

profile

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Mali Country Programme Evaluation

The overall prevalence of poverty in Mali fell from 55.6 to 43.6 per cent between 2001 and 2010, with a fall from 66.8 to 51.0 per cent for the rural population. Monetary poverty has remained lower in northern regions (Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal) in comparison with the rest of the country and the south (especially the Sikasso region). In the northern regions, the main problem is rather vulnerability to climatic fluctuations and the paucity of basic, health and educational services. There have always been conflicts in the north since independence and they dominated the scene from 1990 to 1996, when the Government and the rebels reached a truce. Attacks in the north increased again, starting in 2006, and in March 2012 discontent in the Malian army, connected to combat conditions in the north, culminated in a coup d'état. Power was then returned to the civil authorities. Meanwhile, the rebels – Tuaregs and Islamist groups – took control of the north of the country until the intervention of international forces at the beginning of 2013.

Since starting operations in Mali in 1982, IFAD has financed 12 projects (5 of which were ongoing during this CPE) for a total cost of US\$474 million, US\$183 million (39 per cent) of this in IFAD loans on highly concessional terms. Since 2010, IFAD has been directly supervising all projects, and in 2012 it established a Mali country office managed by a country programme officer reporting to the Rome-based country programme manager.



A herder walks goats to a nearby drinking spot.

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This profile summarizes the main results of the second country programme evaluation, conducted in Mali by IFAD's Independent Evaluation Office in 2012. The main objectives of the evaluation were to assess the performance and impact of IFAD operations in Mali, and provide building blocks for preparation of a new country opportunities strategic programme (COSOP).

Main evaluation findings

The cooperation programme between IFAD and the Malian Government has improved overall in the past five years. The most promising features noted by the 2012 evaluation include the adaptation of projects to the national decentralization policies and the support provided by the programme to institution-building for local governments. With regard to rural finance, interventions have been refocused to fit in better with national sectoral strategies and follow "good practices" in order to improve the chances of sustainability.

Regarding animal husbandry, significant results are noted for bourgou (aquatic plant mainly used as a fodder) flood plain regeneration, rangeland rehabilitation and livestock health. On the other hand, effectiveness with regard to agriculture has been somewhat disappointing, particularly because of the limited number of small-scale irrigation schemes established. As to the support for basic services, good results were noted concerning the training of elected officials and officials from local governments and decentralized State technical services. However, the installation of certain types of infrastructure (especially tracks) has fallen short of objectives.

In terms of impact on households and communities, the most significant elements are the contribution to reducing the rate of infant malnutrition and the improved capacities of local government and decentralized services. From the institutional point of view, greater competence of elected and local government officials in their work was observed, together with better relations between elected officials and communities. This last point is important, because when local administrations work well, this helps in achieving development objectives, apart from

the immediate objectives of projects, and provides grass-roots organizations with a way into participation in public affairs.

IFAD's partnerships have been strengthened and diversified with public institutions at both national and decentralized levels, and also with donors, especially the World Bank and the African Development Bank. IFAD is now better integrated into donor coordination mechanisms. The involvement of private entrepreneurs as partners has been fairly limited until now, but some recent initiatives (particularly the establishment of private veterinary services and pilot biofuel schemes) are a starting point for the future.



Women carry millet after a harvest in the Kayes region.

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MALI AT A GLANCE

Population: **16 million (mid-2012)**

Rate of population growth: **3.0% (2012)**

Rate of real-term yearly growth in GDP: **4.8% (2006-2011)**

Prevalence of poverty: **43.6% overall and 51.0% in rural zones (2010)**

Proportion of agricultural GDP in total GDP: **36.5% (2011)**

Life expectancy at birth: **51 years, with 52 years for women (2011)**

Human development index: **0.359 (2011) - classified as a low level of human development**

Volume of IFAD loans 1982-2012: **US\$183 million**

Sources: World Bank, 2012 *World Development Report*; UNDP, 2012 *Human Development Report*; Population Reference Bureau, 2012 *World Population Data Sheet*.

The 2007 COSOP took good account of the current national poverty reduction strategy and the main sectoral documents. It also sought to place IFAD's activities within the context of donors' coordination. IFAD responded to the Malian Government's request to invest in the sensitive northern zones of the country. However, the COSOP could have discussed better the geography of poverty and its implications for IFAD's strategy: the incidence of monetary poverty is highest in the south. The issue of risks in the conflict zones of the north seems to have been underestimated: the COSOP identified risks in general terms, but did not specify clear-cut measures to reduce them.

Key recommendations

- Presentation in the next COSOP of a diagnosis of the poverty situation and rural development opportunities (agricultural and non-agricultural) and a more thorough analysis of conflict-related and climate risks, together with measures to reduce these risks.
- Geographical priorities to the south of the country and encouragement of more thematic approaches. This recommendation is justified not only by the recent crisis in the north of the country, but also by the prevalence of poverty and the considerably greater population density in the south.
- More systematic involvement of private entrepreneurs and their professional organizations in programme activities, beginning in the project design phase, but also during implementation. This also entails focusing right from the start on the economic viability of production activities and paying closer attention to processing, enhancement and marketing.
- Improvement in the management and monitoring system at the programme level, more especially boosting of the management and monitoring system at COSOP level, by developing a common logical frame of reference, harmonized with the logical frameworks and indicators of the various projects. More attention to analysis and capitalization, and to consolidation of the experience of IFAD projects, in order to provide input to a dialogue on public policy based on concrete experience.

Further information:

Republic of Mali, Country Programme Evaluation, Report N° 3011-ML, May 2013, ISBN 978-92-9072-389-9, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, Via Paolo di Dono, 44, 00142 Rome, Italy. The full report, Profile and Insights are available online at www.ifad.org/evaluation; e-mail: evaluation@ifad.org.