

insights

Number 25, October 2013

Support to the monitoring and strategic management of the programme and non-lending activities: lessons from the IFAD country programme in Madagascar

While giving a fairly positive assessment of the results of individual IFAD-financed projects, a number of country programme evaluations have pointed out the lack of any real monitoring in terms of strategy and also the shortage of human and financial resources for such non-lending activities as knowledge management, partnership development and public policy dialogue. The Madagascar country programme evaluation carried out in 2012-2013 reveals a different situation and offers some important lessons for IFAD.

A knowledge management platform, allowing the aggregation of data from individual projects according to the indicators in the COSOP

In their programme in Madagascar, IFAD and the Government established the Improvement in the Monitoring-and-Evaluation and Knowledge Management System platform, known by the acronym SEGS (from the French title Amélioration du système de suivi-évaluation et de gestion des savoirs) or ZARAFIDA (from the Malagasy word zara, meaning 'shared' + FIDA or IFAD). This platform is based on monitoring and evaluation systems established under individual projects and on the use of information and communication technology. It is composed primarily of an electronic library containing the documents of each project, which are fed into a common data base according to standardized indicators. It also contains a series of case studies on the successes or failures of projects. In this way it allows information from individual projects to be extracted in order to carry out analyses or syntheses, produce maps, photographs or graphics, or write articles. Making use of other initiatives in the region, the SEGS/ZARAFIDA platform allows field experience in Madagascar to be disseminated in other countries.



Upper Mandraré Basin Development Project, Phase II. Woman in market square sells onions in Marombe village, Madagascar

©IFAD/C. Giorgi

In Madagascar, the introduction of the SEGS/ZARAFIDA platform has enabled the indicators in the COSOP logical framework to be cross-referenced with those of projects, and also a monitoring process to be started with regard to strategy. Monitoring of the COSOP is now carried out through an annual report and half-yearly reviews. The platform has also facilitated the work of the independent evaluation of the IFAD programme, so that the objectives and impact spheres of projects can be correlated with the strategic objectives of the COSOP.

Creation of a programme support unit within the Ministry of Agriculture

IFAD now recognizes the importance of a more 'strategic' approach in countries where it is intervening and undertaking activities that go beyond financing individual projects and supporting their execution. Such activities concern knowledge management, partnership development and policy dialogue. However, they are demanding in terms of time, and IFAD often lacks sufficient human resources

even if it has opened a country office. There has been an ad hoc team in Madagascar for several years, which supports non-lending activities among its other tasks: this is the IFAD Programme Support Unit (CAPFIDA) established within the Ministry of Agriculture.

Set up in the late 1990s as a simple accounting support unit for IFAD-financed projects, its mandate was expanded to include administrative support, supervision and auditing (2004–2006). And since 2007 it has been providing support to the IFAD programme, including monitoring of the COSOP, and now encompasses work units that focus specifically on partnership development, public policy dialogue, knowledge management, and communication. The projects (one project per quarter) are responsible for CAPFIDA's budget, using funds from IFAD loans.



Support Programme for Rural Microenterprise Poles and Regional Economies. Rainbow after heavy rains in Analamanga, Madagascar.

©IFAD/R. Ramasomanana

According to the Madagascar country programme evaluation, the results of non-lending activities have been satisfactory. CAPFIDA has played a facilitating role as a local support structure in:

- **The sphere of partnership development.** Relations and discussions with public stakeholders have been developed well, particularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and its general directorates and regional services, but also with other ministries (for example, those in charge of livestock, fisheries, trade and industrialization) and the vice-president's office in charge of development and land-use planning. There have been frequent exchanges of information and discussions with international financial institutions (the World Bank, the African Development Bank). All the development partners recognize the quality of the relations established with IFAD and its wish to share information.

- **The scaling up and communication of experience.** Excellent initiatives have been undertaken through the preparation of brochures, video documentaries and the CAPFIDA website.
- **Public policy dialogue.** Despite the political crisis that started in 2009, which has reduced official consultations between donors and the national counterpart, IFAD and the Government have been involved in: (i) a dialogue for preparation of the Agricultural Sector Programme in collaboration with FAO and the World Bank; (ii) a review of the experience of projects regarding efforts to increase security of land tenure, in order to contribute to reflection on the relative juridical framework and land tenure reform; and (iii) the start of a dialogue regarding small businesses and microenterprises (inspired by the experience of one project) with a view to formulating a national policy to support rural enterprises.

Issues and challenges for the future

The experiences of SEGS/ZARAFIDA and CAPFIDA in Madagascar are encouraging and can be used as a model for reflection in the region concerned, and possibly also in other regions where IFAD is active. The following recommendations may be useful for the future:

- **Incorporation of information on IFAD grants into the SEGS/ZARAFIDA system.** Until now this platform has focused on consolidating information at the project level. It would be useful to incorporate information on pilot activities in Madagascar financed through grants.
- **Incorporation of the monitoring of non-lending activities into the SEGS/ZARAFIDA system.** Similarly, the platform could incorporate progress achieved in the spheres of partnership development, policy dialogue and knowledge management.
- **Division of work between IFAD and CAPFIDA.** In 2011, IFAD opened a country office in Madagascar, which has eased representation constraints, particularly in policy dialogue processes, relations with donors and partnerships with other partners involved in rural development. The division of work between CAPFIDA (which falls under the Ministry of Agriculture) and IFAD's country office will need to be further refined. In this connection, it would be best not to overburden the IFAD office with administrative duties, but to focus more on its role of strategic guidance for the country programme.

Further information:

Republic of Madagascar, Country Programme Evaluation, Report N° 3159-MG, October 2013, ISBN 978-92-9072-433-9, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, Via Paolo di Dono, 00142 Rome, Italy. The full report, Profile and Insights in English and in French are available online at: www.ifad.org/evaluation; e-mail: evaluation@ifad.org.