

Kyrgyz Republic
Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
Validation workshop (Virtual)
1 March 2023
Opening Statement by Mrs. Dina Saleh
NEN Regional Director of behalf of IFAD Management

Words count: 1,223 words

Excellency, Mr Nurdin Alisherov, First Deputy Minister of Agriculture,

Distinguished participants;

Dear colleagues;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I. Introductory remarks and overall context.

1. It is my great pleasure to convey a statement on behalf of Mr Donal Brown, the Associate Vice President of the Programme Management Department of IFAD and IFAD management for the validation workshop of the Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation for Kyrgyzstan. Let me thank above all the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, but also the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, for successfully conducting and concluding this evaluation.
2. Since joining IFAD in 1993, Kyrgyzstan has been an important partner. The Fund has approved 7 projects for a total project cost of US\$ 253.8 million, of which US\$ 129.1 million is IFAD financing. It is worth noting that until 2011, IFAD had provided cofinancing of US\$ 20.4 million to three World Bank projects active in the Kyrgyz Republic. At first, IFAD's country strategy

focused on (i) improving natural resources management; (ii) increasing poor people's access to financial services; (iii) fostering the development of rural microenterprises; (iv) supporting land privatization; and (v) ensuring land ownership rights.

3. The second generation of IFAD's engagement in the Kyrgyz Republic started in 2011, with the strategic focus moving towards (i) improved livestock productivity; (ii) enhanced climate resilience of pastoral communities; and (iii) improved integration of small-scale livestock farmers into remunerative markets.
4. Through these investments, IFAD consistently provided not only financial support, but also innovations, knowledge and global experience, also by linking academic and knowledge institutions, policymakers and legislators to small-scale farmers.
5. As acknowledged by the evaluation, IFAD's investments have been well aligned with overarching government policies and strategies, with the core areas of IFAD's support revolving around (i) pasture management; (ii) livestock productivity improvement; and (iii) the development of private veterinary services.
6. It is also significant to highlight that the community-based approach has been key to improve pasture governance throughout projects. The Agricultural Investments and Services Project (AISP between 2009-2014), cofinanced by IFAD and the World Bank, supported awareness-raising, inclusive social mobilization for establishing and strengthening pasture users' unions (PUUs) and pasture committees (PCs) in every ayil

aymak (municipalities or local self-government units) with pastures in the country (454 ayil aymak in total). The nationwide support in AISP was followed up in Livestock and Market Development Programmes (LMDPs) financed by IFAD and the Pasture and Livestock Management Improvement Project (PLMIP) funded by the World Bank. The interventions were comprehensive, accompanied by a broad range of support for conducive environment (e.g. legislative framework, support for demarcating legal pasture boundaries, determining pasture carrying capacities, strengthening the mechanism for pasture fee collection to be re-invested in pasture infrastructure). The thrust of such community-based approach was to reduce inequality in access to pasture resources.

7. Building on the lessons learned from past investments, the ongoing Access to Market Project (ATMP) and the Regional Resilient Pastoral Communities Project (RRPCP) at signing stage, continue introducing innovative approaches such as (i) facilitating access to modern production and processing technologies; (ii) supporting the formulation of bankable investment project proposals for the development of production and processing enterprises; (iii) strengthening institutions through targeted support to governmental agencies and applied research institute; (iv) setting up an integrated management framework for pasture and forest resources; and (v) improving production systems and processing standards, while opening up opportunities for diversification.

II. A timely Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation

8. The Evaluation gives us an opportunity to take stock of the IFAD country programme in Kyrgyzstan, draw lessons from the

experience, and – as we move forward – adjust the weaknesses and build on the successes in the context of the rapidly evolving context in the Kyrgyz Republic.

9. The evaluation acknowledges the relevance of the country programme in support of pasture management and veterinary services at multiple levels (from policy and legislative framework to field level). It also recognizes its inclusiveness by their nature, supported by a broad social mobilization.
10. Management appreciates the recommendations provided by this evaluation and recognises the need for more adequate targeted measures for the poor and the vulnerable households. Moreover, the suggested shift to more market-oriented interventions is echoed by IFAD, while keeping the focus on poverty alleviation and rural transformation.

III. Evaluation laying the ground for a successful Country strategy design

11. IFAD strongly appreciated the timeliness of such Evaluation. As a matter of fact, the draft report did not only inform the IFAD's National Strategy (country strategic opportunities programme - COSOP) Completion Review held end of 2022, but the findings and lessons will directly feed the upcoming design of the new COSOP, for which the design mission is scheduled for end of March 2023.
12. This new COSOP will take as its starting point the Government of Kyrgyzstan's priorities for the agricultural sector set out in the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2018–2040 which aims at supporting poor rural people to improve their

productivity, competitiveness, and diversify their income. To achieve so, the new COSOP will consider gearing upcoming investments towards the production of high-quality organic agricultural products to be supplied to regional and global markets, as well as to improve efficiency of water and land resources with the introduction of innovative production methods, promoted to newly created cooperatives.

13. Management would also like to recognise the Government's commitment to food and nutrition security, translated into the Food Security and Nutrition Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2023-2027 and its Action Plan, currently being finalized by the Government, with the support from various development partners, including IFAD.
14. Under the IFAD12 and IFAD13 financing cycles (covering the period 2022-2027), the new Country strategy will offer opportunities for continued engagement through a menu of financial instruments and non-lending activities. For instance, there will be opportunities to access additional funds through the new Borrowed Resources Access Mechanism and dedicated climate funding to increase climate resilience. This enhanced Business model offered by IFAD is deemed as a solid ground for strong alignment and partnerships opportunities in the next 5 years, under the umbrella of the recently signed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027.

IV. The way forward for a renewed partnership

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. Allow me to conclude by commending the commitment of the Government of Kyrgyzstan to strengthening partnership with IFAD. It is believed that this milestone event represents a concrete opportunity to materialize the pending investment yet to be signed and ratified by Parliament, thus allowing the needed support to the livestock and forestry sectors, in a time of dire climate change and environmental concerns.
16. On that note, IFAD is counting on the Kyrgyz Government to make a historical pledge for the on-going replenishment efforts, thus sending a strong signal of endorsement and support to the institution and its mandate and this, notwithstanding the current period of economic challenges.
17. Lastly, Management believes that IFAD's continuous efforts to aim at the highest delivery standards in project implementation, with the expected financial and procurement oversight, will contribute to forge stronger partnerships, leverage co-financing and better serve the targeted beneficiaries.
18. Let me close by expressing the hope that together, we will use this evaluation to build an ever relevant, effective and efficient IFAD country programme that ultimately delivers the best possible development impact for the rural people of Kyrgyzstan.
19. Thank you.