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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **IFAD Policy for Grant Financing Corporate-level evaluation Approach paper**

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For: **Review**

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CLE	corporate-level evaluation
CLP	core learning partnership
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
IFI	international financial institution
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
PMD	Programme Management Department
PTA	Policy and Technical Advisory Division
SKM	Strategy and Knowledge Management Department

# IFAD Policy for Grant Financing

## Corporate-level evaluation

### Approach paper

## I. Introduction

### A. Background and evaluation objectives

1. As decided by the Executive Board of IFAD in December 2012, the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) of IFAD will conduct a corporate-level evaluation (CLE) of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing (both the policy approved in 2003 and revised policy approved in 2009) in 2013/14. The evaluation will be undertaken in line with the overall provisions contained in the IFAD Evaluation Policy<sup>1</sup> and the IFAD Evaluation Manual.<sup>2</sup>
2. This is the first comprehensive evaluation of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing. IOE has conducted two evaluations on specific aspects of IFAD's grant-based financing: the CLE of IFAD's Technical Assistance Grants Programme for Agricultural Research (2003) and the CLE of the Extended Cooperation Programme with NGOs (2000).
3. The overall objectives of this CLE are:
  - (i) to assess the performance of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing (e.g. in terms of relevance and effectiveness); and
  - (ii) to generate findings and recommendations that will inform IFAD's strategic directions and priorities for future grant activities.
4. **Grants at IFAD.** IFAD's use of grants as a financing instrument finds its justification in the 1976 Agreement Establishing IFAD. The Agreement allowed for grant financing (as distinct from debt sustainability mechanisms) provided that the proportion of grants would not exceed 12.5 per cent of annual commitments. Debt sustainability mechanisms would not be included in this percentage: "Financing by the Fund shall take the form of loans, grants and a debt sustainability mechanism" (article 7.2(a)) and "The proportion of grants shall not normally exceed one-eighth of the resources committed in any financial year. A debt sustainability mechanism and the procedures and modalities therefor shall be established by the Executive Board and financing provided thereunder shall not fall within the above-mentioned grant ceiling" (article 7.2(b)).
5. At IFAD, the term "grant" is currently applied to a very heterogeneous range of instruments. This includes, for example, grants funding international agricultural research, NGO initiatives, capacity-building for government institutions and activities for strengthening agricultural producers' organizations and their networks. The term grant is also used to describe project cofinancing by other donors under non-reimbursable arrangements. In addition, some of IFAD's main investment projects are funded through grants in the context of the Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) (further discussed below).
6. The fact that no specific categorization or precise labelling of grants has been introduced (something that exists in other organizations) creates uncertainty in the classification of grants. Furthermore, until recently at IFAD, there has been no well-

<sup>1</sup> See [www.ifad.org/evaluation/policy/new\\_policy.htm](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/policy/new_policy.htm).

<sup>2</sup> See [www.ifad.org/evaluation/process\\_methodology/doc/manual.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/doc/manual.pdf).

defined tracking system for grants.<sup>3</sup> A grant database is currently being developed by the front office of the Programme Management Department (PMD) and is expected to become fully operational by the end of March 2013. In order to prepare for this evaluation, IOE had to manually process and compile information on the grants approved in the past ten years.

7. **Coverage of this CLE.** For the purpose of this evaluation, the term “grants” applies only to those non-reimbursable funds that are part of IFAD’s regular annual work programme under the purview of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing (the original policy approved in 2003 and revised policy approved in 2009). They encompass both regional and global grants as well as country-specific grants (which include also “project component grants” in countries that are eligible for country-specific grants).
8. This evaluation does not cover grants that are part of donors’ non-reimbursable cofinancing of investment projects or are financed by external supplementary or complementary funds. Nor does it cover the former Programme Development Financing Facility (PDFF) now integrated into IFAD’s administrative budget, or the grants provided under the DSF (see further explanation below).
9. **Key figures.** Keeping in mind the above operational definition, and the difficulty in obtaining precise figures, a provisional estimate is that between 1979 and December 2012 IFAD approved a total volume of grants of US\$910 million, of which US\$469 million since 2004 (i.e. after the approval of the 2003 policy).
10. As already noted, in spite of the grant ceiling of 12.5 per cent mandated by the Agreement Establishing IFAD, the Executive Board for several years adopted a lower ceiling for the regular grant window, setting it at 7.5 per cent of the annual regular programme of work, with 5 per cent earmarked for global and regional grants and 2.5 per cent for country-specific grants. During the past 10 years, the proportion of regular grants in the annual programme of work declined from 7.2 per cent in 2004 to 5.5 per cent in 2013 (table 1). This decline can be explained by the introduction of the Debt Sustainability Framework in 2007.

Table 1

**Total IFAD regular programme of work and grants (2004-2013) in US\$ million**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (foreseen)	Total
Total regular programme of work <sup>a</sup>	448.5	486.5	536.5	589.4	593	709	845	998	1 091	1 066	<b>7 362.9</b>
Regular grants <sup>b</sup>	32.5	36.5	41.5	45.4	41.0	47.0	51.0	51.0	64.0	59.0	468.9
% of regular grants	7.2%	7.5%	7.7%	7.7%	6.9%	6.6%	6.0%	5.1%	5.9%	5.5%	6.4%

Source: IFAD Executive Board documents.

<sup>a</sup> Includes loans, Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) grants, regular grants.

<sup>b</sup> Excludes PDFF, ASAP grants, DSF grants.

## B. Evolution of grant use and policy at IFAD

11. In the early years (1979-1984), IFAD grants were mainly dedicated to international agricultural research centres and focused on individual commodities (for example, varieties of cereals, legumes, roots and tubers). During these years, IFAD had no formal policy on grants. A set of criteria and priorities for grant financing were approved by the Executive Board in 1982 and in 1984.
12. In 1985, the focus started to shift from individual commodities towards supporting farming systems and technology-related socio-economic research. This reflected

<sup>3</sup> The Loans and Grants System of IFAD has records of the disbursement of all types of loans and grants as well as the repayments of loan instalments. It includes all types of non-reimbursable instruments, which makes it challenging to track the nature and purpose of each grant recorded.

the growing emphasis on international agricultural research, with national research institutions receiving more support. Between 1992 and 1996, the poverty focus of grants increased, notably trying to strengthen linkages between small farmers and extension services. The first set of formal guidelines for grants were prepared in 1997. For the first time, IFAD's regional divisions were in a position to identify, initiate, develop and supervise grants, something which, until then, had been a prerogative of the former Technical Advisory Division (currently Policy and Technical Advisory Division [PTA]).

13. Two evaluations were completed at the beginning of the last decade: the CLE of the Extended Cooperation Programme with NGOs (2000) and the CLE on the Technical Assistance Grants Programme for Agricultural Research (2003). These evaluations highlighted that grant financing had contributed to introducing innovative activities, technologies and approaches in developing countries that were relevant for the rural poor and that the grant instrument provided IFAD with considerable flexibility of intervention. At the same time the evaluations underlined two limitations: (i) the difficulty in ensuring collaboration and synergy between grant-based programmes and IFAD's main investment projects funded through loans; and (ii) the heterogeneous types of activities funded through grants and the limited resources available to monitor, assess, draw conclusions and learn from related experience. Both evaluations introduced a normative model for testing supporting, assessing and scaling up innovations, recommending that it be used as a conceptual reference to inform future grant-based efforts as well as collaboration between grants and investment projects.
14. Following these two evaluations, IFAD elaborated its first Policy for Grant Financing in 2003 and closed the grants window for the Extended Cooperation Programme with NGOs: these grants could now be subsumed under the country-specific grants window (see below).
15. Under the 2003 policy, grants would not finance activities for which the administrative budget would normally be used;<sup>4</sup> instead the focus would be on activities where grants had a comparative advantage over loans and would complement the loan programme. It set two strategic objectives for the grant programme: (i) promoting pro-poor research on innovative approaches and technological options to enhance field-level impact; and (ii) building pro-poor capacities of partner institutions including community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs. This was in line with the overall Strategic Framework of IFAD for 2002-2006.<sup>5</sup>
16. The 2003 policy proposed two mutually exclusive windows: (a) global and regional grants, which were expected to represent on average 5 per cent of the annual programme of work; and (b) country-specific grants, which were expected to hover around 2.5 per cent of the annual work programme. The country-specific grants would be aligned with the country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and allocated according to IFAD's performance-based allocation system. This was a major change: until that time, there had been no country-specific allocation of grants.
17. The 2003 policy distinguished between smaller grants (up to US\$200,000) that could be approved by the President of IFAD (a list of small grants approved in a given year would be shared with the Board in the April session of the following year) and larger grants (above US\$200,000), which would continue to be approved by the Executive Board. In terms of knowledge management and dissemination, the policy required the preparation of technical advisory notes on pro-poor technologies

<sup>4</sup> Although the policy did not clarify which activities were normally financed through the administrative budget.

<sup>5</sup> The objectives of the strategic framework were: (i) strengthening the capacity of the rural poor and their organizations; (ii) promoting equitable access to productive natural resources and technology; and (iii) increasing access to financial services and markets.

- to be disseminated internally as well as to partners outside IFAD and made available to the general public.
18. One of the expectations of the 2003 policy was that the annual amount of grant resources would increase to 10 per cent of the annual programme of work; however, this did not materialize (in fact the proportion of grants reduced).
  19. In 2005 IFAD presented to the Board a report on the implementation of the policy. According to this document, global and regional grants had mainly focused on the generation of pro-poor innovative technology, while country-specific grants had worked with NGOs and community-based organizations, piloting innovative approaches that would benefit the rural poor. The document also proposed new grant-funded activities in the areas of policy dialogue and knowledge management, as an example of the broadening of the range of activities that could be funded through grants. Finally, it made reference to the DSF instrument that had been introduced by other international financial institutions (IFIs) and alluded to a forthcoming document on this matter for presentation to the Executive Board.
  20. **Debt Sustainability Framework.** In 2007, the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing in relation to Debt Sustainability Framework (table 2) was presented to the Board. One of the objectives of this policy was to clarify the difference between DSF grants and grants approved under the 2003 policy. Countries classified as having low and medium debt sustainability ("red" or "yellow" cases) would be eligible for financing of investment projects through DSF grants. However, they would not receive a separate allocation through the "regular" country-specific grant window. Instead, countries with high sustainability framework ("green" cases) would not be eligible for DSF grants but would have access to regular country-specific grants up to a total of 1.5 per cent of the programme of work. This brought about a reduction of the regular grant envelope from 7.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent of the annual work programme (5 per cent for regional and global grants, 1.5 per cent for country-specific grants in green-classified countries).<sup>6</sup>

Table 2

**Chronology of key documents on grants**


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1976 Agreement Establishing IFAD
1997 Guidelines for Grant Approval
2003 IFAD Policy for Grant Financing
2005 Report on the Implementation of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing
2007 IFAD Policy for Grant Financing in relation to the Debt Sustainability Framework
2009 Revised IFAD Policy for Grant Financing
2011 Corporate Strategic Workplan for Grant Financing Procedures for Financing from the Grants Programme

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21. The revised Policy for Grant Financing was approved by the Board in December 2009. The preparation of the new document was triggered in part by the new 2007-2010 Strategic Framework of IFAD, which was more demanding in terms of operational guidance, and by the approval of the DSF.
22. The revised policy contained, for the first time, a logical framework, enucleating an overall goal, set of objectives, and series of outputs and activities. The overarching goal was to promote successful and/or innovative approaches and technologies, and enabling policies and institutions for agricultural and rural development, contributing to the empowerment of the rural poor to achieve higher incomes and improved food security.

<sup>6</sup> The reduction by 1 per cent of the grant envelope was based on the forecast that red and yellow-classified countries would consume the equivalent of 1 per cent of the annual work programme and budget, based on historical trends.

23. The objective of the policy was for IFAD, its partners and other stakeholders to improve their knowledge and understanding of what constitutes successful and innovative approaches and technologies and enabling policies and institutions that promote the interests of poor rural women and men. Specific outputs envisaged by the policy were: (i) promotion of innovative activities, technologies and approaches; (ii) awareness, advocacy and policy dialogue of importance for the rural poor; (iii) strengthened capacity of partner institutions to deliver support services for the rural poor; and (iv) lesson learning, knowledge management, dissemination of information.
24. The following activities were considered eligible for grant financing: (a) agricultural research; (b) piloting innovative initiatives; (c) policy forums (national, regional, global); (d) media outreach; (e) technical assistance for state and non-state actors; and (f) knowledge networks; all with an overarching focus on the rural poor.
25. The revised policy introduced two further changes. First, delegation of authority to the President of IFAD to approve grants up to US\$500,000 (larger ones would still require Executive Board approval), thus creating an incentive to consolidate grant activities. Second, it opened the door to the approval of grants for private sector entities, including "for profit" corporate private sector companies and private companies managing multi-donor trust funds. Private sector grants would be used to subsidize feasibility/market studies, training or start-up activities focused on the rural poor. Grants for private sector companies would have to be approved by the Executive Board during its regular session, and not through the lapse of time procedure, irrespective of size.
26. Another major shift was to introduce a grant approval system that hinged on competition between annual strategic workplans for grants prepared by IFAD regional divisions (as opposed to a competition between individual grant proposals). The rationale was to encourage a more strategic use of grants by requiring regional divisions to prepare a comprehensive annual grant strategy. In 2010, the regional divisions and PTA elaborated their first grant strategies. However, operationalizing interregional competition has been problematic. The Procedures for Grant Financing prepared in 2011 did not fully clarify how the competition would take place. New procedures have been elaborated in early 2013 but are yet to be released.
27. According to the comments submitted by IOE in 2009 on the proposed revised policy, the decision to raise the threshold for small grants approved by the President was a positive shift, encouraging consolidation of grants and reducing transaction costs. Given their demonstrated usefulness in supporting country programmes, IOE noted the low percentage of country-specific grants, as a proportion of annual work programme of IFAD. Other general remarks concerned: the absence of a comprehensive assessment of the results of the 2003 policy, which would have provided a solid evidence base for the revised policy; and lack of prioritization of outputs and absence of specific output targets in the results framework.
28. Since the approval of the 2009 revised policy, the secretariat for grants, which carries inter alia the function of ex ante quality assessment, has been moved from PTA (under PMD to the newly created Strategy and Knowledge Management Department [SKM]). One of the reasons for this shift was to avoid potential confusion of role within PTA between the preparation, supervision and management of grants and, on the other hand, ex ante quality assessment of grant proposals, requiring a neutral referee.
29. More recently, from the perspective of IFAD Senior Management, increasing emphasis has been placed on reviewing the grant approval process. A memorandum from the Office of the President (November 2012), approving some grant proposals but not others, suggested a set of measures to enhance the rigour of grant-related processes, notably: (i) strengthening of the ex ante quality

assessment of grants; (ii) competitive tendering for grant delivery for grants of a certain size (above US\$150,000); (iii) setting and enforcing stricter requirements for reporting on grants; (iv) more systematic reviewing of grants experience and compiling of a related database; and (v) review of divisional strategies for grants by the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee in order to assure strategic coherence, knowledge exchanges and linkages with relevant policies and strategies, including country programme strategies.

30. Over the last decade, grants have been reviewed by IOE in the context of its country programme evaluations and in some of its CLEs. There has been no synthesis of such reviews and the present CLE will provide a good opportunity to tap into the existing body of knowledge. Some of the common themes highlighted in IOE's recent evaluations partially echo the findings of the above sections, notably: (i) the considerable potential for technology innovation of many grants, and the opportunity to fund policy dialogue and knowledge management activities through grants; (ii) the absence of a well-compiled repository of data on grants, which complicates information search and creates an obstacle to awareness of grants among government officials, project staff and other partners; (iii) weaknesses in grant management, notably limited monitoring and supervision of grant activities; and (iv) constraints in building synergies between grant-funded activities and main investment activities. These points will require further probing and explanation in the context of this evaluation.

### **C. Grants at other international financial institutions**

31. Other international financial institutions (IFIs) have non-reimbursable instruments of cooperation in addition to the main loan-based instruments. These instruments are typically classified as "technical assistance" or as separate grant programmes and are financed either through the organization's core funding or through external supplementary funds. The definition of technical assistance is heterogeneous and may range from funds used for consultancy services for loan preparation to the funding of studies, technical workshops, policy dialogue activities and, sometimes, research activities. The Evaluation Cooperation Group of the international financial institutions is currently working on a stock-taking exercise of practices adopted by its members in evaluating technical assistance. The related documentation (Hallberg 2012) has been reviewed during the preparation of this approach paper.
32. In the case of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), there are several grant windows and, in addition, technical assistance activities that include the funding of international agricultural research. An evaluation of the policy implementation and impact of agriculture and natural resources research was conducted in 2000. It estimated high rates of return (for example averaging 83 per cent for International Rice Research Institute [IRRI]) projects, 45 per cent for International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics [ICRISAT] projects, and 91 per cent for projects of the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center). The Independent Evaluation Department of ADB will conduct an evaluation of technical assistance support in 2013.
33. Similarly, the Office of Evaluation and Oversight of the Inter-American Development Bank is about to complete an evaluation of non-reimbursable technical cooperation products. The results will be made available in April 2013 and will be considered in the desk review phase of the present CLE.
34. In the case of the World Bank, five major programmes are funded through grants: (i) the Development Grant Facility; (ii) the Programme for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); (iii) the Institutional Development Fund; (iv) the State- and Peace-Building Fund; and (v) the Global Partnership for Social Accountability.
35. The Development Grant Facility was reviewed in 2011 by the Independent Evaluation Group, in the context of the evaluation of the World Bank's involvement

in regional and global partnership programmes. The assessment had mixed findings. On the positive side, it was found that the facility helped the World Bank build long-standing relationships with development partners such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Stop TB Partnership, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations; and contribute to the governance of the global health system. It was also found that the objectives of most programmes had been relevant in terms of generating multi-country benefits. Fiduciary management standards were assessed as generally high.

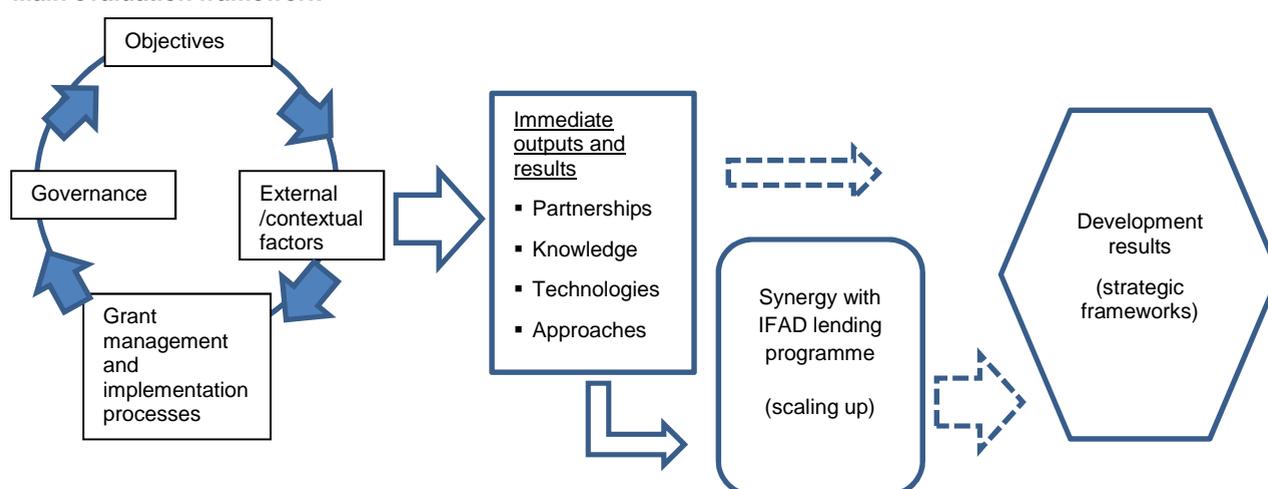
36. On the other hand, the review found that linkages between activities supported by the Development Grant Facility and the Bank's country operations were weak at the country level which prevented potential synergies from fully materializing. In addition, the disengagement strategy was assessed as highly unsatisfactory: it was found that the focus was overwhelmingly on financial exit, resulting in termination of substantive support to the governance of funded programmes. The root problem was identified in the lack of a clear engagement strategy in the first place, to define why the Bank had entered the partnership and what type of results or process development could be expected before the decision is taken to exit.

## **II. Evaluation approach and methodology**

### **A. Evaluation framework**

37. It is important to note that the main subject of this evaluation (the "evaluandum") is the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing, not the individual grants approved by IFAD. Accordingly, the main evaluation criteria will be applied to the policy rather than to individual grants. At the same time the evaluation will have to review a sample of grants financed. This will enable the evaluation to assess to what extent the grant policy has been implemented and achieved its objectives, as well as the contribution that it has made to achieving the Fund's ultimate development objectives.
38. For the purpose of this evaluation, the Policy for Grant Financing should not be simply understood as "a document" but rather as a bundle of objectives, a governance structure and its enabling environment, and a set of managerial processes. Objectives, governance and managerial processes continuously interact together and with external and contextual factors and generate a set of immediate outputs and results (figure 1). These immediate results, either on their own or in conjunction with the main lending programme of IFAD, contribute to broader development results.

Figure 1  
Main evaluation framework



39. The evaluation will cover the following criteria:

- (i) The relevance of the policy's objectives in relation to IFAD's overall development goals at the country, regional and global level. Relevance of the policy's results framework (and its evolution between 2003 and 2009) will also be assessed. As an additional step, an assessment will be made of the governance<sup>7</sup> including the implementation procedures and guidelines of the policy. The latter relates to the practical implementation aspects of the policy, including the elaboration of policy implementation procedures, the assignment of functions and responsibilities within the institution for the allocation, design, ex ante quality assurance, approval and management of grants (including arrangements for monitoring and evaluation and supervision). This includes the interactions between the organizational unit designated as the grant secretariat and other IFAD units intervening in the process.
- (ii) The effectiveness of the policy will entail assessing, first and foremost, the extent to which agreed objectives in the grants policies have been or are likely to be met. In this regard, specific attention will be paid to assessing progress towards achieving the stated targets in the logical framework of the policy.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned earlier, this would require IOE to assess the results of selected grants financed by IFAD. Efforts will also be made to assess the results (at least in terms of outputs) of grants financed following the approval of the 2009 policy and to generate lessons from more recent cohorts of grant activities. Considering the recent policies on grants (2003 and 2009), it is expected that results can be observed in terms of (i) changes in the technology and knowledge frontier made available to the rural poor; (ii) changes in the number and nature of partnerships forged by IFAD with other development partners; (iii) changes in knowledge, policies and behaviours of IFAD's development partners; and (iv) changes in the way in which IFAD conceptualizes and approaches rural poverty issues. The evaluation will take into account the expected results at the time of the policy formulation, as well as additional achievements that were not foreseen. Specific aspects that will need to be considered are to what extent the grant policy has furthered IFAD's agenda on pro-poor innovation and scaling up and to what extent it has contributed to achieving the objectives of the 2003

<sup>7</sup> Governance includes the organizational architecture for implementing and overseeing the roll out of the policy, human resources allocation, supervision, monitoring and reporting arrangements, quality assurance processes and the resource allocation system.

<sup>8</sup> No logical framework is available for the 2003 grants policy.

Gender Action Plan and (more recently) the 2011 Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.<sup>9</sup>

- (iii) Efficiency aspects, that is, the relation between resources and results. One of the aspects to be considered relates to the *grant management and implementation processes*: processes within IFAD and partner organizations (e.g. implementation of grant-related activities, monitoring and reporting of the activities, disbursement of funds, administrative and fiduciary aspects, final assessment and feedback loop to new grant-based or loan-based operations). A specific aspect to be considered is the implementation of the governance arrangements and processes set forth in the 2009 policy. Regarding IFAD's management processes, inter alia two aspects will be considered: (i) changes and opportunities brought about by direct supervision and country presence; and (ii) balance between efficiency and accountability in managing grants (e.g. financially viable supervision modalities to enhance implementation and oversee fiduciary aspects). The contribution of IFAD grants to leveraging external resources will also be assessed.

40. **Selected key questions.** While further desk review and preparatory work will be required to orient this CLE, a few key questions that the evaluation will address can be singled out (a more comprehensive list of questions is displayed in the evaluation framework, appendix II):

- The comparative advantage of grants in furthering IFAD's strategic objectives. To what extent are grants helping IFAD achieve its objectives, in conjunction with its main investment programme, at the global, regional and country level?
- Grant-funded activities. Have activities to be financed by grants been clearly identified? What type of activities should be prioritized for grant financing?
- Grants and research. Should IFAD support agricultural research as a public good or as a means to further country programme objectives, or both? And in what proportion? Have IFAD grants helped ensure greater relevance of research to its pro-poor and gender objectives?
- Grants and non-lending activities. Have grants been adequately used to support non-lending activities, including knowledge management, partnership development and policy dialogue? In particular, how can IFAD better leverage findings, lessons and good practices from grants for broader knowledge management within IFAD and among other development partners?
- Grant size and recipients. Is there an optimal size for the overall annual grant-based activities of IFAD and the specific grant windows, taking into account the different purposes of grants? What type of grant recipients should be prioritized?

41. **Coverage period.** The time frame of the evaluation will span the period 2003 (approval of the first policy on grants) to end-2012. The evaluation will thus cover the 2003 and 2009 Policies for Grant Financing. The CLEs of IFAD's Technical Assistance Grants Programme for Agricultural Research (2003) and the Extended Cooperation Programme with NGOs (2000) will provide an assessment of the baseline situation. The proposed evaluation time frame (i.e. from 2003 to end-2012) should allow IOE to capture some of the development results to which the previous policy from 2003 and related grants have contributed. Since the 2009 revised policy was approved slightly more than three years before the beginning of

<sup>9</sup> The strategic objectives of the 2011 Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment are to: (i) promote economic empowerment to enable rural women and men to have equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, profitable economic activities; (ii) enable women and men to have equal voice and influence in rural institutions and organizations; and (iii) achieve a more equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits between women and men.

this CLE, it is expected that the main observable changes after that policy would be at the institutional and process levels. However, as mentioned earlier, efforts will also be made to capture the relevance and the results of selected grants after the introduction of the 2009 policy.

## **B. Main building blocks, process and products**

42. Evidence and analysis for the evaluation will be gathered through several phases and building blocks, which are described below.
43. **Desk review and methodology fine-tuning phase.** In addition to desk review work, during this phase the evaluation team will refine the methodology. The main deliverable will be the desk review and inception report: a single document providing a summary of the findings of the analysis of the desk review and the advanced methodology design. This report will be shared with IFAD Management for their comments. Desk review work will include the below components:
- A review of: (i) recent annual portfolio reviews of the PMD regional divisions and of PTA, in order to capture the self-assessment of grant-based operations and their interactions with the lending programme; (ii) a sample of results-based COSOPs and of project design documents approved since 2010, compared with a sample of the same type of documents approved before 2010. According to the 2009 policy, results-based COSOPs and project design are to focus on opportunities for scaling up grant activities. The review of these documents will provide information on frequency of references to scaling up before and after the 2009 policy as well as substantive information on how the scaling up has been conceptualized.
  - A meta-analysis of existing IOE documents such as country programme and corporate-level evaluations undertaken since 2004. In addition, the meta-analysis will cover the CLEs of IFAD's Technical Assistance Grants Programme for Agricultural Research (2003) and the Extended Cooperation Programme with NGOs (2000); the Independent External Evaluation of IFAD of 2005; and the Joint Evaluation of the Agriculture and Rural Development Policies and Operations in Africa of the African Development Bank and IFAD (2009). Standardized instruments for desk review will be elaborated to allow for both content analysis and information coding.
  - Descriptive analysis of data from the available databases on grants: the purpose of this analysis is to provide synthetic indicators of key grant characteristics (e.g. size, regional distribution, categories of recipients and purposes) and their evolution.
  - A review of a sample of key documents such as IFAD's grants and related documentation. Sampling will take into account grant size (small versus large according to the evolving definition), scope of grants (country-specific versus regional/global) and purpose of grants (e.g. applied research, knowledge management, policy dialogue). On a tentative basis, for larger grants, the sample size may hover around 25 grants and 40 for smaller grants (corresponding to about 9 per cent of grants approved since 2004). Discussions will be held with relevant IFAD staff in order to correctly identify grants. The review will include key information on the grants' goals, design, approval process, implementation, monitoring and final assessment.
  - A review of available analytical reports prepared by partner organizations on grants. This will include a selective review of impact assessments of grant programmes conducted by CGIAR centres as well as of studies undertaken by the CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment, to obtain secondary data and information on the results of research programmes to which IFAD has contributed.

44. **Self-assessment** . IFAD Management will provide its self-assessment input during an event to be organised at IFAD, based on a set of guiding questions that will be agreed upon with IOE.
45. **Interview phase.** During this phase, IOE will organize a number of interactions with IFAD Management and staff, representatives of IFAD governing bodies and other IFIs. The main deliverable of this phase will be the interview phase working paper summarizing findings from the interviews, follow-up desk review and web-based surveys. This will be considered as an internal working document for the CLE. The main components of this phase include:
- Interviews with IFAD Management and staff, including country office staff and consultants from PMD, SKM, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Audit and Oversight, the Controller's and Financial Services Division, and the Communications Division. It will entail a mix of individual interviews and focused group discussions. The goal is to gather information, experiences and perspectives on the governance, management, performance and results of grant-funded activities and to capture areas of consensus as well as of disagreement among the key players. Interviews will also be held with Executive Board representatives in order to better capture the priorities and opinions of governing body representatives concerning the use of grants.
  - Web-based surveys. These surveys will target: (i) IFAD country programme managers and country programme officers; (ii) a sample of grant recipients (e.g. research organizations, NGOs, producers' organizations, private sector companies) focusing especially on the sample of grants that are to be assessed; and (iii) a sample of government officials and IFAD project managers. They will be based on Likert-scale ratings to probe respondents' opinions as well as degree of agreement/disagreement on issues identified through previous desk review and interviews.
  - A focused review of the experience of selected international organizations (e.g. the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank; the International Development Research Centre may also be considered in view of its engagement in agricultural research for development). This would provide a summary of grant-based instruments and their governance and management in these institutions. The review will be brief: the purpose is not to provide a normative model but to gather key information on alternative practices that may highlight synergies, duplications, or gaps with respect to IFAD's grant instrument. The Independent Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank is currently conducting an evaluation of technical assistance. A part of the activities assessed may be comparable to those covered by the current CLE and mutual exchanges with IOE will be promoted.
46. **Grant case studies** (global, regional, country-level). The purpose of these is to validate the evaluation hypotheses formulated during the previous phases, and gather further evidence by interacting with IFAD partners and final beneficiaries in the field (government representatives, IFAD project managers, representatives from grant recipient organizations, staff from other international organizations, private companies, and the ultimate grant clients). Case studies will look at the implementation of the policy and some of its immediate results at the country, regional and global level. These case studies will involve missions to countries and regions where IFAD operates and will be elaborated through a common protocol to ensure comparability of approaches while allowing the flexibility to analyse different contexts and situations. A relatively small number of missions cannot be expected to be statistically representative but rather "logically" representative, leading to content-rich observations and analysis that identify key concerns of relevance for IFAD and its partners.

47. The selection of the case studies will be made at an advanced stage of the desk review and discussed with relevant IFAD divisions. Criteria for selection must take into account the following: (i) scope of grants (global/regional/country-specific); (ii) geographic concentration of grant activities and/or of grant recipients; and (iii) for country-specific case studies, inclusion of middle-income as well as low-income countries, and countries with high/medium/low debt sustainability (green, yellow, red). The main deliverable will be a working paper which will be treated as an internal working document of the CLE. A presentation on the main findings of the case studies and the interview phase will be made to IFAD Management and staff. Feedback received will be considered in the preparation of the full draft report.
48. In addition to the visits to developing countries, the evaluation team will work extensively in: (i) Rome, taking the opportunity of the presence of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Bioversity, the International Land Coalition and the Global Mechanism, all grant recipients; and (ii) Washington, D.C., given the presence of two comparator organizations (the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank), and of the International Food Policy Research Institute, a grant recipient. Opportunities for collaboration will be sought with the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR which is hosted at the FAO premises. The latter is currently compiling a repository of evaluations and impact assessments of agricultural research programmes conducted by the individual CGIAR research centres. In 2013 it will also initiate a new evaluation of the CGIAR research programme on agroforestry. The Head of IEA will be a member of the core learning partnership (see section III below). Similarly, a senior staff member from ADB's Independent Evaluation Department will be part of the core learning partnership.
49. **Final report writing.** The full draft report will summarize contributions from the several phases of the evaluation. The draft main report will be shared with IFAD Management and staff for review and comments. IOE will thereafter revise the draft and prepare an audit trail, explaining how Management's comments have been taken into consideration and then finalize the report.<sup>10</sup> A written Management response will be prepared, as per normal practice for all CLEs. However, in line with the Evaluation Policy, IOE will be exclusively responsible for the overall evaluation process, for the contents of the final report, and for all other deliverables produced during the evaluation, in accordance with the Evaluation Policy.

### III. Core learning partnership

50. The role of the core learning partnership (CLP) is to provide guidance to the evaluation process and review key evaluation deliverables. In particular, at the start of the evaluation, CLP members will review the draft approach paper and support the CLE team by drawing their attention to key issues, documents and data sources. The CLP will review and discuss the draft final report and its comments will be considered in the finalization of the report.
51. The CLP will include the following members:

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<sup>10</sup> Per the Evaluation Policy, IOE will decide which comments should be incorporated in the revised (final) report. As a general rule: (i) the draft report will be revised to incorporate comments that correct factual errors or inaccuracies; (ii) it may also incorporate, by means of a note in the report, judgments that differ from those of the evaluation team; and (iii) comments not incorporated in the final evaluation report can be provided separately and included as an appendix to the report.

- Associate Vice-President, PMD
- Associate Vice-President, SKM
- Director, Office of the President and the Vice-President (OPV)
- Senior Advisor to the President (organizational development and coordination), OPV
- Director, IOE
- Directors, IFAD regional divisions and PTA
- Regional economists from PMD
- Director, Environment and Climate Division
- Director and General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
- Director, Controller's and Financial Services Division
- Director, Office of Audit and Oversight
- Director, Communications Division
- Senior Portfolio Manager, PMD
- Head, IFAD's Quality Assurance and Grants Unit, SKM
- Ms Rachel Bedouin, Head CGIAR IEA, Rome
- Mr Rajesh Vasudevan, Evaluation Specialist, Independent Evaluation Department, ADB
- IOE Senior Evaluation Officer (i.e. the lead evaluator of this CLE)

#### **IV. Evaluation team**

52. The designated lead evaluator for this CLE is Fabrizio Felloni, Senior Evaluation Officer, IOE. Selected other IOE evaluation officers and research assistants will also be involved and support the evaluation through desk reviews and peer review activities.
53. There will be a small core team of consultants (two specialists) led by Mr Inder Sud, (Development Economist) and comprising a rural development institution specialist with experience in assessing research programmes and NGO activities. The core team will be supported by thematic subject specialists to be recruited for a time-bound period, taking into account the context of the case studies. The evaluation will require substantial desk review work to be performed by one or two Rome-based consultants. Background research as well as database compilation and analysis will be performed by Mr Prashanth Kotturi, Evaluation Research Analyst, IOE, who will also contribute to web-based surveys and selected fieldwork activities. Ms Cristina Spagnolo, Evaluation Assistant, IOE, will provide administrative support.
54. IOE has mobilized the services of two senior independent advisers to provide inputs on key documents throughout the evaluation process. The advisers are Mr Hans Binswanger and Mr Olivier Lafourcade, two prominent international development consultants with previous experience in research and senior-level management in multilateral development organizations. The advisers will also prepare a short joint report on the quality of the final evaluation report which will be shared with IFAD Management, the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board.

#### **V. Communication and dissemination**

55. Communication within IFAD on the progress made by the evaluation will be ensured through presentations to IFAD's Senior Management and other concerned staff. The report will be discussed at a learning workshop to be held in Rome in 2014 and attended by staff from IFAD headquarters and country offices, and other organizations. The workshop will be another opportunity to share results within IFAD and with representatives of other organizations. The final report will be discussed with the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board in 2014.
56. The final report will be distributed electronically to members of IFAD Management, staff and Executive Board members. The main report will be around 55-60 pages;

full-length printed copies will only be made available upon request. As per usual practice, an evaluation profile and an insight will be prepared to be distributed more widely both within and outside IFAD. Profiles/Insights are communication tools (two-page brochures) prepared by IOE for a wider audience.<sup>11</sup> All outputs will also be made available to the general public through the dedicated IFAD webpage on evaluation.

57. Finally, in order to facilitate the dissemination of the findings and recommendations to the international community, presentations could be made in the context of the existing international evaluation networks (e.g. the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee [OECD/DAC]), the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Evaluation Cooperation Group) and other events or conferences.

## VI. Evaluation road map

58. The provisional time frame for the evaluation is provided in table 3:

Table 3  
**Proposed evaluation road map**

<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Activities</i>
March-May	First desk review phase
3 April 2013	Discussion with the Evaluation Committee on the approach paper
Third-fourth Week of June 2013	Desk review and inception report shared with IFAD Management and presentation made on the same
September 2013	Web-based questionnaire interviews
July-December 2013	Case studies
January 2014	Presentation to IFAD Management on findings from: (i) interviews; (ii) web-based questionnaires; (iii) case studies
April 2014	Presentation of preliminary results (PowerPoint) to the Evaluation Committee
Early April 2014	Draft final report submitted to IFAD Management
Early May 2014	Comments from IFAD Management
June 2014	Report finalized Final learning workshop with key stakeholders
July 2014	Discussion of the final report with the Evaluation Committee together with IFAD Management response
September 2014	Discussion of the final report with the Executive Board together with IFAD Management response

<sup>11</sup> The profile is a brochure capturing the main findings and recommendations. The insight focuses on one key learning issue emerging from an evaluation, with the intention of raising further attention and debate around the topic among development practitioners.

## Logical framework for the 2009 revised grant policy

Narrative summary	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<p><b>Goal:</b> The promotion of successful and/or innovative approaches and technologies, and of enabling policies and institutions, for agricultural and rural development contributes to the achievement of IFAD's overarching goal</p>	<p>Percentage of country programmes rated 4 or better for contribution to (a) increasing the incomes of, (b) improving the food security of, and (c) empowering poor rural women and men</p> <p>Percentage of projects rated 4 or better at completion for effectiveness in one or more thematic areas of engagement; poverty impact on the target group; and innovation, learning and/or scaling up</p>	<p>Results Measurement Framework for IFAD VIII (level 2)</p>	
<p><b>Objective:</b> IFAD, IFAD's partners and other rural development stakeholders improve their knowledge and understanding about what constitutes successful and/or innovative approaches and technologies, and enabling policies and institutions, for poor rural women and men</p>	<p>Numbers of IFAD country programmes, projects scaling-up/replicating lessons learned through grants portfolio</p> <p>Numbers of partners and other rural development stakeholders scaling-up/replicating lessons learned through grants portfolio</p>	<p>RB-COSOPs; project design documents; OE evaluation reports</p> <p>Public data sources: reports of partners and other rural development stakeholders</p>	<p>(Objective to goal)</p> <p>Lessons learned fed into IFAD country programmes and projects, and IFAD advocacy activities</p>
<p><b>Outputs:</b></p> <p>1. Innovative activities promoted, and innovative technologies and approaches developed, in support of IFAD's target group.</p> <p>2. Awareness, advocacy and policy dialogue on issues of importance to poor rural people promoted by, and on behalf of, IFAD's target group.</p> <p>3. Capacities of partner institutions strengthened to deliver a range of services in support of the rural poor.</p> <p>4. Lesson learning, knowledge management and dissemination of information on issues related to rural poverty reduction promoted among rural development stakeholders.</p>	<p>Numbers and percentage of projects achieving individual grant objectives</p>	<p>Project completion reports; project evaluation reports; "impact and lessons learned" papers prepared for all large grants</p>	<p>(Outputs to objective)</p> <p>Lessons drawn out and effectively communicated within IFAD, to partners and to other stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1.1. Agricultural research focused on the needs of resource- poor farmers.</p> <p>1.2 Innovative initiatives piloted for addressing constraints faced by poor rural people.</p> <p>2.1 Policy forums supported at national, regional and global levels on pro-poor agriculture and rural development, and participation of rural civil society organization in such forums facilitated.</p> <p>2.1 Media outreach supported to promote greater awareness on policy issues of direct relevance to poor rural people.</p> <p>3.1 Technical assistance and capacity- building provided for state and non-state actors.</p> <p>4.1 Knowledge networks and associations established or strengthened at community to global levels.</p>	<p>Number of projects and value of grant resources allocated to different project activities</p>	<p>Grant-financed project design documents</p>	<p>(Activities to outputs)</p> <p>Improved grant management procedures put in place</p>

## Evaluation framework

<b>Evaluation Domains and Questions</b>		
<b>Domains</b>	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Key Sources</b>
<i>Relevance of the objectives</i>	<p><u>The Grant Policy and its evolution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has the policy been sufficiently grounded in IFAD's experience?</li> <li>- In particular, was the 2003 policy informed by the evaluations available at that time (CLE on agricultural research grant of 2003 and CLE on Extended Cooperation Programme with NGOs in 2000)?</li> <li>- Has it been adequately updated taking into account emerging experience and knowledge?</li> <li>- In particular did the 2009 Revised policy build on a sufficient body of evidence and convincing analysis?</li> <li>- Is the result framework sufficiently clear and relevant to IFAD's corporate Strategic Framework</li> <li>- Is the definition of grants and their purpose clear, including financing priorities?</li> <li>- Has the policy provided clear guidance on priorities and synergies between grants and other operations of IFAD?</li> <li>- Does the policy sufficiently encourage the engagement of private sector companies?</li> <li>- Is the principle of competition between IFAD divisions justified with clear arguments?</li> </ul>	<i>Desk review and selected preliminary interviews</i>
<i>Relevance of governance and implementation of the policy</i>	<p><u>Allocation of resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have policy implementation procedures been produced and to what extent do they reflect and facilitate the policy's key orientations?</li> <li>- Have the implementation procedures been followed and what are the key lessons learned?</li> <li>- Are the principles of allocation of funds for grants (including Performance Based Allocation) consistent with the policy?</li> <li>- Is the current average size of large grants conducive to effective and efficient use of resources?</li> <li>- Is the allocation of resources conducive to synergies between grants and other operations?</li> </ul>	<i>Desk review of the available documentation and data bases</i>



*Effectiveness*

Results of Grant Policy

- To what extent has the policy implementation contributed to achieve the policy's expected output and immediate results? Notably results in terms of promoting: (i) partnerships; (ii) knowledge; (iii) technologies; (iv) approaches that are in line with IFAD's objectives and can generate benefits for the rural poor?

Policy results in research and technology

- Is there evidence of the pro-poor results of research programmes co-funded through IFAD grants? In particular, are benefits from improved technology captured by small-scale farmers and are there trickle-down positive effects on marginal famers and the landless?

- Are research grants sufficiently integrated with other IFAD's operations? Can IFAD grants for research be justified based on their expected economic rates of return, even if not connected to other IFAD operations (e.g. loans)?

Policy results in terms of non-lending activities

Communication and Knowledge Management

- Has the grant policy helped IFAD build instruments for knowledge management (e.g. analytical tools, documentation and dissemination of experiences)?

*Partnerships*

- Has the grant policy and its implementation added value to IFAD's operations through partnerships? Are grant-based partnerships justified with the current broad range of partners (research institutions, NGOs, CBOs, producer's organisations and their apexes, Government, UN organizations, private companies)? Should a grant policy provide strategic guidance to focus more narrowly on partnerships?

*Policy Dialogue*

- Has the implementation of the policy helped IFAD establish priorities for policy dialogue and engage in the related activities? What are the main achievements and constraints?

Policy's contribution to building synergies between grants and other operations

- To what extent has the policy helped harmonise grant-funded activities with other IFAD's activities at country regional and global level, including activities funded through its main investment projects?

- How do these results compare to the results achieved with grants that were not harmonised?

Policy's contribution to the up-scaling of innovations

*Desk review, interviews with external partners and Web-based questionnaires to be complemented by case studies*



	<p>outside? To what extent did they influence practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did the Policy 2009 bring about significant changes?</li> <li>- What are the rewards to IFAD staff for good performance in capitalising lessons and scaling up?</li> <li>- Are there cases in which scaling-up should be taken cautiously?</li> </ul> <p><u>Grant recipients and other key partners</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are the requirements of grantees in terms of fiduciary aspect realistic for the recipient and main partners?</li> <li>- What are the main findings on grantees' performance in terms of fiduciary aspects?</li> <li>- What are the main expectations of partners in terms of substantive monitoring, supervision and final assessment of grants and are these expectations realistic? How are the partners performing in these three dimensions?</li> <li>- What are the main findings on grant recipients' and partners' performance and what are the main patterns and trends?</li> <li>- What are the instruments to engage grantees and partners on IFAD's priorities and how are they used?</li> <li>- How is partners' performance rewarded or sanctioned?</li> </ul>	
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