

IOE



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation



Learning event  
(Rome and hybrid)

# Thematic Evaluation of IFAD's support to gender equality and women's empowerment

9 December 2024

The evaluation assessed the development effectiveness and contribution to gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) of IFAD interventions.

The TE generated lessons and recommendations to enhance IFAD’s future policies, strategies and interventions.

Scope: 2012-2023 (focus from 2016)



## IFAD corporate environment; resources and operations

GEWE outcome trends  
(RIDE, UNSWAP, ARRI...)

Further analysis and  
primary data collection

### Deep dives

74 projects including household  
methodologies

16 projects with high gender rating at  
design (8 of them GT-validated)

Climate change and gender

Eleven country case studies  
(19 COSOPs and 46 projects)

Additional desk review: 12 grants;  
3 supplementary-funded programmes;  
25 COSOPs approved since 2016

29 completed projects (QCA applied) –  
all approved since policy

Interviews

Electronic  
survey

Evolution of IFAD  
GEWE strategic  
approach

Organizational fit-for-  
purpose assessment

Literature review

GEWE in other  
organizations

External  
environment –  
global GEWE  
theory and practice



IFAD's Gender policy and Action Plan are aligned with **global gender strategies** and with those of other **comparators**, and are coherent with the **Fund's broader priorities**;



The move in programming to **tackle the root causes of gender inequality** is highly relevant to IFAD's mandate and is aligned with international efforts;



**Partnership** have been useful to conceptualize gender transformative programming;



Conceptual and operational challenges in project design reports and during early implementation of **Gender Transformative projects** (gender transformative programming);



Widespread challenges to articulate **non-lending activities on GEWE** with IFAD country programmes.

## Recommendation 1 (agreed)

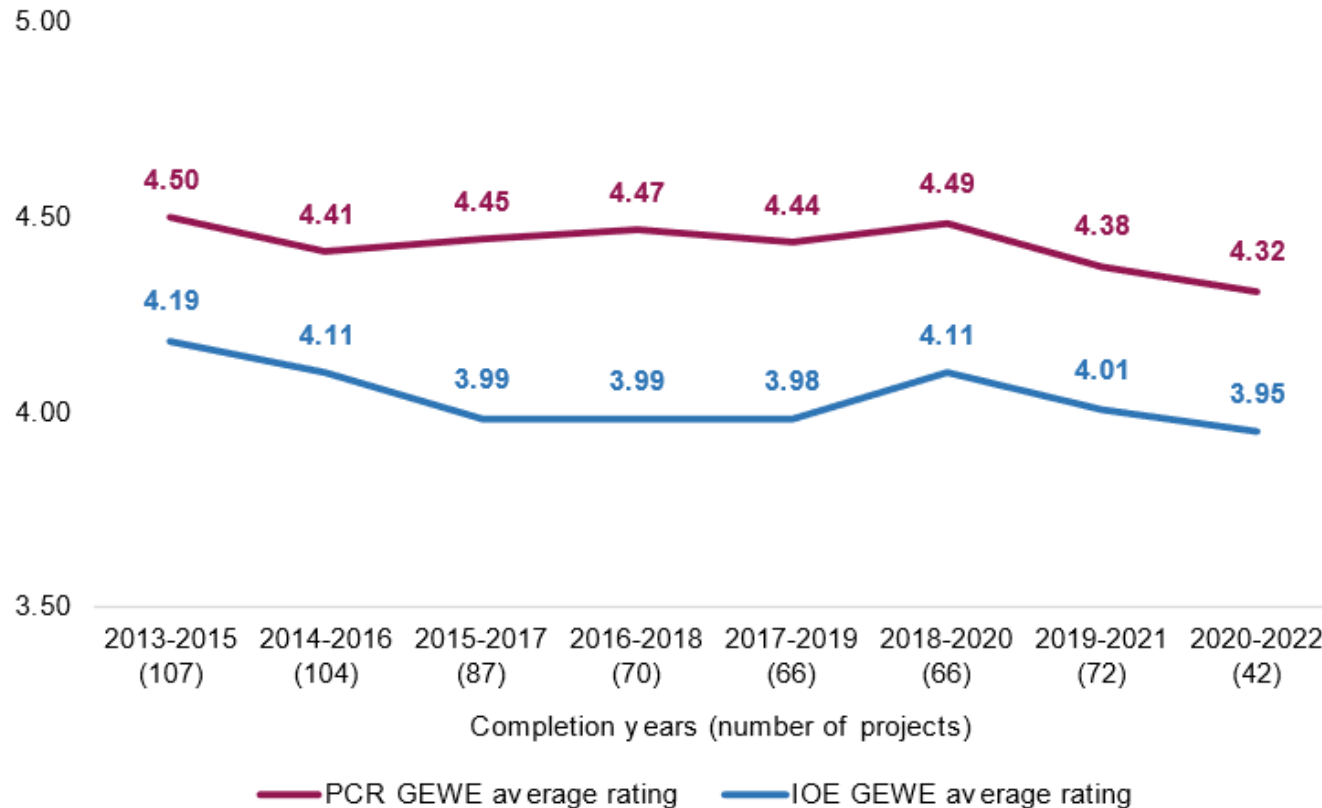
Focus the update of the gender policy and the gender action plan on strengthening IFAD's position to promote gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in agricultural and rural development.

- Interpret what a **gender transformative process** means in practical terms in IFAD interventions;
- Include **work with partners** to develop pathways where IFAD could contribute to catalysing changes that address the root causes of gender inequality in rural areas,
- Spell-out for IFAD interventions how gender **intersects** with multiple drivers of poverty
- Define **advocacy, partnerships and knowledge management** opportunities to reinforce the Fund's visibility as a key global player on GEWE

The average GEWE project ratings at completion have displayed a declining trend since 2013.

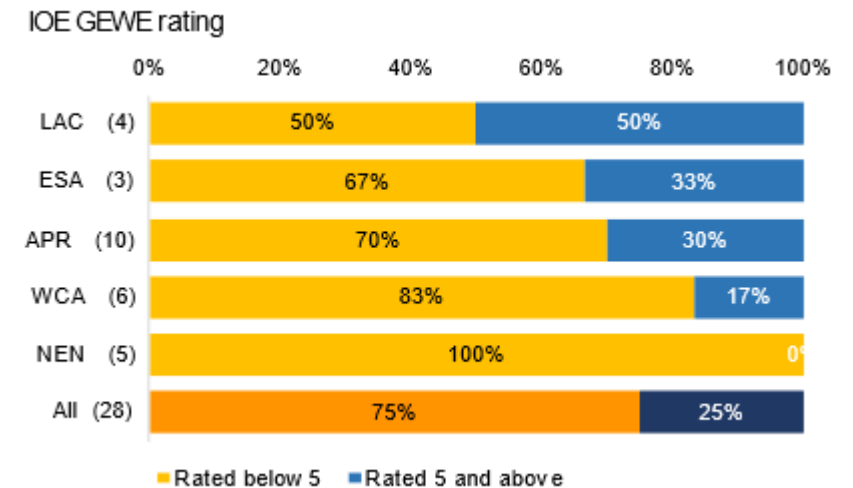
### Average IOE and PCR GEWE ratings by three-year moving period

For projects completed in 2013-2022 with both IOE and PCR GEWE ratings available (n=250).



Completed projects rated 5+ is the only gender indicator which was not met in RIME (2023): 42% vs. target of 60%.

As of today (RMF), 39% vs. 60% (RMF, 5/12/2024)



All projects completed since gender policy (IOE rating database, February 2023)



Variable quality and coherence of **gender strategies in project designs** (QAG gender rating discontinued, dilution in SECAP compliance procedures, overstretched staff);



No clear metrics and guidance to **map contributions of IFAD interventions** to the three strategic objectives of the Gender Policy and Action Plan ;



Reach

There is **over-use of quotas of men/women** in COSOPs and project designs, and **men/women outreach figures** as evidence of “results”:



Benefit

- Most of the reported data are “**reaching**” indicators (ex. # of women participants in activities).
- Only few cases with evidence about **benefits** (ex. how activities contributed to close gender gaps identified during design/baseline or to improve women’s circumstances).



Empower

- Only anecdotal information about how project activities contributed to **women’s empowerment**. RIA measured women’s empowerment (**I-WEAI**) in impact assessments in IFAD 11, only 10 of those 24 projects were approved after the gender policy.

## Recommendation 2 (agreed)

Strengthen GEWE's effectiveness of IFAD's interventions through consolidated guidance, promoting its shared understanding and buy-in among stakeholders.

- Develop **pathways, tailored interventions and outcome-level indicators** for IFAD activities contributing to GEWE (focus on rural finance, land tenure security, workload and shared benefits)
- Develop a practical succinct **guidance on the application of GT programming** in all IFAD languages and on how to do **policy engagement on GEWE** through COSOPs/GT projects
- Stock-take efforts to **measure (women's) empowerment**, clarify roles and responsibilities;





Increase in gender and social inclusion human and financial resources, but also rise in workload;

Gender and social inclusion staff with less seniority relative to other regional technical staff.

Gender focal points in IFAD divisions play a relatively minor role in gender-related work



Gender training for staff/consultants and capacity building efforts to implementing partners are not enough.



Many changes in approaches and guidance, not compiled in a consolidated package in all languages;

## Recommendation 3 (partially agreed)

Ensure the Fund has human resources with the capacities and competencies to address its GEWE priorities and leverage key partners as necessary.

- Identify **staffing gaps and clarify respective roles, priorities and responsibilities** to ensure human and budgetary resources are commensurate with the ambition of IFAD GEWE goals and the replenishment commitments;
- Strengthen the **support to Project Management Units and other implementing partners** throughout the project cycle (systematic inclusion of gender experts in IFAD field missions);
- Deliver **short trainings and peer-peer learning** to promote positive behaviour change about GEWE.



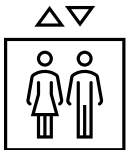
GEWE has not been **systematically and strategically discussed** in Senior Management committees, nor has its promotion been well **incentivized through the staff performance evaluation system**.



**High-level gender-related indicators** focused on outreach numbers ;



**Staff incentives** skewed towards compliance with replenishment targets – project ratings, despite **high motivation**;



**Workforce diversity** is improving, but not enough done on gender parity in all categories and at all levels.



**Staff perceive** that Senior Management does not sufficiently walk the talk (ex. measures to improve work-life balance are inadequate).

## Recommendation 4 (partially agreed)

Establish **high-level metrics** to track and report progress towards IFAD's GEWE goals to **ensure accountability and promote learning**.

- Measures to assess the **quality of project designs** to promote GEWE and a **robust monitoring and reporting system** to capture actual GEWE results
- Concrete actions to address gaps identified from **periodic assessments of strategic issues** related to all areas of the Gender Policy, UNSWAP, 5R Action Plan to improve gender parity and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy;
- Lessons from regular stock takes focused on successful project experiences and challenges.

Thank you, gracias, merci, شكرًا لك