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2019 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations

The 2019 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI) presents a synthesis of IFAD's performance and highlights results and systemic issues identified from independent evaluations conducted in 2018. The quantitative analysis draws on ratings from 344 evaluations conducted since 2002.

Main findings

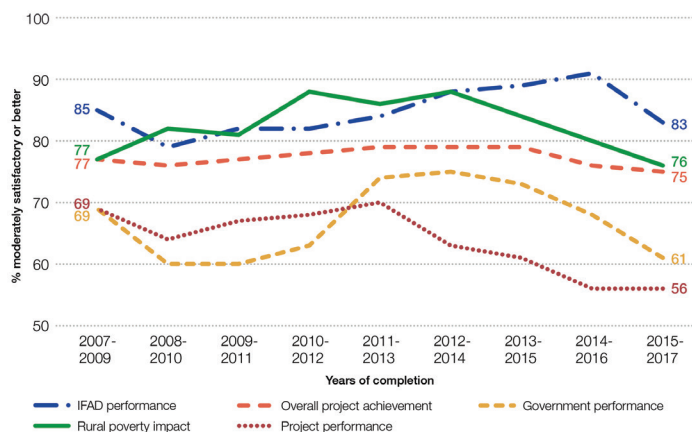
Overall, the majority of project evaluation ratings are positive from 2007 to 2017. Currently, 80 per cent or more projects are rated moderately satisfactory or better in relevance, innovation, scaling up, rural poverty impact and IFAD performance as a partner. However, based on evaluative evidence, the trend in IFAD's project portfolio performance is either flat or declining in most criteria in 2015-2017. The most significant decline is for IFAD and government performance as partners. Moreover, based on the projects completed in 2015-2017, only adaptation to climate change reached its Tenth Replenishment (2016-2018) Results Measurement Framework targets; efficiency and sustainability will require special attention in the Eleventh Replenishment (2019-2021) Results Measurement Framework.

In comparison with agricultural projects of other international financial institutions, IFAD project performance is better than that of the agricultural portfolios of the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank. At the global level, IFAD project performance is slightly below that of the World Bank.

Performance in environment and natural resources management is one of the best-performing criteria in 2015-2017, indicating that taking concrete actions toward the conservation of natural resources is effective in protecting sensitive ecosystems and fragile environments.

Key project performance criteria

(trends in the percentage of projects rated moderately satisfactory or better)



Source: IOE evaluation database (PCR/PPE), April 2019.

Efficiency remains the weakest-performing criterion due to late mobilization of co-financiers, frequent staff turnover, and delays in implementation. Recently, performance in rural poverty impact declined due to the underestimation of the impact of exogenous factors such as political instability or natural disasters and ineffective targeting strategies. Performance in gender equality and women's empowerment also declined, partially due to the limited understanding of women's specific needs in local contexts and the lack of gender specialists during project implementation.

Changes in percentage of projects rated moderately satisfactory or better by criteria over time

Criteria	Baseline	Midpoint	Recent periods		Changes versus 2015-2017		
	2007-2009	2011-2013	2014-2016	2015-2017	2007-2009	2011-2013	2014-2016
Relevance	92	83	89	83	(9) ▼	0 ▼	(6) ▼
IFAD performance	85	84	91	83	(2) ▼	(1) ▼	(8) ▼
ENRM	77	69	80	81	4 ▲	12 ▲	1 ▼
Innovation	69	85	84	80	11 ▲	(5) ▼	(4) ▼
Rural poverty impact	77	86	80	76	(1) ▼	(10) ▼	(4) ▼
Effectiveness	77	76	75	75	(2) ▼	(1) ▼	0 ▼
Overall project achievement	77	79	76	75	(2) ▼	(4) ▼	(1) ▼
Adaptation to climate change	76	62	80	73	(3) ▼	11 ▲	(7) ▼
GEWE	85	83	77	71	(14) ▼	(12) ▼	(6) ▼
Scaling up	69	83	74	68	(1) ▼	(15) ▼	(6) ▼
Government performance	69	74	68	61	(8) ▼	(13) ▼	(7) ▼
Sustainability	58	62	59	59	1 ▼	(3) ▼	0 ▼
Project performance	69	70	56	56	(13) ▼	(14) ▼	0 ▼
Efficiency	62	63	53	51	(11) ▼	(12) ▼	(2) ▼

Source: IOE evaluation database, April 2019.

IFAD performance as a partner, a traditional area of strength, shows a decline in positive ratings. Recurrent issues such as lack of specialists in supervision missions, high staff turnover, and delayed disbursement are still challenging good performance. Government performance represents a critical criterion for the opportunity to scale up projects. Reinforcing the need of government ownership beyond a project's life and avoiding delays in financial execution.

At the country level, performance in knowledge management and policy engagement show a declining trend between 2013-2015 and 2016-2018 unlike partnership-building which increased its share of moderately satisfactory or better ratings to 71 per cent. The strengthening of IFAD's comparative advantage in social inclusion, continued country presence, systematizing project experiences, and stronger linkages between grant programmes and investment portfolios are critical to enhancing the overall impact of IFAD's operations.

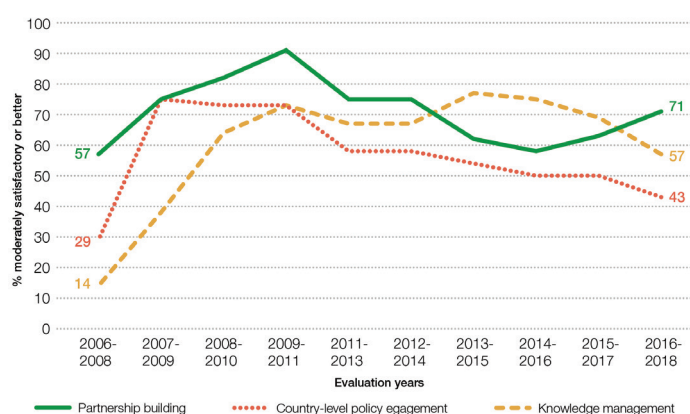
Relevance of IFAD project interventions

Most development organizations recognize Relevance as the fundamental evaluation criterion. It is important to consider Relevance a key criterion in IFAD projects, as it guides IFAD's

2019 ARRI recommendations

- Dedicate more resources to country programme delivery – specifically project design, supervision and implementation – to achieve the improved quality needed for a “better” IFAD.
- Design IFAD-funded programmes and projects according to country capacities and based on sound institutional analysis to ensure the most appropriate implementation arrangements for country delivery.
- Develop government capacities to design and implement country programmes and projects in collaboration with other partners.
- Determine earlier the need to adjust project designs to ensure their “continued relevance” to the country context.
- Develop a more comprehensive and coherent system to better mitigate risks in IFAD projects and programmes.

Performance of non-lending activities 2006-2018



Source: IOE evaluation database, April 2019.

unique poverty orientation and commitment to the rural poor. Relevance, taken as a continuum, provides a linking mechanism between project quality and country context and allows for incremental improvements, ensuring value for money for the beneficiaries and the client.

FIVE FINDINGS OF THE 2019 ARRI LEARNING THEME: “RELEVANCE OF IFAD PROJECT INTERVENTIONS”

1. Ensuring the “continued relevance” of a project intervention requires adapting its design throughout implementation.
2. Meaningful engagement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation and evaluation of a project enhances project relevance.
3. The role of the government in relevance is critical: in adopting pro-poor policies, in providing adequate implementation capacity, and in ensuring “continued relevance” during and after the project's lifespan.
4. A lack of understanding of institutional arrangements together with the lack of capacity to implement IFAD-funded projects ranks as one of the main roadblocks to improved Relevance.
5. Well-functioning government institutions are a key determinant of higher Relevance.

Further information:

ARRI 2019, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, Via Paolo di Dono, 00142 Rome, Italy | www.ifad.org/evaluation | e-mail: evaluation@ifad.org | [www.twitter.com/IFADeval](https://twitter.com/IFADeval) | www.youtube.com/IFADEvaluation