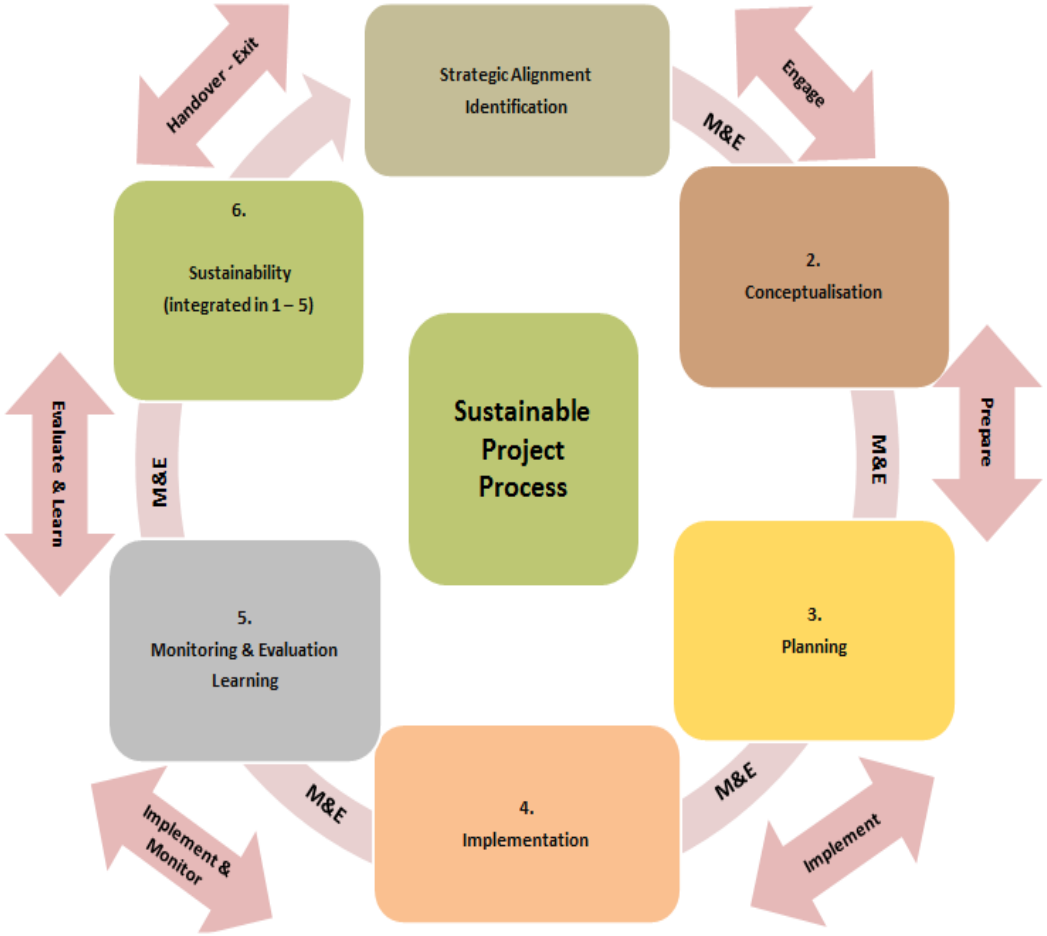
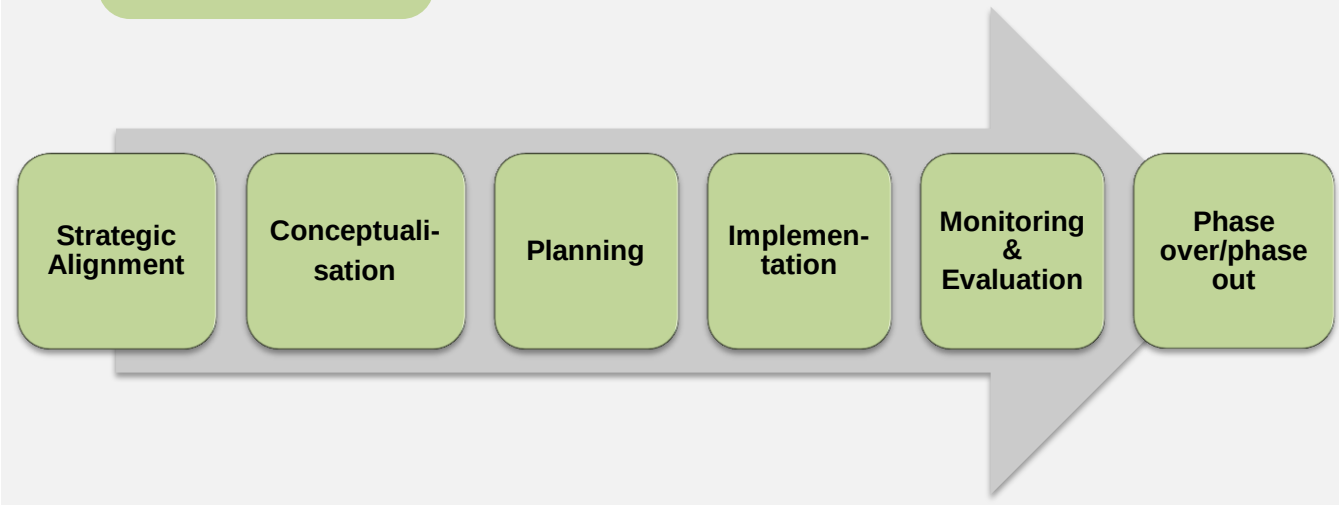


SUSTAINABILITY PHASES



1. Sustainability Overview

Who is involved	What happens	Decisions made
Key Stakeholders Board of Directors Executive Management, Chief Operations Officer, Programme Managers Project Managers Project participants (beneficiaries)	Project is implemented and evaluation/assessments find that the project is sustainable and can continue without the support of funders or the Project is not sustainable and still needs funding/other support and a phasing out strategy is implemented by funding/support institutions.	➢ If sustainable: When to exit and handover the project to the community (project participants/beneficiaries) ➢ If not sustainable: what strategy to implement to ensure that there is a phase-over period? - What support is required during phase-over? - When to finally exit and handover?

Tools and Guidelines	Where to find
Sustainability check list Quality check list Project Closure Document	At the beginning of each of the phases. Tool 22

case examples	
Sustainability Study	Learning and Resource

Documents at end of this phase
Evaluation findings
Lessons learnt
Project ending – sign-off document

Sustainability is not only one of the principles of any Development Agency's identity and role, but also a critical challenge for all Development Agencies. It is not possible to claim lasting impact in terms of rural poverty reduction without ensuring this aspect of development.

Sustainability is defined as "ensuring that the institutions supported through projects and the benefits realised are maintained and continue after the end of the project.

Stage 6: Sustainability has been made a separate stage, although it is a critical part of each of the stages in the Project Development Process. Sustainability lessons from Development Projects worldwide have been incorporated in the design of the resource. The European Union criteria for Development Project evaluation is used to set very high quality standards as a measure of Sustainable Development.

During this stage, a summary is provided of the sustainability principles contained in each of the phases (1-5).

A project is generally considered to be sustainable when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and/or other stakeholders for an extended period after the financial support has been terminated. In most cases sustainability is assessed from three perspectives namely: economic (i.e. financial), social and environmental.

There are various sustainability checks at the various stages which are highlighted here. A case study of a sustainability and due diligence of 5 projects of the Aspire Development Agency is included in the "Resources and Learning" part of the **SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS RESOURCE.** The following 7 criteria were applied in this study:

1. **Maintaining output levels:** Overall, is the project maintaining or increasing its outputs at a certain level year-on-year?
2. **Financial Break-even**: Does the project reveal that it is moving closer towards a financial break-even point year-on-year?
3. **Skills enhancement:** Can the project claim to be positively developing the skills of its beneficiaries on an on-going basis?
4. **Employment creation:** Is the project increasing its exposure, year-on-year, in terms of creating new employment opportunities/
5. **Community upliftment:** Is the project continuously contributing towards the improvement of the livelihoods of the local community?
6. **Defendable expenditure:** Can the funding that has been spent on the project be defended and upheld, based on the impacts that have resulted thereof?

7. **Eventual independence:** On its current path, will the project achieve operational independence from its technical and financial supporters in the medium to long term?

The findings of the study were unpacked during a workshop involving the Executive Committee and Programme management to use the learning for future projects. The Sustainable Project Process model was used to guide the discussion and reinforce the sustainability milestones required for each stage. The outcome of this exercise is included as an example of the typical sustainability issues experienced by Development Agencies. A second part of the workshop was determining the role that the Development Agency plays in supporting the projects during the phases. These recommendations are included in the table below.

Phase 1 : identification and strategic alignment	- Focus on a few projects rather than attempting to take on Funding methods established in the beginning and formalised.
Phase 2 : Conceptualisation	- Community ownership is critical for sustainability. Facilitative role of the Development Agency to ensure all is on board right from the beginning - Develop and implement a communication strategy to ensure that the community understands the intention of the project and to prevent expectations that cannot be fulfilled by the project - Allow enough time for stakeholder engagement: This will in the long term be beneficial - Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders need to be clearly defined - Local ownership must be emphasised - The Development Agency plays a pivotal role in facilitating the development of partnerships. - Cross-project partnering must be explored - Link initiatives (programmes) and not work in silo's
Phase 3: Planning	- Include Environmental sustainability during planning (for infra-structure and Agriculture projects, an environmental impact assessment is required) - Risk needs to be assessed and continuously manage ment - If funding is not committed in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement, then don't continue to the next phase. - Contingency funding needs to be in place - The high cost of feasibility and baseline studies need to be budgeted for. - Long time is often needed for planning during which it seems as if no progress is made. This is a threat to sustainability as a project could be "rushed" to the next phase without thorough consideration of sustainability issues. - Issues such as availability of infrastructure, road access etc.

	needs to be considered during planning
Phase 4: Implementation	- Develop project management skills, business-management and life skills of all project participants - Projects which creates job opportunities must be first priority - High need for on-the-job training to address high unemployment and low levels of education - Long term succession planning to ensure projects can continue after handover - Implement local procurement as far as possible - Progress monitoring on continuous basis - After implementation, projects must generate their own income
Phase 5 Monitoring & Evaluation - Learning	- Learning and networking groups need to be established to share experiences amongst Development Agencies. - Monitoring information and documentation must be shared to prevent that the institutional memory and learning is lost

The administration and management of projects by the Development Agency is an important part of ensuring Programme- and project sustainability. During the second part of the workshop with the Executive Committee, the support role of Exco, Finance and Administration was defined. As part of the Resource and Learning of the **SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS RESOURCE,** there is a detailed outline of the management information system model recommended for Development Agencies as well as a learning module on establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation system for Development Agencies. The table below highlights in broad terms the role and documentation

Phase	Institutional support Role	Documents
Phase 1 : identification and strategic alignment	- Strategic Direction - Strategic Decisions - Funding for projects - Budgeting - Strategic Focus - Board review session	- Strategic Plan - Monitoring plan
Phase 2 : Conceptualisation	- Review MoA's and Edit - Stakeholder relations - Dispute Resolutions - Stakeholder engagement strategy - Strategic Planning of Programme	- Signed MoA
Phase 3: Planning	- Budget Availability - Procurement if necessary - Fund raising - Operations monitoring - Recommended payment - Procurement: appoint service provider	- Local Spatial Development Framework Document - Designs - Needs Analysis - Feasibility - Business plans - Contracts (service provider) - Terms of Reference
Phase 4: Implementation	- Payment on approved invoices - Feedback to Exco about budget vs. expenditure - Project launches	- Payment vouchers - Invoices - Confirmation of Quality/performance and invoice approval - Budget vs. Expenditure report
Phase 5 Monitoring & Evaluation - Learning	Document Management Platform: Corporate services keeps hard and soft versions	- Programme and Project performance
Other support	Information Technology platform Procurement of service providers Documentation Marketing-Branding Project handovers Learning events	- Project completion document

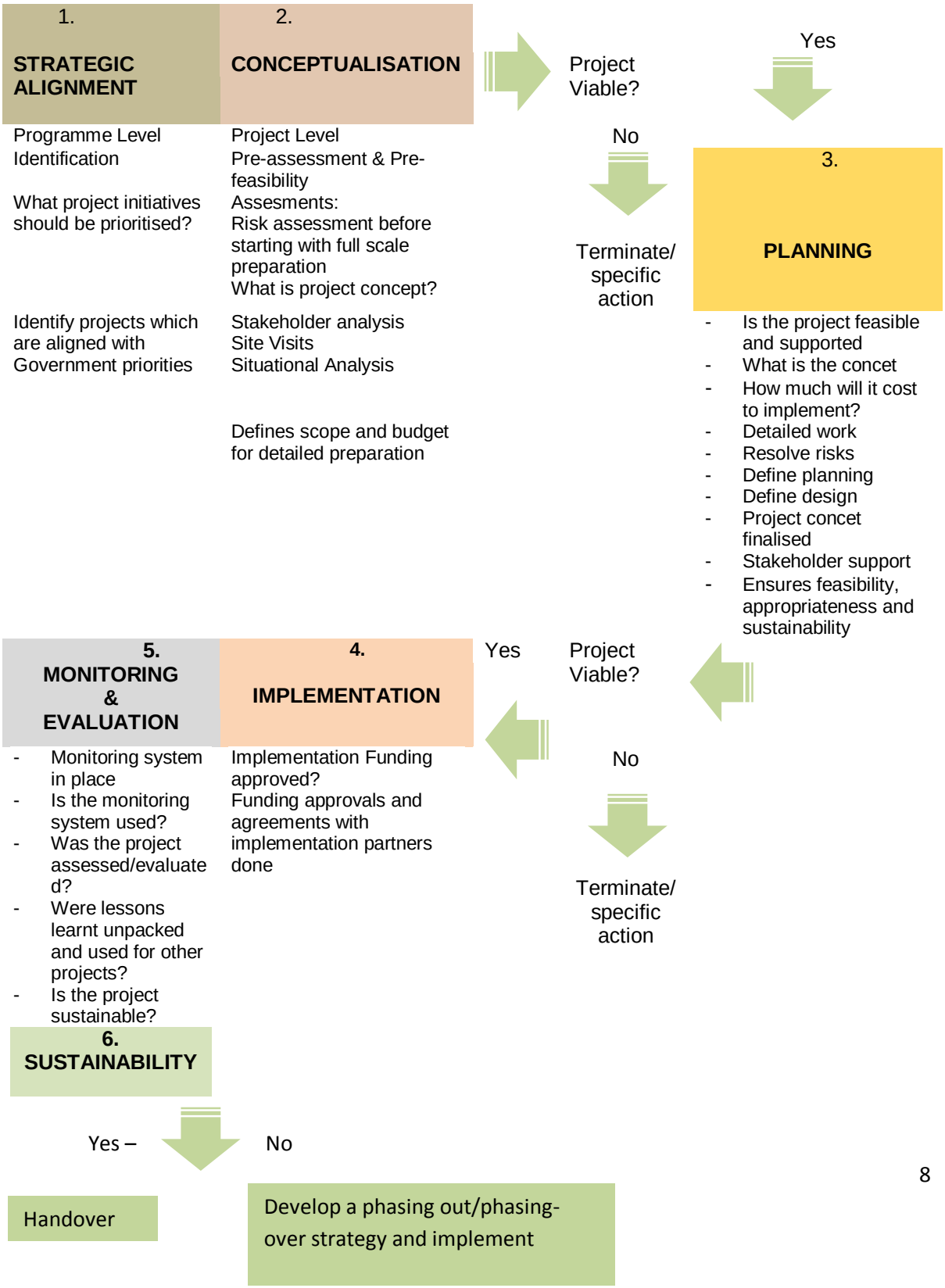
Table: Institutional support to project

2. Sustainability Quality Checks during the various phases of a Project Process

Sustainability principle[1] Institutional Sustainability	Critical Milestone achieved before continuing to the next project phase
Phase 1 : identification and strategic alignment	Project outputs is aligned with programme outcomes which in turn is aligned to Government strategic Goals and priorities - Key elements of sustainability introduced early - already during identification phase - Signed MoA's - Strategic Plan Approved - Institutional ownership of project at the end of implementation decided (legal entity) - Funding model
Phase 2 : Conceptualisation	- Stakeholder participation process in place - Feasibility studies - Risk analysis and strategy in place - Project Concept approved
Phase 3: Planning	Project plan developed and approved Project budget approved and funding available Project handover (exit strategy) developed
Phase 4: Implementation	Project management, control and regular reporting Baseline studies during beginning of implementation Documentation procedures exists and is adhered to Project monitored according to monitoring plan and linked to performance management Project participants are capacitated during implementation and skills transferred
Phase 5 Monitoring & Evaluation - Learning	Monitoring plan is approved and aligned to programme outcomes Project progress is measured and interim evaluations take place to ensure project sustainability is on track and if not, action to correct is taken. Evaluation: (External) Project are evaluated and lessons learnt are shared and serves as input into Strategic planning Monitoring system in place and used
Phase 6 Sustainability	Sustainability & Exit: Project participants are capacitated throughout the project lifecycle in preparation of exit Sustainability : Social, Economic and Environmental good practices implemented throughout life cycle

[1] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 2009, Tango International

3. Sustainability Activities During the entire Project Process (phases)



4. Sustainability Quality Standards

A[2] project is sustainable when the beneficiaries continue to experience benefits beyond the period of project funding. This means that planned benefits should be sustainable beyond the life of the delivery of the project services

[3]Assessment Criteria

Relevance	
The analysis of relevance would focus on the extent to which the design effectively/appropriately:	
Analysed the project's alignment with the government's development priorities and goals	✓
- Identified key stakeholders and target groups (including gender analysis and analysis of vulnerable groups such as the disabled), - assessed institutional capacity issues - effectively promoted local ownership	✓
Clearly and accurately identified real problems	✓
Analysed lessons learned from past experience and ensured coherence with current/on-going initiatives	✓
Provided a clear analysis of strategy options and justified the recommended implementation strategy	✓
Established a clear and logically coherent set of project objectives (goal, purpose, outputs) and a set of indicative activities for delivering each project output	✓
Developed a clear and useful Logframe matrix with supporting activity and resource/cost schedules	✓
Analysed assumptions/risks	✓
Established appropriate management and coordination arrangements	✓
Established appropriate and effective monitoring and evaluation systems	✓
Provided an analysis of sustainability issues – including the financial and economic sustainability of the proposed measure, environmental impact, benefits to both women and men and the use of appropriate technology	✓
Efficiency	
The efficiency criterion concerns how well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended outputs (sometimes referred to as results), in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. The assessment of Efficiency would therefore focus on such issues as:-	

[2] Spreckley, F., 2006: Local Livelihoods
[3] Europe Aid Guidelines 2004 P 35

The quality of day-to-day management, for example in - Management of the budget (including whether an inadequate budget was a factor); - Management of personnel, information, property, etc. - Whether management of risk was adequate, i.e. Whether flexibility was demonstrated in response to changes in circumstances; - Relations/coordination with local authorities, institutions, beneficiaries, donors; - Respect for deadlines.	✓
Costs and value-for-money: how far the costs of the project were Justified by the benefits	✓
Technical assistance: how well did it help to provide appropriate solutions and develop local capacities to define and produce results?	
Quality of monitoring: its existence (or not), accuracy and flexibility, and the use made of it; adequacy of baseline information;	✓
Did any unplanned outputs arise from the activities?	✓
Effectiveness	
The effectiveness criterion concerns how far the project's outputs were used, and the project purpose achieved. The analysis of effectiveness would therefore focus on:	
Whether the planned benefits have been delivered and received, as perceived by all key stakeholders (including women and men and specific vulnerable groups such as the disabled)	✓
In institutional reform projects, whether behavioural patterns have changed in the beneficiary organisations or groups at various levels; and how far the changed institutional arrangements and characteristics have produced the planned improvements (e.g. In communications, productivity, ability to generate actions which lead to economic and social development);	✓
If the assumptions and risk assessments at results level turned out to be inadequate or invalid, or unforeseen external factors intervened, how flexibly management adapted to ensure that the results would still achieve the purpose; and how well it was supported in this by key stakeholders	✓
Whether the balance of responsibilities between the various stakeholders was appropriate, which accompanying measures were or should have been taken by the partner authorities, and with what consequences;	✓
How unplanned results may have affected the benefits received;	✓
Whether any shortcomings at this level were due to a failure to take account of cross-cutting or over-arching issues such as gender, environment and poverty during implementation.	✓

Impact	
The term impact, sometimes referred to as outcome, denotes the relationship between the project's purpose and goal, that is the extent to which the benefits received by the target beneficiaries had a wider overall effect on larger numbers of people in the sector or region or in the country as a whole.. At Impact level the analysis generally examines such aspects as:	
to what extent the planned goal have been achieved, and how far that was directly due to the project;	
in institutional reform projects, how far enhanced economic and social development resulted from improved institutional capabilities and communications	✓
In infrastructure-type projects, how far did they also enhance economic and social development beyond the level of their immediate users?	✓
if there were unplanned impacts, how they affected the overall impact;	✓
where appropriate, all gender-related, environmental and poverty- related impacts were achieved; and	✓
How the economic effects were spread between economic growth, salaries and wages, foreign exchange, and budget, and how this relates to the project's overall objectives.	✓
Sustainability	
Sustainability, relates to whether the positive outcomes of the project at purpose level are likely to continue after external funding ends.	
An analysis of sustainability would therefore focus on such issues as:	
Ownership of objectives and achievements, e.g. - How far all stakeholders were consulted on the objectives from the outset, and - Whether they agreed with them and remained in agreement throughout the duration of the project;	✓
With adequate and trained staff, sufficient budget and equipment?); whether project participants were properly prepared for taking over, technically, financially and managerially;	✓
The adequacy of the project budget for its purpose;	✓
Socio-cultural factors – Whether the project is in tune with local perceptions of needs and of ways of producing and sharing benefits; - Whether it respects local power-structures, status systems and beliefs, and if it seeks to change any of those, how well-accepted are the changes both by the beneficiaries and by others; - How well it was based on an analysis of such factors, including beneficiary participation in design and implementation - The quality of relations between the external project staff and local communities.	✓
Financial sustainability - Whether the products or services provided were affordable for the	✓

intended beneficiaries and remained so after funding ended - Whether enough funds were available to cover all costs (including recurrent costs), and continued to do so after funding ended Economic sustainability - How well the benefits (returns) compared to those on similar undertakings	
Technical (technology) issues such as whether - The technology, knowledge, process or service provided fits in with existing needs, culture, traditions, skills or knowledge; - Alternative technologies were considered, where there was a choice; - The intended beneficiaries were able to adapt to and maintain the technology acquired without further assistance	✓
Cross Cutting issues: Wherever relevant, cross-cutting issues such as gender equity, environmental impact and good governance; were appropriately accounted for and managed from the outset of the project.	✓