

Republic of Türkiye

IFAD's Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE)

Final (in-person) Workshop

16 April 2024 – JW Marriot Hotel, Ankara

**Introductory Statement by Mr Indran Naidoo, Director
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD**

- Excellency, Dr. Ahmet BAĞCI, Deputy Minister, Ministry in charge of Agriculture,
- Dear Mr Babatunde Ahonsi, UN Resident Coordinator in Türkiye
- Dear Mr Donal Brown, IFAD Associate Vice-President,
- Distinguished representatives of the Government of Türkiye,
- Distinguished representatives of partner Institutions of IFAD in Türkiye,
- Dear colleagues,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to participate in this in-person final workshop, organized by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD in collaboration with IFAD's Near East, North Africa, Europe, and Central Asia Division and the Government of Türkiye. This workshop follows the finalization, early this year, of the country strategy and programme evaluation of Türkiye. Today's workshop provides the opportunity to discuss the evaluation main findings and recommendations, with Representatives of the Government, of IFAD, and with other partners of IFAD supported strategy and programme in Türkiye.

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to the Government of Türkiye officials and relevant stakeholders (at central and provincial levels) for their fruitful collaboration on this evaluation. Our appreciation goes to the project team members and national partner organizations for sharing insights, contributing to gather information during the field mission, and responding to numerous requests for data and information from the evaluation team.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the IFAD Management, represented in this event by: Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President Program Management Department; Ms Dina Saleh, IFAD Near East, North Africa, Europe, and Central Asia Division Director; Mr Lian Chicca, IFAD Country Director for Türkiye; and the IFAD Türkiye country team members.

Finally, I would like to thank the evaluation team, led by Mr Maximin Kodjo, IOE – Lead Evaluation Officer, and the team of national and international consultants. Ms Daniela Asprella has provided efficient administrative supports throughout the evaluation stages, including to organize today's event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first highlight the importance of the independent evaluation function. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD undertakes impartial and evidence-based evaluations of projects, country strategies and programmes, and on thematic and corporate matters, to assess the results achieved to generate lessons that contribute enhancing the development effectiveness of IFAD-supported operations.

Since 1982, IFAD has approved 11 loan-funded projects for Türkiye. For the evaluated period, 2016 to 2022, the loan-portfolio evaluated includes four projects for a total amount of USD 233.2 million, of which 59% financed by IFAD, while the balance came from the Government of Türkiye, domestic Banks, and the beneficiaries. During this period, the country economy was affected by challenges of the COVID19 pandemic, and of rising inflation due to the depreciation of the Turkish Lira. However, the economy showed a strong resilience with a GDP growth rate of 11.4 percent between 2020 and 2021.

The evaluation found the targeting of remote upland areas of Türkiye to be relevant: these areas have higher monetary poverty rates and are more vulnerable to climate change. Over the evaluated period, IFAD developed a solid partnership with the Government of Türkiye, through the Ministries in charge of Finance and of Agriculture. This translated into effective strategic oversight of the programme. Additionally, the involvement of provincial directorates in the management and implementation of projects has enabled achieving scaling up results at the provincial level.

Overall, the programme supported by IFAD contributed to enhancing the resilience of smallholders' social livelihoods and ecosystems, in remote mountainous areas, thanks to interventions that aimed to: (i) increase the productivity and production of crops and livestock, (ii) diversify the income sources (beyond crops and livestock activities), and (iii) strengthen the sustainable management of natural production assets.

On the other hand, some areas deserve attention.

Over the evaluated period, the programme contributed little to policy debate on smallholder agriculture. Similarly, the partnerships were insufficiently diversified to include other co-financiers and key national players within the agriculture sector, for instance, research institutions, private sector actors and non-governmental organisations. Moreover, the programme has made limited progress in connecting poor farmers to value chain (e.g., by supporting storage and processing), and to remunerative markets (through partnerships with private actors).

Finally, in contrast with cooperatives that were strong to sustain project benefits, the community organizations created by the programme were still weak to ensure the continuity of actions, especially with regard to the management of natural resources.

As evaluators, we have provided an impartial assessment of the IFAD's country strategy and programme in Türkiye. With this event and with your contribution to the discussions, we can gain a better understanding of future opportunities and ways to overcome constraints that prevent greater scaling up of proven approaches and results that enhance the resilience of smallholders, as well as enable rural transformation in the uplands of Türkiye.

I thank you for your attention.