The 2019 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI) presents a synthesis of IFAD’s performance and highlights results and systemic issues identified from independent evaluations conducted in 2018. The quantitative analysis draws on ratings from 344 evaluations conducted since 2002.

Main findings

Overall, the majority of project evaluation ratings are positive from 2007 to 2017. Currently, 80 per cent or more projects are rated moderately satisfactory or better in relevance, innovation, scaling up, rural poverty impact and IFAD performance as a partner. However, based on evaluative evidence, the trend in IFAD’s project portfolio performance is either flat or declining in most criteria in 2015-2017. The most significant decline is for IFAD and government performance as partners. Moreover, based on the projects completed in 2015-2017, only adaptation to climate change reached its Tenth Replenishment (2016-2018) Results Measurement Framework targets; efficiency and sustainability will require special attention in the Eleventh Replenishment (2019-2021) Results Measurement Framework.

In comparison with agricultural projects of other international financial institutions, IFAD project performance is better than that of the agricultural portfolios of the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank. At the global level, IFAD project performance is slightly below that of the World Bank.

Performance in environment and natural resources management is one of the best-performing criteria in 2015-2017, indicating that taking concrete actions toward the conservation of natural resources is effective in protecting sensitive ecosystems and fragile environments.

Efficiency remains the weakest-performing criterion due to late mobilization of co-financiers, frequent staff turnover, and delays in implementation. Recently, performance in rural poverty impact declined due to the underestimation of the impact of exogenous factors such as political instability or natural disasters and ineffective targeting strategies. Performance in gender equality and women’s empowerment also declined, partially due to the limited understanding of women’s specific needs in local contexts and the lack of gender specialists during project implementation.
Relevance of IFAD project interventions

Most development organizations recognize Relevance as the fundamental evaluation criterion. It is important to consider Relevance a key criterion in IFAD projects, as it guides IFAD’s unique poverty orientation and commitment to the rural poor. Relevance, taken as a continuum, provides a linking mechanism between project quality and country context and allows for incremental improvements, ensuring value for money for the beneficiaries and the client.


1. Ensuring the “continued relevance” of a project intervention requires adapting its design throughout implementation.
2. Meaningful engagement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation and evaluation of a project enhances project relevance.
3. The role of the government in relevance is critical: in adopting pro-poor policies, in providing adequate implementation capacity, and in ensuring “continued relevance” during and after the project’s lifespan.
4. A lack of understanding of institutional arrangements together with the lack of capacity to implement IFAD-funded projects ranks as one of the main roadblocks to improved Relevance.
5. Well-functioning government institutions are a key determinant of higher Relevance.

Further information:
ARRI 2019, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, Via Paolo di Dono, 00142 Rome, Italy | www.ifad.org/evaluation | e-mail: evaluation@ifad.org | www.twitter.com/IFADeval | www.youtube.com/IFADevaluation