

profile



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Republic of the Sudan COUNTRY STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Providing uninterrupted development support since 1979, IFAD has been perceived as one of the few major development partners in agriculture and rural development in Sudan. In the past decade, significant changes have taken place in the country, including the secession of South Sudan in 2011, which had serious repercussions on the economy due to the loss of oil revenue, and a fundamental political change that launched a transition to democracy in 2019. Coinciding with the latter change, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD conducted a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in 2019, covering the period 2009–2018.

Between 1979 and 2018, IFAD supported 21 investment projects in Sudan for a total cost of US\$815 million. The CSPE covered nine investment projects (for a total cost of US\$375 million, of which US\$198 million was financed by IFAD). The main objectives of the CSPE were to assess the results and performance of the IFAD country programme and to generate findings and recommendations for future partnerships between IFAD and the Government.

Main evaluation findings

IFAD has pursued a strategy that has been largely coherent and relevant to the context and the needs of the rural poor deriving livelihoods primarily from natural resources. IFAD's support has mostly focused on traditional rainfed agriculture, which plays a key role in both rural livelihoods and the country's economy. In this context, important elements in the project approach have been the linking of crop and livestock interventions to natural resource management, as well as the empowerment of communities to mitigate and resolve conflicts around natural resources and to advocate

for sustainable practices. The portfolio has also adapted well to emerging issues, such as engagement with the private sector and rural youth.

The IFAD portfolio has attained positive outcomes and impacts in several key areas – including crop and livestock production, livelihoods diversification, access to finance, natural resource governance and management and climate resilience – while also addressing basic and social needs (e.g. improving water supply and access roads). Underlying these results has also been a considerable impact on human and social capital, and on the empowerment of rural communities. In particular, the portfolio has registered remarkable achievements in promoting gender equality and empowering rural women.

The portfolio also contributed towards reducing conflicts around natural resources, accomplished through strengthening community-level institutions, introducing measures to improve outreach to pastoral communities (e.g. mobile extension teams, pastoralist field schools), and reinforcing conflict resolution mechanisms. These efforts

were complemented by investments in water resources and in sustainable natural resource management practices.

On the other hand, the sustainability of benefits is assessed to be mixed: positive in some areas (e.g. small-scale infrastructure, community-level institutions), but less so for aspects that require the Government's resources and commitments (e.g. large-scale infrastructure).

The modus operandi of project implementation and management, with project management units and extension teams which employed mostly seconded Government staff, has been highly effective in delivering project services, resulting in overall satisfactory performance and impact. On the other hand, this approach, while pragmatic, may have reduced the scope of institutional capacity development in counterpart Government agencies beyond the project teams, thus also affecting the likelihood of scaling-up, policy impact, and sustainability of benefits.

The country programme has made good progress in terms of knowledge management, for example with initiatives to foster cross-learning between the projects. However, there is room for strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems and the capacity for critical reflection and analysis in projects. The evaluation has noted that relatively strong partnerships with the Government have been formed and important achievements have been made in building up civil society: examples are the “community networks” supported in the Butana area, many of which have been registered with a legal status. However, there were missed opportunities to work with other development partners on policy and strategic issues.

Most projects integrated policy support, especially in the area of natural resource governance, and a number of concrete outputs were attained, such as the development of a natural resource governance framework for the Butana

area. Nonetheless, for more effective policy engagement, the country programme could have strengthened alliances with relevant partners and made greater efforts in monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management and analytical work to capitalize on the project outcomes. The new political context offers an even more appropriate opportunity and scope for the successes to be shared and scaled up.

Key recommendations

- **Identify opportunities for partnerships and cofinancing to scale up achievements in key areas and generate greater impact**, including through: (i) resource mobilization for integrated programmes, also for basic infrastructure interventions (e.g. roads and water); (ii) partnerships with non-State actors and development agencies; and (iii) refocusing attention on institutional and policy influence to promote inclusive finance.
- **Ensure a more inclusive and differentiated targeting strategy**. In particular, greater attention is needed to more effectively engage mobile pastoral communities as well as vulnerable households, while building on the solid achievements made in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and reinforcing support for rural youth.
- **Support the institutional capacity development of key Government agencies at local and state level, while building stronger links with IFAD-financed projects to enhance sustainability**. Key entry points for such support could be in the area of these institutions' essential functions, for example data collection and collation, the development of monitoring and evaluation systems, and the formulation of strategies and policies.
- **Articulate better the theory of change in country and project strategies**, with greater attention to identifying the pathways through which the project goals (e.g. reduced poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition) will be attained, with relevant and consistent indicators to measure the effectiveness and impact of those interventions.
- **Strengthen the knowledge management platform for IFAD-financed projects**, to foster information-sharing across the projects and partnerships as well as to bolster effective monitoring of the IFAD portfolio.
- **Strengthen IFAD's capacity to be better engaged in project supervision and reviews, knowledge management, coordination across strategic partnerships and policy dialogue**. This could involve enhancing human resources and technical capacities as well as resource allocations to upgrade non-lending activities.

SUDAN AT A GLANCE

Population^a: **40.5 million (2017)**

Rural population^a: **65.6% (2017)**

Gross domestic product growth^a: **4.3% (2017), 4.7% (2016), 4.9% (2015)**

Population below poverty line: **[2014-2015]^b: 36.1% (global poverty line), 25.2% (extreme poverty line); [2009]^a 46.5% (national), 57.6% (rural)**

Life expectancy at birth^a: **64.5 years (2016)**

Human development index^c: **0.502 (2017), in the low human development category (ranked at 167 out of 189 countries and territories)**

Number of IFAD loans approved (1979-2018)^d: **21**

IFAD investment financing approved (1979-2018)^d: **US\$335 million**

Sources: ^aWorld Bank, ^bAfrican Development Bank, ^cUnited Nations Development Programme, ^dIFAD

Further information:

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