

# Evaluation Summary

## *Post-earthquake reconstruction program in the Sichuan Province*

Country: **China**

Sector: **Reconstruction relief and rehabilitation**

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Date of the evaluation: **September 2015**

### Key data on AFD's support

**Project numbers:** CCN 1024

**Amount:** USD 200 million sovereign loan

**Disbursement rate:** 100%

**Signature of financing agreement:** April 2009

**Completion date:** April 2013

**Total duration:** 4 years



### Context

The project contributed to the Wenchuan earthquake reconstruction plan (2008) which had rehousing and restoration of infrastructure as its main priorities.

The government asked for a “build back better” approach by **strengthening seismic building standards and promoting energy efficiency and environmental protection**.

### Actors and operating method

**The contracting authority** were the Sichuan Authorities.

**The management contractor** was Export-Import Bank of China, Tendering companies.

**The project management unit** were local agencies in charge of the sub projects in the targeted locations.

Regarding the **financial set up**, the loan was converted into a grant to local authorities

### Objectives

1. **To restore** key public infrastructures to their former level before the Wenchuan Earthquake (and even better, if possible)
2. **To include** a climate change agenda, within the context of a post-disaster reconstruction project
3. **To promote** renewable energies and risk mitigation features in the project basket
4. **To strengthen** the Sino-French partnership

### Expected outputs

- **Infrastructure component:**
  - Repairing of 100% of basic infrastructures (water supply, water treatment, waste treatment, transport network and bridges)
  - 90% coverage of water supply (Bailu)
- **Biogas component:**
  - Provision of 100,000 domestic biogas units (including the 50,000 destroyed by the earthquake) to rural families
  - Creation of 11 additional biogas service stations
  - Training of 500 additional service personnel
- **Handbook component:**
  - Distribution of 100,000 units of seismic and energy efficiency handbooks

## Performance assessment

### Relevance

The global objective was coherent with AFD mandate and matched the reconstruction strategy implemented by the Chinese government. Yet, **no consistent logical framework methodology was used, and the project missed tangible indicators** to properly assess the expected performance and relevance. The selection of beneficiaries (priorities and vulnerability criteria) wasn't shared enough with AFD. A specific capacity transfer strategy was missing to expose the partners to AFD know-how in sustainable development planning. Nevertheless, **the project showed that the climate change agenda can be implemented in post-disaster reconstruction contexts.**

### Effectiveness

**All infrastructures were restored to their prior level of service and often with higher standards.** Today, all the projects are handed over to the relevant managing bodies and are fully operating. The project improved the standard of living for rural affected populations (economic, social and health benefits) and increased resilience to natural hazards. The biogas component shows significant amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and fossil resources were saved. There is a doubt in the handbook component fully meeting the objectives, most likely due to unclear concept, isolation from the field activities, and a weak partnership.

### Efficiency

The project didn't suffer from haste and misleading decisions. The chain of responsibility, execution, financial set up and supervision, albeit not always understood by the contractors and the local agencies, were adapted and transferred with tailored training modules. **Cost efficiency was met with new procedures and lead to savings**, allowing for extra sub-projects. O&M cost were not considered at the outset. **The handbook wasn't cost efficient** as regards the time and amount spent for design and lack of feedback at ground level.

### Impact

The project had a satisfactory level of performance and good coverage of beneficiaries, with a **positive social and environmental impact** on the (re)development of the territories, due to timely recovery of services that supported the post-disaster economy. Transfer of skills, know-how and methods have enhanced the stakeholders' delivery capacity, thanks to new contracting and management procedures. Climate change benefits of the project can't be measured clearly due to the lack of a dedicated mechanism and baselines. The project greatly contributed to **improve the political dialogue between France and China.**

### Sustainability

Up to date, adequate support is given to the projects with relevant sector budget and national policies to ensure financial sustainability. **The handover contributed to ownership and allowed transfer of competence** between the provincial and county/village levels. The infrastructure component will offer sound and long-lasting facilities. Biogas services may be affected by a fragile business model and a weak operation and maintenance capacity but has a great multiplier effect and potential to set a **benchmark for future climate change programs.** Transversal aspects such as social equity, good governance and coordination of donors were taken into account in the design of the project, but gender, vulnerability, risk management, and sustainable urban plan/visions were not sufficiently addressed.

### Added value of AFD's contribution

AFD had a 5-year presence, renowned expertise on infrastructure, and a decent portfolio in similar post-disaster context. Moreover, its reactivity to prepare an offer and its rapid validation by the board was very much appreciated by the Chinese authorities. **Flexibility and availability** of staff during the preparation phase, **real partnership** and **continuous support** during operations made a difference. The project has not significantly increased French business and AFD could not connect the biogas component with FFEM/ACCA21 program but has improved its position on climate change. Finally, the project contributed to **diplomatic warming.**

## Conclusions and lessons learnt

As a conclusion, it can be stated that the project was **successfully implemented and has met the overall and specific objectives.**

In post-disaster contexts, focus is required on the local needs and priorities given by the local authorities. AFD's prior presence was a strong asset to **ensure the proposed activities match with the local capacities.** Tight deadlines did not alter the quality and level of services due to the population. Indeed, AFD is not an emergency bank but a development bank; nevertheless this project showed a **core capacity to design quick response post-disaster program with short- and long-term impacts.**

This project has shown it is **possible to implement a climate change approach in a post-disaster context with reasonable compromise.**

It also highlights the need for a shared vision, an intensive interaction while drafting the operational modalities and a deep commitment of stakeholders to ensure expected levels of quality on to the field. Timely response, pragmatic innovation, technical stewardship, anticipated handover to operating bodies were instrumental to do so. Despite the lack of strong environmental management mechanisms, the project has undoubtedly demonstrated **tangible impacts and set a benchmark for replication.**