

**TITLE:** STRATEGY FOR RURAL POVERTY REDUCTION

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<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Para. No.</b>	<b>Text</b>
ii	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It reinforces the importance of designing rural development programs that include decentralization of activities and active participation by beneficiaries</li></ul>
7	2.19	The rigidities inherent in the programming cycle, the lack of flexibility in adapting to changes arising during the course of a project, and technical and administrative weaknesses in counterpart arrangements, along with insufficient involvement of communities in the design and execution of the projects, have proven formidable obstacles to the achievement of expected project results.
9	3.11	This heterogeneity of circumstances has several implications for rural development strategies: (i) for the Bank, it signals the need for continuous and open dialogue with each country to ascertain specific issues and shape projects to address them; (ii) for individual countries, it means a strong commitment to decentralization to accommodate diversity and encourage the various actors to express their opinions; (iii) for the region or microregion in which the strategy will be implemented, it calls for flexibility to ensure that implementation is consistent with the possibilities and interests of the inhabitants; and (iv) at the community level, it means that the strategy chosen must include a well-defined structure of encouraging participation by all beneficiaries (women, men and youths) and cooperating organizations (community groups, government agencies, municipalities) in the design, execution and evaluation phases of rural development initiatives.
14	4.8	<b><i>Participation of Beneficiaries</i></b> Most evaluations of rural development programs note the importance of involving the local population (particularly women) more directly and continuously, starting in the design phase and continuing through execution of the activities. Yet there are few cases in which the communities are consulted and participate fully in such programs. Empowering of communities by improving their physical and social infrastructure seeks to frame public investment in a broader context than that of a single farm or individual productive effort. This context is based on the community (microregion) as a relatively autonomous space within which the State operates through policies intended to create the public goods needed to upgrade its production and trade infrastructure, train its labor force, promote the organization of local

		rural groups, and foster technological innovation.
	4.9	The policy of providing access to information on the Bank's programs that are in preparation and approved is an important step for expanding public participation. However, consultations carried out in preparing projects are generally limited to officials of the institutions involved in their execution and groups directly linked to the project; only very rarely are potential rural beneficiaries consulted. Nor has it been common in the past to involve local governments or community groups in the design of projects, even in cases where such groups are directly related to the actions proposed in rural development projects. Most of these groups, however, are only loosely organized and lack technical capacity, limiting their potential for participating in rural development activities. Those with some capacity together with private enterprises could be involved in the preparation and in the execution of projects. In addition, these consultations could be useful to gather information to improve specific sectoral strategy preparation, studies and country papers, helping to prioritize actions in the rural sector.
	4.10	Rural development projects could also include training for interested groups in each country to strengthen their basic organizational capabilities, enabling them to participate fully in rural development activities. This training could cover aspects of the country's existing legal framework, organizational structure and democratic decision-making, and management and administration of organizations and projects. Training could also be included for staff of the government bodies responsible for design and supervision of rural development programs and projects in order to facilitate participation by the beneficiaries.
17	5.5	Although smaller projects (whether financed by the Bank or other development assistance organizations) have had little coverage and limited influence on policy or institutions, they have generally proven the most successful rural development initiatives, primarily because of the high level of participation by their beneficiaries in developing technical innovations, and their efficient institutional arrangements. Based on this the Bank could emphasize an initial institutional-strengthening stage preceding the loan activities themselves. Once the technical aspects, methods of execution and mechanisms for public participation have been adapted to the specific conditions of the place, they can be applied in large-scale investment programs.
17	5.8	The establishment of adequate benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of the methods and procedures used in executing the projects, and the progress made toward their objectives, should begin early with initial work on a data base to be developed during preparation of the operation including, for example, agroecological, socioeconomic and politico-institutional indicators that are easily obtainable. Supervision of these tasks could be carried out by private

		companies, universities or community groups with the cooperation of the executing agencies.
3	Annex 4 pag. 3	<p>All of the evaluations agree that where beneficiaries have not taken an active part, rural development programs and projects have failed to achieve the goals set for them. Yet while adequate participation is a prerequisite, it is not in itself a guarantee of success since lack of proper mechanisms for channeling the desires and potential of the rural poor can be a major hindrance to ensuring effective participation by these groups.</p> <p>Past experience recommends ensuring that target groups participate not only in the initial diagnostic studies and planning, but also in the phases of execution, supervision and evaluation. Equally significant is the need to provide means for different groups to participate, ensuring the integration of women, youths and other specific groups in projects. It should be noted here that attempting to promote female participation through separate components “for the development of women” has ended up increasing their isolation and marginalization by, in effect, keeping them from contributing to the given project as a whole. Rather than creating a separate component, project organizers must concentrate on giving women access to program decision-making at the overall level.</p>