

IOE



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation



COVID-19 Global
Evaluation Coalition and
Global Evaluation Initiative
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Conducting Evaluations in Times of COVID-19: Challenges, emerging opportunities and insights

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Clear challenge: no international mission, restrictions to domestic travels. NB: IFAD funds rural development project in remote areas

Reactions / opportunities:

- 1) Rediscover **under-utilized secondary data** (e.g. surveys conducted by projects)
- 2) Remote interviews with national counterparts; **remote mini-surveys** of local organizations (e.g., cooperatives in the Dominican Republic)
- 3) **Geographic information systems** and remote sensing technology
- 4) Review of existing **thematic literature** (by 'human' consultants, not yet AI)
- 5) For most evaluations, **national consultants** visited the field → caveat: impartiality
- 6) **'Vicarious' field visits** in extreme cases (more on this later on)
- 7) Augment the **quality assurance** process: bring in reviewers with knowledge of country / local context for further 'reality check'

Infrastructure for market and market access

- **Exceptional case in 2020**
 - ✓ No travel possible, including national consultants
- **Changes to adapt the approach to the pandemic**
 - ✓ Enhanced and deeper desk review
 - ✓ GIS
 - ✓ Additional national consultants
 - ✓ Phone interviews with project end-users
 - ✓ Vicarious visits: through network of national consultant, local users / persons took photos / videos of project sites



(Most often, data do not interpret themselves....)

Gathered 103 ground images, 11 videos, several (Google) maps

Roads and embankments
Market infrastructure

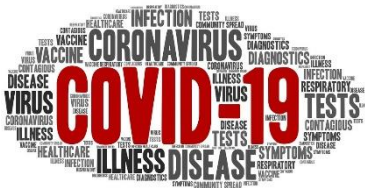
Triangulation with

- Infrastructure engineer (construction, quality, materials, damages...)
- GIS images
- Probed via phone interviews with local users and - at times – local engineers



Munshiganj Bazar,
Shyamnagar, Satkhira

Banishanta Bazar,
Dacope, Khulna



- ❑ **No real substitute to field visits**
- ❑ **GIS data and images:** useful for projects with ‘visible’ outputs / outcomes: infrastructure, cropping pattern change, reforestation....
 - Some changes not detectable ‘from the sky’ (power relationships, gender equality...)
 - Require **triangulation** (expert interpretation, interviews with local people, surveys)
- ❑ **Vicarious field visits** for situations of insecurity (can train local people to collect basic information, photos, short videos), also to be triangulated
- ❑ Evaluation is important in **turbulent times** but we need to be aware of **disruption on national implementation capacity**
 - Negotiate timeline to avoid overburdening, Set up administrative support for evaluators
 - Additional challenge for **evaluation capacity development:** building M&E systems that are resilient to a lock-down situation
- ❑ **Greening our evaluations, field focus.** Can reduce international travels for evaluations and focus on field work (e.g. at IFAD for country level evaluations from 4 to 1-2 missions)