.

E7 Were the administrative costs enough in regards to the support provided (number of people involved, man/days)

Table 45: Adequacy of Administrative Costs Budget

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	% of SP
Yes	11	2	11	4	1	<b>81%</b>
No	3	1		3		<b>19%</b>

Table 46: Number of People Involved/SP

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Average number of people	9	9	9	7	9

#### Discussion:

A significant portion of the sampled SP village committees felt that the administrative costs budget was not enough for the people and input that had been expected of them. **19% of village committees felt that administrative budgets were insufficient** (table 45 above).

The audit team collected committee member estimates for the number of people involved with the SPs and the number of man-days that were invested. Table 46 presents this data. The average number of people in each SP committee is normally 9 (filling each position). Several road committees had difficulty in filling all positions (for unknown reasons). The data collected by the auditors for the amount of time spent during these activities is unclear. A calculation of average number of man-hours for the village committee members is not possible. It appears that the auditors or villagers did not understand the aim of this question.

E8 Efficiency of the different steps from sub-project preparation to sub-project operation and maintenance including trainings, meetings and field visits (time and costs for the support provided by the concerned sector, the PRF staff, the Kum ban Facilitators, the VIT)

Table 47: Time and Costs for Support Provided (Time: hours; Cost: Kip)

Averages	Government		PRF		Kum Ban		VIT	
	Time	Cost	Time	Cost	Time	Cost	Time	Cost
Building (14)	32	340,000	33	330,000	33	310,000	138	750,000
Bridge (3)	16.5	280,000	19.5	140,000	20	280,000	18.5	720,000
Water S (11)	27	340,000	27	340,000	27	300,000	27	610,000
Road (7)	66	1,170,000	33	680,000	29	680,000	356	1,300,000
Irrigation (1)	2160	6,300,000	240	2,100,000	2160	6,300,000	2160	3,600,000
<b>Average*</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>532,000</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>372,000</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>392,000</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>845,000</b>

\*Average discounts the irrigation inputs as high outliers.

#### Discussion:

The **VIT is seen again to be expending the most time (and costs) in its support for PRF SPs**. Government sector employees visit the SPs or attend meetings slightly more often than the Kum Ban Facilitators and PRF staff.

The average costs reported for these liaisons show that the VIT expended the most cost, with government forces second and the Kum Ban/PRF being roughly equal.

#### F. Capacity Building (to PRF staff and to community)

##### F1 - F6 To PRF staff and community

F1 Number of training delivered to the community (survey-design, planning, supervision, operation and maintenance)

Table 48: Number of Training Days per SP (Average/SP Type)

	Building	Bridge	Water Supply	Road	Irrigation
Survey-Design	6.4	5	5.5	2.5	9
Planning	6.4	5	5.6	3.2	9
Supervision	6.5	5	5.6	2.8	9
O&M	6.5	5	5.4	2.8	9

#### Discussion:

Most training days covered more than one of the four subject matters. For example, it can be seen that the single irrigation SP received nine separate training days each of which featured sessions covering all subject matters.

Excepting the irrigation infrastructure type, it can be seen that between five and seven training days are typically provided for building, bridge and water supply SPs. Road SPs, for some reason, receive lesser numbers of training days, only 2 or 3. The low number of O&M training sessions might have ramifications with poor maintenance being done (although Section D2 above does indicate that the quality of the maintenance on the sampled SP roads was satisfactory).

**Recommendation 6:** The PRF engineering department should ensure that road SP village committees receive adequate training for all aspects of SP preparation and use.

##### F2 Adequacy of the training curriculum

Table 49: Adequacy of Training Sessions

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Adequate	6	1	9	5	1	<b>61%</b>
Somewhat adequate	8	2	2	2		<b>39%</b>
Not adequate	-	-	-	-	-	

Discussion:

**The project's training program and its curriculum was judged to be adequate by 61% of the village committee interviewed. The remaining 39% felt that the coursework and materials were only Somewhat Adequate.** This is an important result, as it shows frank, honest assessments by village committees. The committees display a trust in the PRF to listen to their ideas.

**Recommendation 7:** The PRF should follow-up and investigate those villages that found the training sessions to be lacking in some way. Questioning villagers as to what they found most interesting or was most valuable to them in their roles would give valuable data for redesigning the curricula. They should be asked what subject matters could be deleted from or added to the program to make it more relevant to the village's needs.

### F3 Quality of the contents / IEC/ materials / tools

Table 50: Quality of Course Materials

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
High quality	2	-	8	4	1	<b>42%</b>
Good quality	12	3	3	3	-	<b>58%</b>
Poor quality	-	-	-	-	-	

Discussion:

The VIT and participating community members generally thought that the **quality of training aids and materials was Good (58%) to High (42%).**

### F4 Adequacy of the contents in regards to community capacity

Table 51: Adequacy of Training Materials for Community's Capacity

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Adequate	6	1	9	2	1	<b>53%</b>
Somewhat adequate	8	2	2	5		<b>47%</b>
Not adequate						

Discussion:

This question called for a judgment by the auditor based on information that the villagers had shared during the interview (as well as the auditors' assessment of background information such as training manuals). For **buildings and roads, it can be seen that the training sessions and supporting materials is considered only**

**Somewhat Adequate** for large proportions of the sample. **Water supply training seems to be fine**, while bridge and irrigation SPs have limited data to make a judgment.

#### F5 Quality of the approach / methodology used

The auditors asked the villagers about their opinions about the structure of the training coursework, the appropriateness of the educational material supplied and the methods by which the trainers held their attention and conducted the sessions.

Table 52: Quality of Approach/Methodology

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Good quality	12	-	9	3	1	<b>69%</b>
Moderate quality	2	3	2	4	-	<b>31%</b>
Poor quality	-	-	-	-	-	

#### Discussion:

**A majority of the village committees, 69%, felt that the capacity building training was of Good Quality.** The remainder labeled the training programs as Moderate Quality. There were no wholly dissatisfied respondents.

#### F6 Training assessment / evaluation (theory and practice during the different sub-projects steps from survey design up to sub-project maintenance)

Table 53: Capacity Training Assessment

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
High quality	3	1	7	3	1	<b>42%</b>
Good quality	11	2	3	4		<b>58%</b>
Poor quality						

#### Discussion:

All village committees agreed that the **capacity building training sessions were either of Good Quality (58%) or of High Quality (42%).**

#### F7 - F12 To Government counterpart

F7 Number of training delivered to the concerned sector staff (survey-design, planning, supervision, operation and maintenance)

Table 54: Number of Training Sessions per SP (Average/SP)

	Building	Bridge	Water Supply	Road	Irrigation
Survey-Design	1.7	1.5	2	0.8	2
Planning	1.7	1.5	2	0.8	2
Supervision	1.7	1.5	1.9	0.8	2
O&M	1.7	1.5	2	1	2

#### Discussion:

It can be seen, when comparing this table with Table 48, that the community attends far more capacity building than the government sector counterparts, twice to four times as many sessions. This makes sense since the training is often provided in the village and the government staff would need to take time away from other duties and travel to the field.

#### F8 Adequacy of the training curriculum

Table 55: Adequacy of Training Sessions

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Adequate	9	2	10	6	1	<b>78%</b>
Somewhat adequate	5	1	1	1		<b>22%</b>
Not adequate						

#### Discussion:

The **majority of government sector counterparts (78%) felt that the training curriculum was adequate**, although it may be worthwhile to further question those individuals where the rating was Somewhat Adequate to learn what subjects or activities they think is lacking.

#### F9 Quality of the contents / IEC/ materials / tools

Table 56: Quality of Course Materials

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
High quality	11	2	9	7	1	<b>81%</b>
Good quality	3	1	2			<b>19%</b>
Poor quality						

Discussion:

The government sector counterparts replied strongly that **the training materials were of high quality, 81% being of this opinion.**

F10 Adequacy of the contents regards to concern sector staff capacity

Table 57: Adequacy of Training Materials for Government Sector Staff Capacity

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Adequate	13	2	5	7	1	<b>78%</b>
Somewhat adequate	1	1	6			<b>22%</b>
Not adequate						

Discussion:

More than three quarters of the government sector counterparts, 78% felt that the training materials were adequately framed for the sector staff that were involved.

F11 Quality of the approach / methodology used

Table 58: Quality of Approach/Methodology

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Good quality	9	2	10	6	1	<b>78%</b>
Moderate quality	5	1	1	1		<b>22%</b>
Poor quality						

Discussion:

Similar to the above, **78% of government sector counterparts felt that the approach and methodologies used during the training sessions were of Good Quality** for the staff members.

F12 Training assessment / evaluation (theory and practice during the different sub-projects steps from survey design up to sub-project maintenance)

Table 59: Capacity Training Assessment

	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
High quality	8	3	7	3	1	<b>61%</b>
Good quality	6		3	4		<b>39%</b>
Poor quality						



Discussion:

Government sector counterparts assessed the **entire training program as being Good, 39% of the SPs, or High Quality, 61%.**

#### G. Beneficiary satisfaction perception

Auditors used a six-point scale to rate the community's degree of satisfaction with the topics in this section. The six-point scale, from Highly Satisfied to Highly Dissatisfied, allowed the auditors to capture the nuances of village sentiment that emerged from the foregoing discussions on many of these matters. Auditors did use some judgment as they assigned ratings in this section, based on the opinions and sentiments expressed during the previous sections' discussions.

G1 Community degree of satisfaction towards the support received from the PRF during the sub-project period.

Table 60: Community Satisfaction – Toward PRF

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	14	3	10	7	1	97%
Satisfactory						
Moderately satisfactory						
Moderately Unsatisfactory			1			3%
Unsatisfactory						
Highly Unsatisfactory						

Discussion:

The highest satisfaction measured in the audit is **for the PRF forces, 97% Highly Satisfied.**

G2 Community degree of satisfaction towards the support received from the sub-contractor during the sub-project period.

Table 61: Community Satisfaction – Toward Contractor

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	8		6	4		50%
Satisfactory	5	2	4	2	1	39%
Moderately satisfactory	1	1		1		8%
Moderately Unsatisfactory			1			3%
Unsatisfactory						
Highly Unsatisfactory						

Discussion:

**89% of the village committee members were fully satisfied with their choice of contractor, 50% of them Highly Satisfied.** Only a single committee voiced moderate dissatisfaction.

G3 Community degree of satisfaction towards the work done by the Village Implementation Team during the sub-project period.

Table 62: Community Satisfaction – Toward VIT

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	7	1	7	4	1	56%
Satisfactory	4	2	4	3		36%
Moderately satisfactory	3					8%
Moderately Unsatisfactory						
Unsatisfactory						
Highly Unsatisfactory						

Discussion:

**92% of the village committee members were fully satisfied with their choice of contractor, 56% of them Highly Satisfied.** Only a few committees voiced moderate dissatisfaction (8% - 3 SP).

G4 Community degree of satisfaction towards the support received from the concerned government sector during the sub-project period.

Table \_63 Community Satisfaction – Toward Government Sector

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	5			3		22%
Satisfactory	7	3	10	3	1	67%
Moderately satisfactory	2			1		8%
Moderately Unsatisfactory			1			3%
Unsatisfactory						
Highly Unsatisfactory						

Discussion:

Most of the committee were satisfied with the government sector personnel efforts, with **67% Satisfied**. A large percentage were **Highly Satisfied, 22%**. Only one SP committee were Moderately Unsatisfied.

G5 Community degree of satisfaction towards the infrastructure (does the infrastructure correspond to one of the priorities identified in the Village Development Plan; does the infrastructure respond to needs of the community; do all community members access the service provided, etc.)

Table 64: Community Satisfaction – Toward Infrastructure Itself

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	8	3	4	4		53%
Satisfactory	6		5	3	1	42%
Moderately satisfactory			2			5%
Moderately Unsatisfactory						
Unsatisfactory						
Highly Unsatisfactory						

Discussion:

Slightly more than half, **53%, of the committee members were Highly Satisfied** with the infrastructure as constructed through the PRF project. The rest were **satisfied (42%)** except for 2 committee who expressed only Moderate Satisfaction.

G6 Community satisfaction towards the maintenance approach and community role and responsibilities versus concerned sector

Table 65: Community Satisfaction – Toward O&M Responsibilities

Number of SP	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly Satisfactory	4	1	1	3		25%
Satisfactory	7	2	9	2	1	58%
Moderately satisfactory	3			2		14%
Moderately Unsatisfactory			1			3%
Unsatisfactory						
Highly Unsatisfactory						

## Discussion:

A great majority of committees are content with **their O&M responsibilities, 25% High Satisfied and 58% Satisfied**. A few committee were moderately satisfied and only one SP committee indicated that they were moderately unsatisfied.

It is possible to combine all ratings from above to produce the following table for a general satisfaction rating for all of PRF work.

Table 66: Overall Community Satisfaction with Sub-Project Development Process

Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory
50%	40%	7%	2%	0%	0%

## Discussion:

The combination of G1 to G6 totals shows that the great majority of PRF SP committees are fully satisfied with the process (90%), many highly so (a full 50% of the total). Moderate satisfaction comprises the bulk of the rest with very few indicating some moderate dissatisfaction.

## H. Gender

H1 How was gender taken in to account in the different steps from sub-project survey design up to sub-project maintenance?

The auditors asked village committee members for estimates or approximations of the number of men and women participating during the phases of a SP from consultation/selection through to final completion and O&M. Villagers were occasionally able to consult the SP logbook for accurate data on participation of the sexes.

Table 67: Gender Participation at SP Stages

	Number of SPs	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Planning Stage							
1	50% Men/50% Women	1	1	3	3	-	8
2	>50% Men	5	-	2	2	-	9
3	>50 Women	8	2	6	2	1	19
Survey and Preparation							
4	50% Men/50% Women	2	-	1	5	1	9
5	>50% Men	8	-	2	2	-	12
6	>50 Women	4	3	8	-	-	15

Implementation							
7	50% Men/50% Women	1	-	2	4	-	7
8	>50% Men	7	-	7	3	-	17
9	>50 Women	6	3	2	-	1	12
Monitoring							
10	50% Men/50% Women	-	-	1	4	-	5
11	>50% Men	10	-	5	3	-	18
12	>50 Women	4	3	5	-	1	13
O&M							
13	50% Men/50% Women	-	-	1	3	-	4
14	>50% Men	7	-	1	2	1	11
15	>50 Women	7	3	9	2	-	21

## Discussion:

A full analysis and discussion of the gender findings by Dr. Sumountha Ngouttitham is presented in Annex 7.

### I. Supporting documents

- I1 What are the different tools used during the different steps from the survey-design up to the sub-project maintenance (drawing, BOQ, site journal, minutes of meetings, manual and guideline, monitoring forms)?

Table 68: Supporting Documentation – Evidence of Use

Number of SPs Displaying Evidence of Use	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)
Drawing	14	3	11	7	1
Bill of Quantity	14	3	10	7	1
Site Journal	14	3	11	7	1
Minutes of Meetings	14	3	11	7	1
Technical Manual and Guideline	13	3	11	7	1
Monitoring forms	14	3	11	7	1

Note: Samples of supporting documentations are provided in Annex 8.

## Discussion:

Community groups almost uniformly were seen to make use of the supporting project documentation that PRF had supplied or provided templates.

### I2 Relevance of these documents

Having established, above, that community groups were actively using the supporting documentation, the auditors asked their opinions on the usefulness and relevance that these resources had for their work on the SP.

Table 69: Supporting Documentation – Relevance to the Committee Members

Number of SPs Displaying Evidence of Use	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Highly relevant	14	3	10	5	1	<b>92%</b>
Relevant			1	2		<b>8%</b>
Not relevant						

#### Discussion:

All SP committees indicated the supporting documentation that had been provided to them was relevant, **almost all considering the resources Highly Relevant.**

I3 Quality of the documentation (are the documents filled properly, do they include all the information required)?

The auditors were asked to render a judgment based on an examination of each community's records.

Table 70: Supporting Documentation – Quality of the Completed Documentation

Number of SPs	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
High quality	10	3	5	5	1	<b>67%</b>
Good quality	4		6	2		<b>33%</b>
Poor quality						

#### Discussion:

**All community recordkeeping was judged to be of Good (33%) or High Quality (67%).**

It is worth noting that auditors' experiences through the course of the audit might have influenced their judgments in later assessments. A sample size of 36 SPs does not provide much time for auditors' learning curves.

I4 Were the documentations kept in a proper way?

Table 71: Supporting Documentation – Proper Recordkeeping Practices

Number of SPs	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Yes	13	3	10	7	-	<b>92%</b>
No	1	-	1	-	1	<b>8%</b>

Discussion:

A great **majority of village committees (92%) maintained their SP records in a proper manner.**

I5 How far the community manual and guideline are appropriate to the audience and community capacity?

Table 72: Supporting Documentation – Appropriateness of Manual and Guideline to Community Capacity

Number of SPs	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
Very good and appropriate	11	3	8	4	1	<b>72%</b>
Appropriate	4	-	3	3	-	<b>28%</b>
Not appropriate	-	-	-	-	-	

Discussion:

All documentation and guideline resources were thought to be appropriate to the village committee members **with a high percentage, 72%, considered Very Good.**

I6 How are community capacities assessed?

Table 73: Community Capacity

Number of SPs	Building (14 SP)	Bridge (3 SP)	Water Supply (11)	Road (7 SP)	Irrigation (1 SP)	Total
High capacity	8	-	5	2	1	<b>44%</b>
Good capacity	1	-	3	2	-	<b>17%</b>
Moderate capacity	5	3	3	3	-	<b>39%</b>
Low capacity	-	-	-	-	-	

Discussion:

Village communities have been assessed **Good to High Capacity in 61% of the SPs evaluated, with the remainder being judged of Moderate Capacity (39%).** No communities were deemed to be of low capacity. The auditors made these judgments based on the wide variety of criteria featured in the audit, including approach, methodologies and tools used by the communities.

## 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Most of the findings for this technical, utilization and beneficiary satisfaction assessment have been on the high side of the rating criteria for each section. It is apparent that the PRF is maintaining a strong and useful presence in its project areas. For the most part, the findings confirm the soundness and worth of current PRF operations.

There are a number of recommendations suggested through the report, presented in each section as appropriate to the subject matter. These recommendations are gathered for ease of reference in Annex 1.

The PRF can study each section to be informed of village thoughts and feelings toward the program. In those villages where lower ratings were noted (very few SPs were below Moderate or mid-range of the rating scales), the PRF should investigate further. The villages where these moderate feelings of dissatisfaction were expressed may prove to be a good resource as the PRF seeks to improve its program and methodologies.