Mandate

The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) is responsible for conducting independent evaluations of IFAD-financed policies, strategies and operations to promote accountability and learning. The main purpose is to contribute to improving IFAD's and its partner's performance in supporting rural transformation in recipient countries.

In identifying key insights and recommendations drawn from evaluation findings, IOE is also concerned, in accordance with IFAD's disclosure policy, with communicating and sharing IFAD's knowledge and experience of rural and agricultural development with a wider audience.

Evaluation synthesis reports

Objectives

Evaluation synthesis reports (ESRs) are prepared primarily to promote learning and collective reflection, with a view to improving IFAD's development effectiveness. ESRs are knowledge products and a means to consolidate and share acquired knowledge and strengthen IFAD's evaluation feedback and learning loops. Synthesizing existing evaluation evidence allows ESRs to contribute to decision-making processes in an effective way, especially when there is neither adequate time nor resources to undertake a full-fledged evaluation.

The objective of an ESR is to generate lessons learned, good practices and recommendations that can further strengthen the design and implementation of IFAD policies, strategies and operations on the topic chosen for the synthesis. The recommendations in evaluation synthesis reports should be strategic and add value, and not duplicate the recommendations previously made by IOE in evaluation reports that informed the synthesis.

Methodology

ESRs are conducted in accordance with the directives of IFAD's Evaluation Policy[1] and follow the core methodology and processes outlined in IOE's Evaluation Manual.[2] They are primarily desk-based, although resources permitting and on an exceptional basis, they may benefit from a country visit. Generally, a qualitative approach is used to synthesize findings from evaluation reports and related sources, but where relevant, and where time and resources allow, more quantitative approaches may also be applied. The use of evaluation criteria is different in ESRs as compared to most other IOE evaluations because the focus is squarely on learning. Generally speaking, they will follow four criteria, such as: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, but will not provide ratings, as the evaluative evidence is variable and not always subject to aggregation.

Non-lending activities in the context of South-South Cooperation
EVALUATION SYNTHESIS
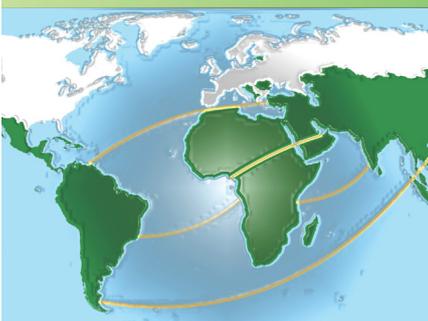
IFAD's Engagement with Indigenous Peoples
EVALUATION SYNTHESIS

FAO's and IFAD's Engagement in Pastoral Development
JOINT EVALUATION SYNTHESIS

May 2016

Process

Preparation and desk review phases. This phase includes the preparation of the evaluation approach paper, which is prepared well in advance with the aim of ensuring agreement on the objectives, scope, and review design and approach. The approach paper is then shared with IFAD Management for comments.

During the desk review phase, the evaluation team collects, filters, categorizes and organizes the information to facilitate a clear and strong analysis, identifying issues that need further exploration through interviews. Such interviews can be individual or in focus groups, or both. In most ESRs, interviews are conducted mainly with IFAD staff and Management, but may also be with representatives from partner organizations and specialists in the areas being evaluated.
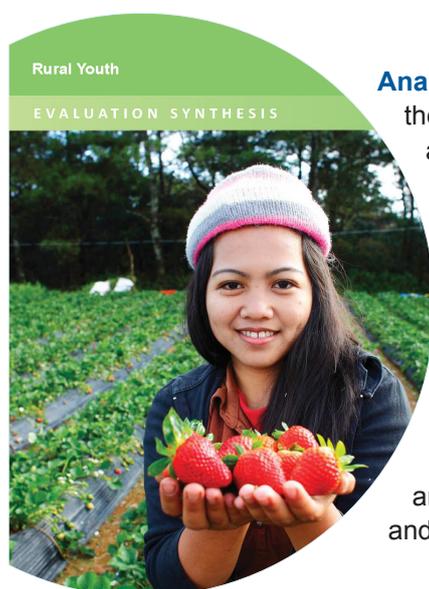
Rural Youth
EVALUATION SYNTHESIS

Analysis phase. This is the core of the work, and the analysis is the basis for findings that are nuanced, validated and triangulated using information from the desk review, site visits (if country visits are undertaken) and interviews.

Report writing, comments and communication phases. After the drafting of the report, a fully consultative process enhances the usefulness of the synthesis and the emerging findings workshop is a critical step, aimed at discussing the report once it has been peer-reviewed within IOE and the corresponding comments included in the draft final report.

The report is shared with the IFAD Management for comments, and discussed in the Evaluation Committee, and may be discussed in the Executive Board upon request.

Expected results

Bring together lessons from IFAD evaluations while also capturing evaluation-based lessons from other international financial institutions, United Nations organizations and bilateral agencies on specific themes; enhance the general understanding of a particular topic within IFAD; highlight the strategic implications of findings and raise strategic issues for further consideration by IFAD Management and the governing bodies.
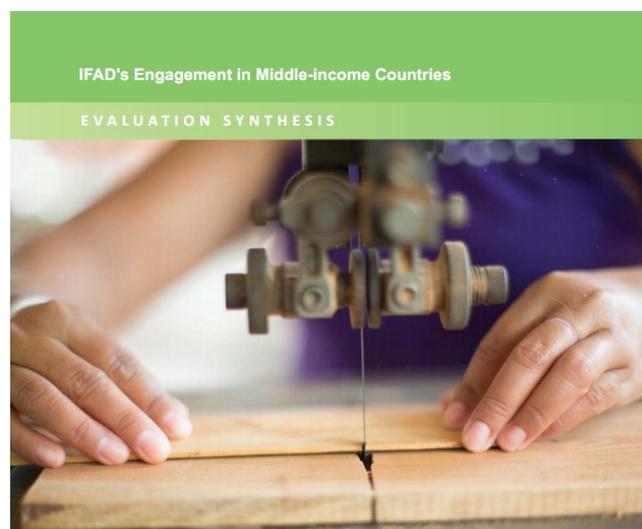
IFAD's Engagement in Middle-income Countries
EVALUATION SYNTHESIS

[1] www.ifad.org/en/evaluation/policy_and_methodology/tags/2085763.
[2] www.ifad.org/en/evaluation/policy_and_methodology/tags/5702569.