

Kingdom of Eswatini Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
National Workshop 28 January 2022
Talking Points for Ms Sara Mbago-Bhunu, Regional Director, ESA

Description of slot: 5-minute statement on future directions for IFAD country programmes (follows panel discussion and reflections by CD)

Statement:

1. Good afternoon Excellencies and distinguished guests.
2. I would like to start by thanking IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation for such a comprehensive assessment of the country portfolio over the past 2 decades, and for convening this very important workshop.
3. I would also like to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini for their collaboration during the evaluation, and for their continued support and partnership with IFAD to help improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in the country. This collaboration has been pivotal to the numerous and significant achievements detailed in the report.
4. As mentioned by the Associate Vice President and Jaana earlier, this evaluation comes at an opportune time, when IFAD is working with the government to finalize a new Country Strategic Opportunities Programme, as well as a new project concept note.
5. Through both of these exercises, we will continue to carefully consider the findings and recommendations provided by this evaluation, as well as in our work across the East and Southern Africa region, to which many of the findings are very pertinent.

6. Based on the insights from the evaluation, there are several priority areas that require further efforts to find evidence-based solutions, including:
- low agricultural productivity,
 - limited access to land for women and youth,
 - low levels of autonomy and self-reliance of smallholder producers,
 - weak water users' associations, and
 - the need for improved sustainability of interventions.
7. Considering also the very important interventions made here today, several points stand out to me from this evaluation that will shape our efforts to address these priority areas.
8. First is our strong performance in country level policy engagement on issues of rural finance, water and land management as well as nutrition. To build on this moving forward, we will focus on generating and disseminating rigorous evidence to inform policy dialogue in line with government priorities. We will also prioritize the use of regional platforms for exchanging lessons and best practices.
9. A second key take away for me are the insights around natural resources, climate and environmental management, which are particularly pertinent as IFAD implements its new Biodiversity Strategy.
10. Partnerships will be key to continuing our strong work in this area moving forward, building on cases such as our

collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on enhancing adoption and implementation of sustainable land management practices in Eswatini - a project that was recently awarded a Temvelo Biodiversity Award for successfully engaging and empowering rural communities in biodiversity conservation.

11. The third key point is the need to continue to innovate - building on key initiatives such as the grant to promote orange fleshed sweet potato with the International Potato Center and the Department of Agricultural Research Services, as mentioned earlier by the Associate Vice-President
12. Through our new country strategy, innovations in digital technologies will also be a key priority, including promoting geospatial tools for targeting and M&E; tools for e-marketing, e-extension and financial services; along with climate-smart technologies.
13. Finally, in terms of project management moving forward, we are determined to address the issues identified in the evaluation in the areas of procurement and M&E among others.
14. As we have heard from Jaana, IFAD has been increasing support to these areas at both the regional and country-levels through a combination of technical and systematic interventions, which are now starting to show results.
15. We of course need the support of our stakeholders to achieve the desired improvements in these areas, and I count on the commitment of our friends here today to support our

efforts to implement more efficient, effective and sustainable projects in Eswatini.

16. In closing, I would just like to reiterate our appreciation for this thorough evaluation, and for the continued support of our valued and trusted government counterparts.
17. Thank you and back to the Moderator.

Annex 1: Background

IFAD in Eswatini

IFAD has a long history of engagement with the Kingdom of Eswatini and has provided a range of technical and financial assistance in support of national programmes aimed at improving agricultural production, enhancing food security and household nutrition, and eliminating rural poverty. Since 1983, IFAD has invested about US\$ 54.5 million in Eswatini through grants and loans*.

IFAD Loan portfolio

Project	Impl. Agency	Total Project Cost (USD million)	IFAD Funds (USD million)	Co-financing		Effectiveness Date	Closing Date	Status
				Domestic	International			
SCMP		8.11	6.01	2.1	-			Completed
SADP	MoA	8.56	7.1	1.39	-			Completed
LUSIP 1	MoA - ESWADE	121.56	14.96	31.49	75.15	27 January 2004	30 September 2012	Completed
RFEDP	MoF	9.21	6.2	2.37	-	15 September 2010	31 March 2017	Completed
SMLP	MoA - ESWADE	24.51	10.1	6.6	7.21	16 February 2016	31 March 2022	Ongoing
FINCLUDE	MoF - CFI	38.56	8.95	24.23	5.07	5 September 2019	31 March 2026	Ongoing
SAPEMP	MoA	19.87	9.07	7.8	3.0			Pipeline

Ongoing grants

Grant	Value	Impl. agency
Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) 2	US\$ 371,000	ESWADE
RPSF 1	US\$ 304,000	FAO
Strengthening Nutrition in Agri-food Systems in East and Southern Africa through Root and Tuber Crops (*FoodSTART – Africa) *a multi-country grant of US\$1,500,000 among five countries (Eswatini, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania)	US\$ 1,500,000*	CIP, DARSS, ESWADE
Climate-Smart Agriculture for resilient Livelihood (CSARL) (from GEF)	US\$ 7,200,000	ESWADE

The current Eswatini country programme consists of 2 ongoing projects: Smallholder Market-led Project (SMLP) with GEF funded Climate Smart Agriculture for Resilient Livelihoods (CSARL) which is being implemented by ESWADE under the Ministry of Agriculture and the Financial Inclusion and Cluster Development Project (FINCLUDE) implemented by CFI under the Ministry of Finance.

In addition, the country is benefiting from the *“Strengthening Nutrition in Agri-food Systems in East and Southern Africa through Root and Tuber Crops - FoodSTART Africa”* grant, which is a multi-country grant of US\$1,500,000 among five countries (Eswatini, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania). In 2021 the country received 2 grants towards increasing Covid-19 Resilience under the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility.

IFAD’s work in Eswatini over the past 2 years has been guided by a Country Strategy Note (2020 – 2021). This will be succeeded by a full scale Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) (2022 – 2027).

The design of the new COSOP initiated in 2021 and involved extensive consultations with government and key stakeholders. Due to Covid-19 related travel restrictions, some of the consultations had to be conducted virtually and others were in person. Notwithstanding, the support from the government and key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, made it possible to develop a draft COSOP which is currently undergoing review processes for approval at the IFAD Executive Board of April, 2022.

IFAD is also elaborating a new project concept note in for approval at the EB in April 2023.