India
Country programme evaluation
2010-2015

Population: 1.3 billion (2014)
Rural population: 940 million; 72% of total population (2014)
GDP growth: 7.3% (2014)
Poverty headcount ratio: 21.9% of population (2011-12)
Life expectancy at birth: 66 years males; 69 years females (2015)
Human development index: 0.609; ranking: 130 out of 188 countries (2013)

Sources: IFAD Flex Cube, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank Development Indicators

IFAD operations
(since 1979)

27 total projects
10 ongoing operations
US$ 2.6 billion total project portfolio
US$ 928.6 million funds lent by IFAD

IFAD country strategies

2001 2005 2011

Main areas

- Community infrastructure
- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Value chain development
- Rural financial services
- Mobilizing community-level groups
- Promoting agricultural production and rural livelihoods

Evaluation storyline

Consolidated results in community mobilization and infrastructure serving basic needs

Results are emerging in the promotion of agricultural production and rural livelihoods; and enabling access to credit and financial services

Focus on disadvantaged groups, including scheduled tribes and castes, women and the landless

Projects have tackled structural issues such as socio-cultural exclusion, access to natural resources and agricultural land, limited presence of public institutions

Good progress on gender equity

One of the strongest elements in the portfolio, particularly as it pertains to making income sources available to women; drudgery reduction and women’s access to rural institutions
Main evaluation findings

Areas of strength

Credit expansion
IFAD-funded projects have established a solid operational basis for credit expansion in the rural areas.

Good portfolio impact
Portfolio impact has been satisfactory in terms of household assets and income and human and social capital. Moderately satisfactory in other impact domains (natural resources and climate change, institutions and policies).

Good communication products
In recent years there has been increased attention to communication products and knowledge management activities.

Strong partnerships with state government agencies
Increased awareness of the importance of partnering with sub-state local governments and national non-governmental organizations.

Areas for improvement

Lagging response from banks
The response from the public sector banks in extending credit support has been well below expectations.

Implementation delays
Delays in project entry into force and slow implementation have been a common problem. This is explained by challenging physical and socio-economic conditions of project areas, and limitations in implementation capacity at the state level, reflected inter alia in high turnover of project staff and cumbersome contractual arrangements and procurement procedures.

Gap in analysis and systematization of knowledge
Compared to the need and demand of government, there is still a gap between the promising experiences promoted by projects and the capacity to analyse and systematize them.

Low capacity in policy dialogue
The capacity to effectively participate and enrich policy dialogue is constrained by limitations in knowledge management, partnerships and country office resources.

Recommendations

1. Differentiate approaches
Where communities are already organized, explore different approaches than self-help groups (e.g. producers’ groups, mutually-aided cooperative societies and producers’ companies).

2. Focus more prominently on rainfed agriculture
Agricultural development components need to concentrate on rainfed agriculture, support local and national applied research and extension, and the commercialization of smallholder farmers.

3. Address portfolio efficiency
Designs need to be better calibrated to implementation capacity in state agencies. Government, state governments and IFAD should reassess, inter alia, compensation packages and recruitment procedures for project staff.

4. Promote scaling up of results
By strengthening partnerships at four levels: state government, central government, private actors and the rural finance sub-sector, and South-South cooperation.

5. Enhance non-lending activities
Embed knowledge management and policy dialogue in individual project financing; discuss sectoral/thematic issues and facilitate knowledge transfer across projects during periodic portfolio review meetings; and establish partnerships with think-tanks to increase credibility of policy analysis.