

POL 451

Agricultural Reform in Zambia

An Appraisal of the World Bank's Project
Performance Assessment Report

Professor Andy Hira
Aaron Raymond
April 6 2011

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
PROJECT REVIEW	4
<i>Objectives</i>	4
<i>Activities</i>	6
<i>Measures</i>	7
<i>Stakeholders</i>	8
<i>Findings</i>	9
EVALUATION TEAM.....	12
METHODOLOGY	15
<i>OED Rating System</i>	15
Relevance of Objective.....	16
Efficacy.....	17
Efficiency	17
Sustainability	18
Outcome	18
Institutional Development Impact	19
Bank Performance	19
Borrower Performance.....	21
<i>Inter-Report Variance</i>	22
<i>Selection of Variables</i>	23
<i>Stakeholder Assessment</i>	24
<i>Survey of Agricultural Producers</i>	25
CONCLUSION	26
<i>Commentary on Findings</i>	26
<i>Recommendations</i>	26
<i>Concerns</i>	28
<i>Concluding Remarks</i>	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY	30

INTRODUCTION

Located in the heart of Southern Africa, the land-locked country of Zambia is richly endowed with land and water resources.¹ Alongside mining, agriculture constitutes a significant portion of the nation's Gross Domestic Product.² Between 1992 and 1994 Zambia suffered severe drought.³ Set against the tableau of economic stagnation, the drought was an unwelcome vignette on the national scene. With the prospect of famine, it was at this lamentable juncture that Zambia found herself in the early portion of the 1990's. The impending loss of life and economic devastation prompted the international community to action. Thus began the first examination of the Zambian government's capacity to respond to circumstances of drought.⁴

Running from January 24, 1994 to December 31, 2001⁵ the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program was an ^{AWK}incentive undertaken by the World Bank in conjunction with the Zambian Government as well as a host of international sponsors and financiers.⁶ In 2003 the World Bank published a Project Performance Assessment Report which will serve as the chief corpus of our analysis.

The aim herein is to examine the aforementioned report – to inspect stakeholder interests, to sift through the report's findings and to scrutinize the logic underpinning the

¹ Paul Ojermark and Charles Chabala. *The Development of Independent Cooperatives in Zambia: A Case Study*. (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1994), 9-10.

² "Zambia." *OECD Journal: General Papers* 2009.6 (2011): 103-131. *Business SourceComplete*. Accessed: 3 Mar. 2011.

<<http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/bsi/detail?sid=0bea5d1d-07ec-4de4-824e-8f3b82632a21%40sessionmgr113&vid=1&hid=106&bdata=JnNpdGU9YnNpLWxpdmU%3d#db=bth&jid=B6GX>>.

³ Mpanjilwa Mulwanda, "Structural Adjustment and Drought in Zambia." *Disasters* 19.2 (1995): 85-93. *Wiley Online Library*. Accessed: 4 Mar. 2011. <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7717.1995.tb00360.x/abstract;jsessionid=FA436C1750AB892797AA3222EAE51400.d02t04>>.

⁴ "Zambia: Sustaining Agricultural Diversification." *OECD Papers* 2009.2 (2009): 96-124. *Business Source Complete*. Accessed: 8 Mar. 2011. <<http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/bsi/detail?sid=2c642513-9a7b-49a1-bd6a-9377a428c1b2%40sessionmgr110&vid=1&hid=106&bdata=JnNpdGU9YnNpLWxpdmU%3d#db=bth&jid=B6GX>>.

⁵ World Bank, Operations Evaluations Department. *Project Performance Assessment Report* in relation to "Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program," (2003), vii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vii

recommendations in order to assess the conclusions reached and lessons drawn from the endeavour.

The Project Performance Assessment Report relies heavily on qualitative data, a characteristic which is inevitably replicated in our analysis of the document. As the task at hand is to assess the Project Performance Assessment Report in the manner it was written, this paper does not contain supplementary quantitative information available through World Bank *undbn* databases.

This paper will first identify the objectives of the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program as expressed in the Project Performance Assessment Report. This paper will then address the activities involved in the program implementation as well as discuss the measures employed. Stakeholder identification as well as the process whereby the Project Performance Assessment Report was compiled will be the subject of careful inquiry. Nevertheless, the greater part of analysis is methodological in nature; indeed it is primarily on methodological grounds that the author of this review premises his conclusions.

Serious concern as to the soundness of the methodological foundation upon which the Project Performance Assessment Report is constructed precludes the author of this paper from being able to either agree or disagree with the conclusions reached by the document. Corollary to the absence of reliable data, this review submits the tandem recommendations of revisions to the manner in which data pertaining to the project is gathered and the selection of viable performance indicators.

It warrants mention that a thorough study of the agricultural sector in Zambia—which dedicates adequate attention to the social and historical context as well as pays due attention to

the contemporary situation itself—would occupy several volumes of literature. The chosen approach, a brief exposition with exclusive regard for the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program, given the narrow range of the subject matter, is limited in scope.

PROJECT REVIEW

Objectives

The Performance Project Assessment Report divides the manifold aims of the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program into two broad categories: Process Objectives and Long-term Goals.

Process Objectives ⁷	Long-Term Goals ⁸
1. To embrace all public investment for the sector in a pool of funding;	1. To improve household food security;
2. To implement within the existing framework of public agencies which would be decentralized;	2. To promote better use of natural resources;
3. To utilize no Project Implementation Units and use minimal long-term international Technical Assistance;	3. To generate income and employment;
4. To standardize procedures for funding agencies;	4. To increase export earnings.
5. To use a flexible design with annual reviews and adjustments;	
6. To promote private and beneficiary participation	

Over the course of the project, however, the objectives were revised to include the following elements:

⁷ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

Revised Objectives⁹

1. To develop and disseminate improved technologies;
2. To improve the institutional structure for cost effective service delivery including decentralization;
3. To assist institutional development including training, policy formulation and monitoring and evaluation;
4. To adopt participatory approaches;
5. To privatize agricultural enterprises and promote agri-business and farmer organizations;
6. To increase farm incomes and export earnings.

Prior to delving into the manner in which the above-stated objectives were to be measured, some attention ought to be devoted to the fact that the objectives of the project were revised at the time of the Mid-Term Review.¹⁰ Whereas the Project Performance Assessment Report acknowledges the changed objectives, the document does not seem to take into account the prospect that the revised aims of the Zambia Agricultural Investment Program may have influenced the behaviour of those charged with the task of implementing the program. The Project Performance Assessment Report insists on assessing the project as per the objectives outlined at the project's outset—aims which, by the time of the project's termination, had long been explicitly abandoned by those involved in the endeavour—as well as the revised objectives which were not in place at the project's commencement. The disjuncture between the goals for which the entities involved in the project were striving and the objectives against which the project is being measured, calls into question the validity of the assessment.

The evaluation rubric to which the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program is subjected is not limited to the expressed goals of the project. Indeed, an additional layer of criteria is employed to judge the initiative: the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department

⁹ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

(OED) Rating System.¹¹ The OED Rating System is composed of eight criteria against which projects conducted under the auspices of the World Bank are graded.

Operation Evaluations Department Rating System¹²

1. Relevance of Objectives
2. Efficacy
3. Efficiency
4. Sustainability
5. Institutional Development Impact
6. Outcome
7. Bank Performance
8. Borrower Performance

Amidst the voluminous criteria against which the Performance Project Assessment Report claims to be evaluating the Zambia Agricultural Investment Program, one is hard pressed to find a summative standard against which the project is assessed. One cannot help but think that the aim of the report's authors was to overwhelm the reader with list upon list of objectives in the hope that length and repetition would serve as substitutes for critical analysis.

incompatibility
quite possible

Activities

The activities involved in the project are not outlined with a great deal of precision in the Project Performance Assessment Report. The reader is aware that the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives¹³ constitutes a major portion of the project's undertaking, but is left wondering what precisely this restructuring process entails. Moreover, the reader is informed that privatization of agricultural lands¹⁴ is an element of the project.

¹¹ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, i.

¹² *Ibid.*, i.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2, 7.

Nevertheless, the nature of the land reform – the speed at which it takes places, the entities gaining title to the land,¹⁵ and the policies surrounding redistribution¹⁶—remains elusive. Additionally, agricultural research¹⁷ and seed distribution¹⁸ are both identified as important components of the project. However, the progress of research and the scope of seed distribution are not sufficiently addressed so as to furnish the reader with an adequate knowledge of how the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program operates. All in all, the details surrounding the activities involved in the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program remain, by and large, undisclosed in the Project Performance Assessment Report.

Measures

Notwithstanding the laudable ambitions of the Zambia Agriculture Investment Program, the undertaking seems to have suffered from a fatal flaw: the near absence of standard performance measures. The Project Performance Assessment Report acknowledges this omission yet proceeds to assess the program through examining indicators deemed suitable by the evaluation team. The scant manner in which measures were applied will be the subject of closer analysis in the *Methodology* section of this paper.

¹⁵ Herrick Mpuku and Ivan Zyuulu. *Contemporary Issues in Socio-Economic Reform in Zambia*. (Sydney: Ashgate, 1997.), 42.

¹⁶ Catherine Hill and Malcom McPherson. *Promoting and Sustaining Economic Reform in Zambia*. (Cambridge: John F. Kennedy School of Government Harvard University Press, 2004), 295.

¹⁷ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 8, 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9, 12.

Stakeholders

The nexus between the interests of stakeholders and the project's aims is not thoroughly examined in the Project Performance Assessment Report. According to the OCE Rating system, the *Relevance of Objectives* criterion is purportedly designed to take into account the varying interests of those involved in the project. The relevance of the project is judged as "substantial"¹⁹ without as much as a reason why, save the vague mention that "both the original and the revised objectives were clearly consistent with both the Bank's and borrower's strategy."²⁰ What was the Bank's strategy? What was the Borrower's strategy? These important questions remain unanswered. Indeed, what the report asserts is "*clearly consistent*"²¹ seems, in fact, to be quite obscure.

Moreover, the Project Performance Assessment Report completely overlooks two vital groups of stakeholders: the international financiers and the Zambian farmers. The report recounts that a "large number of co-financiers did not feel much ownership in the program,"²² and laments that many of them pulled out or distanced themselves from the undertaking over the first two to three years. Given the esteemed list of sponsors – the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to name a few²³ – it seems peculiar that the Project Performance Assessment Report does not identify these organizations as stakeholders. The *Relevance of Objectives* section of the Project Performance Assessment Report makes no mention of the governmental and non-governmental organizations which contributed funds and personnel to the project. Why were these institutions interested in financing the project? How did their interests converge with those of the host government and of

¹⁹ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²² *Ibid.*, ix

²³ *Ibid.*, vii

the World Bank? What led to their eventual disillusionment with the project? These significant questions remain largely unanswered by the Project Performance Assessment Report. Through failing to explicitly identify the donors as stakeholders,²⁴ the Project Performance Assessment Report foregoes much valuable analysis which could have been applied to better understanding the role of foreign donors in the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program. ✓

Given the broad-based aims of the project—particularly the objectives to increase the income of farms and to promote farmers' organizations²⁵—it is curious that farmers were not identified as stakeholders in the Project Performance Assessment Report. Perhaps it was presumed that the initiatives undertaken as part of the project would indisputably assist farmers. Nonetheless, such a presumption, should it have been made, is indicative of an imperious approach to project implementation. If, alternately, the farmers were simply overlooked as stakeholders—an oversight which, even for the most charitable of analysts, is difficult to reconcile with the knowledge that the subject at hand pertains to *agricultural* investment—then local farmers may have been spared some of the hardships²⁶ they endured as a consequence of the project, had it not been for what seems a callous disregard for protocol apropos stakeholder identification. ✓

➤ Del space

Findings

The Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program was assessed in accordance with the World Bank's Operations Evaluations Department (OED) Criteria. This multidimensional assessment seeks to address various aspects of the project including but not limited to its

²⁴ Per-Ake Andersson. *Foreign Aid, Debt, and Growth in Zambia*. (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrinainstitutet, 2000.),95.

²⁵ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

An Appraisal of the World Bank's Project Performance Assessment Report

expressed objectives. Of current, the World Bank's Operations Evaluations Department (OED) has been replaced with the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG),²⁷ which employs a simpler evaluation rubric. Considerations as to the utility of the OED assessment will be conducted in the *Methodology* section of this document. Discussion in this portion of the paper will confine itself to outlining the OED Rating System, as presented in the table below.

Operation Evaluations Department Rating System ²⁸		
Criterion	Description	Possible Rating
Relevance of Objective	The extent to which the project's objectives are consistent with the country's current development priorities and with current Bank country and sectoral assistance strategies and corporate goals.	High, Substantial, Modest, Negligible
Efficacy	The extent to which the project's objectives were achieved, or expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	High, Substantial, Modest, Negligible
Efficiency	The extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, a return higher than the opportunity cost of capital and benefits at least cost compared to alternatives.	High, Substantial, Modest, Negligible
Sustainability	The resilience to risk of net benefits flows over time.	Highly Likely, Likely, Unlikely, Highly Unlikely, Not Evaluable
Outcome	The extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, efficiently.	Highly Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory
Institutional Development Impact	The extent to which a project improves the ability of a country or region to make efficient, equitable and sustainable use of	High, Substantial, Modest, Negligible

²⁷ "An Introduction to IEG for First Time Visitors." *Independent Evaluation Group*. World Bank, Accessed: 9 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/intro/>>.

²⁸ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, i.

	<p>its human, financial and natural resources through (a) better definition, stability transparency, enforceability and predictability of institutional arrangements and/or (b) better alignments of the mission and capacity of an organization with its mandate, which derives from these institutional arrangements. Institutional Development Impact includes both intended and unintended effects of a project.</p>	
Bank Performance	<p>The extent to which services provided by the Bank ensured quality at entry and supported implementation through appropriate supervision.</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory</p>
Borrower Performance	<p>The extent to which the borrower assumed ownership and responsibility to ensure quality of preparation and implementation, and complied with covenants and agreements, towards the achievement of development objectives and sustainability.</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory</p>

Based on the table above, the Project Performance Assessment Report produced the following findings:

Criterion ²⁹	Finding
Relevance of Objective	Substantial ³⁰
Efficacy	Negligible ³¹
Efficiency	Negligible ³²
Sustainability	Unlikely ³³
Outcome	N/A
Institutional Development Impact	Modest ³⁴
Bank Performance	Unsatisfactory ³⁵
Borrower Performance	Unsatisfactory ³⁶

The author of this review consciously foregoes discussion apropos the findings of the Project Performance Assessment Report in this portion of the paper. The author reserves his appraisal of the conclusions reached by the Project Performance Assessment Report until certain methodological concerns—wherein lie the major contentions with the Report—have been explored. Thus, careful deliberation will be devoted to the topic in the *Methodology* section of the document.

Pool sequencing hard to follow from of last section here! (why we needed last section)

EVALUATION TEAM

An evaluation team comprised of three individuals compiled the Project Performance Assessment Report. Ridley Nelson composed the report, William Hurlbut edited the document, and Helen Phillip provided administrative support.³⁷

The Report was commissioned by the Operations evaluation Department of the World Bank. Thus, the objective of the report may be called into question insofar as the implementation and assessment of the project were conducted by members of the same

²⁹ Project Performance Assessment Report, i.
³⁰ Ibid., 6.
³¹ Ibid., 7.
³² Ibid., 10.
³³ Ibid., 16.
³⁴ Ibid., 12.
³⁵ Ibid., 13.
³⁶ Ibid., 15.
³⁷ Project Performance Assessment Report, iii.

organization: the World Bank. Notwithstanding the affiliation between the execution and appraisal of the project, even if we are to assume that a degree of professionalism restrained the opportunity for bias, concerns still remain regarding the integrity of the evaluation process.

The Project Performance Assessment Report is not necessarily based on an examination of raw data. Whereas the evaluation team is entitled to independently review the program's data and documentation, to interview operational staff and to visit the borrowing country, the Report makes no mention of any of these options being conducted in a systematic manner. Instead, the Project Performance Assessment Report draws heavily upon the Implementation Completion Report,³⁸ a self-evaluation compiled by the Rural Development Operations branch of the World Bank.³⁹ An examination of the objectivity with which the self-evaluation was conducted is beyond the scope of our analysis herein. Nevertheless, should the self-evaluation have been skewed so as to favourably assess the role of the World Bank in the project, for example, the biased appraisal may have been replicated to an extent in the Project Performance Assessment Report. *implied*

In addition to examining the Evaluation Team, some attention ought to be devoted to the process involved in compiling the Project Performance Assessment Report. The Report, once drafted, is subject to approval from the managerial staff at the Operations Evaluation Department.⁴⁰ The criteria for approval are not disclosed in the report. Thereafter, the report is dispatched to the responsible World Bank department—in the case of the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program the report was sent to the Rural Development Operations⁴¹ branch—

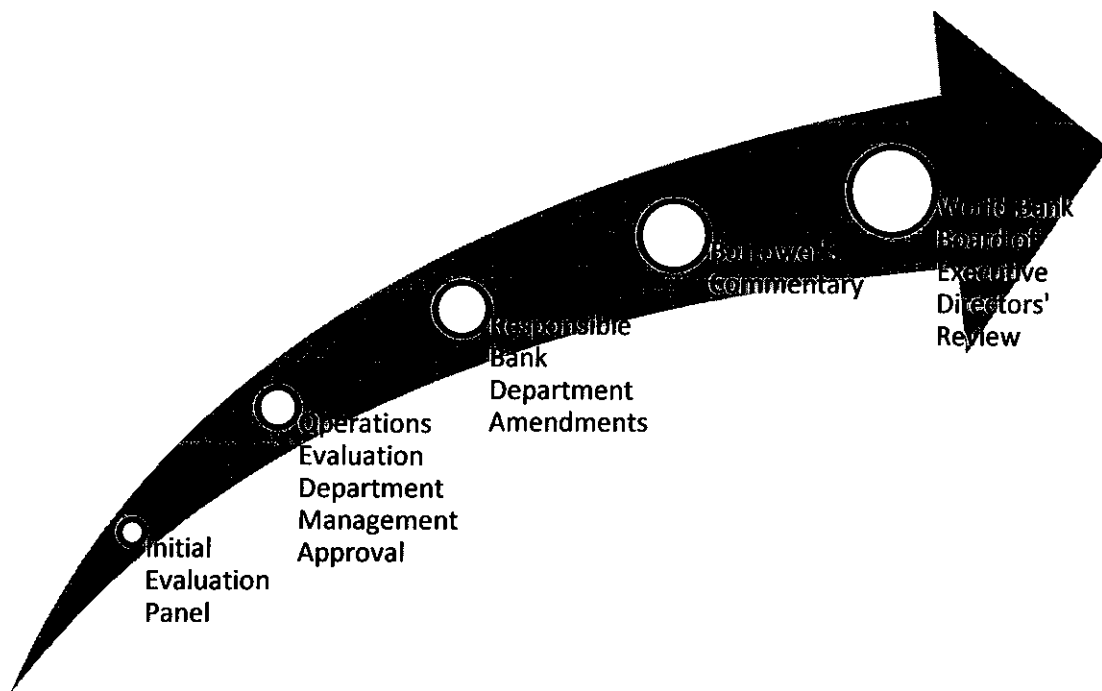
³⁸ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, i.

³⁹ Disclosure of the content of this document is explicitly restricted to those discharging their official duties. The contents are not otherwise to be disclosed without World Bank authorization.

⁴⁰ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, i.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, i.

where the report may be amended as necessary. The opportunity for those involved in the execution of the project to amend the appraisal of their performance would undermine the independence of the review process. Once the relevant department has had the opportunity to edit the review, the borrower—in the case of the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program the report was sent to the Government of Zambia, specifically the Ministry of Agriculture—is presented with the occasion to add comments to the report. Thereafter, the report is submitted to the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors for final review.⁴² Only after this extensive process is the final report disclosed to the public.



Bearing in mind the arduous process associated with the compilation of the Project Performance Assessment Report and cognisant of the many actors involved at each stage, discussion apropos the Evaluation Team cannot simply be limited to the individuals drafting the initial document. Comparative analysis of the document after each of the stages of evaluation

⁴² *Project Performance Assessment Report*, i.

would be a potential starting point for assessing the impact of the evaluation process on the final document. However, the alterations made during the evaluation process are not public knowledge, ensuring that comparative study cannot be conducted without the approval of the World Bank.

METHODOLOGY

A typical methodological critique endeavours, in part, to assess the variables employed by the evaluator as well as the conclusions drawn from the data. Nevertheless, a typical approach cannot be so handily applied to the Project Performance Assessment Report as the document makes little use of performance indicators. The ambiguity of the project's objectives is compounded with the near absence of ways in which to measure whether or not the objectives are being realized. In an almost blasé admission, the report makes the blunt declaration that it lacked "monitorable substantive performance indicators."⁴³

The Project Performance Assessment Report ostensibly erects the framework to examine the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program in accordance with the OED Criteria listed in the *Objectives* portion of this document. This review will undertake the dour task of furnishing a critical appraisal of the Project Performance Assessment Report with respect to its findings apropos the specified objectives.

OED Rating System

Prima facie, the OED criteria may seem a comprehensive list against which a variety of projects can be assessed. Closer examination, however, reveals that a considerable portion of the

⁴³ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 4.

conclusions are arbitrarily determined by the evaluation team. The use of ordinal measures without identified and agreed upon parameters to distinguish between one choice and another ensures that extensive discretion is left to the evaluators. What separates Highly Satisfactory from Satisfactory? Questions such as this remain unanswered.

In addition to the limitations of the OED criteria itself, the manner in which the criteria were employed warrants investigation. Thus, attention turns to specific criterion and the assessment thereunto pertaining.

Criterion ⁴⁴	Finding
Relevance of Objective	<i>Substantial</i> ⁴⁵
Efficacy	<i>Negligible</i> ⁴⁶
Efficiency	<i>Negligible</i> ⁴⁷
Sustainability	<i>Unlikely</i> ⁴⁸
Outcome	<i>N/A</i>
Institutional Development Impact	<i>Modest</i> ⁴⁹
Bank Performance	<i>Unsatisfactory</i> ⁵⁰
Borrower Performance	<i>Unsatisfactory</i> ⁵¹

So del
IEG section
& move
relevant
parts
here

Relevance of Objective

Finding: Substantial. The evaluation process which led to this conclusion remains elusive. On what grounds would the World Bank, upon embarking upon a project, declare that the undertaking was inconsistent with the institution's strategy? This question, amongst others, remains unexplored when discussion the relevance of the project's objectives. Moreover, the convergence between the goals of the country—in our case, Zambia—and those of the World

⁴⁴ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, i.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

Use 1" margin

Bank are not addressed in any detail in the Project Performance Assessment Report apart from the initial assertion that they are one and the same. The assessment makes little effort to convince the reader of the meeting of state and Bank interests, offering dogmatism instead.

Efficacy

Finding: Negligible. Assessment of the efficacy of the project is made with reference to the project's objectives. The discrepancies between the original and revised project objectives are discussed in preceding portions of this document. In addition to the incongruity between the two sets of objectives themselves, the manner in which the objectives were examined calls for closer analysis. The section of efficacy does not make direct reference to the outlined objectives, opting instead to highlight activities which are related to one or more aims of the program. This peculiar choice vis-à-vis the formatting of the Project Performance Assessment Report ensures that it is unclear which activity were targeted towards which objectives. For example, in what ways does the Rural Investment Fund relate to the goal of increasing farm incomes or disseminating improved technologies? The Project Performance Assessment Report makes little effort to answer such questions. Moreover, the threshold for achieving any of the particular objectives is not disclosed so even the project's proximity to attaining an aim cannot be assessed. Thus, when the report discusses a motley collection of data and eventually concludes that the project was inefficacious, the figures are of little value.

Efficiency

Finding: Negligible. As with the assessment of efficacy, the evaluation of efficiency is also activity-oriented. Rather than highlighting the efficiency of specific activities with reference

An Appraisal of the World Bank's Project Performance Assessment Report

to particular project objectives, the undertakings are individually presented without mention of targeted goals. Particularly since the criterion pertains to *efficiency*, establishing a threshold what constitutes efficient and inefficient is necessary. Nevertheless, such a threshold is nowhere to be found. The Project Performance Assessment Report makes vague statements such as “the conclusion is *probably* correct”⁵² and that “efficiency *probably* improved,”⁵³ yet does not establish what is meant by efficient. Moreover, despite the evaluation rubric stating that an examination of efficiency must take into account the opportunity costs of particular undertakings, no such assessment is made in the Project Performance Assessment Report. ✓

Sustainability ✓

Finding: Unlikely. The Project Performance Assessment Report concludes that the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Project is unlikely to be sustained due to insufficient funds for the purpose of continuing operations and paying staff.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the report neither provide figures outlining the operating costs of the project nor the shortfall between the operating costs and current funding levels.

Outcome

Finding: N/A. The Project Performance Assessment Report does not assess the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program in accordance with this OED criterion. The Project Performance Assessment Report provides no reason for neglecting to assess the project with reference to this criterion.

⁵² *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

Institutional Development Impact

Finding: Modest. The report acknowledges that there was “an appropriate shift away from a top-down...approach to a participatory group approach,”⁵⁵ but neither highlight the qualitative difference between the two approaches nor discusses the manner in which the transition from one to the other aided in institutional development. Moreover, the *appropriateness* of the transition towards a participatory approach is unclear. On what grounds was it appropriate? What would have been inappropriate? The threshold for propriety is not established in the Project Performance Assessment Report. The report’s assessment of the Institutional Development Impact also points to the enhanced training undergone by officials participating in the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program. However, the report indicates that “due to extremely low salaries many skills have been lost by the public service over the project period.”⁵⁶ The extent to which individuals possessing these unidentified skills are no longer in the service of the Zambian Government remains to be assessed. As with the other categories of the OED criteria, the results do not seem to be compared against an established rubric but are, by and large, arbitrarily assigned by the evaluation team.

Bank Performance

Finding: Unsatisfactory. In this section of the Project Performance Assessment Report the evaluation team points to some of the early shortcomings of the project, namely the absence of precise objectives⁵⁷ and incomplete stakeholder identification.⁵⁸ In an effort to explain the

⁵⁵ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 12.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

reasons as to why the World Bank largely ignored the reservations expressed by donors, this portion of the Project Performance Assessment Report makes splendid use of imagery, commenting:

“Towards the end stronger donor reservations were expressed but by then the train had gathered too much speed hence donors felt steamrolled.”⁵⁹

It warrants mention in this review that references to locomotion aren't necessarily the most useful in an endeavour to understand the performance of the World Bank with regards to an agricultural project in Zambia.

Whereas the Bank Performance criterion, according to the OED Rating System, pertains to the performance of the World Bank, the Project Performance Assessment Report expands the criterion to include a brief assessment of the donors themselves. Attempting to deflect some of the criticism from the World Bank, the report states that “the fault by no means lies only with the Bank.”⁶⁰ Indeed, the various international donors, so highly esteemed at the project's outset, are later portrayed as pusillanimous. In fact, the report indicates that the donors were “perhaps too ready to turn and run when difficulties surfaced.”⁶¹ Abandoned by its financiers it is the World Bank, left to “carry the tattered remnants of the concept,”⁶² that presses ever-onward.

The Bank Performance section provides cursory glances of the various elements of the project in which the World Bank was involved. It is unclear whether the information provided is a comprehensive overview of all the areas in which the World Bank was involved or if it includes only the areas which interested the evaluation team. Moreover, the assessment of the World Bank's performance is premised on an amalgamation of activities which took place at

⁵⁸ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 13.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 14.

different stages of the project. Since the Project Performance Assessment Report does not assess the performance of the Bank in a chronological fashion, it is unclear whether the World Bank was performing poorly from the very outset of the project, whether Bank Performance improved or deteriorated over time.

not just this

Borrower Performance

Finding: Unsatisfactory. The Project Performance Assessment Report indicates that the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, later called the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, was undermined by a change in government following elections.⁶³ Whereas the political context seems to factor considerably in the assessment of borrower performance, the report does not address the shifts in the political agenda between the outgoing and incoming governments. Indeed, so scantily reviewed is the political context that the Project Performance Assessment Report makes no mention of the ministers responsible for the ministry by name. In addition to the changing political context, the report identifies long delays on the part of the ministry as contributing towards the poor rating for borrower performance. The report, firstly, does not seem to be cognisant of the prospect that the delays in the bureaucratic machinery may be interrelated with the new government's lack of enthusiasm for the project. Separately assessing the change in government and the processing delays may not be appropriate insofar as the two may be closely linked. Moreover, the nature of the delays is not explored in detail. The extent of the delay is unclear inasmuch as the appropriate length of time is not prescribed.

Explain poss.
reasons
why in
each section

⁶³ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 15.

Inter-Report Variance

The Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program is not only the subject of a single Project Performance Assessment Report. Prior to the compilation of the Project Performance Assessment Report the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program had undergone three separate appraisals conducted with reference to the OED Rating System.⁶⁴

OED Criterion ⁶⁵	Implementation Completion Report ⁶⁶	Evaluation Summary ⁶⁷	Audit ⁶⁸	Project Performance Assessment Report
Relevance of Objective	N/A	N/A	N/A	Substantial ⁶⁹
Efficacy	N/A	N/A	N/A	Negligible ⁷⁰
Efficiency	N/A	N/A	N/A	Negligible ⁷¹
Sustainability	Likely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely ⁷²
Outcome	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	N/A
Institutional Development Impact	Modest	Modest	Modest	Modest ⁷³
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory ⁷⁴
Borrower Performance	Satisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory ⁷⁵

While not all the reports examined the Zambia Agricultural Investment Program with respect to the full spectrum of the OED Rating System, what is of particular interests is the variance amongst the ratings given for certain categories. Sustainability is rated as likely in the Implementation Completion Report but is then assessed as unlikely in subsequent reports. Bank Performance is rated as Satisfactory in the Implementation Completion Report but changes to

⁶⁴ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, v.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, i.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, v.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, v.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, v.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

unsatisfactory in later documents. Likewise, Borrower Performance is rated first as satisfactory, then as highly unsatisfactory and finally as unsatisfactory. The variance between the Project Performance Assessment Report and previous reports is not accounted for. What new evidence changed the assessment of the evaluation teams? On what grounds did the evaluation teams base their varying assessments? Such questions are not answered in the Project Performance Assessment Report.

In addition to an assessment regarding the validity of the Project Performance Assessment Report vis-à-vis the OED Rating System, there are areas of the document which warrant further methodological investigation.

Selection of Variables

In the place of thorough analysis, the report offers only a handful of information. The Project Performance Assessment Report seems to make little effort to explain the general absence of data. The document clarifies that “aggregate rural sector indicators such as agricultural GDP [and the] food production index...”⁷⁶ were to be employed. These indicators are not specifically applied to any of the many objectives to which the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program was striving. Indeed, the scant data that is presented is not done so with reference to the objectives outlined at the outset of the paper. Instead, the information is presented in a more thematic manner, outlining various departmental reconstruction efforts, initiatives to disburse seeds, and the creation of a rural investment fund. Thus, the data is presented, for the most part, with reference to activities rather than objectives. ✓

⁷⁶ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 10.

Prior to delving further into methodological analysis, dwelling momentarily on the manner in which the data is presented may prove a fruitful endeavour. The growth rate of agricultural as a portion of GDP is identified as a performance indicator, albeit one not explicitly attributed to any particular objective.⁷⁷ The report, without the use of figures or charts, simply informs the reader that “GDP from agriculture...barely grew at all from 1996 to 2000.”⁷⁸ The stagnation of the variable is thought, in part, to justify the rating of *negligible* vis-à-vis the efficacy of the project. Nevertheless, analysis of this variable doesn't adequately account for the periods of drought and the rapid decrease in farming subsidies attendant to the project's reforms. The report acknowledges the presence of these exogenous factors yet continues to treat the data gathered between 1996 and 2000 as though they are comparable.

Stakeholder Assessment

consolidate w/ earlier disc

With regards to stakeholders, the report acknowledges that a “lack of ownership”⁷⁹ was felt by a large number of donors. The value of this observation is nevertheless undermined because a great deal of information about the stakeholders remains undisclosed. The “large number”⁸⁰ of donors is a very unspecific amount, precluding further analysis regarding the similarities and differences between those who withdrew from the project and offering nothing in the way of the chronology regarding how the sense of dissolution amongst financiers developed. Additionally, the question must inevitably be raised: what constitutes a sense of ownership? Such a question is fundamental to interpreting how this sense of ownership, or lack thereof, relates to the Zambia Agricultural Investment Program.

⁷⁷ Project Performance Assessment Report, 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., ix.

⁸⁰ Ibid., ix.

Survey of Agricultural Producers

In the process of conducting the Project Performance Assessment Report no formal surveys were issued. However, various individuals—mainly farmers and project staff—were interviewed. The questions asked at these interviews are not disclosed in the report; indeed, there is no indication that a standard set of questions was asked. Data as to population size also remains elusive. Given the informality of these surveys – which seem to be little more than a collection of unsystematic conversations—the Project Performance Assessment Report makes selective use of quotes. The report is interspersed with statements such as:

One NGO representative commented: “Livestock have died in Zambia”⁸¹

One lady farmer [said] “Over the last five years things were at first very difficult...but it has become a little better in the last two years.”⁸²

In addition to the inconsistency of the survey questions, there is no indication that an effort has been made to ensure a representative sample. The report specifies that surveys were conducted irrespective of gender⁸³ but provides no further information regarding the region, time-period and employment status of the individual being interviewed. Given the particular nature of the information which the evaluators intend to extract through the interviews – namely the perceived effectiveness of the project—it is peculiar that such basic variables were not accounted for. Essentially, the region where the survey was conducted could heavily influence the response if the region had been the focus of a recent irrigation project, for example. Likewise, a survey conducted during the harvest may solicit a strikingly different response than one conducted whilst the farmers are waiting for the rains. Similarly, if a farmer has acquired a

⁸¹ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 6.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, ix.

small plot through the deregulation process, the response could be at great variance from another who has remained an employee. Additionally, not only was the data poorly collected, some important data went unexamined. “There is no project-survey data on production or enterprise or farm household income,”⁸⁴ ensuring that some of the Project’s objectives cannot be verified from a quantitative data source. Perhaps the report, with a statement that may seem a euphemism to some, makes the clearest admission of this in stating: “Attributable impact data is *very* limited.”⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

Commentary on Findings

Since the Project Performance Assessment Report does not systematically address the objectives of the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program and does not substantiate its assessment in a manner that is methodologically sound, the conclusions reached by the report can neither be accepted nor rejected. Given the lack of clarity over what exactly the project was designed to accomplish, the manner in which it was to achieve its goals, and the method whereby it was to define success, one cannot reach a suitable conclusion from the limited information the report provides without partaking in the same folly in which the authors of the report themselves indulged.

Recommendations

The Project Performance Assessment Report can be improved in a variety of ways:

1. Focus Analysis on Project Objectives

⁸⁴ *Project Performance Assessment Report*, 8.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

The objectives of the Zambia Industrial Sector Investment Program were defined with fine turns of phrase, leaving the reader unaware of what precisely the project was endeavour to achieve. Greater clarity as to the aim of the project is necessary so that the specific expected outcome is clear. Taking the example of increased food security as a case in point; it remains unclear what precisely this would entail? What aspect of the matter is the project focusing on— food access, food availability or food use?⁸⁶ Without a finely tailored objective the project is prone to ambiguity. The Project Performance Assessment Report could have made a great effort to clarify what those implementing the program had in mind when outlining the various objectives. After doing so, the Project Performance Assessment Report could have approached its analysis in a piecemeal manner, addressing each of the project's objectives on an individual basis.

2. Clarify Implementation Strategy

Just as important as the objectives are the means thorough which they are realized. The Project Performance Assessment Report makes little mention of the steps undertaken to work towards the objectives. What precisely did restructuring the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries entail? How was the better use of natural resources to be promoted? The mechanisms through which the objectives were to be accomplished remain largely unaddressed in the report.

3. Limit Scope of Evaluation

The Project Evaluation Assessment Report aimed to address the multitude of objectives undertaken by the Zambia Industrial Sector Investment Program. The vast scope of the assessment left many areas underdeveloped in terms of analysis. Perhaps a variety of reports

⁸⁶ "Trade, foreign policy, diplomacy and health." *Food Security*. World Health Organization, Accessed: 5 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>>.

Assessment Report nevertheless yields lessons regarding the importance of the outlining precise objectives and utilizing measurable performance indicators.

Concluding Remarks

It is increasingly clear that the Project Performance Assessment Report suffers from severe flaws. The document is structured without reference to the objectives and lacks the fundamental performance variables necessary for building a sound analytical framework. In the place of analysis, the reader is offered a melange of facts which masquerade as careful examination. When one overcomes the awe of reading a report compiled by an institution no less prestigious than the World Bank, one is quick to realize that the document is in fact third-rate. Perhaps the outcome is a product of the inputs. That is to say, the Project Performance Assessment Report cannot be examined with such high expectations given the many pitfalls which plagued the project—the Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program—on which it reported. Perhaps World Bank protocol demanded that a Performance Assessment Report be written, for formalities sake, even though the project itself hadn't collected sufficient data to make a detailed analytical report feasible.

Nevertheless, this review has been conducted with an exclusive regard for the Project Performance Assessment Report, a narrow focus which may neglect to account for nuances outside the purview of the document. Additionally, the scarcity of scholarship on the matter, compounded with the lack of comparative research and general absence of quantitative data, ensures that certain fields of scholarly inquiry remain untilled.

OK →
were
project
objectives
unrealistic?
Need to

be
discussed

or other doc.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andersson, Per-Ake. *Foreign Aid, Debt, and Growth in Zambia*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrinainstitutet, 2000. Print.
- Hill, Catherine, and Malcom McPherson. *Promoting and Sustaining Economic Reform in Zambia*. Cambridge: John F. Kennedy School of Government Harvard University Press, 2004. Print.
- "An Introduction to IEG for First Time Visitors." *Independent Evaluation Group*. World Bank, n.d. Web. 9 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/intro/>>.
- Mpuku, Herrick, and Ivan Zyuulu. *Contemporary Issues in Socio-Economic Reform in Zambia*. Sydney: Ashgate, 1997. Print.
- Mulwanda, Mpanjilwa. "Structural Adjustment and Drought in Zambia." *Disasters* 19.2 (1995): 85-93. *Wiley Online Library*. Web. 4 Mar. 2011. <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7717.1995.tb00360.x/abstract;jsessionid=FA436C1750AB892797AA3222EAE51400.d02t04>>.
- Ojermark, Paul, and Charles Chabala. *The Development of Independent Cooperatives in Zambia: A Case Study*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1994. Print.
- "Project Performance Assessment Report." *Zambia Agricultural Sector Investment Program*. 2003. *World Bank*. Web. 4 Mar. 2011. <http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000094946_03080104411480&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679>. Report No. 26086
- "Trade, foreign policy, diplomacy and health." *Food Security*. World Health Organization, n.d. Web. 5 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>>.
- "Zambia." *OECD Journal: General Papers* 2009.6 (2011): 103-131. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 3 Mar. 2011. <<http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/bsi/detail?sid=0bea5d1d-07ec-4de4-824e-8f3b82632a21%40sessionmgr113&vid=1&hid=106&bdata=JnNpdGU9YnNpLWxpdmU%3d#db=bth&jid=B6GX>>.
- "Zambia: Sustaining Agricultural Diversification." *OECD Papers* 2009.2 (2009): 96-124. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 8 Mar. 2011. <<http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/bsi/detail?sid=2c642513-9a7b-49a1-bd6a-9377a428c1b2%40sessionmgr110&vid=1&hid=106&bdata=JnNpdGU9YnNpLWxpdmU%3d#db=bth&jid=B6GX>>.