

Independent Office
of Evaluation



IFAD

Investing in rural people

PAKISTAN COUNTRY STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION
WORKSHOP REPORT



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June 2021





Background

Since 1979, IFAD has financed 27 rural development projects in Pakistan, providing US\$780 million in loans and grants.

In 2020, IOE conducted a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in Pakistan, covering the period 2009-2020. The evaluation found that the projects had positive impacts on livelihoods and living conditions of the rural poor, while also highlighting the importance of paying greater attention to addressing structural constraints; strengthening institutions, policies and systems; promoting innovations and scaling up; and better fostering partnerships, for greater rural poverty impact and better value addition by IFAD.

The workshop, organized by IOE in collaboration with the Economic Affairs Division of the Government of Pakistan and the Asia and Pacific Division of IFAD, presented an opportunity to discuss key findings and recommendations with the Government of Pakistan, provincial governments, IFAD management and stakeholders in the country.

The workshop was held in virtual form and was attended by about 50 participants from the counterpart government departments, partner agencies, IFAD and international development partners.

The workshop

Senior Joint Secretary (WB & IFAD) of the Economic Affairs Division of the Government of Pakistan, **Ms Samar Ihsan**, made an opening statement, expressing appreciation for the long-standing partnerships with IFAD. Her statement



was followed by that of **Mr Indran Naidoo**, IOE Director, who shared some highlights of the evaluation and stressed the importance of the independent evaluation function.



Thereafter, **Mr Alvaro Lario**, Associate Vice-President, Financial Operations Department of IFAD, delivered a statement on behalf of IFAD's senior management, underscoring IFAD's commitment to providing further support to the Government of Pakistan in meeting the objectives of the Agenda 2030.

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Representing the Government of Punjab, **Mr Khalid Sultan**, Sr. Chief, Punjab Planning and Development Board, thanked IFAD for its continued support to government efforts in alleviating poverty through sustainable agriculture in Punjab and expressed the hope that IFAD assistance would continue beyond the ongoing Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Programme.



Following the opening session, **Ms Fumiko Nakai**, IOE Senior Evaluation Officer and lead evaluator for this CSPE, delivered a presentation on the main evaluation findings and recommendations. Her presentation was followed by comments and discussions.

Mr Syed Ibrar Hussain, Additional Chief Secretary (Dev), Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, also appreciated IFAD assistance provided through the Economic Transformation Initiative and hoped that soon the project would cover the remaining districts of Gilgit-Baltistan.

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Mr Nigel Brett, Director of IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division, provided remarks reflecting on the future direction of the IFAD-Government partnerships, also emphasizing IFAD's expectation to have the host country agreement signed at the earliest so that the country director can be based in Islamabad.



Mr Hubert Boirard, Country Director, IFAD Pakistan reiterated IFAD's commitment to Pakistan.

In the closing session, **Mr Hafiz Abdul Basit**, Additional Chief Secretary (Dev), Government of Balochistan, thanked IFAD for its support to the Gwadar-Lasbela Livelihood Support Project and its second phase and requested further programming, in order to sustain the projects' successes in Balochistan. In her concluding remarks, **Ms Samar Ihsan**, Senior Joint Secretary (WB & IFAD), Economic Affairs Division, thanked IFAD, IOE and all participants, and also echoed some of the CSPE recommendations, expressing her support. Finally, **Mr Indran Naidoo**, IOE Director offered a vote of thanks and closed the event.





Challenges, lessons learned and recommendations

The presentation by IOE on the main evaluation findings highlighted the positive impacts of the projects. The investment in basic infrastructure such as drinking water schemes and access roads improved human capital, access to services and markets and household incomes. The provision of productive assets – mostly livestock – and skills training improved livelihoods and resilience of beneficiary households. Furthermore, the portfolio made important achievements in women's social and economic empowerment, considering the challenging gender context in Pakistan.

On the other hand, the evaluation also found challenges and some areas for improvement. During the evaluation period, the lending portfolio had become skewed towards asset transfer and skills training targeted at individual households based on the poverty scorecard. Project efforts mostly concentrated on delivering goods and services, rather than on improving institutions, policies and systems. Also, strategic partnerships with other development agencies were minimal, and there were opportunities to diversify non-governmental partners.

Following the presentation, the participants were invited to make comments and ask questions. A participant sought elaborations on specific elements of market systems development. The IOE team responded that the CSPE message is to identify potential areas of inclusive economic development and design context-specific interventions. These should be based on solid context analyses to be undertaken by IFAD with partners from the Government and the private sector, as such diagnostic studies do not fall within the remit of the evaluation.

There was a comment that in the absence of other reliable poverty measuring tools, the poverty scorecard may be the only acceptable measure to be used for targeting. The IOE team responded that the utility of the poverty scorecard is noted in particular for interventions such as cash and asset transfer; however, in order to support longer-term transformational change, other considerations are also important for geographical and social targeting, such as human development index and socio-economic analyses.

With regard to the CSPE comment on the last national poverty survey held in 2010, a participant from the World Bank shared that another survey is being conducted to update the data and that efforts are ongoing to make the the National Socio-Economic Registry more dynamic.

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With regard to some questions on the evaluation methodology, IOE explained that the evaluation was based on extensive data and evidence, gathered through detailed desk reviews, over 60 interviews with a broad range of stakeholders, as well as field visits. The desk review also included a careful review of the available impact assessment survey data and their triangulation. The field visits were conducted by two experienced national consultants for a total duration of 3.5 weeks, with close coordination with other team members. As such, IOE assured that the evaluation findings are solid even in the light of the constraints faced in the COVID-19 situation and without large-scale surveys.

The evaluation provided the following recommendations:

- place greater emphasis on inclusive market systems development, with due attention to climate resilience and natural resource management, accompanied by support for addressing basic needs, where relevant;
- articulate a strategy to promote innovations and scaling-up for greater rural poverty impact;
- place more emphasis on strengthening and linking with institutions, policies, and systems for a greater likelihood of sustainability;
- adopt a more flexible and differentiated approach in targeting and programming; and
- broaden and strengthen partnerships with other development agency partners and non-governmental actors while upgrading the IFAD country office and its support systems.





The next steps

IFAD and the Government of Pakistan will jointly prepare an agreement at completion point, which is a short document containing the CSPE's recommendations and proposed follow-up actions.

The evaluation will be presented to the Evaluation Committee on 30 June 2021. The next country strategy will cover the period from 2023 to 2028. Under the leadership of the Government, provincial and national consultation processes will be initiated in 2022 to determine the development agenda and key priorities.

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