

**Subregional evaluation of countries with fragile situations in IFAD-WCA. Learning from experiences of IFAD's engagement in the G5 Sahel countries and northern Nigeria**

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## **Foreword**

*This is the first subregional evaluation (SRE) conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD. An SRE assesses common rural-development challenges across a set of countries, and how IFAD's engagement and support have addressed them, aligned with its mandate of enabling rural transformation. The SRE focused on the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali and Niger) and the northern region of Nigeria, as they are facing similar fragility challenges in terms of: (i) socioeconomic issues; (ii) social disruption; (iii) environmental/climate change issues; (iv) institutional weaknesses/weak social contracts; and (v) insecurity and conflict issues.*

*The evaluation identified the main fragility drivers according to the above five categories, with interlinkages between and among them. While IFAD's operations contributed directly to drivers related to economics/poverty, natural resources management/climate change, and social inequality, the other two categories' drivers (weak public institutions and insecurity due to conflict) were not broadly addressed.*

*Findings show that IFAD's engagement and operations were relevant in those fragility contexts, especially for resilience building at the grassroots/community level – a critical goal in fragile situations. IFAD loan-supported programmes were also coherent between and within consecutive projects over the reviewed period (2008-2021), although there was no explicit intent of tackling fragility holistically. IFAD's support contributed to positive change with regard to benefits related to economic outcomes (e.g. through promotion of income-generation activities), socio-institutional contexts (e.g. by strengthening endogenous/local organizations, empowering women and promoting rural institutions), natural resources management and adaptation to climate change (e.g. in promoting sustainable soil and water-conservation practices). These have been instrumental in developing and strengthening the resilience capacities of households and communities.*

*The evaluation identified gaps that hinder the performance of IFAD's engagement in those contexts. Critical gaps include: (i) the lack of guidance on how to conduct holistic fragility analyses and use the results to define pertinent actions to be implemented, either by IFAD alone, or in partnership with other relevant actors; (ii) the insufficient availability of technical capabilities within the IFAD country teams to provide effective support in those difficult contexts; (iii) the limited engagement in non-lending activities to effectively comprehend sound actions tackling the root fragility causes; and (iv) the non-presence of IFAD in all countries and the limited suitability of financial instruments to support effective delivery in those fragile situations.*

*This report includes IFAD Management's response, which presents actions proposed to address all five recommendations. I hope that this report will be useful for Western and Central Africa and the Programme Management Department (in general), to improve their contributions to enabling rural transformation in countries with situations of fragility.*

*Director  
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*The appendices are available upon request from the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD ([evaluation@ifad.org](mailto:evaluation@ifad.org)).*

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
ARRI	ARRI Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations
ASAP	Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme
CASP	Climate Change Adaptation and Agribusiness Support Programme in the Savannah Belt
CBARDP	Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development Programme
CBNRMP	Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme - Niger Delta
CBOs	Community-based organizations
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CDA	Community development associations
CDD	Community-driven development
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
CES	Water and soil conservation
CIF	Community Investment Funds
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel
CLE	Corporate-level evaluation
COGES	Cereal Bank Community Committees
COSOP	Country strategic opportunities programme
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPE	Country programme evaluation
CPIA	Country policy and institutional assessment
CPM	Country programme manager
CPO	Country programme officer
CSN	Country strategy note
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CSPE	Country strategy and programme evaluation
DRS	Soil protection and restoration
DSF	Debt Sustainability Framework
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCS	Fragile and conflict-affected situations
FFS	Farmer field school
FIER	Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project
FIPS	Faster Implementation of Project Start-up
FOs	Farmers' organizations
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HDI	Human Development Index
I3N	Nigeriens Feed Nigeriens
ICO	IFAD Country Office
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs	International Financial Institutions

IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGA	Income-generating activities
ILO	International Labour Organization
INCLUSIF	Inclusive Finance in Agricultural Value Chain Project
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation
IPRM	Integrated Project Risk Management
KM	Knowledge Management
LIFE-ND	Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta of Nigeria
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MERIT	Multi-Energy for Resilience and Integrated Territorial Management Project
MTR	Midterm review
Neer-Tamba	Participatory Natural Resource Management and Rural Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRM	Natural resource management
OBI	Oracle Business Intelligence
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PADER-G	Rural Development Support Programme in Guéra
PAFA-4R	Agricultural Value Chains Support Project in the Southwest, Hauts-Bassins, Cascades and Boucle du Mouhoun Regions
PAPAM	Fostering Agricultural Productivity Project
PAPFA	Agricultural Value Chains Promotion Project
PARSAT	Project to Improve the Resilience of Agricultural Systems in Chad
PASADEM	Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region
PASK II	Poverty Reduction Project in Aftout South and Karakoro - Phase II
PASPRU	Rural Business Development Services Programme
PBAS	Performance-based allocation system
PCR	Project completion report
PCR/V	Project completion report validation
PDR	Project design report
PDRP	Sustainable Rural Development Programme
PFF	Pre-Financing Facility
PIDRK	Kidal Integrated Rural Development Programme
PMD	Programme Management Department
PMU	Project management unit
POs	Producers' organizations
PPE	Project performance evaluation
PPI	Ruwanmu Small-Scale Irrigation Project
RUWANMU	
PRECIS	Project to Strengthen Resilience of Rural Communities to Food and Nutrition Insecurity
ProDAF	Family Farming Development Programme in Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder Regions
ProDAF-Diffa	Family Farming Development Programme in the Diffa Region
PRODEFI	Inclusive Value Chain Development Project
PROGRES	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, Communal Equipment and the Organization of Rural Producers Project
PROHYPA	Pastoral Water and Resource Management Project in Sahelian Areas
ProLPRAF	Value Chains Development Programme for Poverty Reduction



PTA	Policy and Technical Advisory
PUSADER	Emergency Food Security and Rural Development Programme
RBAs	Rome-based agencies
RBM	Réseau Billital Maroobé
REPER	Strengthening Productivity and Resilience of Agropastoral family Farms Project
RIA	Research and Impact Assessment
ROPPA	Network of Farmers'and Producers' Organizations in West Africa
RUAs	Resource users' associations
SD3C	Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SECAP	Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SRE	Subregional evaluation
SWC	Soils and water conservation
TAPS	Technical Assistance for Project Start-up Facility
ToC	Theory of change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VCDP	Value Chain Development Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WCA	Western and Central Africa
WFP	World Food Programme

## Executive summary

### A. Background

1. **Introduction.** In 2021, the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) conducted a subregional evaluation (SRE) of IFAD's engagement in countries with fragility situations within IFAD's West and Central Africa division, covering the period 2010 to 2021. SREs were introduced in 2021, to support evidence-based learning. They evaluate intraregional issues or common development challenges within a defined geographical zone, to identify common strategic and programmatic lessons.
2. **Selected countries.** The SRE covered the G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali and Niger – and IFAD operations in the northern region of Nigeria. These sample countries – referred to as G5+1 hereafter – were selected due to the similar fragility challenges they are facing, which pose threats for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020), all the G5 Sahel countries and Nigeria were considered as being in fragile situations in 2020 (with Chad extremely fragile), while the World Bank (2020) considered Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria as being in situations of conflict-affected fragility, and Chad in a situation of social and institutional fragility.
3. **Rationale.** IFAD's Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations (2019) states that: "Fragility represents a serious threat to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." In this regard, IFAD's support has led to the Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C). This programme was approved by the Executive Board in December 2020 and implemented in partnership with FAO, WFP and the G5 Sahel Secretariat. This subregional joint programme, being the first of this type, raised significant interest within IFAD in providing evidence-based learning for its effective operationalization.

### B. Evaluation design and methodology

4. **Objectives and scope.** The SRE objective was to assess IFAD's operations between 2010 and 2021, using fragility lenses, to identify useful and relevant lessons. Its scope entailed ascertaining: (i) the extent to which IFAD's operational objectives and results contributed to addressing fragility drivers and related root causes within the subregion; and (ii) whether applied tools and approaches were adequate, considering the reality of volatile circumstances due to economic, natural and insecurity factors.
5. **Theory of change.** The SRE design was theory based, aligned with the IOE's evaluation guidelines, and focused on exploring how and why performance was or was not achieved in contexts of fragility. The SRE team constructed a theory of change based on the SD3C results framework and interaction outcomes with key stakeholders (at headquarters and in the field).
6. **Analytical framework.** The SRE utilized an analytical framework, which outlines the need to foster resilience. The framework includes five groups of fragility drivers linked to: (i) socioeconomic issues; (ii) social disruption; (iii) environmental and climate change challenges; (iv) institutional weaknesses and weak social contracts; and (v) insecurity and conflict issues. IFAD's support contributes to enhancing rural resilience through the development of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities at grassroots level.
7. **Methodology.** The SRE applied a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collected through desk reviews, interviews with stakeholders (in groups and with key informants) and primary field-data collection. Virtual interviews were also conducted with various categories of stakeholders at IFAD headquarters, subregional and country levels. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, national

consultants carried out field missions in the six countries. Overall, conclusions were based on triangulation of evidence from several sources.

## **C. Main findings**

### **Relevance**

8. **The country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) were relevant in supporting rural resilience building, which is a critical objective in fragile situations.** COSOPs are frameworks for IFAD's engagement in inclusive and sustainable rural transformation, which clearly outlined resilience building in the Sahelian contexts. The evaluation found no evidence of flexible and adaptive usage of COSOPs in those unpredictable fragility contexts. They also fall short in providing strategic orientation on transboundary fragility issues, such as cross-border trade and transhumance.
9. Reviewed strategies and operations included contextual analyses, which focused extensively on three fragility drivers where IFAD makes a direct contribution. These analyses relate to: economics/poverty, natural resources management/climate change, and social inequality. Deep analyses related to the other two drivers (weak public institutions and insecurity/serious conflict) was broadly absent.
10. **There is lack of clarity on how to perform holistic fragility analyses and the benefit of doing this, in comparison to analyses already done at design stage.** Reviewed experiences showed weak analyses of interactions within and across all categories of drivers. While lessons learned have informed the design of programmes, they do not explicitly relate to how to address holistically drivers of fragility. In fact, holistic fragility analyses were missing, and instances of simple designs – critical in those situations – were very limited.

### **Coherence**

11. **IFAD's loan-supported programme was coherent between and within consecutive projects over the reviewed period, although with no explicit intent of tackling fragility holistically.** Indeed, internal coherence was evident across IFAD-lending operations, with good evidence of it between consecutive loan operations in the same geographic areas. Evidence suggests that, except in the case of Nigeria, knowledge-management and policy-engagement activities could not broadly enhance efficacy in working in a fragile context, as they did not focus on lessons and/or actions for a better engagement in those fragile situations, including with the governments.
12. There was a broad complementarity of IFAD's operations with programmatic priorities of other international financial institutions (the African Development Bank and the World Bank) in the G5+1 countries. However, evidence is still lacking on the extent to which such complementarity translates into formal mechanisms to strengthen relative comparative advantages, or delivers synergies at the field level. Opportunities for partnerships were identified among the Rome-based agencies, but there is no solid evidence regarding previous use of such approaches to deliver better. The SRE identified the SD3C programme as a good opportunity for stronger collaboration and partnerships among the Rome-based agencies.

### **From effectiveness to impacts in fragile contexts**

13. This section presents the extent to which supported interventions contributed to tackling fragility drivers – aligned to the analytical framework – and the recent COVID-19 shock, enabling the identification of lessons learned.

### **Socioeconomic fragility drivers**

14. **Promoting income-generating activities helped in strengthening absorptive and adaptive capacities of beneficiaries in fragile contexts.** Improved farming practices led to increased yields, reduced yield variability, promotion of new crops

and animal-husbandry techniques, and adoption of asset-building strategies. The latter included: (i) reliance on public subsidy policy in some countries; (ii) in-kind credit to support the most vulnerable to accumulate primary assets; or (iii) internal, in-kind savings. These strategies contributed to building capacities of producers to resist or mitigate shocks.

15. **Capacity building and non-financial support have been critical in developing the human and social capital of individuals and groups, which are necessary in fragile situations.** Most projects therefore developed comprehensive packages for supporting micro-projects and rural enterprises around three main categories of actions: training, support along the value chain segments including promotion of market access, and enabling inclusive rural finance services.
16. **Support to customary credit and saving groups was instrumental to smallholders' resilience-building strategies.** In the absence of formal financing systems, supporting local mechanisms facilitates the expansion of productive assets for poor smallholders (e.g. farm inputs and processing equipment in Chad, irrigation pumps and fences for oasis gardens in Mauritania). It also contributes to profitable investments, and strengthening of absorptive and adaptive capacities of producers.
17. Cereal-bank facilities contributed to the improvement of absorptive capacities – by making food available for poor smallholders – and reduced hunger burdens in the lean season, as well as buffering the variation of food prices. Support focused on providing technical, managerial and governance skills for committee members who managed collection, storage and redistribution of grains deposited by farmers. This was particularly important in Chad and Niger, when erratic climatic events were combined with insecurity.

#### **Environment and climate change fragility drivers**

18. **Promoting soil and water conservation (SWC) practices in Sahelian arid and semi-arid contexts was critical in improving the resilience of smallholders.** IFAD-supported projects have accumulated significant knowledge on effective interventions aiming at SWC, restoration of vegetation cover and small-scale irrigation schemes (in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger). These interventions were bundled with sustainable agricultural-intensification methods, to improve productivity and climate change adaptation. In fact, most interventions that included a SWC component were found to be in line with climate-smart farming practices.
19. Supporting beneficiaries and decision makers in situations that prioritize the implementation of effective, sustainable natural resource management practices has been pivotal to enhancing capabilities towards resilience. A good example is the internalization of SWC and natural assisted regeneration in Niger, which is being scaled up through a national programme supported by the government and other partners.
20. **Support using Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) funding has been instrumental in promoting successful strategies for smallholders' adaptation to climate change.** GEF additional funding promoted smallholder livelihood diversification (income sources through off-farm activities), which contributed to effective adaptation (Participatory Natural Resource Management and Rural Development Project in Burkina Faso and the Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region in Niger). Support through ASAP grants effectively promoted participatory communal planning that contributed to climate change adaptation strategies and fostered climate-sensitive enterprises (Fostering Agricultural Productivity Project in Mali, Project to Improve the Resilience of Agricultural Systems in Chad).

21. **Achieving effective natural resource management (NRM) results in the Sahelian contexts requires full engagement of all parties to manage adequately differing interests on water and grazing resources across communities.** Availability and access to water is key to improving management of natural grazing land under the Sahel region's arid conditions, as shown by the example of Chad (with the Pastoral Water and Resource Management Project in Sahelian Areas). In Mauritania, support through the GEF component established three grazing corridors with pastoral wells for transhumance. Overall, SRE found that IFAD support to pastoralists has been modest, restricted to the development of transhumance corridors at a reduced scale.

**Institutional fragility: role of farmers' organizations**

22. **Empowering producers' and farmers' organisations (POs/FOs) to deliver effectively and sustainably has been instrumental to building absorptive and adaptive capacities, and can lead to transformative capacity.** Working with those organizations has been an area of comparative advantage for IFAD within the subregion. Key steps have included: enhancing their capacities to deliver services for improved input supply and product marketing; linking institutional strengthening and lobbying capacities with economic promotion; and helping them to federate into apex organizations. Positive results were achieved at a national level in all evaluated countries and at regional level with the Network of Farmers' and Producers' Organizations in West Africa.
23. IFAD's support to chambers of agriculture improved governance in local-development processes and built social capital. Projects in Burkina Faso and Niger played a significant role in: fostering the involvement of regional chambers of agriculture in both project implementation and participation of apex producers' organizations in policy dialogue; supporting food security interventions and government-led service deliver; and performing participatory marketing diagnosis. In many cases, a positive externality was building trust between beneficiaries and government.
24. **Mixed results were achieved for functionality of water user associations for small-scale irrigation schemes, where local management committees had to play important roles,** despite intensive efforts by projects (in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger). Some explanatory factors were identified, including internal divergence of interests, unequitable allocation of rights, low capacity of associations to deliver maintenance services to keep the investments functional, insufficient time to establish functional management committees, low maintenance fees for irrigation systems, and insufficient support to apex users' associations.
25. Experience suggests that nurturing local conventions for NRM to ensure social cohesion and confidence within and between communities, has been effective. There are several instances where IFAD supported projects promoting such approaches in Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania, which were effective and demonstrated relevance and ability for consensual management of natural resources.
26. **IFAD support created favourable conditions for farmers' organizations to participate in relevant policy discussions.** The SRE found instances where producers' organizations influenced decisions on food security policy, with positive benefits for resilience building. A good illustration was found in Niger (with the Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region), where consultation frameworks were established to foster trade linkages between different economic interest groups.

**Fragility issues linked to social inequalities**

27. **Lack of land tenure security discourages smallholders from investing in long-term land rehabilitation.** Available evidence in the G5+1 contexts revealed that this was addressed to some extent, mainly around investments supported for NRM infrastructure, but not always translated into policies. An exception was found

in Mali, where the recent land law promotes the use of existing local and national-level land commissions, and where producers' representatives were trained for effective use of these frameworks to prevent conflicts.

28. In the G5+1 contexts, women and youths have restricted land rights and are more subject to insecure land access. However, IFAD-supported projects have partially addressed the issue of inequality in land access, as it requires long-term support and involvement of different actors (from local to national levels).
29. **Pastoralism is an important issue in the Sahelian context. However, it received an insufficient focus in IFAD-supported operations over the reviewed period.** Pastoralists have insecure access rights to both farm- and grazing land near their settlements, and other grazing land during transhumance. They are also subject to conflicts over access to water resources or protected areas. Very few IFAD projects have tackled transhumance and its transboundary aspects, yet climate change is making this issue more conflictual in the subregion. Evidence suggests that supporting effective joint management committees of competing users can be effective in preventing pastoral-related local conflicts.
30. **Including a user-rights dimension to NRM remained a necessity, especially in social-conflict-prone areas, where conflict over land access and use easily escalates.** The SD3C programme recognizes this fact. It plans to support producer groups in efforts to manage NRM sustainably and tackle climate risks, by adopting more suitable practices and improving productive land and water infrastructure in order to enhance the resilience of rural livelihoods.

#### **Violent conflicts and insecurity**

31. **A nexus approach addressing poverty and conflict was missing in IFAD-supported operations in the G5+1 contexts.** IFAD-supported projects have been affected by various forms of conflict (e.g. in Mali, Niger and Nigeria) yet conflicts are treated as risks to be managed rather than problems IFAD can directly contribute to solving or preventing. For instance, results frameworks of IFAD projects in Nigeria do not consider how project outcomes fit within the poverty-conflict nexus. This makes it challenging to assess the extent to which interventions were intended to address conflict-related drivers.

#### **Shocks due to the COVID-19 pandemic**

32. Actions implemented in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate IFAD's ability to act in emergency situations. There are several cases where IFAD's support has shown flexibility in contributing to governments' efforts to respond to COVID-19. Examples are the development of a contingency plan for the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 in Niger; the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility; and other short-term, country-level initiatives implemented in Chad, Mali, and Nigeria. While lessons from these initiatives are yet to be generated, they do however illustrate IFAD's strength in adapting to changes in circumstances.

#### **Ensuring inclusiveness of interventions**

33. **Evidence suggests that IFAD-supported programmes had a clear focus on gender equality, albeit not yet sufficient to address root causes underpinning the high vulnerability of women in such fragile contexts.** Women are more sensitive to fragility drivers in Sahelian rural settings, and the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated their vulnerability. Projects have applied positive targeting approaches, enabling women and girls to benefit from interventions. However, gender impacts – critical in fragile situations – are not depicted (explicitly or clearly) in the theory of change pathways to integrate interventions that address roots causes of their vulnerability, which are mostly linked to sociocultural issues. Moreover, some project-design documents had no specific gender strategies.
34. IFAD's support contributed to empowering rural women and improving access to

productive assets – critical in building absorptive and adaptive capacities. All projects have sought to empower women economically, and some addressed issues related to workload (Chad, Mali and Mauritania). Evidence also demonstrates: (i) a gradual but slow improvement in strengthening women’s positions within communities, especially in the governing bodies of FOs and to a lesser extent within households; and (ii) progress in addressing land-access rights for women in Burkina Faso, and access to inputs for diversified economic activities in Chad and Niger. Nevertheless, the SRE found no evidence of women’s participation in processes related to local NRM mechanisms, or of a role in strengthening social contracts and keeping peace.

35. **Approaches to promote youth, core in several recent projects, generally focused on income-generation activities and training to build their absorptive and adaptive capacities.** In fragile situations, modalities for accessing funds (e.g. credit) have been more flexible and tailored (as provided by examples found in Mali and Niger). Evidence (e.g. in Burkina Faso and Nigeria) suggests the effectiveness of: integrating women and youth in upstream and downstream activities of value chain development; contributing to diversifying economic opportunities; and mitigating the effects of fragility drivers such as extreme poverty and climate change.
36. Youth effectively contributed to building the resilience of rural communities, when adequately targeted and involved in key actions, as showed by instances in Mauritania and Niger. Effective interventions simultaneously include goals for improving technical capabilities, increasing access to productive assets, and profitable markets. Overall, the effectiveness of IFAD’s youth support, aligned with outcomes of sustainable youth entrepreneurship and job creation, require deeper analysis of major youth fragility drivers at design stage.

#### **Efficiency, sustainability and scaling up**

37. Findings show that achieving efficiency gains in fragile situations was challenging but possible. IFAD intensified supervision and technical missions to projects in the G5 countries, as well as recourse to non-governmental service providers. This yielded positive results in addressing some barriers to efficiency gains, addressing delays in launching projects, slow disbursement rates, and project-coordination issues. However, management costs were generally higher in those situations, due to unforeseen/unplanned issues.
38. **The SRE identified challenges in relation to the IFAD business model, in supporting operations in those fragile contexts.** In fact, sovereign loan financing is not flexible enough to allow swift adjustments in cases of critical events (e.g. severe drought, economic crisis, political disruption). Grant windows financing seemed more appropriate and adaptive due to its flexibility (for disbursement and management), but is very limited in its amounts. Meeting cofinancing agreements has been challenging for governments of the G5 countries. Positively, the availability of funding with other international cofinanciers (e.g. the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund) was useful in supporting resilience-building interventions. During the reviewed period, most country directors (five out of six) did not reside in the countries, thus constraining IFAD’s ability to work with key partners and respond quickly to changing contexts.
39. **Evidence suggests that results can be sustained in fragile situations, by strengthening the ability of community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver and follow up achievements of IFAD-supported projects, as well as by ensuring greater social cohesion within communities.** Examples from Chad and Niger confirm that strengthening the effectiveness of resource-user associations and management committees increases the likelihood of sustainable results. Evidence from Niger and Nigeria indicated that supporting CBOs, for broadening and deepening social cohesion as well as strengthening the social contract, contributed to sustainable results in fragile situations. Such support includes the “social

engineering” (or social mobilization) approaches applied in strengthening the bonding, bridging and linking of social capitals (with examples in Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania).

40. Regarding scaling up, the SRE found that supporting governments in defining and implementing a scaling-up strategy is critical. Examples of scaling-up results by governments were found in Mali and Niger, while examples of upscaling by other development partners were found in Chad. The anchorage of interventions within national programmes has been a paramount factor in achieving effective scaling-up results.

## **D. Conclusions and recommendations**

41. **Conclusions.** The five categories of fragility drivers, identified in the evaluation analytical framework, were evident in the contexts of the G5+1 countries, with variability between and within countries. Building resilience (the key solution to fragility), is therefore critical in those countries. The reviewed IFAD country strategies, programmes and projects increasingly prioritized resilience building in their objectives, although comprehensive fragility analyses were not conducted.
42. IFAD’s support contributed to positive change in economic opportunities, NRM and adaptation to climate change, which was instrumental in enhancing the resilience of beneficiaries by building their absorptive, adaptive and ongoing transformative capacities. Findings show that women and youth (who are critical actors in fragile situations) have been supported through inclusive value chain development activities; but achievements were moderate in terms of tackling context-specific factors underpinning their greater vulnerability. Moreover, strengthening social cohesion through grassroots’ groups (famer’s organizations and community-based organizations) and using existing endogenous mechanisms are key to achieving and sustaining results.
43. Lastly, the SRE identified the following key challenges. First, IFAD’s engagement did not adequately reflect specificities of working in the G5+1 fragile contexts (e.g. simplicity of design, prior holistic analyses to understand the root causes of fragility, transboundary issues). Second, IFAD’s business model (in terms of financial instruments and country presence) is better suited to delivering in non-fragile situations than in the G5+1 contexts. Third, non-lending activities could not support the lending operations in holistically addressing fragility drivers.
44. Aligned with the previous findings, the SRE made the following recommendations.
45. **Recommendation 1. Develop a comprehensive resilience framework for the subregion or region to guide assessments, designs and implementation of operations (at field, national and regional levels).** The framework should build on existing guiding documents and on past IFAD experiences to guide holistic analyses, in order to: (i) understand the various drivers of fragility and root causes; (ii) develop a sound theory of change that helps in identifying pathways to tackling the fragility drivers identified, including those of a transboundary nature; (iii) design interventions that are simple but effective along the nexus of resilience and rural transformation; and (iv) identify strategic and operational partnerships for engagement. Given the transboundary nature of many of these issues, IFAD should consider piloting partnership frameworks that extend across national borders and build on experience from the ongoing pilot for regional operations. Sources of funding (available and potential) should be analytically presented, to ensure a proper mix of financial instruments to support resilience-building interventions in those contexts.
46. **Recommendation 2. Use the opportunity of IFAD decentralization 2.0 to improve the capabilities of country teams, interactions, and agility, for effective delivery in the G5+1 fragile contexts.** This entails strengthening the technical capacities of country teams’ members (capacity building), in order to



adequately support operations in those situations, identify key players to partner with for specific fragility aspects, and increase interactions for planning and implementation of joint actions. This action should take into account the comparative advantage of each organization, and define appropriate but simple designs.

47. **Recommendation 3. Revisit approaches for value chain development support within the subregion, to further improve inclusiveness and build on community-driven approaches in highly fragile areas.** This requires, on one hand, improving the targeting of women and youth, and developing appropriate support packages (including digital solutions, access to market, climate-smart agriculture) that take into account their specific conditions and respond to their expectations. On the other hand, community-driven approaches involving marginalized groups need to be developed, for better management of natural resources (including rangelands), adaptation to climate change and prevention of conflicts over natural resources. A specific focus should be to understand pastoralism issues, in order to find ways to promote positive interactions between agricultural and pastoral production systems.
48. **Recommendation 4. Further promote the resilience of rural communities through support to POs/FOs and CBOs, to effectively deliver services and strengthen their capacity to engage in policy dialogue on topics related to them.** This entails capitalizing on past IFAD achievements with POs/FOs and their apex bodies – which should include pastoralist organizations – through long-term engagement that facilitates their effective contribution in building the resilience of their members, especially in the most fragile areas. Support to women organizations should be increased and tailored to each context, to address progressively their specific fragility-related root causes, to raise sustainably their leadership profile, and to voice their social and economic status.
49. **Recommendation 5. Organize greater support to country teams for greater effectiveness of non-lending operations in those contexts.** This entails increasing the provision of technical backstopping (in terms of missions, learning events, studies and policy consultations), for better engagement with government partners on specific resilience issues (e.g. exclusion, social contract, pastoralism and transhumance), in partnership with national and international actors.

## Management response

1. Management welcomes IFAD's first sub-regional evaluation (SRE), focusing on countries with fragile situations in West and Central Africa. SREs are a new type of evaluation envisaged in the Multi-Year Evaluation Strategy of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE), released in 2021. They assess commonality of development challenges, programmatic initiatives and opportunities in a set of countries sharing similar rural-development issues, thus going beyond the scope of a single country. As such, SREs will constitute a valuable learning opportunity for Management, providing insights for preparing a subregional strategy or improving ongoing operations at country and regional levels. They will also be useful in building knowledge in countries not covered by country strategy and programme evaluations.
2. **This SRE is especially relevant in light of monitorable action 14 under the IFAD12 commitments**, stating that IFAD will develop specific initiatives for enhanced IFAD engagement in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. In particular, findings stemming from the SRE will guide the development of the joint Rome-based agency results framework for the Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C), which is being presented to IFAD's Executive Board in 2022. In addition, as the Inclusive Green Financing Initiative kicks off with the signature of various projects in 2022 and 2023, the findings of this SRE will inform its implementation.
3. In terms of process, Management appreciates the participatory approach adopted by IOE in conducting this SRE. It also appreciates the good interaction achieved at each step of the process, in spite of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and data availability. Since SREs are a new product, there is scope for IOE to help Management build internal awareness and knowledge of this type of evaluation. IOE has shown flexibility throughout the various steps of the evaluation process; it will be important to maintain such flexibility and allow IFAD staff to build processes for internal review and provision of feedback to this new product.
4. **The final version of the SRE reflects feedback provided by Management at earlier stages of consultation.** Management would like to emphasize the following key points:
  - a. **Analysis of "social contract".** IOE's 2015 corporate level evaluation of IFAD's Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected States and Situations does not make explicit reference to the concept of "social contract"; the same applies to Management's 2016-2025 Strategic Framework and the 2019 document establishing the Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations. Management acknowledges that the SRE does not explicitly recommend adopting the concept of "social contract", yet it highlights how such a concept has become an increasingly used tool that may be applied when required, as was the case in the 2020 Mali country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP).
  - b. **Complexity of design.** The issue of complexity is well known to IFAD, as highlighted in several portfolio stocktakes as well as in IOE's 2021 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations. Project complexity is the result of the evolution of IFAD over the last decade, in which IFAD associated replenishment commitments with the features included in project design. The updated project design guidelines – to be released in 2022 – will offer concrete tools to better articulate the project theory of change and build a consistent logical framework for monitoring. However, Management believes the issue requires a broader conversation in the context of the IFAD13 Replenishment consultation.
5. **Management concurs with the main findings of the SRE, acknowledging the resilience-building objective as the spearhead of IFAD operations in G5+1**

**countries.** Management also concurs with the challenges identified in the conclusion, yet would like to note the following:

- a. **On IFAD's lack of specific approach to fragile context:** the updated COSOP and project design guidelines, to be released in 2022, include enhanced guidance on fragility assessment and fragility lens to be applied. In addition, and as part of the IFAD12 commitments, IFAD will submit to its Executive Board a revised strategy on its engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations, replacing the 2016 one. The revised strategy will build on the recommendations arising from the 2021 IFAD Working Group on Fragility, as well as on the lessons learned from the Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations (2019). The revised strategy will provide further clarity on the definition of fragility, and guidance on differentiating the approach according to the fragility level. In replacing the Special Programme, IFAD will also provide specific guidance for the operationalization of the strategy, and better orientation for project delivery teams on how to concretely operate in fragile and conflict-affected situations.
- b. **On IFAD's country presence and financial instruments inadequacy for G5+1 operations:** the issue of country presence is addressed under recommendation 3. On the flexibility of financial instruments, IFAD's 2018 Restructuring policy promotes proactivity and incentives for governments to adapt their projects to a changing environment and according to emerging needs and priorities.
- c. **On non-lending activities' uneven capacity to support lending operations:** in line with IFAD12 commitments, IFAD is developing companion tools to existing guidelines for country-level policy engagement, and producing training material under IFAD's Operational Academy upskilling programme. The new COSOP guidelines also put emphasis on knowledge management, indicating that all COSOPs should establish the basic framework for knowledge generation, knowledge use and the creation of an enabling environment. These adjustments will be especially relevant in fragile contexts.

## Recommendations

6. **Management agrees with the five recommendations set forth in the SRE.** The following paragraphs provide further details on Management's view and proposed action on each recommendation.
7. **Recommendation 1.** Develop a comprehensive resilience framework for the subregion or region, to guide assessments, designs and implementation of operations (at field, national and regional levels). Also, pilot partnership frameworks that extend across national borders and build on experience from the ongoing pilot for regional operations.
8. **Agreed.** IFAD is committed to operationalizing the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS)<sup>1</sup>. Paragraph 9 of the President's Report on SD3C establishes the programme's link with the broader "strategic goal of building resilience of UNISS". Appendix X of the President's Report also explicitly indicates that SD3C is part of UNISS. The latter constitutes a solid framework basis for engaging in the region.
9. Based on the complexity and specifics of development challenges faced by IFAD Member States in the Sahel, Management concurs that developing a common and comprehensive resilience framework will better guide current and future engagement. Provided that its governing bodies agree to allocate sufficient time and resources to this endeavour, Management accepts the development of a comprehensive resilience framework for the Sahel, based on lessons learned from IFAD's engagement in the region, national and regional development priorities, and

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.un.org/africarenewal/sites/www.un.org.africarenewal/files/English%20Summary%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.un.org/africarenewal/sites/www.un.org.africarenewal/files/English%20Summary%20Report_0.pdf)

ongoing and potential partnership with a number of key initiatives and actors. These include: Rome-based agencies, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, G5 Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States, the Sahel and West Africa Club (hosted at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), regional development banks and integration institutions, and professional organizations of farmers and pastoralists (e.g. , *Reseau Billital Maroobe*, *Association pour la Promotion de l'Elevage au Sahel et en Savane*), among others. Management will however refrain from using the framework as a conditional element to approve new operations in the Sahel, to avoid adding an extra level of compliance and thus further increase the complexity of design.

10. **Recommendation 2.** Use the opportunity of IFAD decentralization 2.0 to improve the capabilities of country teams, interactions, and agility for effective delivery in the G5+1 fragile contexts. Categorizing key players, in order to collaborate for specific fragility aspects, to increase interactions for planning and implementation of joint actions – taking into account the comparative advantage of each organization – and to define appropriate but simple designs.
11. **Agreed.** As part of IFAD decentralization 2.0, IFAD is significantly expanding its country presence in the Sahel. In addition to the regional office in Abidjan, the multi-country office in Dakar, and the country-director-led IFAD Country Office (ICO) in Niger, offices in Burkina Faso and Mali will also become country-director-led ICOs. Furthermore, IFAD will open a new ICO in Chad. By the end of 2022, IFAD will have an ICO in each country of the Sahel, except for Mauritania.
12. IFAD will strengthen the capacity of each country office through training by the Operations Academy, with backstopping from Rome, Abidjan and Dakar. IFAD also plans to recruit additional thematic and technical experts, including specialists to support the implementation of regional climate-finance operations.
13. **Recommendation 3.** Revisit approaches for value chain development support within the subregion, to refine the inclusiveness and to build on community-driven approaches in highly fragile areas. This necessitates an improved targeting of women and youth, and the development of suitable support packages. Secondly, apply community-driven approaches that involve marginalized groups, for better management of natural resources (including rangelands), adaptation to climate change, and prevention of conflicts over natural resources. A specific focus should be to understand pastoralism issues, in order to find ways to promote positive interactions between agricultural and pastoral production systems.
14. **Agreed.** IFAD possesses notable experience in promoting community-driven approaches, with targeted beneficiaries and their communities playing a key role in the design and implementation of projects and policies that respond to their needs. The Evaluation Synthesis on Community Driven Development (CDD) in IFAD-supported projects (2020) concluded that CDD-related projects perform better than non-CDD ones in countries with fragile situations. The evaluation recommended that IFAD retake “corporate ownership of CDD, by making it visible throughout its strategies and institutional functions”.
15. Along this line, IFAD projects will continue to emphasize the targeting and quality of adapted services provided to vulnerable groups, particularly to women and youth, in line with IFAD12 commitments. For example, Management will to continue to support investments and services prompting youth entrepreneurship and skill development, including through the scaling up of innovative and ICT4D interventions. In addition, Management will promote investments in pastoralism through natural resource management and participatory community-driven interventions, based on lessons learned from the implementation of the Water and Resource Project in Sahelian Areas, in Chad, and the ongoing Rural Poor Stimulus Facility-funded grant implemented by *Reseau Billital Maroobe* (a regional organization of pastoralists).

16. **Recommendation 4.** Further promote the resilience of rural communities, through support to producers' organizations (POs)/farmers' organizations (FOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), to effectively deliver services and strengthen their capacity to engage in policy dialogue on topics related to them.
17. **Agreed.** IFAD has a longstanding collaboration with POs/FOs and CBOs in the Sahel. The recent decentralization of the IFAD Farmers' Forum process is also a relevant mechanism to foster stronger partnerships at local level, as testified by the success of the 2018 Nouackchot regional meeting. The SD3C design fosters an innovative modus operandi to engage with POs as strategic partners both at regional and national levels; this will need careful monitoring to ensure generation of valuable lessons.
18. Management will also continue to promote investments in building the capacity of POs/FOs and CBOs, in order to support their participation in policy-engagement activities at the local, national and regional levels, but also to enhance the provision of professional services to their members. For instance, the Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme and the Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Programme, cofinanced by the European Union and IFAD, have been building the capacity of FOs for several years. On the other side, many IFAD-funded projects establish direct memorandums of understanding or service agreements with FOs, which contribute to building their technical and institutional capacities. The regional SD3C programme also includes investments in building the capacities of FOs.
19. **Recommendation 5.** Organize greater support to country teams for greater effectiveness of non-lending operations in those contexts.
20. **Agreed.** Management takes note of the opportunity to improve performance of non-lending activities in fragile contexts. Key actions for Management will include: (i) building the capacity of country teams and project management units in policy engagements, partnerships building and South-South and Triangular Cooperation; (ii) carrying out analytical studies focusing on fragile contexts; (iii) identifying priority areas of non-lending activities during the design process of the regional resilience framework; and (iv) developing partnerships with credible institutions to improve the performance of non-lending activities.

# Subregional evaluation of countries with fragile situations in IFAD-WCA. Learning from experiences of IFAD's Engagement in the G5 Sahel Countries and Northern Nigeria

## I. Background

### A. Introduction

1. In 2021, the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) conducted a subregional evaluation (SRE)<sup>2</sup> of IFAD's support to countries in fragile situations within the West and Central Africa division of IFAD (WCA). The SRE is a new product of IOE that seeks to evaluate intraregional issues or common development challenges within a geographical zone. It identifies intraregional strategic and programmatic lessons that cannot be easily addressed by simply looking at countries individually. SREs explicitly aim at evidence-based learning aligned with the evaluation manual of IFAD.<sup>3</sup>
2. **Fragility as the central theme of SRE and its importance.** Following IOE standard practice when scoping an evaluation, upstream consultations were organized between IOE and the Programme Management Department (PMD) (including WCA). These consultations led to a consensus on the need to focus on fragility, as this was seen as a critical contextual issue across the subregion. On that basis, it was also agreed that the evaluation should cover the G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali and Niger – and IFAD operations in the northern region of Nigeria. As stated in IFAD's Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations (2019): "Fragility represents a serious threat to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The consequences of fragility are alarming and represent a serious challenge to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of the world's poorest people will be living in fragile situations by 2030. Moreover, fragility is not confined to specific countries and/or regions – it has severe global impact on issues such as migration, economic and social disruption and insecurity."<sup>4</sup> The African Development Bank (AfDB) views contextual challenges such as poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, high migration, climate change and poor management of natural resources as sources of pressure that make African countries more vulnerable.<sup>5</sup> Ending poverty and extreme poverty requires greater efforts in accelerating economic gains, especially where poverty has been mostly intractable in fragile and conflict situations.<sup>6</sup>
3. **Rationale of choosing the G5 Sahel countries + Nigeria (G5+1).** Created in 2014, the G5 Sahel aims to support its members in responding adequately to the security challenges they face.<sup>7</sup> Important human and financial resources have been allocated by the five member governments for military responses, albeit to the detriment of investments in socio-economic development. In this context, IFAD's support has culminated in the subregional Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response

<sup>2</sup> A new product introduced by IOE after the peer review of 2019, which is included in the IOE evaluation manual revised in 2021.

<sup>3</sup> IFAD evaluation manual was under development in 2021. The draft version states that SRE can have one or more of the following objectives: (i) assess commonality of development challenges, programmatic initiatives and opportunities beyond the scope of a single country; (ii) assess the strategy, common intervention approaches supported by IFAD, and IFAD organizational set-up in a set of countries that share salient characteristics; (iii) provide learning that can be used by IFAD as an input to prepare a subregional strategy or to improve ongoing operations at country and regional levels; and (iv) build knowledge of countries with a small portfolio that are less likely to have a CSPE conducted.

<sup>4</sup> IFAD. 2019. *Special Programme for Countries with fragile situations: Operationalizing IFAD's Fragility Strategy*. IFAD, April 2019.

<sup>5</sup> AfDB Group Strategy for addressing fragility and building resilience in Africa; 2014-2019.

<sup>6</sup> Corral Paul, Alexander Irwin, Nandini Krishnan, Daniel Gerszon Mahler, & Tara Vishwanath. 2020. *Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>7</sup> Over the past ten years, serious security crises evolved within the subregion due to armed conflicts primarily in border areas (from Lake Chad to the Niger Delta), and attacks from extremist groups. The G5 military force was then established to protect these countries and their populations, restore government services and promote peace for development.



to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C),<sup>8</sup> approved by the IFAD Executive Board in December 2020 and implemented in partnership with the other two Rome-based agencies (RBAs) (FAO and WFP) and the G5 Sahel Secretariat.<sup>9</sup>

4. **SD3C<sup>10</sup> was designed as a response to a subregional context characterized by significant fragility challenges.** Subregional fragility challenges identified in the programme design include political and economic disruptions, constraints related to smallholder farming development due to degradation of natural resources, climate change, food security and nutrition constraints, as well as security concerns. The programme is the first of this kind financed by IFAD. It has the clear purpose of addressing fragility challenges, in particular at subregional level, by assisting smallholders, mainly women and young smallholders living in border areas, to consolidate their livelihoods.<sup>11</sup> As the first subregional joint programme of this type, there is significant interest within IFAD around learning and drawing lessons on how to effectively operationalize similar programmes, considering current IFAD business systems and practices. The SD3C evaluability was almost nil at inception stage during the SRE conduct;<sup>12</sup> therefore, it has not been evaluated. However, its design was referred to to ensure it could benefit the SRE findings.
5. **The SRE's purpose was to assess IFAD's operations since 2010,<sup>13</sup> using fragility lenses, to identify lessons learned that are relevant and useful for current and future interventions.** The SRE covers a geographically continuous area, in which the fragility drivers are assumed similar and transboundary. The inclusion of the northern area of Nigeria is justified by its geographical continuity with the Sahelian region, its influence on interactions with neighbouring countries, and the similarity of fragility concerns.<sup>14</sup> As further presented in chapter II, SRE identified main fragility issues for the subregion in terms of: economic, social, natural, institutional and conflict-related drivers. The SRE did not assess how IFAD's operations directly tackled fragility, but it rather ascertained: (i) the extent to which objectives of IFAD's operations and achieved results contributed towards addressing fragility drivers within the subregion; and (ii) whether IFAD used adequate instruments and approaches considering the reality of operating in areas where circumstances are volatile due to insecurity and violence. The evaluation also paid attention to non-lending activities and other specific initiatives with a transboundary and/or subregional perspective. The scope of the evaluation therefore differs from that of corporate-level evaluations, which rather evaluate corporate strategies and processes. Judging whether the latter effectively contributed to addressing fragility will not be a priority.

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<sup>8</sup> The SD3C includes country loans (highly concessional terms) and grants, to support those countries that are facing serious fragility challenges due to several reasons, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.g5sahel.org/investir-davantage-dans-le-sahel-pour-stimuler-le-developpement-et-la-resilience-des-populations-rurales-le-g5-sahel-et-le-fida-signent-des-accords-de-financements/> (accessed in December 2021).

<sup>10</sup> The programme title is: Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change. It also includes Senegal (in addition to the G5 Sahel), which is not included in the present SRE scope, as it is not classified as a country in fragile situation over the reviewed period.

<sup>11</sup> The programme, which will last six years (2021-2026), is expected to contribute to poverty reduction (approximately by 10 per cent) in the programme area and boost socio-economic (including trading) activities, by reducing constraints (to agricultural production and trade) exacerbated by conflicts, the anthropogenic impacts on natural resources, as well as difficulties in gaining access to productive resources. Elements of the programme are presented in Table A7, Annex V.

<sup>12</sup> Launched in March 2021, while the SRE inception started in April 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Corresponding to the first year of the Eighth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD8). Under IFAD8, IFAD committed for a differentiated approach between different regions and different country situations, including income and institutional development. One of the typologies identified is "fragile states", where IFAD recognized the need for more institution building, basic agriculture and rural services. The report of the Consultation on the Eighth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (REPL.VIII/4/R.2. 2008) acknowledges that almost one quarter of IFAD resources are spent in fragile states.

<sup>14</sup> The formula of the IFAD performance-based allocation system (PBAS) includes a variable entitled "IFAD Vulnerability Index", which captures the multidimensionality of rural poverty in each country. An index of 12 equally weighted indicators measures rural vulnerability in terms of exposure, sensitivity and lack of adaptive capacity to endogenous and exogenous causes and/or events. The IVA scores range between 1 and 2, a score towards 2 entails a high vulnerability. For IFAD11 (2019-2021), the scores were: Burkina 1.57, Chad 1.7, Mali 1.58, Mauritania 1.58, Niger 1.67, and Nigeria 1.46.

6. **Structure of the report.** The current chapter includes further sections, which present the fragility-related concepts and approaches, as well as the evaluation methodology. Chapter II discusses the subregion's main fragility drivers, the overview of IFAD operations, and key lessons from other partners' experiences. Chapters III to VI include assessments in relation to evaluation criteria in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and impact (analysed as short- to long-term results), efficiency, inclusiveness (gender and youth), sustainability and scaling up. The conclusions and recommendations complete the report.

## **B. Fragility-related concepts and approaches**

7. The term "fragility" rose to prominence in the development discourse in the 1990s. Key concerns associated with fragile situations include: i) the threats they pose to national, regional and global security; and ii) the fact that fragility commonly causes higher levels of poverty and slows down progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), compared to non-fragile situations.
8. **Definitions of fragility tend to be organization specific,<sup>15</sup> but all definitions reflect an assumption that the causes of fragility are multidimensional; weak institutions are commonly flagged across all definitions.** The definition of fragility varies from one organization to another, depending on the orientation it takes. In general, definitions vary mostly in the degree of emphasis they place on the following drivers of fragility and their interaction: weak institutions, economic decline, poverty, climate change, environmental degradation, social exclusion, insecurity and violent conflicts (chapter II presents these drivers in detail for the G5+1 countries).<sup>16</sup>
9. **The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) characterizes fragility as the combination of exposure to risk, and insufficient coping capacities of the State and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks.** Fragility can be both a result and a cause of negative outcomes including violence, poverty, inequality, displacement, and environmental and political degradation.<sup>17</sup> The OECD periodically releases a report on States of Fragility, which presents an analysis based on a multidimensional fragility framework. The review of the last decade of reports shows a consistent systems-based conceptualization of fragility, albeit with significant evolution in the framework used over time. The current framework is based on five dimensions of fragility: economic, environmental, political, security and societal.<sup>18</sup> State-level capacities are also measured, together with formal and informal mechanisms that societies can draw upon to cope with negative events and shocks.<sup>19</sup> The 2020 report classifies countries into three categories (extremely fragile, fragile and not fragile), based on a spectrum of intensity across the five dimensions. According to the OECD 2020 classification, all the G5 Sahel countries and Nigeria were considered to be in fragile situations in 2020, with Chad being extremely fragile (Figure 1).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This entails that the listing of countries in fragile situations can differ (sometime significantly) from one organization to another.

<sup>16</sup> Main organizations that classify countries in the situations of fragility are the World Bank and the OECD. IFAD also developed its own list at a certain time (in its 2016 strategy), but from 2019 it went back to using the WB list, which consolidates scores or other IFIs. Violent conflicts are more and more considered among fragility drivers: see World Bank.

<sup>17</sup> Definition first published in the 2016 State of Fragility report and used in the following reports. Before, a fragile state was defined in terms of weak capacity of a State to carry out its basic functions needed to reduce poverty, improve nation's development, and safeguard human rights of its citizens (OECD 2008).

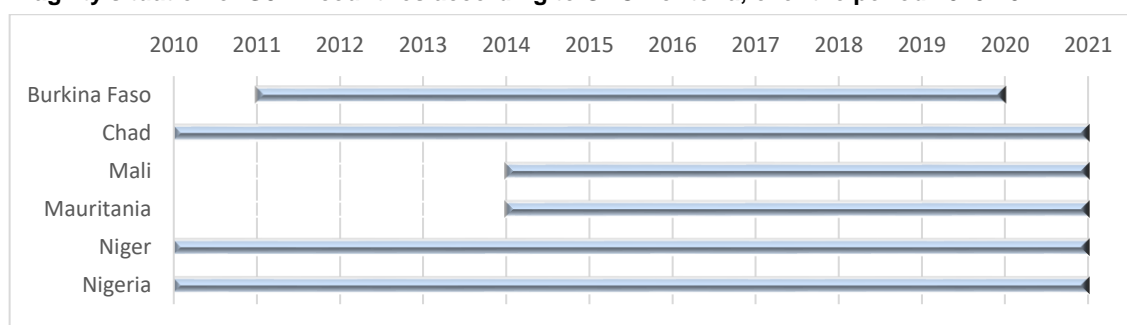
<sup>18</sup> OECD introduced its multidimensional fragility framework in States of Fragility 2016. This framework captures the diversity of those contexts affected by fragility, measuring it on a spectrum of intensity across five dimensions: economic, environmental, political, security and societal. States of Fragility 2020 marks the third iteration of this multidimensional framework. There are 44 indicators across 5 dimensions of fragility. The choice of indicators has been driven by selection criteria in line with the OECD's fragility concept of high risk and low coping capacity.

<sup>19</sup> The choice of these dimensions, and the decision to take a society approach to fragility, is based on expert judgment. It is one of the key outcomes of the consultation process underlying the new OECD fragility framework.

<sup>20</sup> Box A1, Annex V, presents the evolution of OECD criteria since 2010, showing main change.



Figure 1  
Fragility situation of G5 +1 countries according to OECD criteria, over the period 2010-2021



Source: OECD States of Fragility 2020

10. The **World Bank (WB)** defines fragility in relation to countries with deep governance issues, and State institutional weakness, which are identified through policy-based and governance indicators. The WB key definitions are presented in Box 1.<sup>21</sup> The WB currently identifies three issues that are significant in fragile contexts: (i) deep governance issues and institutional weakness; (ii) situations of active conflict; and (iii) high levels of interpersonal and/or gang violence. As with OECD, there has been evolution in WB's approach to analysing fragility and classifying countries as fragile.

Box 1

#### World Bank definitions of fragility terms

**Fragility:** Countries with deep governance issues and State institutional weakness are identified through policy-based and governance indicators. Fragile situations tend to be characterized by deep grievances and/or high levels of exclusion, lack of capacity and limited provision of basic services to the population. Fragile situations tend also to be characterized by the inability or unwillingness of the State to manage or mitigate risks, including those linked to social, economic, political, security, or environmental and climatic factors.

**Conflict:** Countries in active conflict are identified based on a threshold rate of conflict-related deaths. Violent conflicts occur when organized groups or institutions, sometimes including the State, use violence to settle grievances or assert power.

**Violence:** Countries with high levels of interpersonal and gang violence, with a major destabilizing impact, are identified based on the per capita level of intentional homicides. Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children are also integrated into this definition.

Source: World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025, p.6

11. WB annually releases a list of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS), differentiating between two categories.<sup>22</sup> The first category includes countries with high levels of institutional and social fragility, identified through publicly available indicators and its own Country Policy and Institutional Assessment indicators, which measure the quality of policy and institutions, and manifestations of fragility.<sup>23</sup> The second category embraces countries affected by violent conflict, identified through a threshold number of conflict-related deaths relative to the population.<sup>24</sup> WB (2020) considered Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria as being in situations of conflict-affected (medium intensity) fragility; Chad was in the situation of social and institutional fragility (see Figure 2).

<sup>21</sup> World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025.

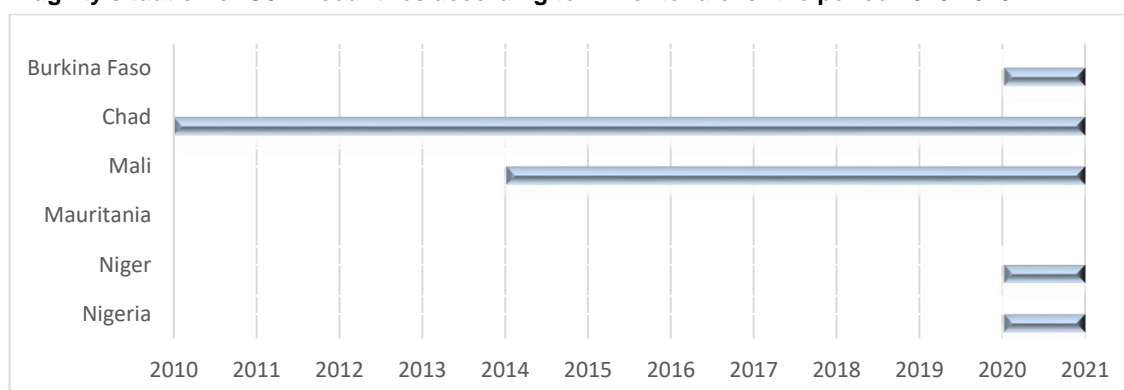
<sup>22</sup> The list is consolidated, taking into account other IFIs (ADB, AfDB, IAD) assessment and scoring. The classification changed in 2020 to include the differentiation of conflict-affected countries from those that faced deep social and institutional fragility.

<sup>23</sup> The WB uses the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) that includes a set of 16 criteria grouped in four clusters: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions.

<sup>24</sup> This category includes two subcategories based on the intensity of violence: countries in high-intensity conflict and countries in medium-intensity conflict.

Figure 2

**Fragility situation of G5 +1 countries according to WB criteria over the period 2010-2020**



Source: World Bank Data

12. **The first IFAD formal response to addressing fragility was the Policy on Crisis Prevention and Recovery, approved in 2006.**<sup>25</sup> The prioritization of adapting IFAD support to countries in situations of fragility and/or conflict increased with IFAD8 (2010-2012). Since then, IFAD has committed to implementing a differentiated approach tailored to specific fragile contexts, including situations of greater vulnerability and institutional weakness. In 2011, IFAD developed the Disaster Early Recovery Guidelines, to support its staff in implementing timely and effective interventions in a post-disaster context. The guidelines emphasized the need for IFAD's involvement in early recovery, to support the rehabilitation of rural livelihoods and to ensure swift transition from relief to long-term sustainable development.<sup>26</sup>
13. In 2014, the first corporate-level evaluation (CLE) on IFAD's engagement in FCS was conducted. Among CLE's overarching messages, the most important were:<sup>27</sup> **(i) the need for IFAD to further adapt and sharpen its approaches in order to achieve better outcomes in FCS; and, linked to that, (ii) the need to customize its operating model to respond to the specific requirements of working in those situations.**
14. Following CLE, **IFAD's strategy for engagement in countries with fragile situations was approved in 2016, outlining the guiding principles for IFAD's engagement in such countries.** It proposed organizational and operational approaches to enhance the resilience and effectiveness of IFAD operations in those situations (including options for mobilizing and allocating resources).<sup>28</sup> The 2016 IFAD strategy for engagement in countries with fragile situations includes its current definition of fragility presented in Box 2. The IFAD 2016 definition is broad in scope – it relates to vulnerability, weak governance, weak capabilities and conflict – but aligned with those of OECD and the WB. It includes key aspects highlighted in both OECD and WB definitions, and therefore has been used in the context of this evaluation.

<sup>25</sup> The policy defines fragile states as being those "characterized by weak policies, weak institutions and weak governance, resulting in meagre economic growth, widespread inequality and poor human development. Fragile states are more exposed to the risk of outbreaks of violence than are non-fragile states. Fragile states may be well endowed with natural resources or be resource-poor."

<sup>26</sup> IFAD. 2011. *IFAD Guidelines for Disaster Early Recovery*. EB 2011/102/R.29.

<sup>27</sup> The CLE recommendations are provided in Table A1, Annex V.

<sup>28</sup> Guiding principles were introduced, encompassing: risk management and resilience; addressing root causes; gender mainstreaming and targeting; building institutions, trust and social cohesion; flexible and responsive resourcing, instruments and approaches; strategic and complementary partnerships; achieving, measuring and learning from results.

## Box 2

### IFAD's definition of fragility

Fragility is "a condition of high vulnerability to natural and man-made shocks, often associated with an elevated risk of violence and conflict"; this entails consequences of weak governance structures along with low-capacity institutions.

Fragility negatively affects rural development and food security objectives, because it weakens institutional capacity, disrupts rural livelihoods, and increases volatility in food prices and food security.

Source: IFAD 2016 Strategy on countries in fragile situation

15. **In 2019, the Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations was approved, providing an operational framework for the 2016 strategy.**<sup>29</sup> The programme is intended to consolidate institutional thinking on the ways in which fragility affects IFAD's work. It focuses on fragility consequences and suggests how to adjust IFAD's activities in such operating environments.<sup>30</sup> The programme identifies four main entry points to maximize IFAD's impact in fragile contexts and build resilience. This latter aspect is critical when working in such contexts.<sup>31</sup> See Box 3.

## Box 3

### IFAD suggested entry points and approach in fragile situations

Four entry points, based on IFAD's comparative advantage when working in fragile contexts, are: (i) gender empowerment; (ii) institution building; (iii) food security; and (iv) natural resource management.

A differentiated approach is also suggested, which takes into account four fragility stages relevant to IFAD's work: (i) high vulnerability to shocks; (ii) crisis; (iii) post crisis and recovery; and (iv) transition to resilience.

Source: IFAD's Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations (2019)

16. **The need to deliver greater resilience, as emphasized by the 2019 Special Programme, means seeking to minimize or suppress vulnerability to shocks by improving actors' abilities to effectively manage and mitigate various fragility drivers and stressors.**<sup>32</sup> Resilience is the ability to manage fragility strains through effective institutions, processes and capacities that build legitimacy and societal cohesion.<sup>33</sup> Resilience has two key aspects: (i) the resilience to what; and (ii) the resilience of what. The "resilience to what" covers both man-made and natural shocks,<sup>34</sup> and the ability of a system to sustainably respond, manage and resist such shocks. The "resilience of what/whom" relates to the system elements that are subject to the shocks. This includes the human actors (individuals, households, groups of actors, communities and nations), the physical environment and the institutional settings (from grassroots to central level).<sup>35</sup> **Achieving**

<sup>29</sup> There has not been time for its usage before the current evaluation.

<sup>30</sup> It is too early to expect it to have significantly affected IFAD support in the G5+1 contexts, given that its major influence would be expected in 2020 designs and onwards.

<sup>31</sup> With the 2019 Special Programme, IFAD moved to use the WB's harmonized list of states in fragile situations to identify fragile states, to align with other multilateral development banks. Before that, IFAD used to establish its own list of states in fragility, mainly based on rural-development indicators. For instance, according to the 2014 CLE, 48 IFAD Member States were classified as fragile, which is approximately 50 per cent of the total recipient countries included in the Ninth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (2013-2015) performance-based allocation system (PBAS) cycle.

<sup>32</sup> OECD. 2012.

<sup>33</sup> The RBA (2015) used the following United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in their common approach to strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition:

"The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions."

<sup>34</sup> See IFAD definition of fragility.

<sup>35</sup> IFAD12 (Twelfth Replenishment cycle [2022-2024]. Recovery – Rebuilding – Resilience) has put a strong focus on resilience, especially due to possible implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among key points mentioned: (a) combining lending programme with new means of engagement such as through PS, grant financing in countries most vulnerable to fragility among other characteristics; and (b) enhanced focus on tailoring its offer in countries with fragile

**resilience means promoting and supporting the development of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities by beneficiaries.<sup>36</sup>**

17. **Another important concept (used in this SRE) is “social contract”, which is increasingly found in literature on fragility and is a response to the growing focus on conflict as a driver of fragility.<sup>37</sup>** According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2016), “a social contract refers to processes by which everyone in a political community, either explicitly or tacitly, consents to State authority, thereby limiting some of her or his freedoms, in exchange for the State’s protection of their universal human rights and security and for the adequate provision of public goods and services”.<sup>38</sup> Simply defined, social contract entails the implicit, mutual bargaining over what citizens expect from the State, and what the State can legitimately ask from citizens in return, as well as trades-off between the two.<sup>39</sup>

## C. Evaluation methodology

### Overarching and key evaluation questions

18. Aligned with the SRE’s objectives presented earlier, **the overarching evaluation question is: to what extent did past experiences of IFAD engagement in the G5+1 countries respond to the main contextual fragility challenges; and what lessons could be drawn from these?** The key evaluation questions, grouped by result level, are presented in Table 1,<sup>40</sup> while the evaluation framework is presented in Annex II. For each key question, what was done and achieved – considering working in fragile contexts – was explored, in order to identify the main lessons.

Table 1  
Key evaluation questions

<u>Processes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent have the design of country strategies, programmes and projects been relevant, taking into account fragility drivers and the principles of working in fragile situations?</li> <li>- How adequate and adaptive have intervention approaches and elements been, for a delivery in the subregional contexts featured by economic, natural, social, institutional and security constraints?</li> <li>- How has IFAD’s engagement (strategies and operations) assumed internal coherence, and had similar or complementary developmental purposes, to contribute mitigating fragility constraints?</li> <li>- How efficient has IFAD’s support been in those challenging fragile contexts, considering financial instruments and procedures, managerial approaches (including field presence), tools and processes?</li> </ul>
<u>Results and outcomes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How effective was IFAD’s past support (at national and subregional levels) in achieving results that contribute addressing key fragility drivers?</li> <li>- Based on evidence, to what extent have past supports contributed to build resilience and fostering rural transformation in these fragile situations?</li> <li>- What are the lessons learned from IFAD-supported interventions in terms of contribution to change in fragile situations?</li> </ul>
<u>Sustainability and upscaling results achieved</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent have achievements and/or results been sustained and upscaled in these fragile contexts, and which lessons are relevant to IFAD’s future engagement in this subregion?</li> </ul>

Source: SRE team elaboration

### Overall evaluation design

19. **The focus of SRE on exploring how and why performance was achieved (or not) meant that the overall evaluation design was theory based.** A key assumption of the evaluation design was that while considering the evolution of underlying fragility drivers in the subregion over the past decade, lessons could be

situations and leveraging existing and new instruments and initiatives – including technology and digitalization – for transformative engagement in these countries.

<sup>36</sup> See details in Table A2, Annex V.

<sup>37</sup> As mentioned earlier, one main feature of FCS relates to institutional weakness (State-related in particular).

<sup>38</sup> UNDP. 2016. *Engaged Societies, Responsive States: The Social Contract in Situations of Conflict and Fragility*, p.9.

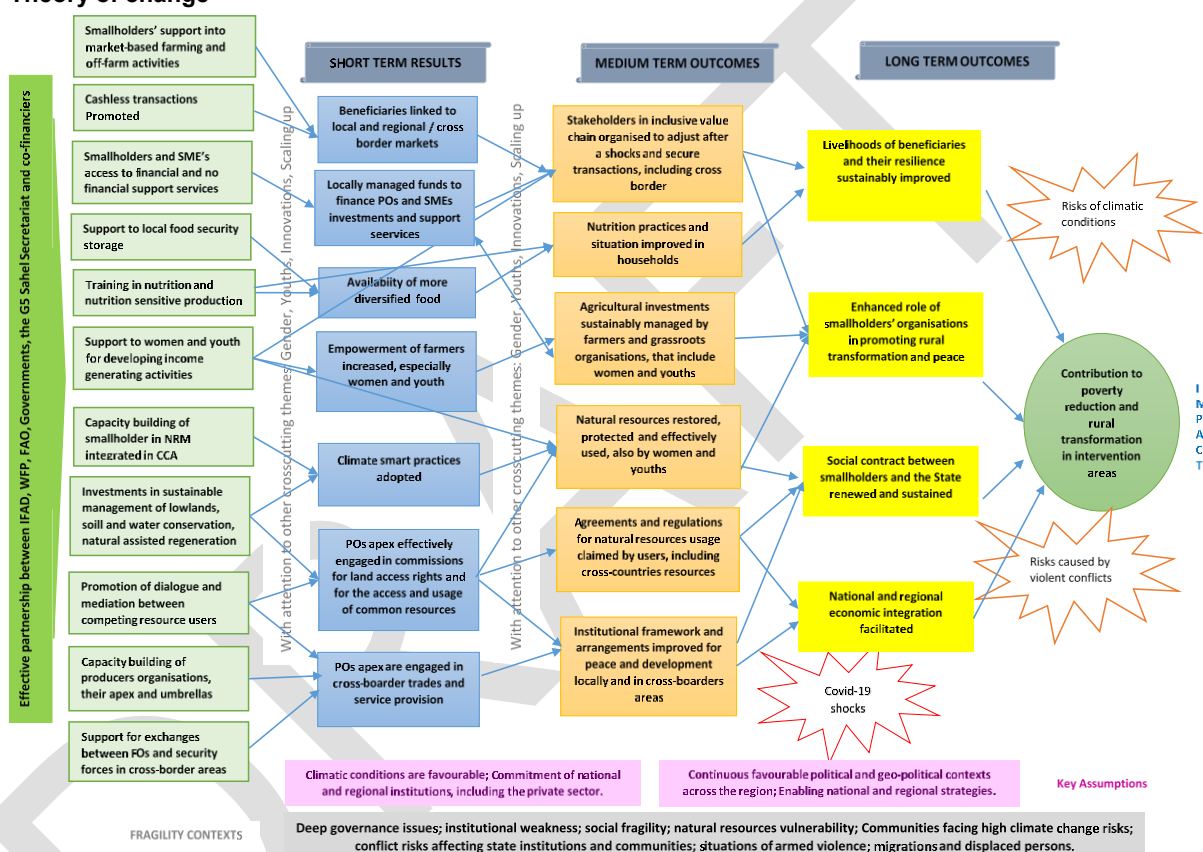
<sup>39</sup> World Bank. 2019. *Social Contracts and World Bank Country Engagements: Lessons from Emerging Practices*. IEG Meso Evaluation. Independent Evaluation Group. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>40</sup> IOE was preparing its third edition of IFAD’s Evaluation Manual in 2021 and, therefore, the new criterion of coherence has been introduced, aligned with the revised OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

drawn from the experience; these would be relevant for current and future programmes. This required exploring both how and why performance was achieved (or not), how was this was affected by fragility at that point in time, and how the same fragility context applies now. This required the use of a theory of change (ToC) that would allow systematic exploration of how and why performance was delivered.

20. Neither the 2016 IFAD strategy nor the 2019 Special Programme include a ToC related to IFAD's supports in fragile situations. Therefore, using the SD3C programme as a basis, the SRE team developed the ToC (Figure 3), with inputs from stakeholders of relevant WCA country teams. Through an iterative process, the ToC was finalized considering data gathered. Hence, the ToC below is beyond the SD3C scope, because it incorporates key fragility features of the subregion.

Figure 3  
Theory of change



Source: SRE team elaboration

21. **The ToC reflects results of a rural-development programme that contributes to rural transformation in the interventions areas, aligned with IFAD's mandate and achieving SDG2.** As reflected at the bottom of the ToC, the contexts entail major fragility issues. Four long-term outcomes are foreseen, of which two are typical rural-development objectives: improved livelihoods and resilience of smallholders, and enhanced role of grassroots organizations in processes for rural transformation.<sup>41</sup> The two other objectives (sustained social contract and regional economic integration) are more related to fragility issues of the subregion. These long-term outcomes suggest different impact pathways of rural transformation. The ToC is based on three important assumptions: i) partnerships with various actors who have experience in operating in fragile situations; (ii) targeting of internal-system actors and institutions that are critical for achieving resilience; and (iii) implementing actions that contribute to developing and strengthening the resilience of beneficiaries, through absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities building, which are assumed concurrent and not sequential.

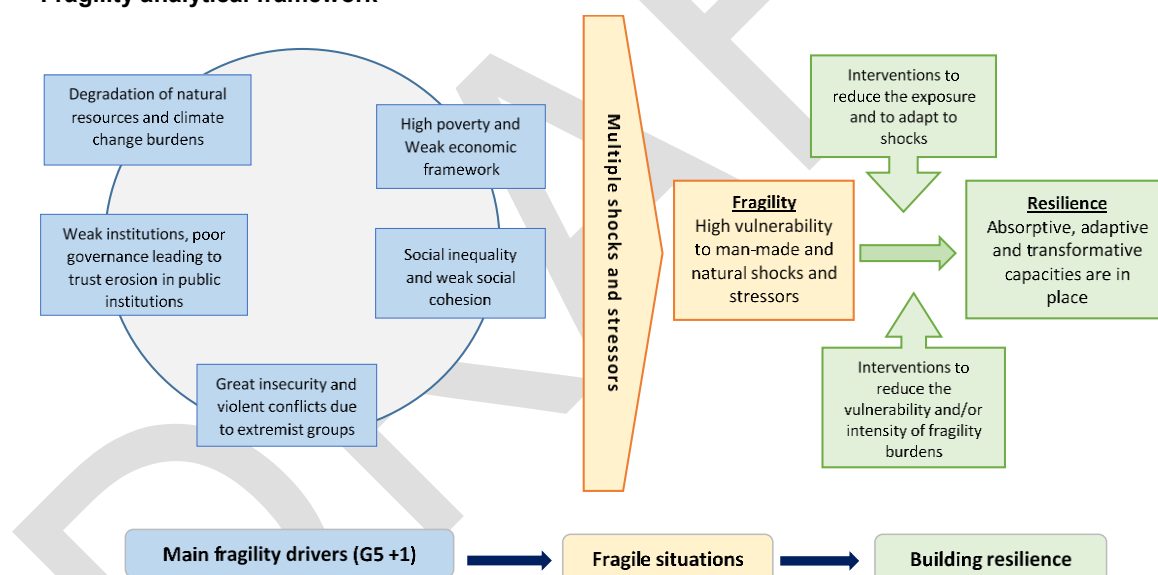
<sup>41</sup> Typical objectives of IFAD-supported programmes and projects in all situations (normal and fragile).



22. **Strategic partnership is strongly emphasized to achieve intended results.** Effective partnership among main organizations – IFAD, WFP, FAO, other cofinanciers and governments – and the G5 Sahel Secretariat is assumed essential for the SD3C programme's success. IFAD's role was key, providing initial resources and mobilization of resources for implementation processes. The contribution of other RBAs is assumed essential for the success of planned actions, due to their proven experience in working in such fragile contexts. The strategy envisages targeting rural households (severely affected by poverty), especially youth and women, within geographical areas exposed more to fragile situations.
23. **While ToC is useful for identifying pathways and assumptions on how results are achieved in the G5+1 contexts, the relationship between the fragility drivers and performance is not reflected.** Therefore, the evaluation team developed a fragility analytical framework (specifically for SRE), as presented in Figure 4, taking into account main aspects highlighted in the literature. This analytical framework reflects the need to foster greater resilience, highlighted in the IFAD Special Programme, by minimizing or suppressing the vulnerability to shocks, and/or improving actors' abilities to effectively manage and mitigate various fragility drivers and stressors. To develop this analytical framework, SRE built on the five dimensions considered in OECD's current fragility framework in terms of economic, environmental, political, societal and security drivers.

Figure 4

**Fragility analytical framework**



Source: SRE team

24. **The SRE fragility analytical framework consists of five fragility drivers** presented below (Box 4), which guided analyses throughout this report. The bottom frames reflect the need to move from fragility drivers and situations to building resilience. Bundles of shocks and stress factors affect individuals, groups and communities, combined or aligned with fragility drivers, leading to fragility situations.<sup>42</sup> IFAD operations may either contribute (directly or indirectly) to reducing vulnerability to fragility drivers, and/or exposure to these, as well as improving coping ability or contributing to the mitigation of fragility burdens. Ultimately, this contributes to the enhancement of rural resilience through the development of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities at beneficiary level.

<sup>42</sup> COVID-19 is per se one such shock.

#### Box 4

#### SRE fragility analytical points

- 1) **Socio-economic issues:** enhanced poverty (especially in rural areas) sustained by poor economic governance and rapid demographic growth, high level of unemployment; food insecurity (as a consequence and driver) etc.
- 2) **Social disruption**-related drivers: weak social cohesion, inequality (notably in terms of access to productive resources), social exclusion etc.
- 3) **Natural and environmental and climate-change**-related challenges: entailing the degradation of natural resources and ecosystems, and the high vulnerability to climate change.
- 4) **Institutional**-related fragility drivers: high institutional weaknesses and weak social contracts, leading to a lack of accountability and weak regulatory frameworks, as well as poor quality in the provision of services by public institutions.
- 5) **Insecurity and conflict** issues: including banditry, and violent and armed conflicts due to extremism.

Source: SRE team elaboration

#### Evaluation methodology

25. **SRE applied a mixed-methods approach**, combining desk reviews, interviews of stakeholders and an in-depth review of specific field (project) cases. The methodological building blocks are presented in Table 2.<sup>43</sup>

Table 2

**SRE methodology building blocks**

<i>Building blocks</i>	<i>Outlines</i>
Review of country strategies	Desk review of COSOPs and CSNs documents, as well as their review reports
Review of the programme of loans and grants	Desk review of project design documents, completion and independent evaluation reports, as well as baseline, end-survey and impact reports Mapping of interventions according to the fragility issues and ToC pathways, and according to the possibilities for comparative assessments at a regional level Preliminary trends of findings and identification of aspects / points that deserve further in-depth review/analysis
Review of experiences of partners (WB, AfDB, FAO and WFP)	Desk review of partners' operations completion and evaluation reports
Interviews of stakeholders and key informants (various level) see the list of persons interviewed in the Annex VII.	Virtual interviews with categories of stakeholders Continuous interactions with the SRE contact groups established Validation of in-depth case studies selected as reflecting significant challenges (fragility and transboundary; IFAD internal)
Self-assessment review	Self-assessment seminar with the participation of IFAD country teams
Questionnaire survey	A questionnaire was sent via email to WFP and FAO representatives within the six countries, to collect their written elaboration on selected aspects. The response rate was 45 per cent
Field (primary) data collection	Field visits and interviews within the six countries (in relation with the case studies) by national consultants in compliance with national regulations related the pandemic. In-depth review and analysis of cases identified, according to the issues and contexts
Data analysis and synthesis	Qualitative and quantitative analyses; triangulation of information and evidence from the sources above. Seminar to discuss and discuss preliminary findings
Reporting	Preparing and sharing the draft report for comments (internal and external) Finalisation

Source: Evaluation team elaboration. More details are presented in Box A2 in Annex V

26. **Analyses.** Analyses carried out by the SRE team are mainly qualitative in terms of content extraction, comparison, categorization, mapping and cross-tabulation. Because SRE aims to generate lessons, generalization appears as a point of consideration; but this was not sought. In fact, there was no approach followed to allow this, as the SRE did carry analyses on the 27 projects identified across the six

<sup>43</sup> Not always carried out sequentially as presented in the table.

countries, to identify lessons found in several instances. But likewise in specific cases, as far as those lessons are relevant and useful in terms of improving IFAD's engagement in those fragile situations. In addition, in the absence of regional lending operations (except of the very recent SD3C), lessons stemmed mostly from country experiences analysed.

27. **Engagement with stakeholders.** The SRE team engaged with WCA and PMD-relevant stakeholders from the beginning until the end of the evaluation process (see Table A3 in Annex V). At inception stage, several discussions held with main actors (including the regional director and Associate Vice-President-PMD) were useful for scoping the evaluation. A focal group was therefore established comprising the six country directors and programme officers, with whom interactions happened throughout the SRE conduct. A virtual seminar to discuss preliminary findings was organised on 29 October with the focal group. Before sharing the draft report, an additional two key engagement discussions were organized, the first with country directors and the second (on 20 December 2021) with the participation of strategic actors (including IOE Director, IOE Deputy Director and the Associate Vice-President-PMD), to discuss implications of the SRE findings and recommendations.

### **Limitations**

28. **The COVID-19 pandemic** posed challenges for the implementation of the in-country missions, as international team members could not travel to any of the six countries. Instead, national team members were recruited to gather field data, under the remote supervision of international team members.<sup>44</sup>
29. **Data availability.** IFAD documentation, including baseline surveys, end surveys or studies, impact assessments, midterm reviews, project completion reports and IOE evaluations reports, were used to the extent possible. The SRE team found sufficient robust evidence on how programme results were documented with completion reports, validated by IOE. However, gaps were found in terms of deep explanations for why some results were (or could not be) achieved, the extent to which this affected change, and how portfolio activities and non-lending activities took into account contextual fragility challenges to enable higher performance in operations. Gaps in the evidence drawn from a desk review could not always be filled through key informant interviews, due to the turnover of IFAD staff.
30. **Mitigation measures.** To overcome the data-availability limitation, the SRE team used data and information from different sources to the extent possible. The team also utilized available quantitative and qualitative secondary data, interviews and discussions with stakeholders, direct observations, specific surveys etc. These allowed appropriate triangulation.
31. Virtual interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, to gather opinions and explanations aligned with the evaluation questions. The SRE team also used questionnaires (sent by email to partners) as well as analyses carried out by other development partners working in the subregion, given that they faced the same challenges as IFAD.

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<sup>44</sup> IOE has had experience in applying this approach since 2020, which showed effectiveness when implemented adequately with a clarity on what is expected from the national consultants.



### **Key points**

- Fragility is the central theme of SRE, whose overarching question is to understand the extent to which experiences of IFAD engagement in the G5+1 countries (over the period 2010-2020) responded to contextual fragility challenges, and the main lessons learned from these experiences.
- Definitions of fragility tend to be organization specific, but all definitions reflect an assumption that the causes of fragility are multidimensional, with weak institutions being a driver commonly flagged across all definitions. SRE adopted the definition of IFAD's 2016 strategy, because it includes key aspects flagged in the WB and OECD definitions.
- The SRE design was constructed by developing a ToC, using SD3C as a basis and capturing key subregional fragility features. A fragility analytical framework also informed the SRE design, with an emphasis on resilience, aligned with the IFAD 2019 Special Programme on fragile situations.
- Achieving resilience means seeking to minimize or suppress vulnerability to shocks, by improving actors' abilities to effectively manage and mitigate various fragility drivers and stressors, which is in turn done by promoting the development of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities.
- SRE applied a mixed-methods approach and used various sources to collect data and information, allowing a good level of triangulation, even with the COVID-19 limitations.

## II. Fragility drivers, overview of IFAD operations and lessons from partners' experiences

32. This chapter reviews the five categories of fragility drivers of the subregion, aligned with the SRE fragility analytical framework presented previously. The review treats each category of drivers at national level and above. Care needs to be taken for two reasons. First, the individual fragility drivers can be different at subnational level. For example, the insecurity and conflict driver can vary significantly in different parts of the same country. Second, fragility emerges through the interaction of several drivers with external shocks.<sup>45</sup> The chapter also provides an overview of IFAD's engagement in the G5+1 over the past decade, and finishes with key lessons learned (based on literature review) of the experiences of other development partners working in the subregion.
33. **Overall, the agricultural sector remains prominent in the economies of the G5+1.** It constitutes the largest source of employment (26 per cent to 75 per cent of the active population) and contributes between 20 to 40 per cent of GDP value added (see Table A4, Annex V). Therefore, agriculture plays a pivotal role in sustainable livelihoods, in terms of social, economic and environmental resilience, as well as building peace and security in the subregion.

### A. Contextual fragility issues of the subregion

#### Poverty and economic fragility drivers

34. **Rapid demographic growth and youth unemployment are among major socioeconomic challenges.** Indicators in Table 3 show that between 40 and 50 per cent of populations for the G5+1 countries are under 15 years of age, and the annual population growth is between 3 and 5 per cent. The latter raises challenges of: (i) significant agricultural production increases to meet agrifood demands; and (ii) subsequent economic growth to both address current youth unemployment and raise the job creation rate to match the rate of increase in labour force supply. Rapid demographic growth and youth unemployment are among the multiple overlapping factors that drive migration through the Sahel.

Table 3  
Demographic indicators

Country	Total population (2019)	Rural population (% of total population) 2019	Annual population growth % (2009-2019)	Population ages 0-14 (% of total population) 2019	Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of youth population)
Burkina Faso	20 321 378	70	3.4	44.6	41 (2018)
Chad	15 946 876	76.7	3.8	46.8	37.04 (2018)
Mali	19 658 031	56.8	3.5	47.3	26.7 (2018)
Mauritania	4 525 696	45.4	3.3	39.8	35.5 (2017)
Niger	23 310 715	83.4	4.7	49.8	68.5 (2017)
Nigeria	200 963 599	48.8	3.0	43.6	31.3 (2019)

Sources: World Bank indicators and UNDP

35. **Debt distress and macroeconomic imbalances limit governments' fiscal space to address drivers.** The World Bank Group observed that building sufficient fiscal space and managing monetary policy are preconditions for effective government service delivery, private sector development, and ensuring resilience to shocks.<sup>46</sup> It showed that macroeconomic stability is key to strengthening resilience and managing fragility, conflict and violence risks. Additionally, it is impacted by

<sup>45</sup> In situations where fragility is persistent, such as in Chad, the combination of key fragility drivers may remain stable over time. In other countries, it is possible that regions may be fragile for limited periods of time due to sporadic shocks.

<sup>46</sup> World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/844591582815510521/pdf/World-Bank-Group-Strategy-for-Fragility-Conflict-and-Violence-2020-2025.pdf>.

conflict and crisis, often resulting in a rapid accumulation of public debt, capital flight, high and rising inflation, exchange rate volatility and other dislocations. It further noted that macroeconomic shocks tend to weaken the factors of resilience for entire economies and societies.

36. **Poverty remains predominant in rural compared to urban areas**, as shown in Table 4. Rural poverty in the subregion is manifested in terms of a greater vulnerability of household assets to shocks and stressors, and a low level of investment and adaptation capacities. Specific features of rural poverty include the decrease in farm productivity, the high and erratic variability of agricultural prices and the insecurity of agricultural transactions.<sup>47</sup> These negatively affect the level of household food security, especially for smallholder farmers. Persistent food insecurity exacerbates the vulnerability of households to shocks and stressors, enhancing the vicious cycle of falling in and out of poverty.<sup>48</sup>

Table 4  
**Socio-economic indicators**

Country	GDP per capita (current US\$) 2019	Poverty headcount ratio (% of population) 2018	Rural poverty %	HDI/Rank (189) 2019	Global Food security index/ Rank (113), 2019	Gini coefficient 2019	Gender inequality Index/Rank (189), 2019
Burkina Faso	786.89	41.4	47.5 (2014)	0.452/182	50.1/87	35.3	0.59/147
Chad	709.54	42.3	52.5 (2011)	0.398/187	36.9/109	43.3	0.71/160
Mali	879	43.8	53.6 (2016)	0.434/184	54.4/80	33	0.67/158
Mauritania	1679.44	n.a.	44.4 (2014)	0.546/157	n.a.	32.6	0.63/151
Niger	553.89	40.8	55.2 (2011)	0.394/189	49.6/89	34.3	0.64/154
Nigeria	2229.85	40.1	52.1 (2018)	0.539/161	48.4/94	43	n.a.

Sources: World Bank indicators, UNDP database, Perspectives économiques au Burkina Faso, Enquête modulaire et permanente auprès des ménages Mali, Office National de la Statistique Mauritanie, 2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria.

### **Social-disruption-related fragility**

37. **Social fragilities reflect inequalities and exclusion, which undermine social cohesion.** Gender inequalities remain persistent across the subregion. For instance, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger rank in the bottom 5 countries of the global Human Development Index, Mali in the bottom 10 per cent and Mauritania in the bottom 20 per cent. Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger are in the bottom 10 (of 52) African countries in the Africa Gender Equality Index, with only Burkina Faso and Nigeria ranking in the top 50 per cent. FRIDE (2015) notes that, in many Sahel countries, women are particularly disadvantaged by several intertwined factors, such as: the region's extreme poverty; weak state institutions; lack of basic services; unstable, unaccountable, corrupt politics; and highly patriarchal social structures.<sup>49</sup> At a global level, it further notes that out of 152 countries on the UN Gender Inequality Index, Niger ranks 151, Chad 150 and Mali 148.<sup>50</sup> Women are underrepresented in the formal sector and in socio-professional categories that require a certain level of training and qualification. In the agricultural sector, they suffer from persistent bias and discrimination, notably in terms of access to productive resources (land access

<sup>47</sup> Low banking rate, also an issue within the subregion, has led to the multiplication of inclusive financial systems, especially in rural areas. In some of these countries, access to formal and informal microfinancing has increased significantly, but unfortunately the collapse of many savings and credit unions has caused financial losses and loss of confidence for many savers.

<sup>48</sup> Global food security index data reveal unfavourable situation for Chad, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali, see Table A5, Annex V.

<sup>49</sup> FRIDE. 2015. *Gender inequality and state fragility in the Sahel*. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/191893/Gender%20inequality%20and%20state%20fragility%20in%20the%20Sahel.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> FRIDE. 2015. *ibid*.

and tenure security) and to services (agricultural inputs, extension and financial services).

38. **Marginalization and exclusion of social groups in terms of access rights to natural resources (land and water) are also key issues in the subregion, leading to conflicts over these resources.** Customary rules and mechanisms formerly used to resolve these issues are showing limitations. Nowadays, there are many situations where the efficacy of former arrangements to resolve disputes and/or facilitate agreements between social groups (e.g. between sedentary farmers and nomad pastoralists, autochthones and allochthones, or landlords and land users) is less successful, leading to frustration and violence. Moreover, the situation of insecurity within the subregion has forced the displacement of persons, exacerbating pressure and conflicts over natural resources, and thus increasing food insecurity, deprivation and poverty.
39. **Youth are highly vulnerable, being victims of social exclusion, although they are a potential asset to reduce fragility.** Youth vulnerability is a critical structural issue in the G5+1 countries.<sup>51</sup> The youth bulge is both a cause and a consequence of fragility. The Sahel has the youngest population in the world, with 64.5 per cent of its population being under 25 (United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, 2018).<sup>52</sup> Alliance Sahel (2019) notes that there are about 50 million people under the age of 30 living in the Sahel region today, representing approximately 65 per cent of the combined population of the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger).<sup>53</sup> Prospects for their future are limited due to poor overall levels of education from school systems clogged by rapid population growth, restricted freedom of movement because of insecurity, sluggish job markets, and increasing poverty.<sup>54</sup> Unemployment and unfavourable rules for access to productive resources are important factors that enhance their vulnerability. In conflict situations, youth are at greater risk due to the fact they constitute a prime source of recruitment for criminal and terrorist groups, given the absence of viable prospects for them, and as they are highly vulnerable. However, when they are provided with adequate opportunities, youth can play important roles in promoting agricultural innovations for increased agricultural productivity and production, thus ultimately contributing to rural transformation.

#### **NRM and climate-change-related fragility**

40. **All G5+1 countries are confronted with significant environmental challenges and are highly vulnerable to climate change.** In these countries, agropastoral activities are practised in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) with short and variable rainfall and limited potential for crop production, where water scarcity is a key driver of vulnerability and access to water is a top priority for rural development. In specific areas of these ASALs, remoteness is a factor that exacerbates environmental fragility. Ecosystems in the subregion are already affected by the effect of climate change; future adverse impacts are expected to be substantial, particularly in the agricultural and forestry sector, as well as on land use (IFAD 2021).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Regarding youth definition, IFAD (2019) recalls that the official United Nations definition of “youth” is people between 15 and 24 years of age, adding that countries often adopt different definitions. It gives an example of African governments’ national youth policies, which normally adopt the definition provided by the African Union, which is from 18 to 35. (See: IFAD 2019: IFAD’s Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021. [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38711624/41190839/Action\\_Youth\\_web.pdf/f09a8d5c-36eb-f915-8b36-b521b1414b08?t=1560521494000](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38711624/41190839/Action_Youth_web.pdf/f09a8d5c-36eb-f915-8b36-b521b1414b08?t=1560521494000)).

<sup>52</sup> According to The State of the World Population 2018, published by the United Nations Population Fund, 52 per cent of the population (53 million people) in the countries of the Sahel is between 10 and 24 years of age, and that number is set to increase further over the next two decades.

<sup>53</sup> Alliance Sahel. 2019. *A Demographic, Threat? Youth, Peace and Security Challenges in the Sahel*. [https://www.alliance-sahel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/AS\\_digital\\_EN.pdf](https://www.alliance-sahel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/AS_digital_EN.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> Alliance Sahel. 2019. Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> IFAD. 2021. *Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme – Environmental & Social Management Framework (ESMF)*. IFAD, January 2012.

41. During the last two decades, the frequency and extent of extreme weather events (such as droughts, floods, bushfires and high winds) have increased, with the intensification of climate change burdens. Burkina Faso faced four severe droughts between 2000 and 2017, while between 1983 and 2017, Chad, Mali and Niger faced 10, 14 and 7 severe droughts, respectively (ARC 2020). These droughts led to decreases in crop productivity of between 10 and 25 per cent. An example relates to Lake Chad, the largest lake in the Sahel, which has shrunk by 95 per cent since the 1960s, with estimates attributing 50 per cent of the decrease to increased water use (e.g. from population growth and unsustainable irrigation projects) and 50 per cent to rainfall change and increasing temperatures.<sup>56</sup> See Box 5.

Box 5

**Vulnerability to climate change in the Sahel**

According to WB (2017), the Sahel is particularly vulnerable to climate-related and other shocks, which have long-lasting negative consequences. Climate change is likely to cause more frequent and severe droughts and floods in the Sahel, affecting pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in particular. With more frequent natural disasters and intensified environmental degradation, people's lives and livelihoods are increasingly at risk.

Extreme events and other shocks have negative and long-lasting consequences for human development and poverty reduction in the Sahel, especially affecting the poorest and most vulnerable. Consequences include: eroding human capital and forcing families to rely on a range of largely informal activities; suboptimal coping mechanisms such as high interest borrowing; reduced consumption; sale of household and productive assets; and withdrawal of children from school.

Source: World Bank 2017. Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Programme

42. **Environmental degradation has led to resource depletion and ecological marginalization of the rural poor, amplified by the increased competition over natural resources.**<sup>57</sup> Natural resource degradation causes social disruption. Land degradation exacerbates water insecurity by reducing soil-water retention capacity, increasing run-off, and provoking destructive flooding downstream; it compounds water insecurity as a conflict trigger. It is a corollary to high population growth rates, combining increased cultivation of marginal areas, inappropriate agricultural practices and overgrazing; this leads to degradation of rangeland and deforestation.<sup>58</sup> Hence, there has been a decline in agricultural productivity in some areas, especially those dependent on rainfed agriculture, and an increase in food insecurity.<sup>59</sup> The World Bank Group (2021) notes that land degradation acted as a multiplier in the conflicts in northern Mali, and showed the link to existing ethnic and political tensions. By eroding natural resource-based livelihoods and income, water insecurity and land degradation generate unemployment, poverty and resentment, particularly among young, disempowered people who are the most recruitable by groups.<sup>60</sup>

**Institutional weakness-related fragility**

43. **The lack of good governance, as well as State weaknesses and collapses, are significant and increasing institutional issues across the countries.**<sup>61</sup> Institutional fragility indicates that rules, regulations and services are not operating properly. This is commonly combined with weak capacity for policymaking, policy

<sup>56</sup> IFAD. 2021. Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Namely: water, arable and pastoral land and forests.

<sup>58</sup> Climate Change Profile West African Sahel, USAID, 2018.

<sup>59</sup> According to Thomas Homer Dixon (1999), natural resource scarcities in the Sahel are of three types based on the categories: supply-induced scarcity, demand-induced scarcity and structural scarcity. Supply-induced scarcity is related to the shrinking of the resource due to land degradation and loss of vegetation cover. Demand-induced scarcity is due to population increase, and structural scarcity is due to the unequal geographic distribution of forest resources and unequal sharing of those resources within regions.

<sup>60</sup> World Bank Group. 2021. *Strengthening Regional Water Security for Greater Resilience in the G5 Sahel*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35994/Strengthening-Regional-Water-Security-for-Greater-Resilience-in-the-G5-Sahel.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>61</sup> According to Ncube and Jones 2013.

oversight, the inability to have a longer-term perspective, and the presence of weak social contracts within society (including within rural communities). The prominence of this driver in all definitions is because it leads to poor financial management, slow procurement procedures, weak regulatory frameworks, unreliable judicial systems, lack of qualified human resources, and poor or lack of good-quality public services (especially in rural areas).<sup>62</sup> All of these factors have a direct, negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery of development partners' support.

44. The documentation suggests that institutional reforms in most of the G5+1 countries have not yet brought significant improvements either in service delivery, especially in marginalized and high-risk areas,<sup>63</sup> or in governance within the public and semi-public subsectors. Limited government investments and access to basic public goods and services, which profoundly affect the population in remote rural areas of the Sahel, are frequently key issues mentioned for those countries. For example, the World Bank Group (2020-2025 strategy) notes that lack of investments, weak institutional capacity, lack of maintenance and unequal water distribution all hinder the actual use of this resource for both consumptive and productive uses; this in turn hampers socio-economic development of the G5+1 countries region.

### **Security challenges and fragility**

45. **Insecurity and violent conflicts are more and more critical within the subregion, resulting in an increased number of deaths and displaced persons, as well as the loss of State control over resources and territories.** The region has been plagued by armed conflicts, from Lake Chad to the Niger Delta. Armed groups manage to control large territories and to threaten others through sporadic attacks and raids,<sup>64</sup> hampering efforts to promote economic development (including rural transformation) and social justice. Systems used by conflict entrepreneurs to extend or multiply the zones and communities they influence lead to complex landscapes of fragility. In response, greater attention and resources are being channelled into security matters.<sup>65</sup> According to the World Bank, across the G5+1 countries, significant medium-intensity conflict has increased recently in Burkina Faso and Niger, and has been chronic in Chad, Mali and Nigeria over the past decade.<sup>66</sup> The assumption is that this leads to physical threats to persons and communities, and misappropriation and destruction of assets, which in turn exacerbates food insecurity and sees people falling back into poverty.
46. **Cross-border aspects of conflict.** Fragility dynamics in the G5+1 countries are cross-border in nature. For example, the Boko Haram violent conflict has spillover effects that extend beyond Nigeria. Furthermore, fragility, conflict and violence may be interconnected within the subregion or connected to other regions of the world. Populations and their livelihoods in the G5+1 countries are increasingly exposed to conflicts and violent extremism that cause food insecurity, aggravate poverty and maintain the affected regions in situations of fragility; this reduces the likelihood of sustainability of development impacts. According to UNHCR,<sup>67</sup> conflict has led to a tenfold increase in internal displacement in the Central Sahel since 2013, from 217,000 to a staggering 2.1 million by late 2021. The number of refugees in the Central Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger now stands at 410,000. The majority of the region's refugees fled violence in Mali, where the conflict began in January 2012. A surge in violent attacks across the region in 2021 displaced nearly

<sup>62</sup> In fact the WB used social-contract framing to diagnose and explain complex development challenges such as entrenched inequalities, poor service delivery and weak institutions, and why decades of policy and institutional reforms promoted by external development actors could not fundamentally alter countries' development paths. World Bank. 2019. Social Contracts and World Bank Country Engagements: Lessons from Emerging Practices. IEG Meso Evaluation. Independent Evaluation Group. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>63</sup> According to country diagnostics of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger by the WB and AfDB.

<sup>64</sup> Extremist groups belonging to Al-Qaida and Da'esh in the north of the Sahel, and Boko Haram in the east and south.

<sup>65</sup> In this context, the G5 Sahel governments have sought external military forces (French forces) to counteract the attacks of the extremists.

<sup>66</sup> [https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/ap\\_situationsofconflict.pdf](https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/ap_situationsofconflict.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> See <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/1/61e137ac4/decade-sahel-conflict-leaves-25-million-people-displaced.html#:~:text=Internal%20displacement%20has%20increased%20tenfold,Niger%2C%20now%20stands%20a%20410%2C000> (consulted on 24/03/2022).



500,000 people, with figures for December still pending. This has acute consequences for food security.

47. **COVID-19 challenge within the subregion.** The subregion has also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, adding more sources of shocks to the already challenging situations. Restrictions introduced by governments to manage the health crisis have had an adverse impact on the living conditions of farmers, pastoralists and agropastoral communities, as well as on animal husbandry. The situation will most probably lead to a rise in the number of persons living in extreme poverty.

## B. Overview of IFAD engagement in the six countries

48. IFAD's financial support is delivered through the programme of loans and grants. Loans are provided to individual governments, with amounts reflecting IFAD's performance-based allocation system (PBAS). Grants (small or large) are allocated to a more diverse range of partners (governmental, non-governmental and multilateral). This section gives an overview of IFAD's support in the six countries, covering: IFAD country strategic documents, loan portfolio, grant financing and IFAD country presence.

### Country strategies and PBAS allocation

49. **Country strategies.** IFAD engagement in countries happens within the framework of the country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) documents or country strategy notes (CSNs). Table 5 shows what was approved for each country either as a COSOP or a CSN during the period under review. As the table shows, the preparation of CSNs in four out of the six countries happened in 2017, and there have been significant periods in several countries when there was neither a COSOP nor a CSN.

Table 5

Overview of COSOPs/CSNs

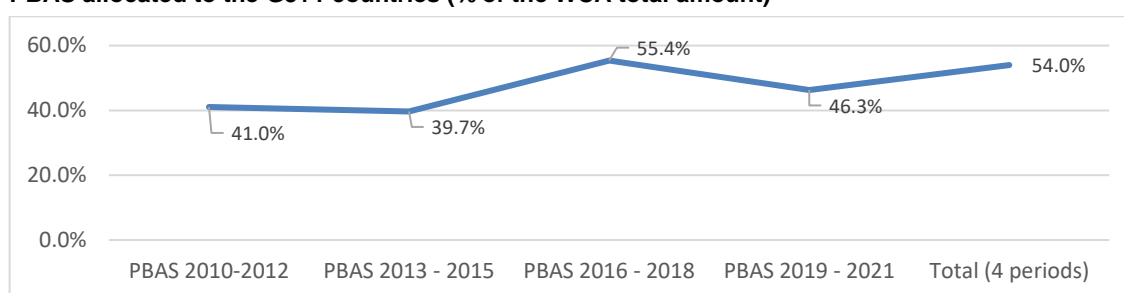
Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Burkina Faso		COSOP 2007-2012							CSN 2017-2018		COSOP 2019-2024	
Chad					COSOP 2010-2015					CSN 2017-2019		
Mali		COSOP 2007-2012							CSN 2017-2018			
Mauritania		COSOP 2007-2012							CSN 2017-2018		COSOP 2018-2024	
Niger	COSOP 2006-2011								COSOP 2013-2018			
Nigeria					COSOP 2010-2015						COSOP 2016-2021	

Source: SRE team elaboration

50. **PBAS allocations.** The G5+1 countries absorb a significant proportion of the PBAS allocation of WCA: 40 to 55 per cent between IFAD8 (2010-2012) and IFAD11 (2019-2021). This is mainly due to Nigeria, which absorbed an average of 18 per cent of the WCA allocation over the four replenishment periods, followed by Niger (11 per cent) and Burkina Faso (8 per cent). Mali, Chad and Mauritania absorb 7, 6 and 4 per cent respectively.<sup>68</sup> (see Figure 5 and further details in Annex V),

<sup>68</sup> These figures support the choice made to have the SRE focus on those countries.

Figure 5  
PBAS allocated to the G5+1 countries (% of the WCA total amount)

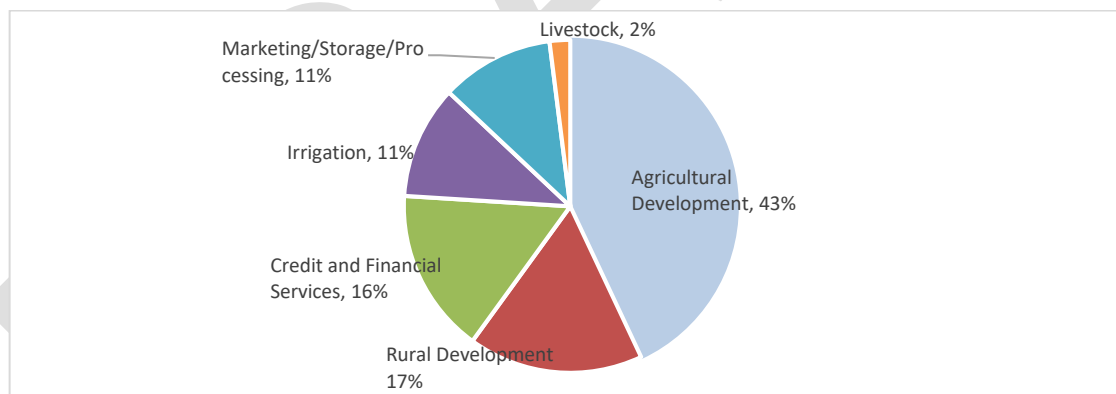


Source: IFAD Oracle BI

### IFAD programme of loans and grants, and presence in the subregion

51. **IFAD portfolio financing and subsector focus.** In terms of portfolio financing for the six countries, 27 investments projects were approved between 2009 and 2020 (15 are still ongoing), with an estimated total investment cost of US\$2.1 billion (see Annex III). Out of this total cost, a large portion (US\$1.2 USD billion, i.e. 56 per cent) was financed by IFAD, followed by international cofinancing (24 per cent),<sup>69</sup> and then governments and beneficiaries (18 per cent).<sup>70</sup> The total IFAD financing corresponds (approximately) to 102 per cent of the PBAS allocation for the 6 countries, over the 4 replenishment periods (IFAD8 to IFAD11).
52. The consolidated portfolio areas show a clear focus on agricultural development (43 per cent), followed by rural development (17 per cent), credit and financial services (16 per cent), irrigation (11 per cent), marketing/storage/processing (11 per cent), and livestock (2 per cent). See figure 6.

Figure 6  
Portfolio sector overview



Source: IFAD Oracle BI

53. **Programme of grants for the six countries.** The desk review identified 38 grants approved between 2009 and 2020 for a total of US\$73.8 million (Annex IV), of which 60 per cent was IFAD financing. Thirty-six of these grants were regional/global and only two were country-specific (Mali and Nigeria). A wide range of topics were covered by these grants, which can be grouped into the following main domains of interventions: knowledge sharing, capacity strengthening for national and civil society organizations (farmers' organizations in particular), policy dialogue, inclusive financing, and promoting climate-smart agriculture (a very recent theme). Most grants were large (27 against 11 small ones) by IFAD standards, possibly reflecting that most were covering regions or were global. Grants were delivered by a range of partners, with CGIAR centres and international NGOs absorbing more than half of the grant financing (35 and 16 per cent respectively), mostly through regional/global

<sup>69</sup> World Bank, African Development Bank and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) were the main cofinancing among international institutions, and represented respectively 16 per cent, 12 per cent and 12 per cent.

<sup>70</sup> A smaller share (2 per cent) still must be determined for projects that were just approved.



grants. UN organizations (FAO, UN Habitat) also absorbed a significant share of the grant financing (9 per cent).

54. **IFAD country presence within the subregion.** In line with the IFAD decentralized model that was launched in 2019, three different hubs (West Africa, Coastal Africa and Central Africa) were established, respectively in Dakar (Senegal), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and Yaoundé (Cameroon), covering the six evaluated countries until the end of 2021. The country directors for Mali and Mauritania were based in Dakar, while those for Burkina Faso and Niger were in Abidjan. The country director of Nigeria was based in Abuja, while the country director of Chad was based in Yaoundé. In 2022, the WCA regional office was transferred from Rome to Abidjan, and the hub model was replaced by multiple country offices, with one in Dakar, and country-director-led offices in Nigeria and Niger.<sup>71</sup>
55. During the reviewed period (2010-2020), country managers have changed at least two times for most of the countries.<sup>72</sup> Apart from Chad and Mauritania, all countries have an IFAD Country Office with a country programme officer. However, with IFAD Decentralization 2.0 under way, this map will change completely from 2022, with the opening of multiple country offices and a regional office in Abidjan.

### **C. Overview of lessons learned from partners' experiences**

56. This section provides main lessons learned from the review of partners' interventions in the G5 Sahel countries and northern Nigeria, over the evaluated period. Partners reviewed were international financial institutions (WB and AfDB), RBAs (FAO and WFP) and UNDP. Partners' experiences revealed some factors to consider when designing interventions for fragile situations, as well as aspects or approaches to apply during implementation. The main relevant lessons in the context of this SRE are presented as follows.
57. **The review confirms the necessity to conduct prior in-depth contextual analyses and to focus on fewer objectives in line with priorities identified, when designing actions for fragile situations.** There is consistency that in-depth analyses of fragility drivers are essential, to understand the specificities of fragility in the geographical area that an intervention works in (FAO, WFP and WB). This helps the design of sound interventions to address fragility (at least to some extent). Complex and/or ambitious projects, with multiple objectives and/or components, deliver limited achievements and results in situations of fragility (according to WB).<sup>73</sup> Early and preventive interventions that are well focused on identified fragility pockets and drivers ultimately make it possible to be more effective and to optimize the utilization of resources.
58. **Designing interventions in fragile contexts should include encouraging leadership by government institutions, coupled with building their capacity, as well as empowerment of communities through farmers' organizations (FOs) for implementing and managing various activities.** WB highlights the necessity to help in building the State's legitimacy, capacity and inclusive institutions. According to UNDP,<sup>74</sup> this contributes to strengthening resilient social contracts between citizens and the State. Regarding FOs, WFP notes the need to build on existing community-based mechanisms to deliver programme activities, as well as job creation initiatives for young people, as this helps in reducing tensions in fragile situations. Partnering with local/grassroots organizations allows deepening knowledge of local circumstances and develops implementation capacity to enhance effectiveness in such contexts.
59. **Flexibility is critical for working in fragile situations, enabling adaptation to changing circumstances and ensuring continued and effective programme implementation.** For WB, differentiated approaches have been used, as well

<sup>71</sup> One additional country director-led office is planned to be open in Burkina Faso.

<sup>72</sup> According to IFAD Oracle Bi, change in CPMs/CDs over the reviewed period is as follow: two for Chad and Mali, three for Burkina Faso, four for Mauritania and Niger, and five for Nigeria.

<sup>73</sup> WB experience (2013-2016).

<sup>74</sup> UNDP. 2018. Forging Resilient Social Contracts: A Pathway to Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace.

differentiated financing tools when working in such fragile contexts, to scale up and tailor support. In evolving environments of fragility, programmes that can respond rapidly to crises perform better, while also retaining a focus on the key goals of reducing vulnerability to shocks over the medium term. In a fragile environment, the bank's flexibility has been critical to ensuring continued and effective programme implementation. However, this requires operational policies that are more agile, and risk-management practices that promote responsiveness and adaptation in low capacity and high-risk environments.

60. **The need to partner with other development actors when working in fragile situation is very important.** Such partnerships require: (i) effective consultation between partners; ii) complementary areas of expertise with clearly different comparative advantages for each agency; and iii) development of joint responses and/or joint interventions from the initial planning.<sup>75</sup> Based on FAO and WFP work in Mali, joint interventions enabled blending of their differing expertise and higher overall effectiveness when carrying out activities on the same site. This was through creating important synergies to improve the resilience capacities of populations. WFP supported the recovery of populations affected by shocks, through asset-creation activities that mobilized communities around labour-intensive interventions; FAO was responsible for the supply of inputs and equipment for the development of assets created or rehabilitated. FAO was also responsible for the technical design of infrastructure.
61. **Appropriate targeting and effective capacity building are enabling factors for achieving results in fragile contexts.** WFP experience showed that an overambitious geographical coverage, weak targeting and/or insufficient understanding of factors of vulnerability negatively affected the achievement of programme results (outputs and outcomes).<sup>76</sup> UNDP experience in Mali (2020) corroborates WFP experience.<sup>77</sup> The WB experience in Mauritania, based on effective targeting, showed substantial progress in improving access to vocational training, better safety net programmes and improving financial management at decentralized /local government level.
62. **Community-driven development (CDD) has shown its relevance and usefulness for achieving results in fragile situations.** Regarding CDD, WB in Mauritania reported good progress in improving the living conditions of rural communities through the implementation of CDD programmes, and in facilitating access to basic services in urban areas. Communities were keen to invest in local economic and social services. Good progress was also found in improving the living conditions of rural communities through implementation of CDD programmes in Niger (2008-2011). Similar results were observed for WB-supported CDD projects in Nigeria (2014). The latter showed that interventions to transform land-related assets required a socially and culturally sensitive design, which provided inclusive development opportunities for all affected parties.
63. **Nexus approaches, entailing combining short-term (economic and/or humanitarian) needs with longer-term development objectives, enhance effectiveness when working in emergency contexts.** For instance, in Mali (2013-2017), WFP stepped up to meet refugees' and internally displaced persons' needs as required, while it played an increasing role in building the resilience of communities by supporting food security actions. In Mauritania (2018), WFP supported the establishment of the Adaptive Social Protection System, which includes not only the dimension of response to shocks but also a broader approach

<sup>75</sup> The three stages entail increasing involvement levels, a joint response being the most engaging.

<sup>76</sup> In 11 operations out of 19, according to the regional synthesis (2013-2017).

<sup>77</sup> However, UNDP recognizes that for interventions to be more effective, they must address fundamental structural issues that have a large impact on results, such as land-tenure issues, social relations, and the natural tendency for assistance to be captured by dominant groups.

to food insecurity and malnutrition – in particular the support for the resilience of populations.

64. **Addressing gender-equality issues, both strategically and operationally, is pivotal for reducing inequality linked to fragility.** FAO realized that the lack of a context-specific gender strategy contributed to the lower effectiveness of activities targeted at women,<sup>78</sup> who are among the most vulnerable in the subregion. Additionally, in Mali, improving the empowerment of women by strengthening their economic power and social status, and enabling their decision making, contributed to improving their livelihoods. WB noted that neglecting human dimensions could reinforce income inequality and exacerbate societal tension. Gender being a key factor, women migrants who reside in hamlets are the most disadvantaged, in terms of access to the productive factors. Thus, addressing their inequality in accessing those factors has been important in such contexts.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, in conflict-affected situations, gender-based violence can be a serious issue; therefore, it is essential to address this challenge and learn from its complexity and manifestation. Considering all this, support to women is critical to enabling them to be entrepreneurs, change makers and peacebuilders.<sup>80</sup>
65. **Empowerment of youths has been pivotal to mitigating issues that contribute to fragility.** FAO in Mali (2018/2019) contributed to the empowerment of young people and their remaining in their home areas. The opinion of beneficiaries and local authorities was that there were fewer young people departing from the intervention areas, while robberies carried out by groups of young people had decreased due to alternative sources of income.

#### Key points

- Five sets of fragility drivers are manifested in the subregion: socio-economic; social; natural and environmental; institutional; and insecurity and conflict. All five sets of drivers are significant, although their importance has varied both over time and by specific geographic location.
- Over the evaluated period (2010-2020), IFAD has been engaged in the six countries using the COSOPs or CSNs, and the PBAS allocation. The latter for the six evaluated countries has varied according to IFAD's replenishment cycle, and represented on average 54 per cent of WCA PBAS allocation over the decade.
- The largest share (60 per cent) of the portfolio funding (of an estimated total cost of US\$2.1 billion) for the six countries was on agriculture and rural development, followed by credit and financial services. Grant financing was slightly important (73.8 million), of which 60 per cent was funded by IFAD to support topics related to knowledge management (KM), inclusive financing, policy dialogue and grassroots organizations.
- At the time of the evaluation, while IFAD is well present within the subregion through three hubs, the in-country residence of country directors is weak (only one out of six) and country offices are operational in four countries.
- Main lessons learned, identified from the review of partners' interventions in the G5+1 fragile contexts, covered points such as: flexibility, need for partnering based on comparative advantages, applying nexus approach, addressing gender inequality and empowerment of youths, and working directly with local and grassroots organizations.

<sup>78</sup> for a project in Mali (2019).

<sup>79</sup> In Niger (2013-2016), the WB needed to double-up efforts to mainstream gender dimension across the portfolio.

<sup>80</sup> Sound analytics need to be done so WBG can learn from the challenges and complexity of addressing GBV and how, beyond the focus on GBV, women should be supported as entrepreneurs, change makers and peacebuilders. WB recommended that support for transformation or commercialization activities should be underpinned by market and value chain analysis that is poverty- and gender-sensitive.

### III. Relevance and coherence

#### A. Relevance

66. Relevance assesses the extent to which: (i) the objectives of the intervention/strategy are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities, and partner and donor policies; (ii) the design of the interventions/strategy and the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the intervention/strategy has been (re-) adapted to address changes in the context.<sup>81</sup> In the context of SRE, the provision of answers to the following two key evaluation questions helped to identify lessons learned, considering IFAD experience within the subregion so far.

- To what extent have the design of country strategies, programmes and projects been relevant, taking into account fragility drivers and principles of working in fragile situations?
- How adequate and adaptive have intervention approaches and elements been, for a delivery in the subregional contexts featured by economic, natural, social, institutional and security constraints?

#### Relevance of country strategies and programmes

67. **COSOPs are, in principle, flexible instruments that should be revised and adapted when major contextual change occurs; but evidence is limited on their flexible use in the G5+1 contexts.** COSOPs provide a framework for IFAD's engagement for inclusive and sustainable rural transformation at the country level, and are jointly developed by IFAD and the respective government. The preparation of CSNs, rather than new COSOPs or updating of the current COSOP, in four out of the six countries in 2017, appears to have been the main response to IFAD operating in an unpredictable context during much of the past decade in the G5+1. Notwithstanding the use of CSNs, the lack of an active COSOP or a CSN for several years raises questions over their usefulness as a tool to manage the unpredictable context. Even when COSOPs/CSNs were in place, there is little evidence that they were revisited on a regular basis to respond to the unpredictable context, as suggested in IFAD's 2018 Revised Guidelines and Procedures for Results-based Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes. Therefore, there is little experience across the G5+1 of using COSOPs/CSNs as a flexible strategic tool for ongoing engagement between IFAD and the governments.<sup>82</sup> The implied gap in terms of usefulness of COSOPs/CSNs was identified in the recently completed country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) for Niger, which recommended drafting a COSOP implementation action plan to guide investment and non-lending activities.
68. **The 2018 COSOP guidance requires carrying out a fragility analysis in countries classified as fragile. Experience suggests a non-comprehensive approach for that, and a lack of clarity on how this adds value.** Before 2018, there was no requirement that COSOPs/CSNs in countries classified as fragile by IFAD should include a fragility analysis. Three COSOPs have been agreed post 2018 – for Mali, Niger, and Mauritania – and one is currently under preparation for Nigeria. Neither Niger nor Mauritania were classified as fragile by IFAD when their post-2018 COSOPs were produced and so, as would be expected, do not include fragility analysis. Only the COSOP for Mali, classified as a fragile country when the COSOP was produced, includes a fragility analysis. This Mali-focused analysis de facto discusses four of the five drivers (see Box 6), namely: (i) conflict and violence; (ii) political instability and governance ineffectiveness; (iii) vulnerability to shocks (climate and price related); and (iv) the low Human Development Index. It does not analyse the interaction between the drivers, which is actually what leads to fragility, and then link these challenges with resilience. Furthermore, it is difficult to see the benefit of the fragility analysis performed, given that the recommendations made

<sup>81</sup> It relates to the question: Is the intervention doing the right things?

<sup>82</sup> NEN division actors interviewed, also facing serious fragility issues due to conflict, mention their preference of using CSNs in their contexts.

are generic and mainly repeat points of IFAD's 2016 strategy for engagement in countries with fragile situations (see Box 6).

Box 6

**Actions proposed in the COSOP (2020) of Mali**

Develop and strengthen partnerships with other development agencies with complementary mandates on humanitarian interventions and proven experience in building rural communities' post-conflict resilience, social cohesion and conflict prevention and mediation.

Design and implement operations that focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as women and young people, while promoting climate-smart and resilient economic activities. Such operations should be responsive to structural (climate change, conflicts, poverty) and other shocks (like the COVID-19 pandemic). This should be done through adapted and flexible approaches that allow the provision of short-term emergency support, and mitigate the reverse effects on project beneficiaries and their livelihoods in the long-term.

Improve quality and capacities in projects' implementation support, and follow up through operational partnerships on the ground involving farmer organizations, local and international NGOs, and other socio-economic stakeholders (organized civil society organizations).

Strengthen institutional support (with the technical, logistical and financial means) to empower government agencies and local authorities with skills and capacities needed to effectively coordinate, monitor and evaluate the ongoing projects/programmes.

Source: COSOP Mali 2020

69. **Nevertheless, while COSOPs and CSNs are not supported by formal fragility analyses, and the language of drivers is not used, some aspects of the fragility drivers have been captured in the contextual analyses included in COSOPs/CSNs.** While fragility emerges from the interaction between drivers, a fragility analysis starts with analysis within the individual drivers. Review of the COSOPs' strategic objectives (see Table B1 of Annex VI) highlights three main areas of focus, which are well aligned with key fragility drivers (analysed earlier) related to socio-economic, institutional and environmental issues.
- Economic resilience of smallholder farmers and food security, combined with inclusive value chain development (in all six countries).
  - Rural-institutions strengthening, to enable sustained and inclusive access (by women, youth and poor groups) to diversified services (all countries overall but especially in Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria).
  - Environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change (all countries overall but especially in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger).
70. Guidance for analyses related to most of the drivers already exists within IFAD, as presented in Table 6. This explains why analysis pertained to the drivers is found in COSOPs, but also in design documents for loan operations.

Table 6

**Examples of guiding documents that address fragility drivers**

<i>Name of the document</i>	<i>Stated purpose</i>	<i>Fragility drivers covered</i>
Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies (2019)	The guidelines define the procedures that: (i) highlight the basic principles of country strategies; (ii) define the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities; (iii) explain the COSOP review and evaluation processes; and (iv) offer an overview of the financial resources needed to implement the country strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High poverty and related economic situation</li> <li>• Social inequality and weak social cohesion</li> <li>• Degradation of natural resources and climate change burdens</li> <li>• Erosion of trust in public institutions and weak social contracts</li> <li>• Greater insecurity and violent conflicts due to extremist groups</li> </ul>
Project Design Guidelines. Programme Delivery Risks and IPRMs	The IPRM was elaborated for all new and ongoing projects, to help identify, assess, mitigate, manage, monitor and update risks to programme delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High poverty and related economic situation</li> </ul>
SECAP assessment	SECAP sets out IFAD's commitments to social, environmental and climate sustainability. All projects supported or cofinanced by IFAD are required to comply with SECAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inequality and weak social cohesion</li> <li>• Degradation of natural resources and climate change burdens</li> <li>• Erosion of trust in public institutions and weak social contracts</li> </ul>
Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting	The Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting operationalize the 2006 targeting policy that calls for greater commitment by IFAD to engaging more fully in national policy processes, in order to tailor COSOPs and projects to the specific conditions and priorities of partner countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inequality and weak social cohesion</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the SRE team. See detailed Table B2 in Annex VI

71. **Reviewed contextual analyses focus extensively on the drivers where IFAD makes a direct contribution – economic/poverty, natural resources/climate change and social inequality. Deep analysis related to issues in the other two drivers – weak public institutions and insecurity/serious conflict – is absent.** This reflects that issues related to these drivers are to be treated as risks to be managed rather than problems where IFAD is expected to make a direct contribution to their solution. The review of objectives at both the COSOP and loan-operation designs shows outcomes directly addressing problems under the economic/poverty, natural resources/climate change and social inequality drivers, but not in relation to weak public institutions and insecurity/conflict (in rural settings). Social and economic issues are rarely identified among key risks to manage, while public institutions and insecurity are commonly treated as risks to the overall programme.
72. **Analysis of “social contracts” was not found within the analyses carried out in any of the G5+1 COSOPs, albeit marginally addressed in the fragility analysis for the Mali COSOP.**<sup>83</sup> The assessment of existing social contracts helps

<sup>83</sup> It is probable that IFAD programme staff are unaware of social-contract diagnostic tools, such as those developed by the World Bank and UNDP.

in understanding the political economy in rural settings and the factors causing socio-political instability (see Box 7).

Box 7

**What is a social contract analysis?**

Social contract analysis (or diagnostic) is an approach that is increasingly used by a number of development organizations, including the World Bank, USAID and UNDP, to help explain disparate and seemingly intractable development challenges within a single analytical framework. It is important to note that its use is not confined to analysis in fragile contexts but has been applied across multiple contexts. As such, it would not be an analytical approach promoted only in IFAD's approach to working in fragile contexts. Experience of its use in the World Bank would also suggest that the analytical approach is distinct from that found in other analytical approaches to examining government failure and inequality.

According to the World Bank (2019), social contract diagnostics can help explain development challenges and the persistence of distortionary economic policies because of unequal bargaining power among citizens, the State, and non-State players, including the private sector. As such, its main practical use is in identifying risk-mitigation strategies for political and governance-related risks. Social contract diagnostic approaches differ from those commonly used in IFAD, in that they rely on the use of perception-based data to better explain feelings of inequality and discontent, rather than relying on traditional measures of inequality such as income and resource distribution.

Source: World Bank 2019<sup>84</sup>

73. In fragile settings, multiple, interacting factors can undermine the social contract, which usually emerge from the interaction between: (i) the expectations of the rural poor; and (ii) the State's capacity to provide services, including security. Rural conditions become particularly fragile when rural people living within such contexts are disconnected from State institutions and services. The COSOPs/CSNs for the G5+1 (for the entire reviewed period) did not explicitly touch on this point. The exception is the Mali 2020 COSOP. The political economy analysis in its annexed "fragility assessment note" can be seen as touching on the issue of social contracts (see Box 8); however, it is important to note that social contract analysis is different from a generic political economy analysis. Examples of social contract diagnostic tools include those of the World Bank and UNDP, but it is also true that these diagnostic tools have not been widely promoted by either organization.

Box 8

**Excerpts of fragility assessment in the Mali 2020 COSOP**

The military coup in 2012 interrupted the democratic dynamic and shattered the national consensus and social contract, which had been well established through decentralization and promoted under the 1991-2012 presidencies. Meanwhile, with conflicts and violence rising in the entire northern part of the country, growing threats to the country's security diverted public resources; the newly elected Government could not cope with high and increasing social expectations emerging from the multidimensional crisis. Although pursuit of the decentralization agenda is one of the key elements of the 2015 Peace Agreement, it has fallen short of its promise to reduce poverty and build national cohesion. Administrative structures put in place to support decentralization have not been supported by adequate financial resources. Local governments continue to face significant challenges in delivering basic services to the rural communities.

Furthermore, poor governance and weak control of corruption was ubiquitous during the post-crisis period; this exacerbated the gap in social distrust towards the central government. Mali has shown poor performance on the World Bank governance indicators recorded over the last decade, with the country ranking below the 40 percentile for most of them. As seen in the chart below, the Political Stability and Government Effectiveness indicators show consistent downward trends. Control of corruption has remained unstable, improvements are not permanent and popular perception of the weakness of this indicator is strong. Many Malians have lost confidence in their elites and in their capacity to improve their living standards. Recurrent protests to claim improvements in public services, including

<sup>84</sup> World Bank. 2019. Social Contracts and World Bank Country Engagements: Lessons from Emerging Practices. IEG Meso Evaluation. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32621>



education, health and governance, demonstrate the general dissatisfaction in management of public affairs. Added to that, recurrent changes in the Government affect the development and implementation of policies and programmes. Between 2016 and 2019, the Prime Minister has changed four times. The last national election held in 2018 was marked by low turnout. The legislative election held in 2020 also had low turnout, and the results were widely contested, leading to protests and escalating social tensions and unrest.

Source: Mali COSOP 2020

74. **Guidance on what to cover in a fragility analysis is available, but built on a simplistic assumption of weak or non-existent interlinkages among the drivers.** The current Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies suggests that the fragility analysis seeks to answer the four questions shown in Box 9, but provides no guidance on how to go about answering these questions and highlighting interlinkages within and among drivers. In fact, fragility emerges from the interaction between select drivers, and fragility analysis needs to focus on this interaction and not just within the separate drivers. Analysing those linkages is critical to understanding the scope of the fragility, and therefore to designing appropriate interventions.

Box 9

**Suggested questions for fragility analysis in country strategies**

1. Why does IFAD consider this country fragile (e.g. conflict or post-conflict, prone to natural disasters, low institutional capacity and governance framework as reflected by bottom rural sector performance quintile)?
2. How does this fragility affect the agricultural/rural sector? What are the drivers of fragility (e.g. riparian water issues, land tenure, pastoralist grazing patterns)?
3. What is the risk posed to IFAD's programme? What are the various measures IFAD would introduce in the new COSOP and future interventions (both lending and non-lending), to prevent, mitigate or help cope with this fragility? What impact does this fragility have on IFAD's current portfolio, if any?
4. How would IFAD operate differently in such situations to reduce risks to beneficiaries, staff/consultants and implementing agencies (e.g. not operate in certain areas, introduce more flexibility in supervision arrangements, ensure additional security arrangements)?

Source: Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies

75. **The assumption that IFAD can easily draw on fragility analyses carried out by other development partners can be questioned.** The operational guidance also suggests that the fragility assessment note draws elements as much as possible on fragility assessments prepared by the Government and its partners, or by other partner institutions (e.g. international financial institutions or UN agencies). The assumption that this is feasible can be questioned. The fragility analyses carried out by the international financial institutions (the risk and resilience assessments) are not published. The UN rarely carries out explicit fragility analyses that are in the public domain; albeit such analyses are produced by some UN organizations but for internal use.<sup>85</sup>
76. **Transboundary issues are rarely considered in COSOPs, as IFAD lacks a framework within which such issues can be easily accommodated.** COSOPs are not a tool for coordination and agreement across neighbouring countries, although the current Operational Guidelines for Developing COSOPs notes that: "In a limited number of countries, IFAD will pilot: (a) regional lending operations to support country programmes in addressing cross-border development challenges." There are at least three challenges to using COSOPs to strategically address transboundary issues. First, COSOPs across the six countries are developed in

<sup>85</sup> The World Bank, Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs) have been developed to assess patterns and drivers of conflict, violence and fragility. RRAs are not published but on occasion are developed in partnership with other development partners. In 2018, the African Development Bank introduced the Country Resilience and Fragility Assessment (CRFA) tool. This tool provides a systematic and objective assessment of fragility risks and sources of resilience, on the basis of seven dimensions of fragility.



different years and for different periods, reflecting in-country needs aligned with country development priorities and national plans. Second, COSOPs are joint products of both IFAD and governments, and if transboundary issues are not considered in governments' priorities, it will be difficult for IFAD to incorporate them in COSOPs.

77. **Positively, few programmes are being used to address transboundary issues.** Investments in addressing transboundary issues are found in the Niger country programme, such as in the Family Farming Development Programme in Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder Regions (ProDAF) project, with its systems for monitoring cross-border flows of agropastoral products along the Kano-Katsina-Maradi, Tahoua-Sokoto-Kebbi and Zinder-Daura-Kano transport corridors. The more ambitious SD3C programme, with its focus on transboundary issues, can be seen as the first initiative using such approaches across the entire subregion.

#### **Relevance of programmes and projects**

78. **The objectives of country programmes were well aligned with national and IFAD priorities of achieving resilience and relevant to primary beneficiaries' priorities.** IFAD loan operations are in general designed to meet needs identified in national priorities and of primary beneficiaries, while supporting building resilience in rural areas. There is no evidence suggesting that loan operations are not aligned with governments' priorities, as illustrated in findings from the country strategy and programme evaluations (Nigeria, 2016; Burkina Faso, 2019; and Niger, 2021) and according to views of key informants. Analysis of field data gathered in the six countries (see Table 7) reveals that the perception of fragility drivers varies slightly according to each category of actor. For instance, beneficiaries of IFAD support mentioned unemployment and lack of economic opportunities as the most important fragility issues, while direct implementers of projects and their local partners mentioned climate and weather disturbance as the top challenges. All the issues expressed have been addressed by IFAD-supported projects and programmes. However, beneficiary groups reported not having been involved in identifying projects' priorities, raising a question on their involvement mechanism.<sup>86</sup> The generally lower priority given to conflict in Table 7, by all three stakeholder groups, is assumed to reflect the fact that IFAD projects have been located in areas where conflict is less problematic than elsewhere (in some countries) or the fact that field data gathering did not take place in medium-intensity conflict-affected areas.

Table 7  
**Perception of fragility drivers by category of stakeholder**

<i>Fragility driver</i>	<i>Direct project implementers</i>	<i>Beneficiaries of IFAD support</i>	<i>Local projects' partners</i>	<i>Average Total</i>
Poverty leading to asset depletion	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.3
Unemployment and lack of incomes	3.8	4.3	3.8	4.0
Food insecurity and malnutrition	4.2	3.9	3.4	3.8
Social inequality and exclusion	2.8	2.3	2.9	2.7
Environmental/natural resources degradation	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0
Climate/weather disturbance	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.1
Poor availability of services linked to production	3.9	4.1	3.8	3.9
Insecurity and violation of human rights	3.1	2.3	3.6	3.0
Violence and civil unrest	2.5	1.3	2.7	2.0

Source: SRE field data (see details by country in Table B3, Annex VI)

<sup>86</sup> Triangulation of this information confirms the superficiality of consultations with beneficiary groups in most cases.

*Methodological note:* The assessment was purely qualitative. After an explanation of the evaluation theme, interviewees were asked during a discussion (in groups or individuals) to provide their opinion, by appreciating the importance of each fragility driver aspect in their specific context. The average ratings were calculated for types of actors by country. As already mentioned, interviewees were not sampled in order to make a generalization. The results reflect the variability in the perception of fragility by individuals or types of actors. Appreciation varies from (0) almost inexistent to (5) very high. Interviewees were groups met during the field visits. Number of persons met by category are presented in Annex V.

79. **Cross-border trade being important in the subregion, and the increasing priority given by IFAD to investment in value chains, requires sound and comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and risks involved in investing in such areas. Evidence suggests that such analysis has generally not been done.** Available information on cross-border trade is produced by regional organizations such as WFP and the Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel (CILSS). The IFAD FARM-TRAC grant also funded the collection of information on cross-border trade of food and animal products.<sup>87</sup> However, the risks of cross-border trade are illustrated in the border regions between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where trade has been disrupted because of insecurity, thus requiring new arrangements for transporting goods by secured convoy. IFAD-supported projects funded initiatives in Niger to mitigate the risks to trade between Niger and Nigeria, and to promote dialogue to maintain trading of essential and perishable commodities. However, the review of design documents for relevant loan operations, in general, reveals no use of cross-border trade information or analysis of the vulnerability of value chain stakeholders to trade risks. A case in point is the recently designed PAFPA project in Burkina Faso, where design mainly assessed risks in the production segment, due to climate and environmental hazards. The same observation also applies for the Family Farming Development Programme in the Diffa Region (PRoDAF-Diffa).<sup>88</sup> Yet trade risks appear significant in the light of recent events such as conflicts and COVID-19 shocks, leading to border closure or trade hindrance, difficulties to transport and market, insecurity of trade activities, risks of robberies and racketing etc. Changes of routes due to border closure or insecurity increases the transportation hurdles and costs.

#### **Adequacy of designs and approaches**

80. **Programmes and projects identified lessons that have informed designs of new operations, but not in terms of how interventions can address holistically drivers of fragility.** Examples of lessons being carried through into new projects can be found in Burkina Faso and Niger. For instance, the Burkina Faso COSOP 2019 includes lessons learned from earlier projects that were useful in designing new ones, even if not systematically. Some lessons pertained to improved traditional techniques for soil and water conservation (SWC) techniques, by establishing a relationship between these techniques and land security, which has changed over time;<sup>89</sup> also, landowners are now required to apply these techniques systematically. Another lesson was that access to non-financial services is a prerequisite for successful access to financial services. Non-financial services, in particular business-development services and technical skills training, should be supported in the context of decentralized financial services and addressed in a systemic manner. Similar lessons were also identified in Chad and in Mali.<sup>90</sup> Those examples show that lessons were more focused on delivery of particular

<sup>87</sup> FARM TRAC 2019 (CILSS, IFPRI, Association Ouest Africaine du Commerce Transfrontalier des produits Alimentaires, Agro-sylvo-pastoraux et Halieutiques (AOCTAH)/West African Association for Cross-Border Trade, in Agro-forestry-pastoral and Fisheries Products (WACTAF)) is expected to provide quantitative information on trade in agricultural and food commodities and on trade barriers; design an electronic platform for the monitoring of agricultural interstate trade in Sahel and West Africa and of cross-border flows of agropastoral products along trade corridors; and conduct an economic analysis of the main bottlenecks in rural households' access to agricultural and food products by country.

<sup>88</sup> It included a detailed risk assessment at design, including economic risks that might affect market governance, but did not include trade risks.

<sup>89</sup> More than 20 years of investment on this aspect.

<sup>90</sup> Based on experience from previous projects, PROHYPA in Chad (2009) highlighted in its design document that priority must be given to establishing diversified institutions to resolve conflicts related to natural resources. The approach should be to capitalize on local institutions' capacities and only engage with the departmental administration for the most delicate arbitrations. In Mali, the PAPAM (2010) drew on lessons related to demand-driven and private delivery of advisory services in rural areas. The Mali COSOP 2020 considered integrating some lessons learned from IFAD-funded projects in its design. These lessons include the importance of promoting entrepreneurship for young people and women, and improving household food security by rehabilitating degraded lands.

interventions, but not on how interventions can better contribute to mitigating drivers of fragility (environmental and economic-related in the given examples). This is possibly because: (i) explicit consideration of addressing root causes of fragility contextual challenges has not been a common practice in the programmes; and ii) some key drivers are treated as risks whose incidence shall be mitigated, rather than an important contextual challenge that support can directly contribute to addressing.

81. **Maintaining investments in the same geographic area makes learning and implementing lessons easier. Some lessons directly relate to working in fragile contexts.** This seems to be the case in the G5 (only) countries, where practice has been generally to locate successive project phases (in successive loan-design documents) in the same geographical area. By doing so, lessons have been drawn from previous operations; some are in relation to working in fragile situations, and reflected in the design of latter operations. The example of Chad in Box 10 is illustrative.<sup>91</sup>

Box 10

**Lessons from Chad, PARSAT (2014-2022)**

**Complexity of interventions.** The experience of IFAD and other technical and financial partners has shown the importance – to ensure the rapid achievement of tangible impacts – of limiting the areas of intervention to simple actions that are easy to implement, given difficulties in finding quality goods and services in rural areas. The participatory approach must be favoured, as done in the framework of PSANG-II and PRODER-K, whose priority interventions have been based, as far as possible, on those identified and prioritized by the communities in their local or village development plan. However, the experience of PSANG-II also demonstrates the fact that the complexity of projects derives from the desire to respond to all the requests expressed. This can lead to: (i) a great dispersion and disconnection of the activities undertaken; (ii) difficulties in technical control and monitoring of these activities; and (iii) a dilution of the impacts.

**Institutional set-up.** Chad is classified as a "fragile State", although efforts are being made by the Government to gradually move out of this categorization. Institutional capacities are weak – at the central level and even more in the regions – and the public finance management system suffers from serious shortcomings. The management of development projects/programmes is therefore still mainly delegated to specific management units – entities recruited competitively for the duration of the projects/programmes – but under the supervision of the ministries concerned by the interventions. This arrangement remains necessary as long as government and ministerial measures are not defined for a more transparent and sustainable management of bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects/programmes (this is one of the conclusions of the PSANG-II and PRODER-K completion reports, and was also taken into account in the design of the Rural Development Support Programme in Guéra [PADER-G]).

Source: PARSAT design document

82. **Loan operation designs have not included much consideration of how they can effectively address shocks, except those related to climate change.** The review of experience shows that shocks are flagged on occasion, but not consistently and systemically in the programme designs. Beyond the climatic aspects for which the Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) are applied,<sup>92</sup> shocks occurring across the other categories of drivers are not explicitly assessed, in terms of their occurrence, their magnitude or how these might interact with the other drivers.
83. **All relevant guidance on working in fragile contexts emphasizes the need to design simple interventions, but there is limited evidence that this approach has been implemented. Programmes have instead prioritized developing the capacity of non-government stakeholders in delivery.** In fragile contexts, interventions should fit with the institutional capacity to implement them and in

<sup>91</sup> In Nigeria, there has been a significant change in geographic focus over the evaluation period, and so a more limited opportunity to pursue such an approach.

<sup>92</sup> Mandatory since 2015, as an important mechanism to mainstream climate change in IFAD operations. But the starting year was 2009, according to the report of the Thematic Evaluation of IFAD's Support for Smallholder Farmers' Adaptation to Climate Change. IOE, 2021.

general be simple to implement. Only the Chad project design documents for PADER-G 2010-2016 and the Project to Improve the Resilience of Agricultural Systems in Chad (PARSAT) 2014-2022 explicitly discuss the need for a simple design. Elsewhere, looking across the G5+1, in the instance in Mali, the Fostering Agricultural Productivity Project (PAPAM) project completion report of 2018 highlighted that the complex design (institutional set-up, complexity of actions and number of public institutions involved) created significant risks for the project implementation. The 2013 CSPE of Mali also highlighted issues with institutional set-ups leading to delays, and changes in the institutional arrangements. In fact, slow initial implementation was highlighted in 16 out of 18 initial supervision reports, and low institutional capacity was signalled as a significant reason for this. The self-assessment by IFAD country teams also identified low institutional capacity as a continuing challenge across the countries. The main response to low institutional capacity has been to invest in developing the capacity of non-government stakeholders, which is discussed in more detail in the efficiency section.

84. **Major adjustments in projects were made during the midterm reviews (MTRs) to respond to critical issues, e.g. a deterioration in the security situation or failures in meeting result targets or in cofinancing.** Out of the ten loan operations where MTRs have been carried out during the evaluation period, in three of them,<sup>93</sup> medium-intensity conflict led to a scaling back of activities, while non-availability of planned cofinancing triggered significant redesign of planned results in five loan operations (Rural Business Development Services Programme [PASPRU] [Burkina Faso], PAPAM and the Rural Microfinance Programme [Mali], the Poverty Reduction Project in Aftout South and Karakoro – Phase II [PASK II] [Mauritania], and the Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region [PASADEM] [Niger]). Examples of responses to medium-intensity conflict for Nigeria and Mali are shown in Box 11.

Box 11

#### Responses to medium-intensity conflict

##### Nigeria

Given the scale of IFAD's engagement, its programmes have been vulnerable to various forms of conflict, insurgency or unrest, whether in the northeast from Boko Haram, from pastoralist-farmer conflicts in the middle belt, or violence and unrest in the Delta region. Most programmes do not include any conflict analysis or risk assessment of how changes introduced by IFAD would affect conflict or insecurity in either a positive or negative way, or mitigation measures. Where a mitigation strategy is put forward at design, it is largely to avoid working in known conflict zones by selecting local government areas or villages outside known areas of disturbance, and by bringing staff and beneficiaries located in conflict zones to attend capacity building or other sessions in safer programme locations.

##### Mali

Two projects (the Northern Regions Investment and Rural Development Programme and the Kidal Integrated Rural Development Programme [PIDRK]) operated in the northern regions. Efforts were made to adapt their components to these zones but the risks linked to conflicts were underestimated. The situation in the north of Mali in recent years has been particularly serious and IFAD-supported projects moved from the North to the South. Nevertheless, a more thorough analysis would have helped to plan mitigation measures from the start.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

#### Summary on relevance

85. **Lessons from IFAD's engagement in the subregion (G5+1 countries) confirm that IFAD country strategies, programmes and operations were overall well relevant for objectives linked to rural transformation, in line with IFAD's mandate; but the relevance was less in addressing key fragility challenges of the subregion.** This is because only three (related to economic poverty, NRM and social exclusion) of the five types of fragility drivers are explicitly

<sup>93</sup> PADER-G (Chad), the Rural Microfinance Programme and PAPAM (Mali).

covered in designing strategies and operations. Another fact was the insufficient reflection of fragility features in designing strategies and operations as suggested by the 2016 strategy and its 2019 Special Programme. The SRE found country strategies unsuitable in addressing transboundary fragility challenges within the subregion. Aligned with partners' experiences (Chapter II), key lessons learned relate to: conducting context-specific analysis (to explore fragility root causes and identify right actions needed); applying flexible approaches (to adjust when necessary) and simple designs (to be able to work at all levels and with grassroots stakeholders); and extending the duration of support (to better tackle fragility drivers).

## B. Coherence

86. Coherence relates to the compatibility of an intervention with other interventions (do they support or undermine each other?) in a country, sector or institution. It includes internal and external coherences. Internal coherence is the synergy of IFAD-supported interventions with each other and with non-lending support. External coherence is the consistency of the intervention/strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context. The SRE key question was as follows: How has IFAD's engagement (strategies and operations) assumed internal coherence and had similar or complementary developmental purposes, in order to contribute mitigating fragility constraints?<sup>94</sup>

### Internal coherence

#### Loans and grants portfolio

87. **Between IFAD loan-supported operations, a coherence has been observed, although they did not intend to explicitly address fragility drivers or fragility in general.** Internal coherence was evident across IFAD lending operations, with good evidence of planning for this between consecutive loan operations in the same geographic areas in four of the six countries, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

**Internal coherence at loan operation level by country**

Country	Examples of IFAD loan operations	Anticipated benefit
Burkina Faso	PAPFA (2017-2024) and PAFA-4R (2019-2026)	At the request of the Government, the Agricultural Value Chains Support Project in the Southwest, Hauts-Bassins, Cascades and Boucle du Mouhoun Regions – Extension (PAFA-4R) complements the PAPFA. It will complement the Agricultural Value Chains Promotion Project (PAPFA) through a geographical extension in the Southwest region and the addition of additional sectors.
Chad	PADER-G (2010-2017) and PARSAT (2013-2020) and REPER (2018-2025)	At the operational level, PARSAT interventions are complementary with PADER-G and PROHYPA given its focus on the development and resilience of agricultural systems. In addition, PARSAT collaborated in the development of the REPER Annual Work Programme and Budget. In addition, the REPER has extended the PARSAT intervention areas by covering additional departments in the regions of Chari Baguirmi (Department of Baguirmi), Batha (Batha West and Batha East) and Salamat (Department of Aboudéia).
Mali	PAPAM (2010-2018), Rural Microfinance Programme (2010-2018) FIER (2013-2022) MERIT (2019-2026)	The complementarity of activities has occurred at the level of intervention areas and thematic focus. Indeed, the INCLUSIF project has confirmed the regions of Ségou, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Kayes and Mopti covered by the previous projects (PMR and FIER) and will rely on the faire-faire mechanisms already established by PMR and FIER for the implementation of rural financial inclusion activities for the rural poor.
Mauritania	PRODEFI (2016-2025) PROGRES (2020-)	PROGRES will be implemented in the six wilayas (regions) covered by the ongoing PRODEFI project, with which it will create strategic and operational synergy and complementarity.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

88. Two countries, Nigeria and Niger, were exceptions. In Nigeria, the geographical targeting approach was initially too dispersed across the country, which limited the opportunity to pursue an approach to internal coherence from one operation to

<sup>94</sup> This criteria has been introduced from 2021 and, therefore, explicit analytical review evidence was missing.



another covering the same geographic area. In Niger, internal coherence was also observed, but it was delivered through a different approach that reflected the decision of the Government and IFAD to transition towards a programme approach. The main features of the programme approach were as follows: (i) merging several projects within a single initiative (e.g. integrating PASADEM and Ruwanmu Small-Scale Irrigation Project [PPI Ruwanmu] into ProDAF); (ii) setting up a single team to manage all the activities funded by several IFAD loans (CENRAT); and (iii) endeavouring to support investments with non-lending activities with the contribution of CENRAT.<sup>95</sup> The 2021 Niger CSPE found that project components and subcomponents were well linked among themselves, even if the programmatic approach had not been fully implemented.

89. **Small grants sought for coherence in supporting the loan operations, but often this did not happen.**<sup>96</sup> Out of the 11 small grants operating in the six countries that were reviewed by the SRE team, only one clearly shows an intent for internal coherence also flagged in either a loan operation design document (the PASPRU loan operation and the small grant Participatory Microfinance for Africa in Burkina Faso). The 2016 Nigeria country programme evaluation (CPE) found that while small grants for research and development potentially may have created some impact at national level, their use within IFAD's own loan operations was not evident. On the other hand, in Niger, the 2021 CSPE found a more mixed story. While some small grants clearly shared little synergy with the loan operations, others contributed by introducing technical solutions. In all cases, the main challenge remains to ensure a better connection of standalone grants to loan portfolio activities and results.

#### **Knowledge management and policy engagement**

90. **KM and policy-engagement activities generally did not focus on identifying and implementing lessons for an enhanced engagement aligned with the fragility situations, including with the governments.** The four CSPEs rated non-lending activities' performance as moderately satisfactory, at best. For example, the CSPE of Mali (2013) highlighted weaknesses regarding KM and policy engagement. It found that KM activities were weak, as there were no activities on this before the opening of the country office in 2012; policy dialogue was constrained by limited strategic guidance, the multiplicity of interventions and project management structures, straining the capacity of the ministries concerned.<sup>97</sup> Similar results were noted in the cases of Burkina Faso and Niger CSPEs, 2019 and 2021 respectively (Box 12). The lack of adequate or sufficient capacity to deliver in these areas, aligned with operating in fragile contexts, is an explanatory factor of this shortfall. Another explanatory factor is the weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems for tracking results and impacts in those contexts, as these are critical to ensuring a solid knowledge-management function that can effectively feed in policy-engagement activities. Unfortunately, M&E systems of the concerned country programmes were assessed generally weak over the evaluated period.<sup>98</sup>

Box 12

#### **The challenge of adequately prioritizing KM and policy dialogue**

**CSPE Burkina Faso, 2019.** In the country office, portfolio monitoring absorbed too much time of the undersized team, which was unable to really engage in policy dialogue and provide leadership in discussions among donors and in knowledge management. The grants were relevant and yielded useful results, the majority having direct links to the project portfolio.

<sup>95</sup> Established in and under the supervision of the Ministry in charge of Agriculture and Livestock

<sup>96</sup> Different from the in-loan grants, such as those related to the debt sustainability framework (DSF) or other grants described in the effectiveness section.

<sup>97</sup> It was noted e.g. Little information from the field has been properly capitalized upon in order to provide solid input to this dialogue, rather than simple information. Surprisingly, KM aspects were not addressed in the CSN (2016) and COSOP (2020).

<sup>98</sup> The CPE (2016) of Nigeria concluded that effective KM was hampered by poorly performing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. The CSPE (2019) of Burkina Faso stated clearly that M&E systems focused more on monitoring the progress of activities than on measuring changes and impact, as well as related explanatory factors. The latter, similar finding was mentioned in the CSPE (2021) of Niger.

**CSPE Niger, 2021.** Despite the progress made, knowledge capitalization was confined to technical aspects and not treated comprehensively. Learning efforts were not oriented to transcend the specificities of activities, so that capitalized knowledge could be shared by a large number of projects and with other donors, which would have enabled a contribution to sector policy dialogue. In order to offset the small size of the country office, IFAD de facto tasked the ProDAF project management team with public policy dialogue, and the setting up of a national representation and technical assistance unit embedded within the Ministry of Agriculture. IFAD's policy dialogue through project formulation missions and implementation support missions remains largely informal and lacks visibility.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

91. **Bearing in mind that the performance in KM and policy dialogue was modest, only in Nigeria is there some evidence that the KM and policy engagement approaches have responded to working in a fragile context.** In Nigeria (CPE 2016), it was noted that given the size of the country and the complexities of the federal system, the level of capacity seemed inadequate to cover multiple roles of programme-implementation support, policy dialogue and partnership building. As for KM, CDD experience was a priority for knowledge sharing, contributing to dialogues on participatory approaches and encouraging local governments to work with communities. Learning tools were trialled with local communities to allow them to develop appropriate CDD procedures; these also helped to inform subsequent programmes such as the Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme – Niger Delta (CBNRMP) and the Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP). Nevertheless, the CPE noted that considering the length of IFAD's experience in implementing CDD approaches in the country, the available documentary evidence on this approach was limited.

#### External coherence

92. **The thematic focus of IFAD's operations – i.e. agricultural and rural development in terms of improving food security and sustainable livelihoods – have been complementary, with priorities addressed by other partners working in the subregion.** Partners' priorities highlighted in Table 9 show the broad complementarity of IFAD's programmes, with AfDB and WB programmatic priorities. However, there is little evidence that this then translates into either formal mechanisms to assess relative comparative advantages, or deliver synergy at the field level. With RBAs, there are overlapping themes.<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, RBA actors who were interviewed noted that the complementarity of their actions at field level is achieved in terms of areas of interventions, and with the comparative advantage of each organization: emergency actions for WFP, policy development and support to governments for FAO and grassroots linkages, and support to producers for IFAD. These comparative advantages of RBAs can be very complementary in fragile situations, as demonstrated through the SD3C programme.

Table 9  
Programmatic priorities of IFAD partners in the G5+1

Partner	Programmatic priority or themes
African Development Bank (AfDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure development</li> <li>• Regional economic integration</li> <li>• Private sector development</li> <li>• Governance and institutional strengthening</li> <li>• Technology development</li> </ul>
World Bank (WB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic reforms, including institutional strengthening</li> <li>• Agricultural transformation</li> <li>• Infrastructure development and access to social services (energy, education and health).</li> </ul>

<sup>99</sup> According to the 2021 Evaluation of RBAs collaboration, there are significant differences between the three organizations. FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, combining normative and operational functions in food and agriculture, food security and nutrition across the humanitarian–development continuum. Its funding combines assessed contributions by each Member State with voluntary contributions of extrabudgetary resources. IFAD is an international financial institution, funded through periodic Member State replenishments, providing finance for combating rural poverty and hunger mainly through loans. WFP delivers emergency food assistance and uses food assistance to support economic and social development. It is financed entirely by voluntary contributions.

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural policy development</li> <li>• Food security and nutrition</li> <li>• Resilience and rural livelihoods improvement</li> <li>• Early warning systems</li> </ul>
World Food Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency responses to vulnerable people directly or indirectly affected by crisis, disease, including COVID-19, etc.</li> <li>• Nutrition Response- prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition activities.</li> <li>• Resilience building</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the SRE team

93. **Opportunities for partnerships are identified in COSOPs/CSNs and to a lesser degree in loan operation design documents. However, there is very limited evidence that country teams have already used partnership as an approach to effectively working in the G5+1 fragile contexts.** According to the 2016 IFAD fragility strategy, partnership is core to managing risks in fragile situations.<sup>100</sup> Potential partnerships are identified in COSOPs/CSNs, although review of risk-management sections within both COSOPs/CSNs and in-loan design documents does not identify instances in which partnerships are a key part of risk management. Details of how the partnerships will be managed is always lacking.<sup>101</sup> Most examples of partnerships mentioned in the self-assessment by IFAD country teams, as presented in Box 13, are still yet to be implemented.

Box 13

**Examples of partnerships being sought**

- IFAD has actively sought the support of other organizations – WFP, FAO for the SD3C – as well as the partnership with AfDB for the PAVAL project.
- Currently, in Burkina Faso, support is being sought for a partnership with WB on the implementation of the digital-solutions aspect of the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF).
- In Nigeria, the design of a major project is ongoing and the country team relied on UNDP expertise to develop the section on fragility and conflict.
- The Project to Strengthen Innovation in Youth and Women Agro-pastoral Entrepreneurship in Chad, under design, is developing synergies with AfDB supporting a livestock project
- Harnessing of partners' reports and knowledge products as well: the case of the Agro-sylvo-pastoral Exports and Markets Development Project in Niger, for example.

Source: SRE data collected

94. **Some examples of partnerships with the RBAs are found but evidence of how they were operationalized is not available.** Two initiatives were identified by IFAD partners in Niger as examples of good partnership projects: (i) the RBA Resilience Initiative (WFP/FAO/IFAD), 2017-2021; and (ii) Communes de convergence. Collaboration between IFAD, FAO and WFP since 2017, with the development of an operational framework for the countries of the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria), is also an example. Although this framework addresses both humanitarian and development needs, the evaluative evidence from these examples was not available and the evaluation was unable to collect it.
95. **There are challenges for a closer partnership between the RBAs but these do not relate to fragile contexts specifically.** The case studies carried out in Burkina Faso and Niger, as part of the 2021 joint evaluation on RBA collaboration,

<sup>100</sup> The specific importance of partnership in fragile situations warrants its inclusion as a guiding principle. Partnerships help IFAD to manage risks and enable it to stay engaged in more challenging contexts, because they provide the means to address root causes of fragility that lie outside IFAD's areas of comparative advantage but pose a threat to IFAD's country programmes.

<sup>101</sup> The 2019 OIE Review of the Partnership Framework identified a number of key concerns across IFAD: (i) insufficient clarity on how partnerships enable IFAD to achieve results in its projects, programmes, grants and policies, and inadequate linking of partnerships with the underlying theories of change of projects or programmes; (ii) lack of prioritization and selectivity of partnerships at all levels, leading to inadequate attention to critical partnerships; (iii) limited or absent monitoring and reporting of the achievements of specific partnerships, and no corporate-level reporting on the overall contribution of partnerships to IFAD's achievements; and (iv) limited use and awareness of good partnering practices and tools, and variable staff capacity to support effective partnership-building.



reveal a number of enablers and barriers to better partnerships. However, there is no evidence that the increasingly fragile context is, in itself, either a significant enabler or barrier to greater collaboration. The broader evaluation also does not identify fragility as a constraint to greater collaboration, as illustrated by excerpts in Box 14.

Box 14

**The challenge of delivering partnership across the RBAs**

The Joint Evaluation on the Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies (2021) concluded as follows: Collaboration between the RBAs has significant potential, but the rationale for it is not stated in an appropriately realistic way. At present, efforts to promote RBA collaboration are not fully grounded in an accurate understanding of the conditions in which it is most effectively pursued. The formal statements of corporate commitment to collaboration reflect this...In fact, any idea for collaboration must be tested against its practicability, its likely effectiveness, and the level of transaction costs that it will impose. In many cases, these tests yield a negative result. Alternative arrangements, such as separate but complementary activities or collaboration with other partners, may prove more advantageous. Realism and pragmatism are the keys to meaningful and effective RBAC."

Source: Joint Evaluation on the Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies (2021)<sup>102</sup>

96. **The SD3C project between the three RBAs can be seen as a response by them for stronger collaboration.** The project requires joint programming between the three agencies at field level, thus delaying the national launching in the countries.<sup>103</sup> IFAD has no previous experience in the G5+1 on implementing such joint programming approaches. Experience in the UN system is that joint programming is challenging and generates significant transaction costs, but IFAD lacks human and financial resources at country level.<sup>104</sup> IFAD is engaged in developing coordination mechanisms to include the development of the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018–2022 in Mauritania, and the most recent United Nations Development Assistance Framework process in Burkina Faso, which brought together humanitarian, development and peace actors to undertake joint analysis, planning and programming.<sup>105</sup>

**Summary on coherence**

97. **In sum, IFAD-supported operations in the G5+1 contexts have shown good internal coherence within the loan portfolio, than between the lending and non-lending operations. In terms of external coherence, there was little evidence on achieving this.** Grants, KM and policy-engagement activities poorly contributed to better operating in such fragile situations. Moreover, while partnerships were prioritized in design documents, little evidence was found on the operationalization of these. The SRE identified lessons learned pertaining to coherence, namely: the importance of learning to enable better tackling of fragility drivers, and the need for complementarity and partnership for greater effectiveness in those contexts. These are aligned with lessons identified from the review of IFAD's partners' experiences.

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/44355601/Report+joint+evaluation+RBAs.pdf/974292c1-abac-a880-2f75-8d9d1a1ec891?t=1638354215029>

<sup>103</sup> According to country teams interviewed, while IFAD has put in place resources required on its side, other partners involved have not fulfilled their commitments and this has delayed the national launching. Finally, the launching workshop of the SD3C in the six countries happened on 16-18 November 2021 in Nouakchott (Mauritania). See <https://fr.wfp.org/communiqués-de-presse/lancement-du-programme-regional-conjoint-sahel-en-reponse-aux-defis-covid-19>

<sup>104</sup> One person (at P4 or P5 level) managing multiple countries, and one CPO, whereby other partners (WB, AfDB, FAO and WFP) have a significantly greater presence.

<sup>105</sup> However, even if functioning coordination mechanisms are developing, the question is whether IFAD country teams can participate. Evidence is lacking, but the Niger CSPE 2021 observed that "IFAD did not participate sufficiently in coordination with other United Nations agencies operating in Niger, and was absent from the process of developing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). As a result, IFAD was unable to fully leverage its experience with rural development in Niger by contributing to the common reflection on resilience, as did FAO and WFP."

## **Key points**

### **Relevance**

- COSOPs are, in principle, flexible instruments that can be adapted and revised, but their flexible use was not observed in the G5+1 contexts. They are inadequate for addressing transboundary issues.
- Comprehensive fragility analyses are not implemented, but contextual analyses are done covering three fragility drivers (related to economic poverty, NRM and gender inequality). It not clear how analytical results are used to design interventions that address fragility.
- Supported programmes and projects were aligned with national and IFAD priorities in terms of achieving resilience in rural settings.
- Lessons learned have informed designs of programmes, but not explicitly how to address drivers of fragility. Limited evidence of simplicity of designs were found, although these are very important in fragile situations.

### **Coherence**

- Country strategic documents do not explicitly explain how internal coherence will be achieved within the programme, which is critical in fragile contexts.
- KM and policy-engagement activities could not contribute to better working in those fragile contexts, except in Nigeria.
- Opportunities for partnerships are identified, but there is no solid evidence that country teams have used this approach to deliver better in those fragile situations.
- Challenges remain for a closer partnership between the RBAs, but these do not relate to the fragility situations. To that effect, the SD3C project appears a very good opportunity for stronger collaboration.

## IV. From effectiveness to impacts in fragile contexts

98. This chapter assesses short and medium-term results in terms of effectiveness, and their contribution to change (longer-term results or impacts) as identified in the evaluation ToC (see Table 10). Intervention outcomes of IFAD-supported projects under review are briefly described and then assessed for their contribution to resilience, defined as a combination of the adaptive, absorptive and transformative capacities of beneficiaries. The focus of analysis is to explore the extent to which supported interventions contributed to tackling fragility drivers, aligned with the ToC outcomes as shown in the table. The assessment is performed by a category of fragility drivers, in line with the analytical framework, and findings formulated in terms of lessons.<sup>106</sup>

Table 10

Medium-term outcome statements in the ToC

Medium-term outcome statements in the ToC	Related fragility drivers
Stakeholders in inclusive value chain organized to adjust after shocks and to secure transactions, including cross border	Poverty and food security; Inclusiveness
Nutrition practices and situation improved in household	Poverty and food security
Agricultural investments sustainably managed by farmers and grassroots organisations, which include women and youths	Poverty and food security; Social inequality; Institutions
Natural resources restored, protected and effectively used, also by women and youths	NRM and ACC; Social inequality
Agreements and regulations for natural resources usage claimed by users, including cross-countries resources	NRM and ACC; Social inequality
Institutional framework and arrangements improved for peace and development locally and in cross-border	Institutions and Security

Source: SRE team elaboration

99. Key evaluation questions addressed in this chapter are:
- How effective was IFAD's support (at national and subregional levels) in achieving results that contribute to addressing key fragility drivers?
  - Based on evidence, to what extent has IFAD's support contributed to building resilience and fostering rural transformation in these fragile situations?
  - What are the lessons learned from IFAD-supported interventions in terms of contribution to change in fragile situations?

### A. Poverty and economic fragility aspects

100. A poor economic environment is characterized by low incomes, low levels of socio-economic assets and few opportunities, inducing a state of poverty and risks to food security; poverty is a consequence as well as a fragility driver. Overall, **IFAD's interventions did contribute to addressing economic fragility drivers**, through promoting diversified income-generating activities and development of value chains linked to secure national and cross-border regional markets.

#### Socio-economic drivers and income generation

101. **Evidence suggests that the promotion of income-generating activities, using IFAD's support, is conducive to strengthening absorptive and adaptive capacities of beneficiaries in fragile situations.** Promotion of economic activities for rural beneficiaries is an area of comparative advantage for IFAD. The way it has been supported has evolved over time, aligned with changes in the economic context – mainly due to the growth of entrepreneurship in rural settings and to incorporation into the market economy. Different entry points to promote profitable farm income-

<sup>106</sup> As mentioned in the methodology section, generalization was not sought in the evaluation but rather to identify lessons (from single or several experiences) that are relevant and useful for improving IFAD's engagement in those fragile situations.

generating activities have been chosen in different countries; however, in all cases, promotion of improved farming practices led to increased yields, reductions in yield variability, and promotion of new crops and animal-husbandry techniques. Such improvements have been linked with asset-building strategies. These strategies have included: (i) reliance on public subsidy policy in some countries (input supply in Niger and Nigeria); or (ii) in-kind credit to support the most vulnerable in accumulating primary assets (goat kits for vulnerable women groups in Niger, to be repaid in kind); or (iii) internal in-kind savings (for seeds and inputs in Niger). These strategies have contributed to building the capacities of producers to cope with shocks. In most projects, subsidized investments in land management (see below) to improve productivity have increased opportunities for new crops, and thus beneficiaries' adaptive capacities through diversification.

102. **In areas where fragilities were multiple over a long period, including economic, social and security challenges, a pathway entailing progressive stages has been effective in promoting economic activities and gradually linking them to pro-poor value chains.** In such regions where economic opportunities and market access were initially lacking, the concept of entrepreneurship or economic interest groups was at first not even understood. Returns obtained by the promoted economic interest groups were low (lower than assessed at design). Therefore, most projects developed comprehensive packages for supporting microprojects and rural enterprises around three main categories of actions: training, support along the value chain segments – including promotion of market access – and enabling inclusive rural finance services. A stronger market orientation of the promoted microenterprises was required, and approaches – such as the business support-service centres and project financing enabling an access to microfinance institutions – have been developed accordingly. Examples include the Agricultural Value Chains Promotion Project in Burkina Faso and PRODAF in Niger.
103. **When promoting economic activities, evidence suggests that capacity building and non-financial support are critical in developing the necessary human and social capital of individuals and rural communities.** In the contexts of economic and climatic fragility, smallholders and microenterprises are particularly prone to being negatively affected by poor technical and entrepreneurial capabilities and choices; they are also prone to poor access to quality inputs and markets, combined with climatic shocks and environmental constraints. Herein lies the relevance of non-financial support services and their contribution to the promotion of rural microenterprises and other initiatives along the value chain. Resource centres promoted in Burkina Faso for providing services to microenterprises are a good example.<sup>107</sup> These types of support have been critical for the development of resilience strategies in target communities.
104. **Grants did contribute to making value chains more resilient and able to respond quickly to trade risks.** Trade risks appear to be increasingly triggered by rising medium-intensity conflict or COVID-19-related border closures and increased trade barriers. For instance, around Lake Chad, a trade ban has been imposed for some commodities. Border closures or insecurity have led to markets shifting and the need to transport goods in convoy. The IFAD FARMTRAC grant (implemented by IFPRI and CILSS) has contributed to such adjustments by producing publicly available data on intraregional trade in agricultural and food products along trade corridors,<sup>108</sup> as well as on food losses during transportation and road harassment along trade corridors in the region. Results have been used in the design of the SD3C,

<sup>107</sup> IFAD in Burkina Faso has been promoting rural microenterprises (MER) within selected value chains, and it has been a major target since 2000, with a focus on business-development services. Microenterprises supported showed a willingness to pay for quality support services provided by local business development support centres created. PASPRU developed an ambitious and multidimensional training and information component, and a major achievement was to set up 56 CREERs as resource centres for the MERs, which concluded 6,116 contracts with MERs on a demand and pay for service basis (partly covered by a subvention); 7,440 business-development services could be delivered for market access, training in management and access to finance.

<sup>108</sup> Within an extended geographic coverage to the Western and Eastern Basin of West Africa.

where mediation activities (i.e. with men in uniform) are foreseen to reduce harassment in cross-border trade.

### **Inclusive financial services**

105. **Inclusive financial services are essential in enabling the effective promotion of rural economic activities and microenterprises. They can contribute to expanding productive assets and strengthen the absorptive capacities of producers, as well as supporting profitable investments to enhance adaptive capacity.** IFAD-supported programmes and projects have focused for most of the evaluation period on building credible, viable and sustainable rural financial services that are accessible to diverse groups (vulnerable and poor in particular). The field mission confirmed that credit and saving groups were considered instrumental to financing farm inputs and processing equipment (Chad), as well as irrigation pumps and fences in gardens and oasis (Mauritania). In addition, support for linking rural microfinance institutions to formal banks has been provided to enhance sustainability and assist these institutions in facing shocks. This may not have been always effective (Box 15).
106. **Customary self-help groups contribute to improving the resilience of their members, but their development into viable and resilient financial institutions able to deliver local services and respond to credit demands (to some extent) is very challenging. Yet there is no alternative where public and private service providers are absent, as found in many project areas.** In Chad for instance, successive projects in Guéra region supported the credit and saving groups and their organization into cooperatives and federation into an apex organization (*Union des caisses d'épargne et de crédit du Guéra* [UCEC-G]). However, the networks of credit and saving groups and small banks remain fragile and subject to collapse, caused by both internal issues and external shocks, and they require long-term support.

#### **Box 15**

#### **Credit and saving networks fostered over decades can still be bankrupted by shocks**

In Chad, credit and saving groups were strengthened (PSANG II, 2001-2010), 41 village banks established (18,000 borrowers) and a network linking the two created. This network was expected to be an alternative to moneylenders and, as such, contribute to reinforcing the absorptive capacities of beneficiaries facing seasonal shocks and protect their assets against liquidation. By 2010, after nine years, the credit and saving network was judged very fragile and not yet ready for integration, according to the national microfinance strategy. PADER-G (2010-17) supported federation of the savings and credit cooperatives into a union (UCEC-G), and helped the network to mobilize local savings and develop a range of viable products adapted to the needs of rural households and producers; it also improved access to credit for women, who were not members of the cooperatives, by training them in financial management. These new products increased the coverage and financial viability of the banks.<sup>109</sup> However, the union suffered significant internal management weaknesses. Increasing insecurity and an economic crisis also adversely affected the credit portfolio of UCEC-G, and new support measures needed to be taken.<sup>110</sup>

In Mali, the Rural Microfinance Programme (PMR) ran between 2011 and 2019. It was specifically designed to strengthen decentralized microfinance institutions (MFIs) and to

<sup>109</sup> A NGO was in charge to support the network, which also underwent a restructuring. The project also developed a fund for producers' organizations in need of credit for the development of income-generating activities (39 microprojects funded). In all 5,384 farms benefited from credit. The network was granted the agreement of *Commission Bancaire des Etats d'Afrique Centrale* in October 2014, and developed partnerships with many institutions in the region. It also benefited from a refinancing line. In all, the projects set the basis for the sound development of this network.

<sup>110</sup> The REPER PDR in 2018 evaluates the operational autonomy of UPEC-G at 58 per cent, and identifies the breakdown of the union as a risk. REPER planned to extend financial services to 20 000 HH and 450 POs. In continuity with the intervention of PARSAT, REPER intends to strengthen the credit and saving cooperatives by facilitating a refinancing line from commercial banks; both parties should use an increasing part of their own funds to finance this line. Beneficiaries get access to a three-parties funding mechanism: the new entrepreneur has to bring its own contribution and be eligible by its credit cooperative or another DFS to obtain a project subvention. The COSOP 2009 had anticipated that the consolidation of microfinance systems in rural area would be a lengthy process (12 years). The increasing fragility factors also contributed to shaking these systems.

implement the national microfinance strategy. As a win-win strategy, poor people in rural areas were able to become clients and their savings were mobilized. Their mobilization was combined with group building and training for safer credit management. These MFIs could also benefit from a refinancing line from the banks. Fifteen MFIs were supported, which opened new branches, and some succeeded in partly complying with the legal requirements of the microfinance sector. Despite these achievements, MFIs suffered from the 2011 crisis and the contribution of the banks to their refinancing was halved; <sup>111</sup> it fell to 25 per cent of the credit delivered (the agricultural national bank reduced its refinancing from CFA Franc 30 million to 3 million). An IFAD refinancing facility was set up by the PMR project and its management delegated to a trustee. The MFIs partly recovered, and 3,514 Producers' Organizations (POs) borrowed from an MFI after having successfully defended their business proposals.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

### Food and nutrition insecurity

107. Food insecurity is one of the drivers within the broader poverty and economy drivers. Food-insecure smallholders are those that cannot cope with the hunger gap in the lean season, either structurally every year or after a climatic shock, by relying on their production and cash savings. They have to liquidate their productive assets to buy food, work as labourers or emigrate, borrow from moneylenders at a high cost, and reduce the number of daily meals – and food quality even more – over a significant period. This in turn directly affects their working capacity and health, as well as the health of their dependants. Repeated cycles of such food insecurity can lead a household into complete impoverishment, and see the household leaving their community with few assets to support themselves.
108. **Community grain-storage facilities supported by IFAD contributed to improving absorptive capacity, preventing food-insecure households from forced liquidation of assets while also strengthening social capital at local level. This was particularly important in fragile contexts when erratic climatic events are combined with insecurity.** Food-security storages were designed to improve food availability at all times for local producers, reduce the hunger gap in the lean season and buffer food-price variations.<sup>112</sup> IFAD's support has focused on providing technical, managerial and governance skills for committee members selected to manage these facilities. In Chad, successive projects in the Guera region (Central Sahel) contributed to a solid network of cereal banks. These were then seen as an entry point to develop other services for producers. In Niger, women were specifically put in charge of the management of security granaries to keep their focus on food security. In our field mission in Niger, beneficiaries and civil servants insisted on the importance of keeping transactions from, and back into, granaries strictly in-kind; this was to reduce the risks of poor repayment among very vulnerable households, which are higher when scarce cash is involved.
109. **Increasing access to markets for smallholders, with the support of private traders, managing stocks and marketing networks, offers a resilient opportunity to address food insecurity, and reduces risks for involved POs** Trade is also a way to counteract erratic local production and resulting food insecurity.<sup>113</sup> When more and more producers enter the market-based economy, the focus can switch to private traders managing stocks and marketing networks, rather than on POs only. This decreases the risk born by the POs. Box 16 provides an example of storage facilities managed by FOs.

<sup>111</sup> External review (WB, 2015) reveals that the sector has been experiencing a major crisis, where some MKI were bankrupt and depositors lost their savings, which explains the following loss of confidence in the sector. A new legal framework was effective since 2010, with several institutions for monitoring and control of the DSF.

<sup>112</sup> In remote places, food security granaries (*greniers de sécurité alimentaire [GSA]*) and community cereal banks improve accessibility to food at all times and reduce food-price variations, which both contribute to the vicious circle of hunger and impoverishment. In remote places, poor households rely on local production and exchanges to secure their food, rather than on inexistant market exchanges.

<sup>113</sup> The new 2019-designed REPER keeps a focus on security storage (40 cereals banks) with a target on the improvement of the management of banks. Banks are now managed by producers' organisations according to business plans.



**Storage facilities managed by FOs, and/or by private specialized operators, facilitate access to credit but also risky businesses in fragile contexts**

In Burkina Faso, for instance with support from the Community Investment Project for Agricultural Fertility, community-based warehouse receipt systems have a long history of PO stores being used as a guarantee for credits; the MFIs control them, with the Apex PO negotiating credit with the MFIs on behalf of its members. This credit can then be used without selling the stocks at a low price. Usually, producers cover their costs after deduction of credit interests, storage fees and losses. However, as food-price variations cannot be forecast with accuracy, there are significant risks to the FOs. Private-storage companies increasingly operate as a third specialized party, as they can better manage risks of food-price fluctuations and partner with the financial sector. These companies also store products in other segments of the value chains (traders and exporters) and are able to enter contractual arrangements with large quantities.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

110. **Improvements in food security do not automatically lead to improved nutritional status.** Food insecurity has the greatest impact on children – especially those under 5 years of age – contributes to poor nutrition and health, and to consequential stunting that ultimately contributes to lower learning abilities. This cycle is also intergenerational, as stunted mothers are at higher risk of bearing stunted children. The problem is that while investment may be necessary in increasing food security, this is not always sufficient to address poor nutrition, especially if chronic in children, and the issue remains unacknowledged. In response, some projects in the G5+1 have included nutrition-related interventions (e.g. PARSAT and PADER-G in Chad, and ProDaF in Niger). They usually focus on nutritional education on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) aspects, with little evidence of results.<sup>114</sup> Addressing malnutrition is of paramount importance (especially chronic malnutrition),<sup>115</sup> but requires long-term and coherent interventions in production, consumption, health, WASH and education. IFAD's perceived comparative advantage in this complex system, which has to mobilize many partners, has not been very clear nor operationalized for country teams. There was little quality data on food security and nutritional status available, and hence no lessons could be learnt.
111. **IFAD has some experience of supporting development of nutrition-sensitive value chains as a complementary pathway. However, it has not partnered with organizations with comparative advantages in addressing chronic malnutrition.** In Nigeria, new cassava varieties with a higher vitamin A content have been disseminated. In the Agricultural Value Chains Support Project in the Southwest, Hauts-Bassins, Cascades and Boucle du Mouhoun Regions (PAFA-4R) in Burkina Faso, the promotion of non-timber forest products (moringa, baobab, shea, honey etc.) and aquaculture is expected to positively affect the nutritional status of rural households. Many projects have supported gardens and more diversified food crops and animal husbandry, which can all contribute to improved diets. However, evidence on effectiveness is lacking. Overall, in fragile situations, IFAD has to ensure that nutrition issues can be addressed; as far as possible this can be done through partnerships with organizations that have comparative advantages in this domain, but so far evidence has been missing.

## **B. Environment and climate-change-related fragility**

112. Climatic variability and natural resource degradation are major sources of shocks and stress factors threatening smallholders' resilience, especially in the Sahelian

<sup>114</sup> PADER-G impact assessment in Tchad in 2017 reveals significant improvements in food security, diet diversity, household asset accumulation and resilience to violence and civil unrest.

<sup>115</sup> In Niger for instance, such a strategy would be of paramount importance: IOE CSPE (2021) noted a stunting prevalence rate of 47.8 per cent in 2018, which first declined between 2005 and 2010 but has increased since. Niger is one of the countries with the highest prevalence of chronic malnutrition in the Sahel region and the world. The southern part of the country is the most affected (Maradi, Zinder, and Diffa). The rate of wasting (or acute malnutrition) is 15 per cent. The prevalence rate of anaemia in women of reproductive age (15-49) is almost 50 per cent (2018).

context.<sup>116</sup> Vulnerable populations rely on natural assets to make a living, and as savings to monetize when coping with urgent cash needs. Repeated shocks may lead to very negative outcomes: beyond thresholds of depletion, restoration of natural assets (soil fertility, vegetation, water etc.) becomes impossible (systemic breakdown) or very costly. Climate change also reduces the range of possible profitable activities if not counteracted by vigorous and speedy adaptation measures. Moreover, in the subregion, issues with access to natural resources, coupled with climate stress factors, trigger conflicts; these aspects are treated under social conflicts below.

113. **Over decades, addressing fragility related to NRM has been an entry point in many IFAD projects in the subregion.** Significant knowledge has been accumulated on effective interventions for SWC, restoration of vegetation cover and small-scale irrigation. These interventions have been bundled with agricultural-intensification methods to improve overall productivity. Conflicts over resources have been considered, even if not systematically (see below). Issues related to climate change only recently started to be considered systematically in project designs. However, many lessons remain relevant to adaptation to climate change.<sup>117</sup>

#### **Soil and water conservation and sustainable natural resources management**

114. **Supporting SWC practices in arid and semi-arid contexts is instrumental in improving the resilience of beneficiaries, but needs to be taken to scale.** Overall, absorptive capacities of beneficiaries are strengthened by cash-for-work activities performed by groups of vulnerable young people, and adaptive capacities by reversing trends towards resource depletion, yield decrease and land scarcity. SWC investments are also combined with microprojects. SWC management committees are then expected to manage better access to inputs and markets; equipment; and group marketing, veterinary and maintenance services. Supporting beneficiaries and decision makers to prioritize effective NRM practices and preventive measures, over ex post restoration of depleted or destroyed natural assets, can lead to transformative capabilities toward resilience. Among the most prominent examples are the internalization of SWC and of natural assisted regeneration in Niger, which is being up scaled in a national programme supported by the Government and other partners (WB etc.). However, other drivers, especially medium-intensity conflict, are an increasing risk to such approaches, as they both raise new uncertainties and sometimes destroy SWC investments or displace the population managing them. However, interventions to recover degraded lands and greening remain effective, provided that the annual area being restored is larger than the area being degraded.
115. **In insecure contexts where formal service providers (both public and private) may not be active or knowledgeable, local stakeholders can effectively support smallholders' groups in their SWC or small-scale irrigation schemes.** When pursuing such strategies, training local committees is key, and care needs to be taken to ensure investments are simple and aligned with the level of capacity (see analytical evidence below in rural institutions sections).

#### **Pastoral grazing resources**

116. **Experience suggests that the restoration of fragile grazing land, its sustainable management, the management of transhumance, and conflict resolution are possible in arid and semi-arid areas, when relevant stakeholders are fully engaged.** Effective NRM results in the Sahelian contexts

<sup>116</sup> Fragility aspects related to CC have been subject to a specific thematic evaluation conducted by IOE in 2020, with two case studies implemented in Chad (PARSAT), Mali (PAPAM) and Niger (ProDAF-Diffa). See <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/ioe/evaluations>

<sup>117</sup> In fact, the 2021 thematic evaluation of IFAD on climate change stated explicitly that "IFAD's experience in working with marginalized communities in the rural agricultural sector, often facing adverse climatic and environmental conditions, has positioned it well to address the accelerating risks from climate change and to place climate change adaptation as a strategic institutional priority" (TE 2021).



require adequate management of the differing interests over water and adjacent grazing lands across communities involving agriculturalists, agropastoralists and pastoralists. Availability and access to water is key to improved management of natural grazing land under the arid conditions of the Sahel. In Chad, the Pastoral Water and Resource Management Project in Sahelian Areas (PROHYPA 2010-2015) has targeted agropastoralists as well as pastoralists. Despite good results (see Box 17), these were not replicated by IFAD but were by other partners (e.g. World Bank, AFD).<sup>118</sup>

Box 17

**The Pastoral Water and Resource Management Project in Sahelian Areas in Chad**

In Chad, PROHYPA targeted agropastoralists as well as pastoralists. Interventions addressed a major issue of pastoral systems: due to insufficient access to water, pastoral resources were overused in some areas and underused in others. The project improved access to water and pastoral resources for both pastoralists and agropastoralists.<sup>119</sup> This was based on supporting development of *commissions mixtes* for both groups to decide on the locations of the wells to be installed, and training-management committees which could collect fees for the maintenance of wells and ponds. In the *commissions mixtes*, local chiefs and religious leaders met, delimited transhumance corridors for livestock mobility, and helped settle conflicts. New or rehabilitated wells and ponds covered 19 per cent of livestock needs and opened access to new pastures that met 31 per cent of fodder needs. This contributed to a reduction in the increasing pressure on pasture and water resources in the target area.<sup>120</sup>

Source: compiled by the SRE team

117. **However, IFAD support to pastoralists has been modest as mainly restricted to the development of transhumance corridors and at a reduced scale.** The 2016 Nigeria CSPE states clearly that insufficient attention has been given to pastoralism-related conflictual issues. In Niger, IFAD did not apply its innovative social mobilization approach (of social engineering presented below) in pastoralist contexts; this would assist pastoralist and agropastoralist communities in introducing sustainable rangeland-management practices that would allow them to face climate change burdens effectively.<sup>121</sup> In Mauritania, the PASK II (completed in 2020), through its GEF component, developed three grazing corridors with nine pastoral wells for the transhumance. Additional services are offered near the pastoral wells (animal health for camels and livestock).<sup>122</sup> The number of transhumance corridors considered for grazing corridors has increased, so that cross-border transhumance and trade flows towards Senegal and Mali can be managed and improved through pastoral service provision.

**Adaptation to climate change**

118. **Most interventions that include a SWC component can be seen as supporting climate-smart farming practices;** in many cases, they include species and varieties able to cope with erratic rain patterns, which make better use of scarce water. This contributes to improved absorptive capacity. Details of IFAD's experience in SWC is discussed above.

<sup>118</sup> In 2015, the World Bank approved the US\$248 million Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project to support 2 million pastoralists in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. During that same period in Chad, technical partners such as AFD implemented major interventions targeting pastoralists.

<sup>119</sup> 231 wells and ponds were either built or rehabilitated (125 per cent effectiveness) and improved the availability of grazing resources. 190 corridors were also delineated (100 per cent effectiveness) but their materialization had not been completed at project-completion time.

<sup>120</sup> Small enterprises were also successfully promoted (239 vet assistants, 586 women trained in animal-product processing, 473 in infant-food processing etc.).

<sup>121</sup> For instance, the recent project PRODAF-Diffa intends to build 17 pastoral wells and 1,500 ha pastoral corridors in response to insufficiently delineated transhumance corridors in a region where flows are intense.

<sup>122</sup> PROGRES pursues these activities and extends them to adjacent regions, proposes to regenerate degraded ecosystems through the restoration of abandoned farming areas and pastoral areas, and to promote climate resilient agriculture.

119. **Projects designed after 2014 demonstrate a stronger orientation towards climate change.**<sup>123</sup> The thematic evaluation of IFAD's support to smallholder farmers' adaptation to climate change (2021) explicitly stated that IFAD has demonstrated capabilities in improving economic, climate and environmental resilience of smallholders through appropriate interventions. Evidence gathered by the SRE confirms the validity of this statement in the context of IFAD's support in the G5+1 countries. For example, in Burkina-Faso, where water resources are still underused, the PAFA-4R project (2020-26) defined objectives to improve access to secured land and hydro-agricultural investment, where climate-smart agricultural practices should be implemented;<sup>124</sup> these included afforestation and anti-erosive devices as a protection of irrigation perimeters, and small dams coupled with water-saving irrigation devices and solar pumps. In Nigeria, the Climate Change Adaptation and Agribusiness Support Programme in the Savannah Belt (CASP) (2015-2021) intended to mainstream climate change adaptation measures through a landscape-rehabilitation approach, focused on sustainable land management, which encompasses soil-erosion control, water-harvesting techniques and SWC.
120. **Evidence confirms that successful strategies for poor smallholders facing climate change do not only relate to changes in cropping or husbandry practices, but also to diversification of livelihoods, especially off-farm activities,**<sup>125</sup> **which contributes to effective adaptation.** GEF additional funding, supporting microprojects, contributed to improving smallholders' incomes and their diversification. They are expected to yield overall environmentally positive effects. With the Participatory Natural Resource Management and Rural Development Project (Neer-Tamba) in Burkina Faso for example, 215 business plans have been designed for SMEs in the agroforestry baobab, shea and locust bean value chains (out of 900 targeted), which should create incentives for the sustainable management of these tree species. In Niger, according to the impact assessment of PASADEM, the most climate-resilient households are those that can diversify their livelihoods by balancing crop production and pastoral activities. For instance, incidence of support for households raising small ruminants are significant due to resilience interventions, which helped reconstitute the stocks and improved breeding conditions and food security (especially during the lean season). However, expansion of microenterprises is very slow (with modest results), in remote areas lacking effective access to markets.
121. **Support through Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) grants effectively promoted participatory communal planning that contributed to climate change adaptation strategies and fostered climate-sensitive enterprises.** In Mali PAPAM-ASAP component, a community-based large landscape approach was developed to design agricultural projects in the Sikasso region. PAPAM initially started with climate change adaptation activities in small-scale irrigation systems (especially SWC and monitoring) before moving onto testing two types of biogas small units coupled with photovoltaic devices. It also contributed to policy formulation as reflected in Box 18. ASAP grants also contributed to the formulation of the National Strategy of Sustainable Development, and to aligning the NRM and climate change adaptation (CCA) adaptation measures promoted with the national strategy against climate change (PARSAT in Chad) as shown in Box 18.

Box 18

<sup>123</sup> "In 2004, IFAD became an accredited implementation partner to GEF with financing approved for climate adaptation. Climate adaptation became an explicit objective of IFAD. Climate adaptation is an explicit priority within its Eighth Replenishment 2010-2012 (IFAD8). In 2010, a climate change strategy was adopted and the flagship Adaptation for Smallholder Agricultural Programme (ASAP I) launched in 2012 to support smallholder investment in climate resilience. The Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP), mandatory since 2015, was an important mechanism to mainstream climate change. Strengthening environmental sustainability and climate resilience constituted one of the three strategic objectives in the 2016-2025 Strategic Framework. In 2018, the Strategy and Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2019-2025 fused climate and environment strategies and committed to reduce exposure and vulnerability to climate change for 24 million rural smallholder farmers by 2025." IOE report.

<sup>124</sup> in the regions du "Sud-Ouest, des Hauts-Bassins, des Cascades et de la Boucle du Mouhoun"

<sup>125</sup> Measures helping smallholders to cope with climate-related shocks and stresses, when their assets and livelihoods are threatened, are also contributing.

## Contribution of ASAP grants to climate change policy or strategy formulation

Mali, PAPAM (2010-2018). The ASAP component, added later during the project implementation, facilitated a partnership with the Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable, and directly contributed to the formulation of the National Strategy of Sustainable Development. The project also successfully advocated for the integration of the Communal Climate Change Adaptation Planning, a community-based large landscape approach, in the design and implementation of agricultural projects in the Sikasso region.

Chad, PARSAT. The ASAP component of the project contributed to agricultural sectorial priorities but also to cross-cutting priorities such as reinforcing the capacities of the stakeholders towards CCA and fostering resilience. The project financially participated in the national strategy against climate change (2017). In addition, it also contributed to policy dialogue and formulation.

Source: Thematic Evaluation of IFAD's Support for Smallholder Farmers' Adaptation to Climate Change

### C. Institutional fragility: role of farmers' organizations

122. **Promoting rural institutions that encourage inclusiveness and social cohesion, and that deliver collective services essential to livelihoods, is an important dimension for building smallholders' absorptive and adaptive capacities.** When embedded in a social contract and backed up by regulations and policies, this can also contribute to social transformation. Solid institutions are even more essential in situations of high social and institutional fragility, including a range of contexts of political-institutional crises. The reduced presence of public institutions in rural settings, in time of conflicts and violence, may further fuel feelings of being marginalized or neglected, and provoke a lack of trust in State authorities at decentralized and central levels. The political and economic crises faced by the G5+1 countries can further exacerbate existing social disruption and inequalities, thus perpetuating localized fragility, which in turn weakens social cohesion. Therefore, it is important to assess how IFAD support to target communities contributed to strengthening their absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities to withstand socio-institutional shocks (usually man-made) linked to situations of fragility, and to breaking the vicious circle of fragile institutions, leading to enhanced sensitivity to fragilities.<sup>126</sup>
123. **Approaches adopted by projects to support organized beneficiaries have increasingly contributed to fostering capacities, bonding and the bridging of social capital at local level, which is useful in a context of fragility; and the provision of services by grassroots organizations has been important.** Such approaches take time, as sufficient grassroots capacity needs to be developed at first.<sup>127</sup> Many IFAD-supported projects in the subregion have promoted local organizations to deliver and manage infrastructure. They usually rely on the beneficiaries for investments in irrigation or SWC – through in-kind labour as a group (in cash-for-work schemes) to develop the infrastructure – and then help them to get organized in sharing the maintenance costs and benefits. POs/FOs and their apex organizations also play a major role in supporting their members for effective resilience strategies,<sup>128</sup> by providing key services. Examples include training, seed

<sup>126</sup> The SC3D intends to address these issues in reinforcing smallholders' organizations in their abilities for advocacy, for conflict or crisis prevention, and for mediation between farmers and pastoralists and local stakeholders and security forces. Their advocacy should result in better regulations, strategies and laws which, coupled with their capacities, will yield improved local management of peace and development initiatives and contribute to regional integration.

<sup>127</sup> Early projects such as the Special Programme for Soil and Water Conservation and Agroforestry in the Central Plateau in Burkina Faso evaluated after 15 years could align impressive results in term of vast areas restored under SWC and NAR, improved with SSI, etc, but had not materialized the expected impact in terms of social capital and local and collective capacities in proportion to the investment made (IOE 2004. Special Programme Soil and Water Conservation and Agro-forestry in the Central Plateau).

<sup>128</sup> Organizations, when they grow to networks, can have an apex able to deliver services to the member organizations, which every organization could not provide, and which may not be provided as well by the public or the private sectors. Smallholders' organizations may therefore play pivotal functions in directly increasing their members' resilience to shocks of all kinds, maintaining essential socio-economic support functions for their members' activities during crises, preparing them to adapt to long-term stress factors such as climate change, scarcity and degradation of natural resources, and preventing as well as managing community and intercommunity conflicts. Federations and interprofessions may also be

production and supply, input transportation and marketing, distribution, and access to markets and to credit. Illustration examples are given below with the roles of resource-users' associations and management committees.

### **Socio-economic aspects of promoting POs**

124. **Empowering POs/FOs to deliver effectively and sustainably has been instrumental to building absorptive and adaptive capacities, and ultimately transformative capacity.** Working with POs has been an area of comparative advantage of IFAD within the subregion. An assessment of possible PO functions was done in 2013 for WCA countries, as the basis for a set of guidance and a toolbox that could be used by the country teams.<sup>129</sup> Key steps have been to enhance their capacities to deliver services for improved input supply and product marketing to their members; link institutional strengthening and lobbying capacities with economic promotion; and help them to federate into apex organizations and take part in sectoral and territorial planning.<sup>130</sup> PO leaders' capacities in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and the regional apex (such as the Network of Farmers' and Producers' Organizations in West Africa) have been strengthened, and they participated in processes such as COSOP and programme designs, as well as in the concertation on policy issues at both national and regional levels.<sup>131</sup> In Chad, during the design of the Strengthening Productivity and Resilience of Agropastoral Family Farms Project (REPER), the national FO apex advocated for a more active role in project implementation and more support to strengthening its branches, for better monitoring by FOs in the field. Additional examples are given from the Community-Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (CBARDP) in the sustainability section below.
125. **IFAD's support to chambers of agriculture, in countries where government policy allows such farmers' representatives to deliver services, also improves governance in local development processes and builds social capital.** For instance, in Burkina Faso, the Neer-Tamba project had a significant role in fostering the involvement of regional chambers of agriculture in both implementing project activities and in the participation of apex POs in policy dialogue. In Niger, Regional Chambers of Agriculture were supported in IFAD-funded interventions aimed at increasing food security and government-led service delivery. For instance, the regional chamber of Diffa performed a participatory marketing diagnosis, and was involved in a process to oversee private-management contractors.<sup>132</sup> A positive externality was building trust between beneficiaries and government.

### **Resource users' associations (RUAs) and management committees**

126. **Experience has been mixed on the effectiveness and sustainability of RUAs in fragile situations.** There is significant experience of establishing water users'

able to give visibility to fragility drivers affecting their constituents, and negotiate at a higher level with public decision-makers at different levels.

<sup>129</sup> FIDA 2013. *Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Pour un partenariat efficace avec les organisations paysannes et de producteurs ruraux*

<sup>130</sup> Multidonor continental grant Support to Farmers Organizations in Africa Programme (SFOAP)<sup>130</sup> has been working since 2009 with regional apex and country POs to build their competencies (ie ROPPA Peasant University) and in providing services to their members for incorporation into VCs. Technical staff in these POs allowed them to offer peer-to-peer training, test several business models, POs business plans and contracts with other VC segments. ROPPA trained its national members in initiating economic activities and regional B2B meetings. Assessment at completion revealed that sound services to members would require different sets of capabilities than usually available in a PO.

<sup>131</sup> See: completion report of Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme (SFOAP) – Main Phase 2013-2018, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/publication/support-to-farmers-organizations-in-africa-programme-sfoap-completion-report>.

<sup>132</sup> Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture de Diffa. 2020. *Note de capitalisation des activités d'ingénierie sociale conduites par la CRA autour du Marché à bétail de N'guelkolo réhabilité avec l'appui financier du PECEA*. [https://reca-niger.org/IMG/pdf/note\\_capitalisation\\_marche\\_betail-nguelkolo\\_juin\\_2020.pdf](https://reca-niger.org/IMG/pdf/note_capitalisation_marche_betail-nguelkolo_juin_2020.pdf). In this market, 13 categories of actors were identified according to the activities carried out: the breeders, the "Dillali" or intermediaries, the "kap-kap," the "varandama" or (resellers), wholesalers, "djoaés" or (carriers on foot), rope sellers, restaurateurs, transporters/conveyors, dockers, straw sellers, butchers, and vendors of water. These different categories of actors are in a business relationship or linked by affinity with each other. The N'guelkolo cattle market has a system for managing conflicts between the different market players. This system comprises a single person called a "charama", chosen from among the players, who plays a vital role in the market. In N'guelkolo, there are two "charama," one for large ruminants and the other for small ruminants.

associations for irrigation schemes, especially small-scale irrigation ones, where public support services are lacking. Such associations are expected to allocate water and sometimes plots, collect fees, and fund the maintenance of the investments. Despite intensive efforts, their functionality is mixed (see Box 19 for examples).

Box 19

**Experience with resource-user associations**

In Chad, resource-management committees were established under both the PROHYPA and PARSAT projects. A key lesson was that sufficient time – possibly several years – is needed after construction of the physical infrastructure, to ensure management committees can function properly.

In Mali, under PAPAM, management committees for irrigation and transport investments were promoted, but the assumption that they would receive longer-term support from the Government could be questioned.

In Burkina Faso, the Neer-Tamba (2013-2021) project supported management committees for common resources, as well as village associations with a focus on subwatershed natural resource management. It innovated by supporting their efforts to federate into unions and design plans and actions at a higher spatial level (76 unions designed development plans and 91 investments were funded).

In Niger, institutions created and supported by PPI Ruwanmu (water-user groups and focus groups) have contributed to building social capital through the establishment and implementation of joint plans and the vegetation monitoring subcommittees. These institutions have had an additional benefit by raising local awareness of the value of microwatershed management and other sustainable management practices.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

127. **A common problem was insufficient time to establish functional management committees.** Reviewed projects usually pay a lot of attention to the formation and training of the management committees, albeit the approach taken was developed based on trial and error. In most cases, management committees started to function towards the end of projects and were too weak to address issues; their weakness was usually exacerbated by the fragility context, which results in recurrent difficulties in collecting fees.
128. **The low functionality of water-user associations generally observed is due either to internal divergence of interests and unequitable allocation of rights, or to the low capacity of such associations to deliver maintenance services required to keep the investments functional.** The IFAD-grant-funded recent review of experiences across Africa identifies maintenance as a key problem, which is also found in IFAD investments in the G5+1 countries,<sup>133</sup> and lays out a number of ways to address this risk. In principle, promoting federations of RUAs (in this case, of water usage) may contribute to the effective participation of users in the delivery of required services (including maintenance) on their own or in partnership with State institutions. This contributes to strengthening the social capital bonds for effective local development, as federations can help in planning at higher spatial levels such as watersheds, and have a voice in addressing issues of competing stakeholders.
129. **Experience suggests that nurturing local conventions for natural resource management, to ensure social cohesion and confidence within and between**

<sup>133</sup> IFAD grant on Water User Associations: A Review of Approaches and Alternative Management Options for Sub-Saharan Africa states that investors expect WUAs to deliver on user participation, full cost recovery and reliable service provision. But for this to happen, support to WUA policies, by-laws, contracts, training and M&E has not been convincing. User participation is crucial for smallholder-irrigation development but does not mean that WUAs can or should be solely responsible for all the functions. Indeed, the study identified seven management options, including enlarging the scope of services delivered by the WUAs, and partnering with private providers or with public agencies. Aarnoudse, E.; Closas, A.; Lefore, N. 2018. Water user associations: a review of approaches and alternative management options for Sub-Saharan Africa. Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute (IWMI). 77p. (IWMI Working Paper 180). doi: 10.5337/2018.210.



**communities of competing users, has been effective.**<sup>134</sup> Alinon and Kalinganire 2008 noted that there is a need to recognize local conventions, which offer an opportunity for decentralization to be more rooted in local situations.<sup>135</sup> Local conventions are community by-laws, which are adopted in a social-settlement process that enables communities to consensually manage natural resources and thus promote equitable access to, and use of, communal resources. These have demonstrated their relevance and ability as tools for consensual natural resource management.<sup>136</sup> Several examples found in the G5+1 contexts demonstrate their effectiveness (see Box 20).

Box 20

#### Local conventions in IFAD projects

In Mauritania, the Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project was effective in supporting a settlement between landowners and the "landless"; it was formalized by a land agreement (French: *entente foncière*). The aim of the process was to provide landless families with the long-term right to use flood-recession cropping land. The negotiations took place in three phases and lasted two years. The first phase was to create village committees to develop a land agreement between owners and users of the land. All members of the community endorsed this agreement, after debate. Then, a land appraisal was carried out in order to identify the most vulnerable groups. During the third phase, the land agreements concluded during the first phase were codified as part of a participatory negotiation and official endorsement process.<sup>137</sup>

In Burkina Faso, land-tenure commissions were also expected to develop consensus on land issues, with the support of the Neer-Tamba project.<sup>138</sup> When NRM investments opened up to opportunities for expanding the resource base, they created a positive context for re-negotiating access rights for all categories, who had been disadvantaged or marginalized; this also developed good practices of sustainable usage, with oversight of local land commissions.

In Mali, PAPAM has assisted the set-up of land commissions at communal and village levels (31 communes), and the ongoing Multi-energy for Resilience and Integrated Territorial Management Project will assist 600 village-level commissions, so that they can deliver land certificates, especially to women and youth. The project intends to promote a mechanism for conflict resolution.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

#### FOs and social contract

130. **Strengthening the social contract between the State and beneficiaries has not been an explicit focus of IFAD-supported operations in the subregion. However, interventions have enabled conditions for FOs to participate in policy decisions about them; this is particularly critical in fragility situations.** IFAD in the G5+1 did not conduct any diagnostic analysis of social contracts between the State and the rural population. Nevertheless, through work on resilience building, there are instances where POs have influenced decisions on food security policy or strategy. For instance, PASADEM in Niger promoted consultation frameworks (*Hadin Gwiwa*) to foster trade linkages. These brought together stakeholders around common strategic visions of economic development and clarifying implications, for the roles of economic interest groups responsible for managing semi-wholesale markets built by IFAD projects.

<sup>134</sup> Local conventions are sets of rules developed locally by stakeholders concerned with natural resources and competing over these resources, to regulate their uses and peacefully settle or prevent conflicts.

<sup>135</sup> Alinon, K., Kalinganire, A. 2008. *Effectiveness of bylaws in the management of natural resources: The West African experience*. CAPRI Working Paper No. 93. International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2499/CAPRIWP93>.

<sup>136</sup> Also confirmed by findings of the IOE 2020 Evaluation Synthesis on community-driven development (ESR-2020).

<sup>137</sup> IOE. 2011. *Validation du Rapport d'Achèvement - Projet d'Amélioration des cultures de décrue à Maghama II*. République Islamique de Mauritanie.

<sup>138</sup> Targets of 150 commissions and 500 consensus. But the overall achievement was lower at the end.

## D. Social inequalities in access to productive resources

131. This section assesses issues pertaining to rights for access to productive resources, and conflicts that can arise from competition over the use of common natural resources. Aspects of inclusiveness are treated in the next chapter.

### Land-tenure rights

132. **Investments in land rehabilitation or improvement will only be funded by individuals or families if they are sure to benefit from the returns, which means medium-term stability of land tenure.** Rehabilitation may only bring significant benefits after several years. Lack of security in land access therefore discourages smallholders from investing, especially in NRM and other long-term investments. Land-tenure insecurity and exclusion from land rights are also usually sources of conflicts that can exacerbate social tension – a driver of fragility. Reviewed past experience of IFAD support within the G5+1 countries reveals that this issue has been addressed to some extent around investments in NRM infrastructure, but not always translated into policies. An exception is in Mali, where the recent land law foresees using existing land commissions from the local to the national levels. Producer representatives were trained under IFAD projects to use these commissions as an arena to clarify land rights and prevent conflicts.
133. **There are groups and categories of stakeholders, including women and youth in the G5+1 countries, that have limited land rights and are more subject to insecure land access.** IFAD-supported projects have addressed inequality in land access, but rarely based on extensive analysis.<sup>139</sup> Land-access rights are not favourable for specific groups, as illustrated in Box 21. Effective approaches to managing exclusion from land access have involved decreasing the pressure on scarce resources, by opening access to new resources (usually communal) to landless groups, and deliberately conditioning access to funding around assured access rights for disadvantaged categories (women especially).

Box 21

#### Main land-rights issues in the G5+1 contexts

Women are, in most social contexts, excluded, and must enter groups to negotiate access rights as an organization. These rights may still be contested. Youth are also excluded over a period of their domestic cycle, or their access to land and water resources is conditioned to their supply of labour to the right holders. Allochthonous groups, especially if they have only recently settled in an area, may have unsecure user rights. Pastoralists settling down as agropastoralists often belong to this category. Pastoralists have temporary access rights based on traditional contracts, and are in many cases not consulted when these rights are de facto revised.

Source: elaboration by the SRE team

### Pastoral land-use rights as conflictual issues

134. **Pastoralism is recognized within IFAD as a challenging and important issue. It is a source of social conflicts but is not a subject of sufficient focus by IFAD in the G5+1 context.** The desk review shows that analyses of farmer and pastoralist conflict over rangeland and water resources have not been prioritized in the G5+1 COSOPs and loan-operations documents.<sup>140, 141</sup> The Thematic Evaluation on smallholders' adaption to climate change (2021) found that – in the cases of reviewed projects in Chad, Mali and Niger – while the design documents noted the existence of transhumant pastoralism in the intervention areas, clear mechanisms

<sup>139</sup> Worth mentioning that inequalities in land and water access are poorly analysed in design documents and processes of land concentration among a small group of better-off farmers in areas with better opportunities; individual appropriation of grazing rights by large livestock herd owners are not systematically assessed nor addressed.

<sup>140</sup> Pastoralist conflicts are competitions over land and land-based resources between pastoralists or between them and crop farmers. See: "Dennis Amego Korbla Penu, D.A.K. 2021. *Institutions and Pastoralist Conflicts in Africa: A Conceptual Framework*". <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1542316621995733>.

<sup>141</sup> It appears that IFAD had projects in pastoralist areas in the 1990s and early 2000s; then it moved out of those areas because of conflicts.

were not established to address their competing interests concerning access to water and land resources.

135. **For pastoralists, access to most natural resources is subject to both negotiation and potential conflict. Despite the trend for pastoralists to partly settle as agropastoralists, nearly all livestock keepers still depend on transhumance, which is increasingly conflictual in the G5+1 context.** According to key informants interviewed, pastoralist transhumance is both a mode of production and a lifestyle for livelihood (see Box 22); however, these issues have not been seriously taken into account in governments' national priorities, making it difficult for IFAD to put a strong focus on them.<sup>142</sup> The inclusion of an output in the SD3C programme, related to supporting dialogue and mediation between farmers and pastoralists, is of great importance in the G5+1 contexts. According to the recent Réseau Billital Maroobé (RBM) study,<sup>143</sup> most livestock keepers in the Sahel and West Africa are affected by the crisis of pastoralism, which fuels a sense of injustice and mistrust vis-à-vis institutions. Pastoralists may not massively join or support jihadist groups, but most also do not trust the national militaries and self-defence groups. Pastoralists (still mobile or late settlers) are the group with the most insecure access to both farm and grazing land near their settlement, and other grazing land during transhumance. They are also subject to conflicts over access to water resources or areas under protection (natural parks, protected forests). Cross-border transhumance brings challenges of animal-health regulations that are little known by pastoralists, thus exposing them to both legal and illicit pressures. Finally, they are either grazing their animals in regions of low population density and high insecurity, hosting violent and illicit groups, or of high population density where animals encroach on farmland.

Box 22

**Pastoralist concerns in West Africa**

Pastoralism is becoming associated with problems, with some people talking about the death of mobile and transhumant farming. The reasons for hope come from their capacity and readiness to adapt, notably towards a more intensive, sometimes even sedentary, mode of livestock farming. However, many herders say they are firmly attached to mobility and are not considering another mode of production. Semi-transhumant livestock farming is an option for many farmers, when agro-ecological, political and security conditions allow it. Leaving livestock farming particularly appeals to young people seeking to migrate to urban areas and interested in trade or gold panning. However, this departure is often not definitive and does not necessarily result in an "intergenerational divide". Young people become socially and economically emancipated – sometimes even by taking up arms – creating tensions within families, but the children do not systematically break with their families or home territories.

Source: excerpts from Réseau Billital Maroobé and Partners 2021. *Listening to Herders in West Africa and the Sahel: What is The Future for Pastoralism in a Context of Rising Insecurity?* Synthesis Report, p.4

136. **Supporting effective management joint committees of competing users is essential and effective in preventing pastoral-related local conflicts.** For instance, in Chad, PROHYPA (2010-2015) targeted both agropastoralists and pastoralists; however, in the absence of a relevant and effective pastoral land rights system, the use of pastures and water points generated numerous and sometimes devastating conflicts. Therefore, the project's investment in pastoral hydraulics required special attention to the management of conflicts that these new structures would generate, and sensitivity to conflicts around existing water points. The project supported creation of *commissions mixtes*, including both pastoralists and agropastoralists to decide on the locations of the wells to be installed, delimitate transhumance corridors for livestock mobility, and help in conflict settlement. Management committees were trained and were supposed to collect fees for the

<sup>142</sup> As IFAD supports governments.

<sup>143</sup> Réseau Billital Maroobé et partenaires, 2021. *Entendre la voix des éleveurs au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest: quel avenir pour le pastoralisme face à l'insécurité et ses impacts ?* Résumé exécutif, p.1.



maintenance of wells and ponds. At project completion, despite training, nearly half of the 231 committees were assessed as being only at the infant stage.

137. **Very few IFAD projects have tackled transhumance and its transboundary aspects, yet climate change is making this more conflictual.** Due to climate change, the timing of transhumance movement has changed and increasingly overlaps with harvest times in regions to the south (in the Sudanian agro-ecological zone).<sup>144</sup> Customary regulations, and tacit contracts linking farming and grazing communities, are therefore becoming increasingly obsolete as communal planning does not consider the required adaptations in grazing paths and pastoral areas. It seems that changing realities, reinforced by structural causes of conflict, have overtaken existing governance frameworks of transhumance and “emerging forms of pastoralism (neo-pastoralism) and the privatization of land rights leads to growing inequality between different communities, eroding complementarity of agricultural and pastoral activities”.<sup>145</sup> Finally, COVID-19 movement limitations and increasing insecurity have changed transhumance routes, leading to more frequent conflicts with agricultural hosting communities.
138. **IFAD successfully facilitated collaboration between Niger and Nigeria in removing barriers to cross-border trade in agro-silvo-pastoral products.** In Niger, PASADEM, PPI Ruwanmu, and more generally PRODAF, in addition to structuring investments in infrastructure, have helped set up systems for monitoring flows and harassments, as well as local consultation frameworks on the fluidification of trade. With PRODAF and PRODAF-Diffa located at the border to Nigeria, corridor management is coupled with the monitoring of cross-border livestock flows on three corridors: Kano-Katsina-Maradi, Tahoua-Sokoto-Kebbi and Zinder-Daura-Kano. A mixed commission has been put in place to facilitate cross-border trade. Illicit trade barriers and racketeering are to be monitored and reduced. CILSS has been instrumental in the monitoring and facilitation.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, there was no similar initiative on the other side of the border.
139. **Including a user-rights dimension in NRM remains a necessity, especially in social-conflict-prone areas, where land-access-and-use conflicts easily escalate.** The SD3C recognizes the user-rights dimension, as it aims to support producers’ groups in their efforts to manage NRM sustainably and tackle climate risks; it aims to do this by adopting more suitable practices and by improving productive land and water infrastructures. It also intends to secure user rights by regulations, as well as mediation spaces between competing user groups. This should not only result in improved production and productivity, less sensitivity towards climate vagaries and more resilient livelihoods, but also in less risks of social conflicts.

## **E. Violent conflicts and insecurity**

140. **A nexus approach addressing poverty and conflict is missing in IFAD-supported operations in the G5+1 countries.** The design of IFAD-supported interventions in the G5+1 did not consider the nexus between poverty and conflict. This makes it challenging to assess the extent to which interventions were intended to directly address conflict-related drivers.
141. **Supports did not seek to address drivers related to medium-intensity conflicts. Such conflicts are treated as risks to be managed, rather than problems IFAD can directly contribute to solving or preventing.** In Nigeria, many parts of the 2016 COSOP demonstrates sensitivity to conflicts, although the Results Management Framework does not provide a basis for the analysis of transformative effects on the farmers/pastoralists’ conflicts at the target

<sup>144</sup> Due to demographic increase, general trends observed are to resettle southwards, and to mechanize and increase farm size and occupy farmland all year round with tuber cultivation and other crops.

<sup>145</sup> Joined-up analysis on farmer-herder dynamics in West and Central Africa commissioned by the UNOCA, UNOWAS and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, September 2021. Unedited report.

<sup>146</sup> In Mauritania, there is an ongoing process between Senegal and Mauritania to develop an agreement regulating transhumance, but cross-border institutional linkages seem to be missing between Mali and Mauritania.

communities' level. IFAD's projects have been vulnerable to various forms of conflict, insurgency or unrest, whether Boko Haram in the northeast, pastoralist-farmer conflicts in the middle belt, or violence and unrest in the Delta region. IFAD projects in Nigeria do not consider, in their results framework, how project outcomes fit within the poverty-conflict nexus; instead, conflict is managed as a risk. In Niger, PRODAF-Diffa, affected by flows of displaced people, no action has been planned either to explicitly address root causes of violent conflicts.<sup>147</sup>

## F. Shocks due to the COVID-19 pandemic

142. **Recent actions implemented, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrate how IFAD can react in case in emergency contexts.** In Niger, both ProDAF and PRODAF-Diffa have shown flexibility in contributing to the Government's efforts in the context of the response to COVID-19. This was through emergency plans to finance strengthened household food security in their respective intervention areas. The Government and IFAD have also developed a Contingency Plan for the Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 in Maradi, Tahoua, Zinder, and Diffa, through ProDAF. This plan includes support in terms of hygiene and sanitation.<sup>148</sup> It is too early to assess the effectiveness of such responses.<sup>149</sup>
143. IFAD's response to the COVID-19 crisis involved, among other measures,<sup>150</sup> establishing RPSF. Short-term country-level initiatives were then financed and implemented in Chad, Mali, and Nigeria. The significant-to-fragility initiative with a transboundary scope was financed in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger (2021), through a standalone project (implemented by RBM), which focused on cross-border areas to support pastoralist organizations and agropastoralists (to ultra poor). It also strengthens the data-collection mechanism that feeds into the existing digital platform managed by RBM; this monitors the situation of pastoralists and the impact of COVID-19 on them, and helps to inform policymaking and promote inclusion of this group in new legislation.<sup>151</sup> While lessons from these initiatives are yet to be generated, they illustrate however IFAD's strength in adapting to changes in circumstances. As analysed below (Efficiency section), the problem may be in terms of swiftness in making change.

## G. Resilience building overall

144. **Interventions with a focus on bonding and bridging social capital of target groups, and on their resilience capacities, have succeeded in engaging communities in collaborative activities that have allowed them to enhance their resilience.**<sup>152</sup> Supporting communities in strengthening their bonding, and bridging social capital, helped them to improve their absorptive capacity. The appropriate interventions for this have been those that support target groups or communities in working closely with each other to prevent, cope with and respond to shocks; they have also focused on the ability of households, communities and systems to manage shocks in the short term. Examples were found in Burkina Faso

<sup>147</sup> PRODAF-Diffa design document mentions: "Since 2014, the Diffa region has been facing security challenges related to the attacks of the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Lake Chad Basin area, causing massive displacement of populations in the interior of the region. In this context, under the Facility for Refugees, Migrants, Forced Displacement and Rural Stability (hereinafter referred to as "FARMS"), IFAD has received a grant from the Norwegian Development Cooperation Agency of an amount of NOK 32 million (about US\$3.8 million), to cofinance IFAD's investments in supporting the development activities of host communities and displaced persons in the Diffa region." Interventions comprehend supporting the resilience of refugees and their hosting communities as well as promoting cross-border trades. However, there was no action planned to contribute explicitly to addressing root causes of violent conflict.

<sup>148</sup> IOE CSPE 2021.

<sup>149</sup> IFAD has expertise from post-recovery interventions in West Africa on how to rebuild rural economies after civil conflicts or pandemics (Ebola), which may help in developing approaches to restore the absorptive capacities of impacted populations in fragile contexts. For instance, IFAD launched a Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) as a multi-donor fund in April 2020, after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as an immediate response that aligns with IFAD long-term development objectives. The Facility should ensure that farmers in the most vulnerable countries have timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity.

<sup>150</sup> There has been also the repurposing project funds and provision of policy and analytical support.

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.marooobe.com/index.php/chantiers/initiatives>

<sup>152</sup> This collaboration strengthens social values of positive solidarity and social cohesion, which are essential for fragility mitigation.

Niger and Nigeria, as presented earlier. The development of apex FOs and the inclusion of FOs in value chains has contributed to bridging and linking social capital.

145. **By fostering approaches of natural resource management on communal land that promote collaborative relations between user groups and strengthen customary institutions that traditionally manage conflicts over natural resources, IFAD-funded programmes have supported the conditions of social cohesion, and thus contributed to fragility mitigation.** IFAD-supported interventions are in line with these analyses, to achieve food security by fostering equitable and inclusive management of natural resources. Examples of how to build community absorptive and adaptive capacities for resilience, through the restoration and sustainable management of natural capital – thus contributing to addressing some of the root causes of fragility – were found in Mali, Niger and Nigeria. In Niger, assisted natural regeneration proved to be an enabling approach for transformative change, demonstrating that **a momentum and consensus for change can occur in a short run among communities, and between them and government institutions, as far as an obvious common interest emerges.**<sup>153</sup>
146. **There are emerging indications in some countries that transformative capacities are being developed.** In Niger, through the adoption of a range of interventions layering complementary resilience capacity-building activities – by adopting a spatial concentration approach, and by sequencing projects – IFAD interventions helped to break the cycle of food crises affecting different poor and vulnerable households and communities. Among the key elements with the potential for developing absorptive capacities of the target groups, there was attention to the marketing of produce; the creation of linkages between producers, their associations and agricultural sectors; and strengthening the networks of farmers' associations. In Mali, certain favourable factors that supported developing transformative capacity made this sustainability possible. Generally, most of the achievements were based on establishing infrastructure-management committees and the involvement of women in management.<sup>154</sup> By contrast, in Chad, while incremental benefits for target community groups and locations are seen, the interventions lacked clear approaches to empowering communities to strengthen their resilience capacities in a continuum, and to manage their risks more effectively by building increased local adaptive capacity.

#### **Summary, from effectiveness to impact**

147. **Supported operations in the G5+1 countries have achieved numerous but variable rural resilience results, which contributed to mitigating some fragility drivers. Achievements were mixed in contributing to addressing fragility drivers linked to transboundary issues, weak social contracts and root causes of medium-intensity conflicts.** Strong contribution results were found in terms of: food security and rural-income creation, and diversification through pro-poor value chain development; improved farming practices in soil and water conservation for sustainable resources management; and strengthening grassroots and community-based organizations, which play critical roles for their members (e.g. delivery of services) in those fragile situations. Achievements were

<sup>153</sup> Key government institutions and their partners mobilized to integrate ANR in their rural development strategies. Early signals of systemic change at the community level indicate that the quality, depth and intensity of transformation are very likely to sustainably reduce conflicts over access to and use of natural resources. ANR increases agricultural productivity and thus improves the income of poor rural families, reduces the time it takes to collect wood and non-wood products, the diversification of the farming systems, regeneration of the rangelands, and the protection of the ecosystems. It also has an advantage in strengthening social cohesion, which is essential for the mitigation of fragility. It allows mitigation of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, ensures respect for local social conventions, educates, and involves young people in protecting the environment.

<sup>154</sup> In Mauritania, the examples of sustainable achievements observed by the field visit mission concern, in terms of infrastructure, all the structures of soil and water conservation/restoration of degraded land such as gabion sills or stone bunds. These achievements are sustainable and have a real and verifiable impact on all the territories concerned, in terms of soil restoration. The field visit also observed that all the capacity-building activities of community associations showed a certain sustainability in the contribution to resilience; the most spectacular example being the AGPOs which have benefited from the support of IFAD to become essential interlocutors of the oasis communities (until obtaining recognition of Law 98/016), and thus continue to attract funding and work with new donors (Fades).

modest in relation to: the management of communal resources and infrastructures; social conflicts linked to pastoralism (especially transhumance); and land tenure rights. These findings support building absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities, and hence to develop and strengthen the resilience of beneficiaries (individuals, groups and communities). For transboundary and weak State institution fragility aspects, contributions were little. The findings highlight several lessons very specific to IFAD interventions. These comprehend conditions for enabling resilience by promoting or supporting: economic activities along value chain segments; food security through storage facilities and sustainable management of natural production resources; and successful strategies for adaptation to climate change by smallholders, effective community-based organizations (FOs, RUAs) and their apex. Forging social contracts between producers and the State, and managing social conflicts linked to access to resources – both in the realm of the IFAD mandate – could be systematically enhanced in fragile situations.

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## **Key points**

### **Poverty and economic fragility aspects**

- Support to multiple farm and non-farm income-generating activities is conducive to strengthening the absorptive and adaptive capacities of beneficiaries.
- Capacity building and non-financial support have been critical in developing the necessary human and social capital of individuals and rural communities.
- Inclusive financial services have contributed to expanding productive assets and strengthening the absorptive capacities of producers.
- Community grain-storage facilities contributed to improving absorptive capacity and benefited private actors in addition to POs.
- Interventions in nutritional issues are scanty and inconclusive. Yet the issue of child malnutrition must be considered in partnership with other more specialized agencies, which is yet to be implemented.

### **Environment and climate-change-related fragility**

- Supporting SWC practices in arid and semi-arid contexts is instrumental in improving the resilience of beneficiaries, but needs to be taken to scale.
- Restoration of fragile grazing land, its sustainable management and the management of transhumance is possible in arid and semi-arid areas, when relevant stakeholders are fully involved and their rights secured.
- Successful strategies for poor smallholders facing climate change do not only relate to changes in cropping or husbandry practices, but also to diversification of livelihoods, especially off-farm activities, which contributes to effective adaptation.

### **Rural institutions: role of FOs, POs and CBOs and public institutions**

- POs/FOs and their apex organizations have played a major role in supporting their members in effective resilience strategies, and by providing key services.
- IFAD's support to FOs for service delivery in rural communities did help improve governance in local-development processes, and also build social capital.
- A common issue has been insufficient time to establish functional management committees.
- Strengthening the social contract between the State and beneficiaries has not been the focus of IFAD-supported operations in the subregion.

### **Social inequalities and disruption**

- Some categories of rural players, including women and youth, have limited land rights and are more subject to insecure land access in those contexts.
- Access to most natural resources by pastoralists has been a source of conflicts within the subregion.
- Supporting effective management committees might be relevant to preventing transhumance-related local conflicts.
- Very few IFAD projects have tackled transhumance and its transboundary aspects, yet climate change is making this more conflictual.

### **Violent conflicts and insecurity**

- A nexus approach, addressing poverty and conflict, is missing in IFAD-supported operations in the G5+1 countries.
- IFAD's support does not explicitly seek to address drivers related to medium-intensity conflicts. Such conflicts are treated as risks. The type of conflicts IFAD should address, and how, is not clear.

### **Resilience building overall**

- Interventions that focus on bonding and bridging the social capitals of target groups, and on their resilience capacities, have succeeded in engaging communities in collaborative activities that have allowed them to enhance their resilience.
- IFAD-funded operations have supported the conditions of social cohesion, by fostering approaches of natural resource management on communal land.
- Transformative capacities are being strengthened in some G5+1 countries.

## V. Ensuring inclusiveness of interventions

148. This chapter separately analyses inclusiveness, seen within the social-fragility driver and consistently flagged as key to working effectively in fragile contexts. It is complementary to analyses reported in the previous chapter related to social disruption and inequality.<sup>155</sup> Most projects in the G5+1, during the evaluation period, implemented approaches (e.g. quota mechanism) for inclusion of women and youth.

### A. Gender equality and women's empowerment

149. **The status and situation of rural women are not favourable in the G5+1 countries, making them more sensitive to fragility drivers.**<sup>156</sup> As presented earlier (in Table 4), the gender-inequality indicators of the G5+1 countries are at the very lower side. Food and nutrition insecurity, poverty and climate change burdens in the subregion contribute to exacerbating existing disparities and inequalities, as women have limited access to productive resources (especially land); opportunities of education and training; and decision-making processes at household, community and higher levels. Armed conflicts in the G5+1 countries in recent years have negatively affected women and girls (in the form of verbal, mental, physical and sexual violence, and trauma, stigmatization, rejection etc.). The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused major constraints for rural women, particularly with the closure of borders (complicating the marketing of agricultural products and the meeting of rural households' food needs). Drawbacks in women's empowerment are observed in many regions of the Sahel affected by violent conflicts and religious and political tensions. Gender inequalities, accentuated by sociocultural norms/values, contribute to worsening women's status in those contexts, reducing their resilience and, in a vicious circle, increasing their vulnerability and pauperization.
150. **Evidence confirms that IFAD-supported programmes have put a clear focus on gender equality in the G5+1, albeit not yet sufficient to address root causes underpinning the high vulnerability of women in such fragile contexts.** IFAD's Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations (2019) enhances "the role of women in sustaining peace and building resilient communities, by promoting their economic empowerment, their right to access and use resources and services, and their decision-making power in NRM and community development", as one entry point (among four) for interventions in fragile situations.<sup>157</sup> Constraints to gender equality and women's empowerment mentioned in COSOPs (and project documents) refer to the three pillars of economic empowerment: secure access to productive resources and activities; voice (in households up to POs and beyond); and reduced drudgeries; but this does not always translate into a gender strategy for higher resilience in fragile contexts. Targeting women is consistently used as an entry point by the country programmes (see Box 23). However, gender-related impacts, critical in fragile situations, are not depicted (explicitly or clearly) in the ToC pathways, to orient interventions that address root causes of women's vulnerability. Moreover, some projects had no specific gender strategy in their design documents: out of 28 project-design documents, 7 did not include a gender strategy right from the design stage, even if they included subsections on gender in the context analysis.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Inequalities and marginalization generate frustration, weaken the social patterns and slow the institutional adjustment processes required to cope with fragility overall.

<sup>156</sup> Improving women's capacities and well-being is strongly correlated with poverty reduction and other gains, such as lower child mortality and malnutrition.

<sup>157</sup> But it has not clarified approaches to achieving this.

<sup>158</sup> They were: PROHYPA in Chad, INCLUSIF and MERIT in Mali, PUSADER, PASADEM, PRoDAF, and PRoDAF Diffa in Niger.

**Examples of women targeting results**

Most projects have a strategy for inclusion of women and young people, based on a quota planning approach. In Niger, the Project to Strengthen Resilience of Rural Communities to Food and Nutrition Insecurity in Niger (PRECIS) targets 30 per cent of women and 30 per cent of young people – equal to 50 per cent of young women. In Burkina Faso, there has been a progression over time, and the recent PAFPA targets 50 per cent of women, as well as an allocation of 30 per cent of the irrigated land improved by the project to women.

In some cases, POs' access to funding is conditioned by the participation of women in the microprojects submitted, or by the allocation of restored land to women; in other cases, there is a self-selection based on the type of activities promoted. In Nigeria, the CBNRMP Project Completion Report Validation (PCRVR) (2017) reported that out of 291,435 households who benefited from it, 41 per cent of individuals reached by the programme were females, and 53 per cent of people participating in marketing groups were women, as were 50 per cent of people trained in income-generating activities and 45 per cent of voluntary savers. Female beneficiaries benefited more from linkages with non-governmental organizations, market outlets and enterprise-management activities.

The targeted results are achieved in most projects (they could be better documented by gender-disaggregated reporting); however, it is difficult to obtain evidence on the appropriation – after project completion – of the positive discrimination principles promoted, especially within FOs.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

151. **Evidence reveals that, with specific and strong women targeting, IFAD-supported projects contributed to empowering rural women and girls, and improved their capacity to cope with shocks and stress factors.** Reviewed experiences show that IFAD-supported interventions have been sensitive to the participation of women – including them in the decision-making bodies – and considered their priorities from project design to implementation.<sup>159</sup> Interventions sought in the first instance to favour the economic empowerment of women, followed by strengthening their position in both households and communities, and easing their workload (Table 11).<sup>160</sup> All projects have sought to empower women economically;<sup>161</sup> some interventions addressed the work overload due to water harvesting for irrigation and to firewood gathering. Evidence also demonstrates a gradual but slow improvement in strengthening the position of women within communities, especially in the governing bodies of FOs and to a lesser extent within households, with self-assessments based on the Gender Action Learning System methodology. A stepwise approach could be observed over successive projects, starting with literacy training, and in financial up to leadership training. For instance, in the Rural Finance Institution-Building Programme (Niger), the PCRVR (2018) reported that in around 70 per cent of the groups, women are in leadership positions – more than doubling the appraisal target.<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless, the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme PCRVR (2017) found that sustainable inclusion and empowerment of women is harder to ascertain, due to limited evidence showing how women have used the opportunities provided by the programmes to improve their economic and social status.

<sup>159</sup> IFAD's gender policy has been factored in all projects and, thus, women actively participated in all stages of the project cycle (preparation, design and implementation), and the choice of activities was guided by their needs. Specific measures were applied in favour of women. Intracommunity targeting is carried out by the communities with the most vulnerable, through self-targeting methods and instruments (land agreements, labour-based works).

<sup>160</sup> Women's economic empowerment is restricted by the limited possibility to go and sell their products on the markets (almost systematic intermediation of the husband). Several projects note an overload of work for women, and activities aimed at reducing hard work were not carried out as planned.

<sup>161</sup> By promoting specific value chains and some of their segments where women are active or even dominant (poultry, goat kits, vegetable gardens with increasingly sophisticated irrigation systems, dry grains, sesame, rice or cowpea where women are active in cultivation and processing), as well as cereal banks women's lean granaries, through microproject-funding mechanisms and training in income-generating activities.

<sup>162</sup> Women were trained in entrepreneurship, financial management, book-keeping, group dynamics and governance aspects. These have enabled them to improve their financial, business, leadership and management skills, and have also assisted in promoting a common vision and understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment among the Village Saving and Credit Groups. It has improved their access to income.

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Table 11

**Examples of IFAD-supported interventions that provided opportunities for women's empowerment over the reviewed period (2010-2020)**

Country	Economic empowerment	Social status and voice	Workload reduction
Mauritania	Specific value chains where women are dominant (poultry, vegetables, non-timber forest products)	Women in FOs	Labour-saving water systems; gas cookers
Mali		Financial training	Biogas cooking
Burkina Faso	Specific value chains and segments where women are present/dominant Shares of land restored and allocated to women	Literacy training Gender Action Learning System	Improved drop irrigation
Niger	Women-based food-security storage	Nutritional education Household Interactive Gender Learning System <sup>163</sup> Training on women leadership and women in leadership positions in FOs	
Chad	Women-based food-security storage Vegetable gardens Sesame cultivation and improved poultry		Solar pump and oil crushers

Source: compiled by the SRE team

152. **Evidence suggests positive results in improving women's access to productive assets, which is critical for building absorptive and adaptive capabilities.** For instance, in Burkina Faso, the Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD) has had some success in obtaining right of use of managed land plots for women: out of 26,573 farmers who installed in the market-gardening areas and rice-growing lowlands, 52.61 per cent are women, who benefit from a right of use on the developed plots. Access to this resource is essential for the empowerment of women, particularly in the Burkinabé context. The Neer-Tamba project has also recorded successes in this area. Its support has improved women's access to land in the lowlands and market-garden areas by 48 per cent and 100 per cent respectively. In Chad (PADER-G), the diversification of rural activities, especially those that are favourable for women (e.g. improved poultry, sesame farming and cattle raising) contributed to enhancing absorptive and adaptive capacities of women. A similar result was achieved in Niger (with the Emergency Food Security and Rural Development Programme [PUSADER] and PASADEM), where women were supported in accessing plots in rehabilitated irrigation perimeters, and in improved techniques and inputs.
153. **IFAD-supported operations contributed to a positive impact on women and ultimately to strengthening their resilience.** In Nigeria, the 2016 CPE noted that, overall, the programme increasingly succeeded in mobilizing women to participate. For example, the CBNRMP PCRV (2017) reported that out of 291,435 households that directly benefited, 41 per cent of individuals reached by the programme were females, 53 per cent of people participating in marketing groups were women, 50 per cent of people trained in income-generating activities were women, and 45 per cent of voluntary savers were also women. Female beneficiaries benefited more from linkages with non-governmental organizations, market outlets and enterprise-management activities. The number of women in leadership positions was below target, suggesting that actions fostering social change for women had less impact than envisioned.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>163</sup> The most recent PRECIS foresees the implementation of transformative actions such as the use of the Interactive Gender Learning System, and training on women's leadership in farmers' organizations and other rural institutions, without, however, providing a substantial budget for transformative actions.

<sup>164</sup> The 2021 CSPE Niger reported that the Country Programme's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment has been quite satisfactory. However, in most cases, it was hard to substantiate such a positive incidence with evidence.

154. **The contribution of women in processes related to the management of natural resources is critical, especially when natural fragility drivers are at stake.** It appears that women's control over community natural resources is usually weak or absent. Projects made good efforts to include them in NRM committees. However, cultural barriers inhibit their effective participation in those committees. For instance, water is a critical resource for both production and household consumption in the Sahelian subregion. Women are in charge of seeking it when the needs are for household purposes, yet their participation can be marginal in NRM committees. In terms of participation of women in NRM committees, the Value Chains Development Programme for Poverty Reduction in Mauritania provides an example of better participation of women in rural organizations, with the introduction of the dewatering and irrigation systems, including the establishment of quotas for this participation.<sup>165</sup>
155. **Ensuring women's participation in management committees is a prerequisite to enhancing their capacity to play a key role in decision-making, but this is not sufficient.** CBNRMP PCRV 2017 noted that while IFAD's programmes have increased women's participation in community-development activities, the impact on decision-making empowerment and social change has not been as great. In Mauritania, local management structures are required to integrate women. However, the field visit revealed that, despite the presence of women in the management bodies (Association de Gestion locale Collective, Cadres Communaux de Concertation, Association de Gestion Participative des Oasis), when it came to allocating funds from the Community Investment Fund or the Municipal Investment Fund, women were in a small number, according to several accounts, which is not favourable to strengthening social cohesion.
156. **Those positive achievements, related to women's empowerment in the G5+1 contexts, may be restricted – in terms of importance and sustainability – to counteracting fragility drivers, due to sociocultural constraints.** Field information gathered (presented in Table 12) shows that field actors in four of the six countries perceived social inequality and exclusion fragility drivers as having a lower importance, compared to other drivers. This situation reflects the prominence of sociocultural aspects linked to gender inequality – a key element of social-related fragility drivers – in the G5+1 countries. While context-specific gender assessments guided interventions, they were hardly precise enough to capture sociocultural factors and constraints that lead to women's vulnerability and exacerbate it. Most assessments conducted were short and unspecific. They do not describe the social organization, sociocultural values and norms regulating households and communities (for all kinds of interactions and activities), nor the room left for women to rely upon. The latter varies according to regions, socio-ethnic groups and political contexts, and along trends, which may oscillate between openness to new norms and empowerment versus stiffening back to patriarchal traditions and rigours. Changes in norms affecting women's status are therefore difficult to foster and trace.<sup>166</sup>

Table 12

**Appreciation of fragility drivers of social inequality and exclusion by field stakeholders**

<i>Driver</i>	<i>Burkina Faso</i>	<i>Chad</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Niger</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>Subregion</i>
Social inequality and exclusion	3.8	2.5	2.0	2.5	1.0	4.1	2.7
All fragility drivers average	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.0	2.8	3.8	3.4

<sup>165</sup> In Chad, where concerted efforts were made to build social cohesion in securing access to water in pastoral systems and in establishing stakeholders' consultation, the involvement and the role of women at each stage of the process has not been highlighted. In Mali, PAPAM mentioned the role of women in the management and use of rehabilitated lowlands.

<sup>166</sup> An example of women-situation analysis can be found for example in: WFP. 2017. *Gender, Markets and Women's Empowerment in the Sahel Region: A Comparative Analysis of Mali, Niger, and Chad*. VAM Gender and Markets Study #4 2016-2017.

157. **Evidence is lacking on what might be effective ways to support the role of women in strengthening social contracts, which is key for both reliance and sustainability.** Previous analyses (in Chapter IV) reveal significant experience in the field of social cohesion and contracts in Niger and Nigeria. Unfortunately, little or no evidence is available on how women's roles were determinant in such processes. The same appears in Chad, where concerted efforts to build social cohesion in securing access to water in pastoral systems and establish a consultation framework of stakeholders were made. However, the involvement of women and the role they played at each stage of the process has not been examined. Only in Mali, PAPAM mentioned the role of managing rehabilitated lowlands and exploiting them. This does not strengthen social cohesion.
158. **Women in the Sahel are expected to contribute to prevention, mediation and peacekeeping in conflict situations, which will require much stronger collective and broader actions.** For now, increasing insecurity in the Sahel region and the northern area of Nigeria victimizes women and their children, as they are unable to exercise their economic activities. They are cut from their rightful access to basic social services and are at high risk of being victims of violence, coercion and racketeering. The review found no evidence of collective actions, albeit there are some associations and unions where women are well organized for socio-economic purposes.<sup>168</sup> To that effect, the SD3C, as a pilot programme specifically addressing fragility, can be useful for testing innovative options.

## **B. Youth promotion**

159. Youth have restricted access to productive resources, lack a voice at household and community levels and suffer from low access to quality education, which means they are often underemployed or unemployed. They tend to cope with these constraints by looking for alternative employment opportunities, often in illicit and high-risk activities. Consequently, they remain highly sensitive to fragility drivers and unable to contribute to their reduction.
160. **Prioritization of youth as a target group has only been recent in IFAD but is reflected in the country programmes of the G5+1.** All COSOPs over the evaluation period recognized the contextually fragile socio-economic situation of young people, which is characterized by underemployment and unemployment, illiteracy, lack of skills, heavy dependence on the household-production system, and lack of access to the means of production (land, inputs and equipment). Greater attention to youth issues, and how they are addressed, can be seen in recent COSOPs compared to older ones. For instance, the 2007-2012 Mali COSOP simply called for IFAD programmes to support the participation of poor rural youth in the development of community development plans and environmental action plans. By contrast, the Mauritania COSOP 2018-2024 emphasized the need to encourage the inclusion of youth in local organizations that represent the rural poor and can defend their interests. Among the 26 projects under review, 22 had a subsection on youth in the context analysis of their design document, but only six had added a detailed assessment at that stage; 15 developed a youth strategy at design but 2 of the most recent projects did not. Most projects implemented have included interventions aimed at supporting youth – with targeting approaches to include them – in addition to women, and based on a quota approach. Recent projects have been specifically designed for youth (Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project in Mali) or have a whole component dedicated to youth (PRECIS in Niger, REPER in Chad).
161. **Reporting on intervention results achieved pertaining to youth inclusion has been weak in the G5+1 contexts, hence few lessons could be identified.**

<sup>167</sup> See methodological note mentioned for Table 9.

<sup>168</sup> COVID-19 has a strong impact on women, with closing borders inhibiting the marketing of products, areas where women may be active. Due to the lack of specific evidence, gender-sensitive COVID-19 assessment would be needed to design adequate actions to support them during the post-COVID period.

Many completed projects that were reviewed often mentioned youth inclusion objectives in conjunction with women's inclusion. Although the inclusion of young people seemed systematic, the results are only reported in terms of the number of women supported, with little reference to young beneficiaries. Reporting on youth participation has been poor in early projects and in more recent ones; beyond reporting on the youth-targeting number and process-level results,<sup>169</sup> evidence of outcomes on youth are rare or absent. Reports are not always disaggregating results and how youth will be capacitated, and are not always reflected in a theory of change and in outcome-level indicators. Therefore, the evaluation team could learn little on the employment and entrepreneurship development achieved, and even less on social empowerment and contribution to peace, which could have informed policy decisions.

162. **Approaches to promoting youth generally focused on income-generation activities and training, to build their absorptive and adaptive capacities.** Access to funds and other resources is critical for entrepreneurship development; therefore, in fragile situations, modalities of supporting youths to that effect should be very flexible. In some cases, cash for work and assets has been an entry point; in other cases, vocational training (reaching mainly young men) and, in many cases, support to rural microenterprises, have been entry points. New types of microenterprises have been recently supported to foster youth engagement in mechanized service provision (REPER in Tchad), but experiences are too recent to be assessed. Digital agriculture and trade are hardly mentioned. Examples are provided in Table 13.

Table 13  
**Examples of interventions targeting youth**

<i>Projects</i>	<i>Example of interventions targeting youths</i>
Neer-Tamba (Burkina Faso) MTR 2012-2022	Investments in SWC and NRM with a low participation of young people at MTR (gold mining as an alternative).
PAPFA (Burkina Faso) 2017-2024	Promotion of four value chains, with quota-based targeting of youth rural microenterprises (specialized in service provision to other stakeholders in the value chains), conditional selection of groups requesting funds to improve their access to markets, and specific vegetable-garden investments targeting women and youth.
PROHYPA PCR (Chad) 2009-2015	Capacity building of young beneficiaries to deal with climate change and the degradation of natural resources, and to develop skills in processing and off-farm activities (cooking stoves; fodder harvesting and conservation).
FIER (Mali) MTR 2013-2022	Entirely dedicated to rural youth entrepreneurship, with a vocational training component and an income-generating activity/rural microenterprise component, with funding based on requests after a facilitation-training-linking with Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) sequence.
PUSADER (Niger) PCR 2010-2014	Creation of local employment to reduce the exodus of young people, through labor-intensive activities, small-scale irrigation and cash for work, to recover degraded land; specific financing services.
PPI Ruwanmu PCR (Niger) 2012-2018	Cash for work and assets in irrigated and SWC perimeters; extension and literacy training.
VCDP MTR (Nigeria) 2012-2022	Builds on the development of market linkages with stakeholders downstream in cassava and rice value chains, with processing creating jobs, and identifies viable business opportunities for youth and women. Youth active in all FOs also in the production segments (40 per cent participation at MTR).
CASP MTR (Nigeria) 2013-2021	Enterprise development in specific value chains targeting women and youth (training, starter packs, linkages with banks).

Source: compiled by the SRE team

163. **In fragile situations, modalities for accessing funds (e.g. credit) must be more flexible and tailored.** In Niger, the country programme portfolio integrates support for rural microenterprises promoted by young men and women. Indeed, the 2021 CSPE noted that youth economic integration is affected by the same problems

<sup>169</sup> The percentages of youth inclusion are reported rather superficially and without precision on the denominator, which sometimes is related to the total number of beneficiaries and at other times related to the total number of youth beneficiaries foreseen. In some cases, although the projects have intervened to increase the productive capacity of rural populations, the results on youth are not reported.

of supporting businesses in general, which are: (i) unclear guidance for financial support to businesses; (ii) credit terms not well suited to small producers; and (iii) unclear strategy and priorities of microenterprise development. Recent programmes target youth and draw on partnerships with other IFAD programmes, to ensure a proper linkage with financial institutions (the Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project [FIER] and the Inclusive Finance in Agricultural Value Chain Project [INCLUSIF] in Mali). They rely on a combination of sound business planning and training, starter kits in kind or cash, and subvention delivered by a financial institution able to provide credit (especially for operations) to the young entrepreneurs. Another alternative remains a project fund mobilized to finance eligible microprojects; the solution is convenient, as it is easily tailored to the specific needs of the beneficiaries, but may be less sustainable. Alternatives cannot be compared due to lack of evidence, and their robustness when facing new fragility drivers – such as a pandemic or a conflict – cannot be assessed.

164. **In value chain development (VDP) projects, integration of women and youth in upstream and downstream activities contributes to diversifying economic opportunities of beneficiaries, as well as mitigating the effects of fragility drivers such as extreme poverty, climate change and natural resource degradation.** VCDP in Nigeria adopted a holistic and demand-driven approach to addressing constraints along the cassava and rice value chains. The programme focused its interventions on agricultural market development and smallholder productivity enhancement. VCDP has a sound strategy for inclusiveness. The implementation strategy is led by a rural institutions and gender/youth advisor at national level, supplemented by officers at State level. VCDP mainstreams women and youth into project implementation (the M&E system adequately disaggregates performance indicator data, enabling gender-sensitive progress analysis). As at MTR, 61 per cent of the beneficiary farmers' organizations were youth, of whom 28 per cent were young women and 72 per cent young men. Through their interventions on productivity enhancement and enterprise development for women and youth, VCDP (as well as CASP) has contributed to diversifying the economic activities of young beneficiaries in intervention areas; this allows them to mitigate the effects of fragility drivers such as extreme poverty, climate change and natural resource degradation. Additional examples are provided by the projects in Burkina Faso and Niger.<sup>170</sup>
165. **When youth are effectively targeted and proactively involved in actions aiming at mitigating conflicts, e.g. over resources in pastoral and agropastoral areas, they can effectively contribute to enhancing the resilience of their communities.** For instance, in Niger, actions carried out by PASADEM on natural resource management have produced numerous effects; these include strengthening the capacities of 8,133 young people in NRM, while reducing the quantity of firewood and crop residues used as fuel in households. Together with the Cereal Bank Community Committees (COGES), these interventions to support the involvement of young people in the management of natural resources have had a significant effect on reducing conflicts between farmers and herders. PASK II in Mauritania has developed a gender and youth targeting strategy based on a policy of positive discrimination in favour of women and youth. As such, young people are systematically considered in the preparatory steps of the activities of all components. The project also has a gender and youth officer, who ensures that women and youth are included into the project's activities. The project has supported young people in the restoration of soils, the mobilization and management of surface water, the development of agricultural systems of livestock, and support to production systems vulnerable to climate change. In this sense, the project has made it possible to increase the production and agricultural productivity of young beneficiaries and, in turn, to fight against the fragility driver of poverty.

<sup>170</sup> PAFA-4R (Burkina Faso) has strengthened the resilience of young smallholder farmers through climate-smart agriculture by PAFA-4R. PUSADER (Niger) has engaged youth towards reducing land-resource degradation and to create economic value.

166. **Evidence (though limited) suggests that curbing youth out-migration and strengthening their resilience can occur in fragile contexts when interventions simultaneously include goals of improving their technical capabilities, and sustainably increasing their access to productive assets and profitable markets.** In Niger for instance, in addition to the youth quota strategy and the process of developing and validating targeting criteria at the community level, PPI Ruwanmu has developed an Equitable Development and Empowerment of Women and Youth Strategy document, that has created the conditions for equitable access to the opportunities and benefits of the project. The project has contributed to reducing the vulnerability of beneficiaries through watershed rehabilitation, by granting temporary works to beneficiaries over an average period of four months/beneficiary. The approach used is the distribution of cash for assets, avoiding the massive departure of able-bodied youth towards uncertain horizons in a context of regional insecurity. Consequently, 47 per cent of the young people surveyed at the end of the project were no longer willing to leave. The project has thus introduced a direct provision of financing services contributing to poverty reduction and a better economic framework. An additional example in PUSADER reveals that the project played a key role in creating local employment and greatly reduced the exodus of young people, through labor-intensive activities and small-scale irrigation. This has allowed them to ensure the vital needs of their households and to reduce the drain on their agricultural production or herds, which are already severely affected by recurrent periods of drought.
167. **Targeting youth of diverse social and educational status, living in very different contexts as well as facing diverse opportunities, requires a deep assessment of their situations; but this has hardly been implemented.** This point was partially addressed by designing baskets of interventions and approaches, so that young farmers could draw an advantage from cash for work, while rural youth with initial resources for entrepreneurship could provide services or develop off-farm activities. Expected outcomes were not always met due to unspecific contextual assessments. For instance, in Nigeria, CASP actions have been directed towards individual and collective enterprise development around value chains, relying on the N-Agripreneur approach to attracting youth to agribusiness, including young women. It raised interest among youth, and at midterm it was reported that 6,931 young farmers (4,159 men and 2,772 women) had been reached,<sup>171</sup> out of a target of 10,500 (66 per cent achievement rate); however, the project was plagued by weak enforcement of loan repayment. In addition, the methodologies and tools tested were not applicable to young people with low literacy levels.<sup>172</sup>
168. **Interventions that were effective in youth targeting and promotion were backed up by strong political commitment.** For example, in Nigeria, under CBARDP, the initiative Youth in Agriculture was a deliberate strategy to address the problem of crime and unemployment among younger people in the Delta. The 2016 CPE reported that, in CBNRMP, the focus on youth empowerment had a significant achievement. Through increased incomes, youth groups grew their confidence and for some the impact was life changing. It added that important social benefits included a reduction in youth migration, crime and vandalism, as employment opportunities rose. Youth were specifically asked to participate in collective decision processes.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> A government initiative to attract youth to agribusiness.

<sup>172</sup> In PPI Ruwanmu (Niger), irrigation and watershed management did not attract youth as planned because their access to the restored land could not be secured. All successive projects in Niger reduced the massive departure of able-bodied youth towards uncertain horizons in a context of regional insecurity; but the planned 30 per cent youth targets were usually not achieved, due to restricted land rights. Therefore, there is a need for more holistic approaches to the inclusion of youth from diverse social and educational backgrounds.

<sup>173</sup> For instance, the 2007-2012 COSOP in Mali called for IFAD programmes to support the participation of poor rural youth in the development of community development and environmental action plans; while Mauritania's COSOP 2018-2024 emphasizes the need to encourage the inclusion of youth in local organizations that represent the rural poor and can defend their interests.

169. Overall, regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, **the effectiveness of IFAD's engagement to support youth, aligned with the outcome of sustainable youth entrepreneurship and job creation, requires a deeper analysis at design stage of major drivers that affect the fragility of young people.** By doing so, interventions can contribute to improving the resilience of rural youth, with the potential for rural transformation in fragility settings.<sup>174</sup>

### C. Other marginalized groups

170. **Marginalization can be very significant in fragile situations.** In the G5+1 fragility settings, the marginalization of the rural poor may be a consequence of neglect or a reduced focus on the development of livelihood zones that have limited or no rainfed or irrigated agriculture potential.<sup>175</sup>
171. **Interventions addressing the needs of marginalized groups for reinforcing social cohesion between and within communities do not focus on the multiple interconnected processes of marginalization, and thus it is difficult to conclude on their effectiveness in terms of transformative results.** For instance, regarding refugees and displaced populations, which is a key issue in the subregion plagued by protracted insecurity and conflict,<sup>176</sup> IFAD-funded interventions still lack a development approach in addressing related challenges. Yet, how to understand displaced people's specific needs and develop appropriate responses, especially in partnership with other UN agencies, is not clear. There is a lack of interventions to address environmental impacts associated with the refugee pressure on natural resources, and to undertake positive remedial actions to offset those impacts in a way that addresses the needs of both the refugee and host populations. For instance, in August 2020, in the Diffa region, the Sayam Forage refugee camp, which accommodates refugees, Nigerien returnees and asylum seekers of various nationalities, had 4,121 households of 19,315 registered people.<sup>177</sup> The environmental assessment indicates that the impact of the settling refugee camps is one of distress in this region, which is already affected by desertification, land degradation and climate change. Bare soils are in full progression, and regression is noted on the shrub vegetation cover and the gallery forest areas.<sup>178</sup> For IFAD operations in those areas, integrating the needs of refugees in intervention strategies will be more and more necessary, to impact social cohesion and adequately contribute to the nexus emergency and resilience. This can be done in partnership with other RBAs.
172. **In the subregion, safeguarding land-tenure rights is generally an issue for marginalized groups, including foreigners (allochtones), temporary users such as pastoralists, and other sociologically marginalized groups.** As mentioned earlier, structural elements such as demography and land rights contribute to exacerbating the fragility situation of environmental and natural resource degradation. Lack of inclusiveness is a source of major frustration – resulting in violent conflicts between and within communities – and a cause of environmental degradation. The review could not find projects with elements of strategies to address these issues.

### Summary on inclusiveness

<sup>174</sup> These aspects are currently missing in strategic and programmatic documents. It would therefore be necessary to conduct systematic surveys on their aspirations, and how they cope with discrepancies between the realities of their environment and their aspirations for a better future.

<sup>175</sup> The interface between those zones and those with a rainfed/irrigated agriculture potential may turn into geographies of tensions between farmers and pastoralists who share at the margin of the national political, economic and social life.

<sup>176</sup> UNHCR and the Government had registered 35,439 refugees (9,708 households) in the Maradi region as of 31 January 2020. Of those registered, 23 per cent were women, 10 per cent were men, and 67 per cent were children. UNHCR (2020). UNHCR Niger – Factsheet Maradi Situation – February 2020. <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/73999>.

<sup>177</sup> UNHCR. 2020. *Camp de Réfugiés de Sayam Forage (Commune de Chetimari, Région de Diffa au Niger)*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/79516>.

<sup>178</sup> Mansour, R.H., Mahamane ; Issiaka, M.M., Issiaka, I.M., Ali, I.M., and Mahamane M.A. (2019). *Impact de L'installation des Camps des Réfugiés, Retournés et Déplacés sur L'exploitation des Ressources Ligneuses dans la Région de Diffa Impact of the Installation of Refugee Camps, Returned and Displaced on the Exploitation of Wood Resources in the Region of Diffa*. DOI: 10.19044/esj.2019.v15n36p118.



173. **Findings show that IFAD's support moderately contributed to tackling social fragility drivers related to gender inequality, due to sociocultural barriers that are critical in the G5+1 contexts. Youth promotion results have also been modest due to a great variability in their conditions, leading to variable vulnerability levels.** Specific approaches to target women have been effective in launching economic insertion processes; this has led to their economic empowerment, which in turn has led to a gradual improvement in their social status. Insertion of youths as entrepreneurs and/or in value chain segments led to mixed results in responding to their diverse needs in those fragile contexts, but contributed to mitigating their vulnerability. The positive results achieved appear low in view of important women and youth-related challenges in the G5+1 fragile situations. Therefore, a more differentiated approach linked to specific assessments (tailored to contextual constraints and challenges) is required for better effectiveness of IFAD-supported interventions to that effect. Findings confirmed lessons from partners related to the critical role of women and youths in fragile situations, as both groups are affected and are key contributors to solving fragility issues.

#### **Key points**

##### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

- Applying specific and strong targeting of women and relevant supports contributed to empowering rural women and girls and to strengthening their resilience.
- The effective participation of women in processes related to the management of natural resources is critical, especially when natural fragility drivers are concerned; but it is still timid as social norms are usually not conducive.
- Ensuring participation in terms of quotas is a necessary step to enhancing women's capacity to play a role in decision making; but it is not sufficient.
- Context-specific gender assessments will be increasingly needed, due to sociocultural issues, and as fragility drivers are worsening; this is so that women can turn from victims to organized proactive actors capable of addressing drivers of their higher vulnerability.

##### **Youth promotion**

- Stopping youth out-migration and strengthening their resilience can occur in fragile contexts when interventions simultaneously include goals of improving their technical capabilities, and increasing their sustained access to productive assets and to profitable markets.
- When youth are effectively targeted and proactively involved in actions aimed at mitigating conflicts, e.g. over resources in pastoral and agropastoral areas, they can effectively contribute to enhancing the resilience of their communities.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of IFAD's engagement to support youths, aligned with the outcome of sustainable youths' entrepreneurship and job creation, requires a deeper analysis at design stage of major drivers that affect their fragility, and needs to take into account the diversity of their situations.

##### **Other marginalized groups**

- Interventions addressing the needs of marginalized groups, for reinforcing social cohesion between and within communities, do not focus on the multiple interconnected processes of marginalization; thus it is difficult to conclude on their effectiveness in terms of transformative results.

## VI. Efficiency, sustainability and scaling up

174. This chapter assesses results achieved in terms of three evaluation criteria: efficiency, sustainability and scaling up. The definition of the criteria is presented in Annex I. Each section starts by presenting the related key evaluation question that triggers analytical and exploratory answers, leading to identification of lessons learned.

### A. Efficiency

175. This section addresses lessons on the delivery of IFAD-supported operations in those fragile contexts.<sup>179</sup> First, performance of the loan operations is benchmarked against that of the overall IFAD loan-operation portfolio. Then, several enablers and barriers to efficiency are discussed,<sup>180</sup> and instances are identified where the fragile context in the G5+1 may also be a contributory barrier. The main evaluation question is: how efficient has IFAD's support been in those challenging fragile contexts, considering financial instruments and procedures, managerial approaches (including field presence), tools and processes?

#### Efficiency against performance across the entire IFAD portfolio

176. **Reported ratings during the evaluation period, from the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI), indicate that efficiency in the G5+1 loan operations was actually higher than for the loan operations in WCA as a whole, and comparable to those across the entire IFAD loan portfolio.**<sup>181</sup> The ARRI efficiency rating for the period under review gives an average rating of 3.53 for the six reviewed countries. This is higher than for WCA as a whole (3.19) and slightly lower than the overall IFAD loan portfolio (3.59). The disaggregated ratings by country (Table 14) furthermore does not suggest that fragility was a significant barrier to efficiency, since the three countries classified as fragile during most of the period – Chad, Mali, and Niger – had the higher ratings.<sup>182</sup>

Table 14

Disaggregated ratings by country

	Burkina Faso	Chad	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Nigeria	G5+1 average	WCA average
Efficiency ratings	3.0	3.60	3.50	3.33	4.40	3.33	3.53	3.19
Elapsed months, approval and first disbursement	16.04	7.90	18.52	15.97	8.45	47.41	19.05	12.8

Source: compiled by the SRE team based on ARRI and OBI data

177. **This finding is *prima facie* surprising since fragility analyses tend to highlight weak institutional capacity and challenges to achieving efficiency gains in such contexts.** On the one hand, as acknowledged by field stakeholders interviewed, taking into account the low institutional capacity in those countries, IFAD has intensified the supervision and technical missions for the projects in the subregion, as well as the recourse to external service providers. On the other hand, the ratings may have taken into account contextual challenges of intervention areas; the judgment of efficiency has reflected this.
178. **In the G5+1 countries, the period between loan approval and the first disbursement has been longer than observed across the broader WCA**

<sup>179</sup> The efficiency with which non-lending support is delivered is touched upon but, reflecting the relative lack of evidence, to a lesser extent.

<sup>180</sup> As identified in the IFAD ARRI 2019.

<sup>181</sup> In fact, similar results were observed for other evaluation criteria, namely: effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

<sup>182</sup> In fact, the 2021 Niger CSPE stated that there were good financial performance and execution of loan operations by the Country Programme, with indicators such as a lower-than-average time for loan effectiveness and the good profitability of main loan-operation activities. But the level of efficiency of most of the loan operations was affected by: i) the partial realization of structuring investments (for reasons of increased unit costs and the low execution capacities of operators); and ii) the significant reduction in the achievements of microloan operations and income-generating activities (for reasons of inadequacy of the implementation procedures with the capacities of the target populations).

**portfolio of loan operations, but with exceptions.** Table 15 includes the numbers of elapsed months between approval and first disbursement. Delays in launching loan operations have been higher in four countries out of the six, with an average of 19 months compared to 12.8 months across WCA.

179. **Exceptions were observed in Chad and Niger** (shorter timeframes of 3.60 and 4.40 months respectively), where both had the highest efficiency ratings. Nigeria is an outlier with the longest timeframe and a low efficiency rating (3.33). Common reasons cited for delayed launching in the G5+1 countries include very slow procurement procedures, the necessity to conduct preliminary studies and to set up steering mechanisms, and time needed to decide on the allocation of grants and loans to the beneficiaries' specific microloan operations. In Nigeria, the several levels of approvals required, from national to local authorities, has been a significant reason for delays.
180. **Two approaches hold the prospect of addressing barriers that lead to launch delays.** First, experience has shown that using operating and procedure manuals prepared for previous loan operations cuts the time to first disbursement by addressing the very slow procurement procedures.<sup>183</sup> Second, IFAD developed specific new instruments that should positively affect the timely launching of loan operations. An example is the Faster Implementation of Project Start-up (FIPS) instrument,<sup>184</sup> which is not a grant but an up-front, short-term loan that is reimbursed when the IFAD loan is disbursed; this helps in speeding up the implementation of required prior technical studies for risky operations. Because this facility was approved only recently, only Burkina Faso and Niger took advantage of it in the preparation of PAFA 4R and PRECIS, leading to a reduction in the timeframes (before the first disbursement) to 1.1 and 4 months respectively.<sup>185</sup> Other causes of delays (for example the setting up of steering mechanisms and the time needed to decide on the allocation of funding to beneficiaries' of microprojects), still required appropriate actions to speed up the launching of loan operations.<sup>186</sup>
181. **Coordination units of IFAD-supported projects in the subregion have learned how to address problems with slow disbursement that were observed in earlier periods.** Completed loan operations disbursed an average of 87 per cent (G5 countries only), with a distorted pattern over the implementation period. In the very early loan operations, there were significant issues of cash flow. Out of the 16 loan operations reviewed, seven explicitly mentioned slow and complex financial procedures as a cause of delays, and the need to focus on addressing such issues (especially for procurement) in the design of the following loan operations. For instance, in the cases of PPI Ruwanmu and PASADEM in Niger, IFAD negotiated differentiated procurement rules with the Ministry of Finance and obtained increased thresholds, when applying different rules. In Chad, with PADER-G, the establishment of a local commission in charge of implementing the procurement plan, along with the support provided by IFAD, contributed to significantly reducing the average duration of procurement processes from 211 to 86 days. The fact that issues with

<sup>183</sup> Operating and procedure manuals prepared before loan operation starts, as well as preliminary feasibility studies prior to investments, enable a swift start of operations, and previous loan operations may help following ones to perform such preliminary operations. Follow-up loan operations can take advantage of their predecessor and be better prepared, by having completed administrative procedures and preliminary studies. It was not always the case (PASPRU did not take advantage from PROFIL in Burkina Faso), but recent loan operations tend to build on one another or to pool resources (PASADEM informed PRODAF in Niger and PAPAM informed FIER in Mali). In a few cases, governments also funded preliminary studies before the start of a loan operation, in order to reduce the delays.

<sup>184</sup> Faster Implementation of Loan operation Start-up (FIPS) Instruments comprehend (IFAD 2018, EB-2018-124-R-34):

- The Loan operation pre-Financing Facility (PFF) is a revolving fund that would provide liquidity early on in the loan-operation cycle, so that activities can be initiated and financed prior to entry into force of the financing agreement (as part of loan operation design).
- The non-reimbursable Technical Assistance for Project Start-up Facility (TAPS) would finance specific activities to support loan-operation implementation capacities at start-up.

<sup>185</sup> PAFA-4R, which also contributes to the GR5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme 2019-21, took advantage of pre-financing facility to recruit the team of a new antenna, launch feasibility studies and prepare the working and procurement plans. PRECIS also used the facility to complete characterization studies of the economic-development poles in the regions. PAFA-4R did succeed in drastically reducing delays between approval and first disbursement.

<sup>186</sup> As for SD3C, there is the added complication of coordinating with both WFP and FAO partners.

slow disbursement due to cumbersome rules are not identified in the most recent completion reports may suggest that country teams have learned lessons on how to effectively address those issues.

### Other aspects of efficiency performance in fragile situations

182. **The appropriateness of IFAD financial instruments is variable, to support resilience building in the G5+1 fragile contexts.** Highly concessional loans (sovereign lending), DSF grants (tied to sovereign loans) and grants (of national and regional windows) have been deployed by IFAD over the evaluated period, to finance operations in the G5+1 countries.<sup>187</sup> Evidence gathered suggests that sovereign loan financing is not flexible enough to allow swift adjustments in cases of critical events (e.g. severe drought, economic crisis, political disruption) that exacerbate the fragility situations.<sup>188</sup> Non-lending supports (with grant windows) are quite appropriate and adaptive to such contexts, due to their flexibility (for disbursement and management); however, they are limited in their amounts, and their linkage with the lending portfolio is usually weak, in ensuring a greater effectiveness of the overall country programme.<sup>189</sup>
183. **Long-term cofunding arrangements with other international donors are critical in addressing effectively and sustainably the fragility drivers in the G5+1 countries.** Evidence confirms failures in delivery of cofinancing agreements. This issue seems to be increasing and is one major reason for reprogramming at the midterm review stage. In the 11 completed loan operations, at design IFAD should have contributed to 48.5 per cent of the costs, governments to 13.5 per cent, beneficiaries to 3.3 per cent and other sources to 34.7 per cent. At the end, while commitments were met, IFAD financing was greater (57.2 per cent of costs) than planned (as presented in Table 15). The decrease in the mobilization of cofinancing by governments appears as a key challenge, which is understood in the fragility situation of the G5+1 countries that have to devote significant resources for security purposes.<sup>190</sup>

Table 15

#### Source of financing for completed projects

Source of financing	% at design	% at completion
IFAD	48.5%	57.2%
Government	13.5%	7.6%
Cofinancers	34.7%	34.4%
Beneficiaries	3.3%	0.9%

Source: projects' design and completion reports

184. Considering the overall external resources mobilized for WCA PoLG over replenishment periods, Table 16 shows that the contribution percentage from cofinancers has declined between IFAD9 and IFAD10; but this trend is being reversed considering the cofinancing plans for IFAD11.<sup>191</sup> Most reliable cofinancers are the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and GEF.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Specific funding opportunities also exist, such as the ASAP-related support, as presented in the effectiveness section.

<sup>188</sup> In terms of procedures for approval, clearance, disbursement and revisiting the loan agreement. The decision to revise and adjust can be taken only at midterm review, which can be late in the case of shocks and/or stressors (climate, security, health and economic related), which are more and more frequent in the region.

<sup>189</sup> For instance, highlighted in the CSPE reports of Nigeria (2016) and Burkina Faso (2019).

<sup>190</sup> There is a significant variation in experience across the six countries, with at one extreme Burkina Faso where cofinancer commitments were often not met, and Niger at the other where cofinancers actually topped up their commitments.

<sup>191</sup> This is still a plan. The effective mobilization will be assessed in about 4-6 years.

<sup>192</sup> For the 16 ongoing loan operations, the size of the loan operations is twice as high on average than for closed operations (US\$72.48 million against US\$39.16 million), attesting the trend to go "bigger" in the subregion; but this has not been matched by a comparable increase in international cofinancing commitments.

Table 16

**PBAS allocation and cofinancing over the evaluation period**

Country	IFAD8 (2010-2012)	IFAD9 (2013-2015)	IFAD10 (2016-2018)	IFAD11 (2019-2021)
IFAD PBAS (planned)	223 390 562	213 664 175	348 964 591	383 034 293
PBAS (used)	245 283 194	180 608 770	348 761 591	345 546 708
G5 Sahel+1 co-finance planned	150 126 005	56 722 928	128 199 656	232 432 100
List of cofinanciers	European Union, Canada/CIDA, GEF, IDA, OFID, Spanish Fund, Swedish Comp, WFP	GEF, ABC, Denmark/DANIDA, GCF, GEF, NORAD, OFID	AFDB, Canada/CIDA, GCF, GEF, NORAD, OFID	

Source: Oracle BI and projects' design reports

185. **Governments' capacities to ensure that project management units (PMUs) adequately fulfil their roles affects efficiency in the fragile contexts.** For example, in Mali, the PAPAM national director was also in charge of a major division within the Government, and did not have sufficient time to maintain the required oversight of a large and complex multidonor loan operation. Other experience was of project management units that were both overstaffed but with underpaid staff without the required skill-sets (ProLRAF in Mauritania), or that experienced a rapid turnover of government staff (common in Burkina Faso operations). By contrast, well-staffed and dedicated national project teams in Niger have contributed to better performance in the Niger PASADEM and PRODAF loan operations.<sup>193</sup>
186. **The cost-effectiveness of using non-governmental service providers is contingent on their readiness to deliver.** Reliance on local stakeholders has to be considered in fragile contexts, especially in areas where the State cannot be fully in control. NGOs are often funded for social mobilization, but this may initially appear as a source of inefficiency if their capacity needs first to be enhanced, usually by a learning-by-doing process.<sup>194</sup> At the same time, they fill critical capacity gaps, and reduce management-overhead costs. Five out of sixteen loan operations (completed) reviewed explicitly mentioned recourse to non-State organizations to implement their activities, and only one was satisfied (PASPRU in Burkina Faso).
187. **Management costs have often been higher than initially foreseen. Reasons include issues that could have been recognized during design and led to extensions in loan operation, but also the need to adjust to crises and security concerns.** At design, management costs of between 10 and 15 per cent were commonly cited for loan operations in the G5+1. At completion, actual management costs ranged from 18 to 37 per cent. Examples of loan operations where poor design was the main reason for high management costs include: (i) PASK II (Mauritania), where there were too many field workers and costs needed to be reduced by revising the non-essential activities at MTR; and (ii) delays in the establishment of the PROHYPA PMU in a remote area in Chad, and the consequent slow implementation of loan-operation activities, resulting in a one-year extension of the loan implementation period. Crises are, by definition, unpredictable, but loan operations implemented in times of crisis also have to revise their plans. Examples

<sup>193</sup> According to WCA country team actors, IFAD loan operations are designed in a manner that relies on Government systems, as it helps to strengthen national systems and national ownership. Then ringfenced PMUs are set up to administer and manage IFAD financing. However, these PMUs are overseen by the relevant Government ministries, which subject them to many of the shortcomings for which the PMUs were set up in the first place. The recruitment of key loan operation (PMU) staff from the Government civil service has often enabled a carryover into IFAD loan operations, of some of the inefficiencies and poor financial and administrative management at country level highlighted by fiduciary agents such as Transparency International and the World Bank.

<sup>194</sup> For instance, in Chad, PADER-G delegated the implementation of two components to a local NGO in order to be more efficient, but the organization could not do the job. CASP in Nigeria deplored the low quality of the contracted service providers also in farmer field schools. PASADEM in Niger assessed its service providers as unprofessional, and in PRODAF few entrepreneurs could do the job.

include PAPAM and PIDRK (Mali) and Neer-Tamba (Burkina Faso).<sup>195</sup> Looking forward, the example of increased security costs in Nigeria, where security measures are mandatory, suggests that management costs will be higher than planned in several of the G5+1 countries.

188. **Evidence suggests that the previous decentralized subregional hub approach is less favourable in the G5+1 contexts.** As mentioned earlier, between 2019 and 2021, three hubs hosted the country directors of the G5 countries, plus Nigeria where the country director resides.<sup>196</sup> While the six countries have moved in and out of being designated “fragile” during the evaluation period, it is undoubted that they are becoming increasingly challenging contexts and certainly more challenging than the countries usually hosting the IFAD subregional hubs. Stakeholders interviewed have consistently highlighted the need to frequently take ad hoc decisions which, in the absence of a resident country programme manager (CPM), is a source of delays.
189. **The non-residence of country directors appears in this context to be constraining IFAD’s ability to both work with key partners and respond quickly to the changing context.** While new IFAD instruments (e.g. FIPS, RPSF) have been created that allow a more rapid response than the usual 12-24 months required to launch operations under the standard business model, their use also requires human resources to draft the proposals. The design and implementation of the SD3C assumes a learning-by-doing endeavour with intra RBA cooperation. It seems clear that the non-residence of country programme managers/country directors in the countries constitutes a major limitation on their ability to quickly respond to challenges, as well as for opportunities of joint planning and actions, which is critical for the operationalization of loan operations such as SD3C. What is unknown is whether the change that started in 2022 to replace the hubs by the multi country offices, and to have more country-director-led offices, will completely solve these challenges; but surely this may significantly contribute to improving IFAD’s agility in the G5+1 contexts.<sup>197</sup>

#### **Summary on efficiency**

190. **In line with other partners’ experiences in this context, the findings show that achieving efficiency gains in fragile situations is very challenging but possible.** In an operationally challenging context, IFAD has been applying the same financing rules and procedures (in terms of flexibility) as in non-fragile contexts. Despite this, IFAD country teams have learned lessons on how to work better to address challenges of delayed launching and slow disbursement. On the other hand, the most significant challenge remains the ability to respond efficiently (and effectively) to new shocks and stressors – especially given the deteriorating fragility situations across the G5+1 – to sustain cofinancing and to work effectively with other partners.

## **B. Sustainability**

191. This section assesses the extent to which sustained results in addressing fragility drivers were achieved, and explanatory factors associated with these. It answers the following key evaluation question: to what extent have achievements and/or results

<sup>195</sup> According to ARRI 2020, “within the 2019 ARRI loan operation sample, 34 per cent were implemented in WCA and, among these, 71 per cent in fragile situations. Some of the main causes for high loan-operation management costs in WCA were mainly related to high staff turnover (Burkina Faso, Gambia and Ghana), low performance of key loan operation staff requiring external service providers (Burkina Faso, Gambia and Ghana), vast and dispersed loan operation areas (Congo), and a lack of rigour in the planning of activities (Congo)”.

<sup>196</sup> Advantages mentioned by actors interviewed for the hub model encompass: more proximity to clients, beneficiaries (although processes remain still centralized); increased visibility of IFAD in the field; and opportunities for networking and work with subregional Sahelian institutions (ECOWAS, CILSS).

<sup>197</sup> Within the scope of Decentralization 2.0, IFAD has defined the optimal scenario for its enhanced field presence, which will comprise 50 field offices, including four regional offices, by 2024. Aligned with the documentation received from IFAD management, in the G5+1 subregion, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali will be hosting their country directors from 2022 onwards, making four the number of countries having their CDs resident.

been sustained in these fragile contexts, and which lessons are relevant for IFAD future engagement to address fragility in the subregion?

192. **The 2016 strategy assumes implicitly that a main entry point to ensuring sustainability in fragile contexts is through strengthening the social contract between the State and populations whose livelihoods depend on rural production.** The 2016 IFAD strategy for engagement in fragile situations does not provide guidance on how to maintain sustainable results in fragile settings where institutional support is particularly weak. Nevertheless, it does identify some aspects that should be covered in project design and that should increase the likelihood of sustainability and scaling up. These include: strengthening institutional capacity, building the resilience of target groups, and using implementation models that are robust. All these points trigger actions in terms of social contract strengthening. The following analyses corroborate this.
193. **Approaches to sustainability applied by loan projects have varied, while prospects for sustainable results are generally good with ASAP or GEF funding.** Contrasting examples are the Neer-Tamba project in Burkina Faso and PAPAM in Mali. For Neer-Tamba, the objective was to improve the living conditions and incomes of the most disadvantaged rural populations in the northern region. Additional funding from GEF under the Pilot Programme of Integrated Approaches to Food Security was used to strengthen the sustainability of the project's investments in the North region. An exit strategy document was drawn up and validated by stakeholders, covering the period 2018-2022.<sup>198</sup> By contrast, the PAPAM project in Mali included additional ASAP grant funding to complement the activities in climate change adaptation and to improve the resilience of family farms. The design of the project did not formulate an explicit exit strategy, but included a commitment to working on how the planned activities could be made sustainable.
194. **Processes supporting inclusiveness in the management of natural resources, as well as strengthening the effectiveness of RUAs, increase the likelihood of sustainability of results.** In Niger, IFAD-funded interventions achieved good and sustained results through support for assisted natural regeneration. The projects supported the setting up of management committees around the restored sites. The approaches promoted were effective because the techniques used were both simple and fully owned by the producers. To strengthen equitable use of the regenerated resources, the government adopted a decree regulating the practice of assisted natural regeneration. In Chad, the field mission observed that good experience and achievement through supporting lean season banks and the savings and credit banks, under the PSANG and PADER-G loan operations, are continuing and are being leveraged in the ongoing REPER loan operation.
195. **Positive examples of broadening and deepening social cohesion, and thus the resilience of target communities, are found where IFAD has also supported more inclusive political settlements and institutions.**<sup>199</sup> The case of Niger illustrates this. Until recently, the country has managed to avoid internal instability and open conflict. Several factors helped to facilitate the institutional arrangements needed for various groups to coexist and manage violence. The Government has also increasingly built effective and inclusive institutions. With strong international support, including IFAD's, the Government successfully developed a core political platform around the initiative Nigeriens Feed Nigeriens (I3N); this seeks to build resilience through local community projects and, as shown above, can be considered as a social contract with rural producers. IFAD's projects have collaborated with deconcentrated government technical services at the departmental and regional levels, and with local NGOs, communes and, more recently, regional chambers of agriculture and their national networks, to implement its projects with I3N priorities. In this social-contract context, the high quality of

<sup>198</sup> Supervision Report, November 2018.

<sup>199</sup> Previously presented in the concept section.



partnerships established by IFAD with government structures at national and regional levels, and with farmers' organizations and civil society organizations for implementation, has been a significant sustainability factor. An additional example is provided by the CBRADP project in Nigeria in Box 24.

Box 24

**Example of broadening and deepening social cohesion in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, the Government turned the community development associations (CDAs) into a "fourth tier" (below federal, State and local government) of governance, to link and institutionalize their inter-relationships with the local governments. Okwakpam (2010) defined CDAs "as the coming together of people living within a given locality or community with the sole aim of identifying their felt needs and agreeing on the ways, means, and moves towards the realization of such identified needs."<sup>200</sup> In general, by establishing the CDAs as a link of the State with grassroots communities, in the form of a fourth governance tier, the Government innovated a form of strengthening the social contract with them. IFAD-funded CBRADP used the CDAs to allow gains for the target communities to be sustained. With this support, the CDAs demonstrated reasonable confidence in their relations with local government officials and in managing programme assets, and showed leadership in planning and implementing local development.<sup>201</sup>

Source: compiled by the SRE team

196. **Differing opportunities to enhance management of community-level conflicts are found in the different countries.** In Nigeria, CDAs and value chain investments may also hold potential for increasing grassroots' ability to manage community-level conflicts. Although reportedly not a widespread phenomenon, in a VCDP-targeted community visited by the evaluation team (in Nigeria), the formation of a conflict-resolution committee within the existing farmer organization – combined with using the CDA as a platform – was reported to have reduced instances of farmer-herder conflict. Working in synergy with the private sector involved in economic activities in selected value chains was also reported to have led to a decline in tensions between herders and farmers. In Niger, the entry point of projects was different, but still built on community-steered mechanisms such as the water-user groups or the COGES. However, these may not guarantee that investments will be maintained; some COGES became inactive or had very limited budget for maintenance. Decentralization has given producers and their organizations a position of responsibility and improved their access to advisory services from government structures.<sup>202</sup> This has allowed recent IFAD projects to more effectively address pastoralists' needs in the pastoral law and the G5 Sahel Strategy for Development and Security.
197. **Experiences suggest that a "social engineering" approach contributes to increasing the likelihood of sustainability of projects' achievements. This is through strengthening the engagement of rural producers and building bonding, bridging and linking social capitals.** Nigeria has a decentralized federal system of government comprising a federal capital territory, 36 states and 774 local government areas. These areas are unable to generate sufficient revenue to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. In many instances, this creates a gap of service delivery at grassroots level. To fill this gap, as already mentioned, the IFAD-

<sup>200</sup> Okwakpam N. 2010. Analysis of the Activities of Community Development Associations in Rural Transformation in Emohua Town, Nigeria. *International Journal of Rural Studies (IJRS)* 17(1). <http://www.vri-online.org.uk/ijrs/April2010/community-development-associations.pdf>.

<sup>201</sup> IOE. 2016. *Community-Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme. Project Performance Assessment*. <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/39731335/Nigeria%20CBARDP%20PPA%20-%20full%20report%20for%20web.pdf/b2c60d57-eb63-4b46-8889-6ed3ac1ed133>.

<sup>202</sup> The examples can be found in IOE's 2021 CSPE, which reports that IFAD has introduced development approaches into the Niger Country Programme, with the potential to ensure the sustainability of results, such as the economic-development poles approach and the social-engineering approach. The economic-development poles approach, first used by PASADEM, was the basis for the formulation of PRoDAF. The interventions are carried out in synergy and proceed from social engineering (participation, organization, and involvement of local actors from planning to the management and sustainable use of infrastructure) and civil engineering (studies, control and construction of infrastructure).

funded CBARDP established CDAs as a “fourth tier” of government, through a process of systematic sensitization and group formation across 207 selected village areas. As shown above, the CDAs fill a gap in certain aspects of the social contract between the State and the citizens in the targeted areas.<sup>203</sup>

198. **However, social-engineering approaches cannot guarantee a full success for the investments’ sustainability.** For instance, in Mauritania, the oasis project promoted local participatory organizations at oasis level, which still exist today and are able to put claims towards the State and many donors for their development. On the other hand, the evaluation field visit observed first-hand that many investments were no longer operational due to an inability to solve minor maintenance issues.
199. **Insecurity appears to be a main threat to the sustainability of IFAD-supported project results, in terms of infrastructure and consultation frameworks to facilitate cross-border trade of agricultural and agropastoral products.** For example, Niger has been affected by the violent extremism of Boko Haram, affecting cross-border trade of agropastoral products. Particularly threatened is the sustainability of the results of ProDAF and ProDAF-Diffa in supporting cross-border trade in agropastoral products. With ProDAF-Diffa, local consultation frameworks have been established to increase the value and volume of cross-border trade of agropastoral products, by reducing barriers and strengthening the capacities of actors between Niger and Nigeria.<sup>204</sup> The implementation of those activities has been facing challenges such as the borders closure by Nigeria, the COVID-19 pandemic and the prevailing insecurity in interventions areas. Since 2017, the insecurity situation has spread to Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, which have borders with Mali, then the south of the region of Tillabéri with the deterioration of the situation in Burkina Faso since 2018. Since the beginning of 2019, the situation has been deteriorating also in the Maradi region, bordering Nigeria.

#### **Summary on sustainability**

200. **Albeit with the little evidence found, findings confirm that sustainable results can be achieved in the G5+1 fragile situations; this is by strengthening social contracts through CBOs and enhancing their capability to deliver and follow up achievements of IFAD-supported projects, as well as ensuring a greater social cohesion within communities.** Enabling the strengthening of the social contract between the State and rural producers can increase the likelihood of sociopolitical sustainability of benefits, as far as fragility drivers related to public institutions and provision of services are concerned. This outlines once more the pivotal role of CBOs in such contexts, as also highlighted by lessons learned by other development partners. Other lessons learned pertaining to successful conditions relate to inclusiveness in the management of natural resources, and deepening of social cohesion.

### **C. Scaling up**

201. Scaling up is when results achieved through IFAD’s support are either adopted or taken to scale by other partners (bi- or multilaterals) or the private sector, or incorporated into a government’s national policy framework (from practice to a policy). Review of design documents reveals that scaling up is not reflected in the theories of change of programmes and projects. Here, the SRE is answering the key question related to the extent to which achievements and/or results have been upscaled in these fragile contexts, and lessons learned that are relevant to IFAD’s future engagement in this subregion.
202. **Evidence confirms that scaling up of results has been very limited with governments.**<sup>205</sup> Good examples are found in Nigeria and Niger. From the four

<sup>203</sup> CASP also followed the same approach in its target areas. By filling the gap in service provision at grassroots levels, the CDAs enhanced the likelihood of sustainability.

<sup>204</sup> In the Diffa-Zinder-Jigawa / Daura-Kano and Diffa-Borno-Yobé corridor areas. An agreement was signed with the Mixed Nigerian-Nigerian Cooperation Commission.

<sup>205</sup> The TE. 2021. Assessed IFAD scaling-up results limited, due to difficulty in securing sufficient resources and/or mainstreaming the work within national budgets.

CSPEs and key informant interviews, the clearest example of scaling up has occurred in Nigeria but is of limited extent. In Nigeria, the 2016 CPE shows scaling up of the CDD approach, with State legislation and funding for replication in Sokoto, Kebbi and Katsina states. IFAD's follow-up programme, CASP, to CBARDP, is intended to replicate the CDD approach to formulate and implement their plans effectively towards achieving the goals of providing services to respective local communities. The field visit also found that the state government has used the IFAD VCDP model and adopted a value-chain approach to three major crops, while in Katsina state the mission observed that a university had adapted the energy-saving stove introduced by IFAD-CASP, with the support of the State's environment ministry, because it reduced wood consumption and was demanded by the community. The 2016 CBARDP PPE stated that Kebbi state government had adopted the pioneering CBARDP approach to rural development and expanded interventions to more than five local governments – 100 per cent government-funded. One more example is given in Box 25 below.

Box 25

**Example of a scaling-up case in Niger**

Through its field results, PASADEM has supported national rural-development strategies to improve food and nutritional security. It envisaged coordination with other sectors and partners working in the field of nutrition. This was reinforced with the 2012 COSOP, which saw an increased effort from the Government of Niger and IFAD to initiate a transition towards a "programme approach" which promotes scaling up, in particular through greater alignment on the I3N. PASADEM notably envisaged coordination with other sectors and partners working in the field of nutrition. With regard to the Government of Niger's I3Ns, the 2020 CSPE questioned whether scaling up of agricultural intensification through farmer field schools, and the sale points of agricultural inputs and improved seeds, was really taking place. It found instead that IFAD was called upon to provide funding to enlarge the size of interventions. PASADEM also inspired the I3N for its second five-year action plan (2016-2020); this concerned the integration of development sectors and the reduction of vulnerability to food and nutritional insecurity as its focus areas, while ProDAF is considered fully aligned with the initiative.

Source: compiled by the SRE team

203. **Experience suggests that supporting the governments in defining and implementing strategies for scaling up is essential in the G5+1.** The case of Niger provides a good example of IFAD's support to a government for scaling up, from practices to policy.<sup>206</sup> In Mali, PAPAM (2011-2018) was designed for policy engagement and scaling up, both horizontally and vertically. Its coordination unit was embedded in the Ministry of Agriculture, and it pursued a sector-wide approach. The idea was that each funding partner (EU, IFAD, WB) would care for those activities they respectively supported, but learn from each other. However, this did not fully work out because of the following barriers: i) the political crisis that started during the implementation of the project; ii) the lack of experience of the government-led central coordination unit; iii) the withdrawal of a large part of the European Union (EU) funds as a result of these challenges; and iv) poor communication and coordination between the funding partners.<sup>207</sup>
204. **There is more evidence of scaling up through other development partners, but IFAD's monitoring systems rarely picked these up.** The evaluation field missions observed several examples of scaling up in Chad, presented in Box 26,

<sup>206</sup> The 2021 CSPE reported that PASADEM supported national strategies to improve nutritional security and called for coordination with other sectors and partners working in the area of nutrition. PRECIS calls for consultations with the Government, development partners and other stakeholders on rural-finance policies and support for youth agropastoral entrepreneurship.

<sup>207</sup> IOE. 2012. A detailed account of this is provided in IOE. 2012. *Mali Case Study- Mali - Evaluation of IFAD Support to Smallholders' Adaptation to Climate Change*. By design, PAPAM was set up for both policy engagement and scaling up. However, this did not fully play out as planned, due to the obstacles described here. With this new situation, IFAD made several modifications to the project, including the reduction of the intervention areas, focusing on the South and lowering the targets.

largely due to the uptake of IFAD-supported project experiences with government programmes supported by other development partners.

Box 26

**Examples of scaling up implemented in Chad with partners**

- The “make do” and “do with” approach for the implementation of projects and programmes that largely involve partners' services, the mobilization of water resources for the mobility of pastoralists, and the consultation by local actors around natural resources that were subsequently replicated by WB, AfDB, IDB, AFD, EU and Swiss Cooperation;
- Innovative techniques for agricultural production (soil bunds, spreading threshold, market-gardening sites with boreholes equipped with a solar system), the construction of tracks by users, lean season cereal banks and cereal storage stores that are now recommended by the EU Food and Nutritional Security Programme in the Guéra area for the implementation of the food and nutritional security component;
- The production of improved seeds by OXFAM, AURA CARITAS;
- Market-gardening sites with boreholes and solar equipment, farmer field schools and the making of boards for vegetable production are replicated by AURA France and the Jean Paul II Foundation, to support beneficiaries in the areas of Dababa, Abtouyou and Barh Signaka;
- UCEC-G funds solicited by PROMOFIT under BID financing for Islamic loans (MOURABA or Buy-Sell); and the auxiliary women approach for animal health and breeding centres is replicated by OXFAM with funding from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and AURA France etc.

Source: SRE field data collected

205. **The limitation of scaling-up results is linked to IFAD-supported KM and/or policy-engagement activities in the G5+1, which were mixed.** As indicated above, examples of scaling up were identified in field visits that were not identified in IFAD's own documentation or previous evaluations. In Burkina Faso, the 2019 CSPE report flags that project completion reports generally provide little or no information on efforts to scale up innovations, whether internal or external to the projects. The CSPE also observed that usually replication occurs from one IFAD project to another, mentioning as an illustration that PDRD took into account the water and soil conservation/soil protection and restoration (CES/DRS) practices developed within the framework of other programmes to replicate them. The Niger 2021 CSPE mentions the fact that innovations were introduced, but not always formalized and well capitalized to enable them to be shared and to influence public policies, so their potential remains underutilized.

**Summary on scaling-up results**

206. **As for sustainability, findings on scaling-up results are mixed in the G5+1 contexts.** While more examples of scaling-up results were found with development partners (in general), with governments, success cases were limited, and this can be justified by the weakness of State institutions in those fragile contexts. It appears essential to support governments in defining and implementing a strategy for upscaling successful experiences in such situations.

**Key points**

**Efficiency**

- Efficiency ratings during the evaluation period indicate that efficiency in loan operations in the G5+1 contexts was actually higher than for WCA as a whole, which is surprising due to preconceptions on efficiency gains in fragile situations.
- However, some efficiency indicators have not been better, in relation to first disbursement and rates, delays in implementation and management costs.
- Sustaining cofinancing is critical for IFAD-supported operations in the G5+1 countries, but there has been a decreasing trend over the evaluated period, which is being reversed from IFAD11. The most reliable cofinancers are GEF and GCF.

- Variation between the capacities of governmental institutions to ensure an adequate fulfilment of PMU role affects efficiency in those contexts.
- Close follow-up by IFAD country teams, and strong support to loan-operation teams, are required in those fragile situations.
- The hub model is not favourable for agility in responding to new challenges.
- Adjustments during supervision missions and at midterm contribute to improving effectiveness and efficiency overall; however, adjustments should be enabled at all times in the fragile situation of the G5+1.

### **Sustainability**

- The 2016 IFAD strategy on fragile situations implicitly mentions the strengthening of social contracts as essential for achieving sustainability in such contexts.
- Processes supporting both equity and inclusiveness in the management of natural resources, as well as strengthening the effectiveness of resource-user associations, increase the likelihood of sustainability of results.
- Experiences corroborate that social engineering (*ingénierie sociale*) contributes to increasing the likelihood of sustainability of projects' achievements.
- Sustainability of results in terms of cross-border trade of agricultural and agropastoral products has been threatened by the security situation, which has deteriorated over several years.

### **Scaling up**

- Scaling-up results with governments have been very limited, with few good examples found in Nigeria and Niger.
- There is evidence of scaling-up through other development partners, but IFAD's monitoring systems rarely seem to pick these up.
- Supporting governments in defining and implementing strategy for scaling up is essential in the G5+1.
- Mixed scaling-up results achieved in the G5+1 contexts reflect weaknesses in terms of KM and policy-engagement activities.

## VII. Conclusions and recommendations

### A. Conclusions

207. **Contexts in the Sahel subregion are becoming more and more fragile.** All the G5+1 countries were classified as fragile at some point, by OECD and/or WB, over the reviewed period 2010-2020; also, the evolution in metrics for classification has been a significant reason for countries getting in and out of the list of those in fragile situations. The five categories of fragility drivers, identified in the evaluation analytical framework, were well present in those contexts, but with variability between and within countries. These include: (i) high poverty levels (including youth unemployment, food and nutrition insecurity); (ii) social inequality and exclusion; (iii) degradation of natural resources and high vulnerability to climate change; (iv) institutional weaknesses and poor governance; and (v) insecurity due to violent conflicts. The COVID-19 pandemic also appeared since 2020, to exacerbate the situations. Several of these problems are on a worsening trend, in particular the level of conflict, as clearly described by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.<sup>208</sup> In such situations, it will be increasingly difficult for IFAD operations to avoid conflict-affected areas in the G5+1 subregion.
208. Building resilience, which ultimately is the solution to fragility, is critical in the G5+1 contexts. Reviewed IFAD country strategies, programmes and projects have all increasingly prioritized resilience in their design. All COSOPs and portfolio projects included the explicit intention of working to address rural poverty and its root causes (within IFAD's mandate), and enabling rural transformation in intervention areas. IFAD's engagement within the subregion has been relevant in addressing national agricultural priorities identified by governments. Programmes and projects developed after 2015 have explicitly put a core focus on building resilience, aligned with the 2016 IFAD strategy for engagement in countries with fragile situations. They have responded adequately to rural-development challenges identified in the intervention areas, and achieved positive short to long-term results, which contributed to addressing some fragility drivers mainly pertaining to economics/poverty, natural resources/climate change and social exclusion (especially gender inequality). Drivers of fragility in relation to weak State institutions (including weak governance and social contracts) and violent conflict have been managed as risks to be mitigated, rather than issues that operations can directly contribute to addressing.
209. IFAD's support contributed to change in rural settings in terms of economic opportunities, NRM and adaptation to climate change. This was instrumental in enhancing the resilience of beneficiaries (individuals, groups and communities) by building their absorptive, adaptive and ongoing transformative capacities. The SRE identified key lessons. In relation to food security, effective community food storage systems have contributed to building absorptive capacities of farmers when the delivery is ensured by FOs – which benefit from public and private actors' support – and promoted along the emergency and development nexus. In terms of adaptation to climate change, strategies were successful when effective changes in cropping and/or husbandry practices were coupled with support for diversification of livelihoods (especially with off-farm activities). This entailed integration of ecological and socio-economic perspectives, enabling the strengthening of absorptive and adaptive capacities. Regarding NRM, pivotal investments in the restoration and protection of environmental assets were effective when combined with cash-for-asset schemes, implemented in partnership with WFP for instance, which provided incentives for labor-intensive activities to restore land and vegetation. Findings show that in areas subject to repeated shocks and stresses, IFAD's engagement needs to be long term and based on building local capacity; this can be done through simple actions that can progressively become complex, but only when local capacity grows. In addition, sustainable management of fragile grazing land is possible in arid and semi-arid areas, when key actors are fully

<sup>208</sup> <https://acleddata.com/2021/06/17/sahel-2021-communal-wars-broken-ceasefires-and-shifting-frontlines/>



engaged. Nevertheless, IFAD's support to pastoralists has been modest and limited in most cases to developing transhumance corridors.

210. Women and youth, who are critical actors in fragile situations, have been supported through inclusive value-chain development activities; but achievements were moderate in terms of tackling context-specific factors underpinning their greater vulnerability. Findings confirm that value-chain development interventions adequately targeted women and youths through the choice of products and by setting quotas of inclusion. They were beneficial in improving human and social capital as well as providing economic opportunities. These contributed to strengthening absorptive and adaptive capacities of women and youth. However, those benefits were moderate in terms of amplitude and stability, because context-specific issues leading to their greater vulnerability and fragility could not be properly identified and addressed. In fact, in such contexts where sociocultural aspects are prominent, women still lack a collective voice, which is key to preventing drawbacks in times of insecurity, conflicts and norms questioning their autonomy. Regarding youth, their prioritization as a target group for IFAD is relatively recent and, given the complexity of contexts and the limited availability of analytical results, it is too early to draw lessons on what works and under which specific contexts.
211. Strengthening social cohesion using existing endogenous mechanisms was effective for NRM; additionally, promoting strong rural institutions (FOs and CBOs) is critical to building resilience and sustaining achievements in such contexts. Several lessons were identified. Nurturing local consultation mechanisms for NRM, as well as local approaches for inclusive land rights, has been shown to be effective in ensuring social cohesion and confidence within and between communities (in building bonding and bridging capital), especially when regulations or laws backed them up. Promoting strong FOs and CBOs (including resource users' associations) and their apex organizations is pivotal for effective resilience-building strategies in rural communities; this is because they can ensure the provision of essential social and economic support and services, in particular in terms of value-chain development activities, and strengthen the social contract. CBOs can also contribute to inclusiveness in the management of natural resources and play a crucial role for the sustainability of investments in fragile contexts. Nevertheless, to reach this performance level in such situations, FOs and CBOs require a long period of support (through gradual and successive stages), before becoming effectively functional and viable.
212. **These positive lessons on FOs and CBOs have not been used to address pastoralist-related issues.** A gap identified by the SRE has been not to build on CBOs – which include pastoralist groups/organizations – in order to improve endogenous mechanisms to manage at-scale pastoral-related issues (e.g. transhumance) that trigger increasingly social conflicts across the subregion. The SRE also found no indication that governments are taking actions to scale up pilot results demonstrated by few IFAD projects (e.g. in Chad and Mauritania).
213. In its operations in the G5+1 fragile contexts, IFAD's engagement has not adequately reflected specificities of working in such contexts. Simplicity is a key feature that is consistently highlighted while working in fragile situation (e.g. by the IFAD 2016 strategy and its operational programme). The SRE found limited evidence (only in Chad) of this being applied explicitly in the design of projects and their delivery; on the contrary, complexity of implementation arrangements was flagged in some cases (Burkina Faso and Mali). The SRE also found that experience was very limited in conducting comprehensive fragility analyses, required in such contexts to understand the root causes of fragility (as mentioned in the 2018 COSOP guidance and emphasized in lessons learned from other development partners). This raises three issues. First, how to perform such holistic analyses when operational COSOP guidelines suggest a very simple approach, neither including the concept of fragility drivers nor the fact that fragility emerges from the interaction between drivers as well as the linkage between fragility and resilience. Second, the



use of fragility-analyses results to develop appropriate responses that effectively contribute to addressing fragility root causes, as evidence has shown a lack of clarity on how existing contextual analyses (in the design documents) contributed to identifying fragility-tackling actions. Third, the availability of adequate resources (funds and expertise) to perform such analyses; the insufficiency of skills within IFAD country teams having been mentioned consistently by stakeholders (internal and external).<sup>209</sup>

214. Finally, due to the absence of a regional strategy, findings confirm the limitation of COSOPs as a tool for addressing fragility aspects with a regional dimension, as observed in the subregion (e.g. insecurity, transboundary trades, transhumance, insecurity etc.).
215. **Notwithstanding performance achieved, IFAD's business model is better suited to delivering in non-fragile situations than in the G5+1 contexts featured by increasing fragility issues and medium-intensity conflicts.** IFAD's financing model (in terms of instruments and implementation procedures) did allow country programmes to respond effectively to rural-development challenges (rural economic poverty, food insecurity, social inequality, degradation of natural resources and climate change burdens). Findings confirm that IFAD loan-financing procedures were suitable to responding (in the past) to these issues in the subregion when the contexts were of low fragility level. IFAD grants (national and regional windows) have demonstrated some adaptability and flexibility, but have been relatively small in size and rarely well-linked to the loan portfolio. ASAP grants and international cofunding (especially from GCF and GEF) have been instrumental in the G5+1 contexts, and need to be sustained.
216. Regarding loan-financed supports, procedures take a relatively long time to make change – when this is needed if circumstances change – in terms of acute shocks due to weather or environmental conditions, economic crisis or conflict. On the other hand, IFAD showed adaptive capacity with new instruments such as RPSF and FIPS. However, the non-residence of most IFAD country directors (5/6) over the reviewed period has contributed to circumscribing the agility and swiftness of IFAD's responses.
217. **Learning was reflected across the programmes, but mainly for designing and managing operations within the lending portfolio. A gap has been not using non-lending activities to improve IFAD's engagement in such fragile situations.** Evidence confirms that portfolio projects were able to identify lessons, while operations were deployed successively in the same geographical area for a long period (projects with successive phases); this was helpful for better addressing challenges under some fragility drivers. Country teams also learned how to address delays in launching projects and slow disbursement rates. More broadly, the SRE identified a gap in linking lending and non-lending operations for improving IFAD engagement in the G5+1 contexts. Indeed, regarding KM, there was no learning documentation on how IFAD-supported interventions contributed to addressing holistically key fragility drivers and to building resilience. With policy engagement, no evidence of policy brief or paper and policy action on the fragility theme was found by the SRE. Among explanatory factors of these gaps, there are the M&E systems, which were found to be weak in measuring outcome and impact results, as well as in generating lessons. Moreover, while strategic and operational partnerships are critical in those situations, the SRE found little evidence of these; the main explanation of this was the limited or non-presence of IFAD senior programme staff in several countries, limiting coordination (joint planning and implementation) with others.

<sup>209</sup> Such analyses also needs to focus on subnational levels, where there is increasing availability of GIS data. See: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/geospatial-tools-and-applications-for-climate-investments>

218. **Overall, the SRE found the SD3C programme relevant to filling several gaps identified, as well as to consolidating positive lessons identified,** for a greater performance of IFAD's support in the G5+1 fragile contexts.

## **B. Recommendations**

219. The recommendations below relate to main conclusions presented above, with the purpose of improving IFAD-WCA engagement in the fragile Sahelian context. Some findings/lessons call for change at IFAD corporate level, but the SRE made recommendations for which actions can be undertaken at WCA regional level.<sup>210</sup>
220. **Recommendation 1. Develop a comprehensive resilience framework for the subregion or region, to guide assessments, designs and implementation of operations (at field, national and regional levels).** The framework should build on existing guiding documents and on past IFAD experiences to guide holistic analyses, in order to: (i) understand the various drivers of fragility and root causes; (ii) develop sound ToCs that help in identifying pathways to tackling the fragility drivers identified, including those of a transboundary nature; (iii) design interventions that are simple but effective along the nexus resilience and rural transformation; and (iv) identify strategic and operational partnerships for engagement. Given the transboundary nature of many of these issues, IFAD should consider piloting partnership frameworks that extend across national borders and build on experience from the ongoing pilot for regional operations. Sources of funding (available and potential) should be analytically presented to ensure a proper mix of financial instruments that support resilience-building interventions in those contexts.
221. **Recommendation 2. Use the opportunity of IFAD decentralization 2.0 to improve the capabilities of country teams, interactions and agility, for effective delivery in the G5+1 fragile contexts.** This entails strengthening the technical capacities of country teams' members (capacity building), to adequately support operations in those situations; identifying key players to partner with for specific fragility aspects; increasing interactions for planning and implementation of joint actions, taking into account the comparative advantage of each organization; and defining appropriate but simple designs.
222. **Recommendation 3. Revisit approaches for value-chain development support within the subregion, to further improve inclusiveness, and to build on community-driven approaches in highly fragile areas.** This requires, on the one hand, improving the targeting of women and youth and developing appropriate support packages (including digital solutions, access to market, climate-smart agriculture) that take into account their specific conditions and respond to their expectations. On the other hand, it requires applying community-driven approaches that involve marginalized groups, for better management of natural resources (including rangelands), adaptation to climate change and prevention of conflicts over natural resources. A specific focus should be to understand pastoralism issues in order to find ways to promote positive interactions between agricultural and pastoral production systems.
223. **Recommendation 4. Further promote the resilience of rural communities through support to POs/FOs and CBOs, to effectively deliver services and strengthen their capacity to engage in policy dialogue on topics related to them.** This entails capitalizing on past IFAD achievements with POs/FOs and their apex bodies; it should include pastoralist organizations, through long-term engagement for their effective contribution to building the resilience of their members, especially in the most fragile areas. Support to women's organizations should be increased and tailored to each context, to address progressively their

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<sup>210</sup> IFAD established in 2021 a Cross-Departmental Working Group on IFAD's interventions in Conflict-Affected Situations, to review how IFAD current business system (of strategic, policy and operational frameworks) is adequate and adaptable to remain engaged in conflict-affected situations. Main issues addressed are also valid for fragile situations. Comprehensive recommendations were made in the final report that provide IFAD Management with practical, prioritized and costed options to improve its institutional approach (including global engagement, financing, delivery modalities and supervision, human resources and field security) and impact in those contexts.

specific fragility root causes, and to raise sustainably their leadership profile, voice, and social and economic status.

224. **Recommendation 5. Organize greater support to country teams for greater effectiveness of non-lending operations in those contexts.** This entails increasing the provision of technical backstopping (in terms of missions, learning events, studies and policy consultations) for better engagement with government partners on specific resilience issues (e.g. exclusion, social contract, pastoralism and transhumance), in partnership with other actors both national and international.

DRAFT

## Evaluation criteria and definition

Criteria	Definition **
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies. It also entails an assessment of project design and coherence in achieving its objectives. An assessment should also be made of whether objectives and design address inequality, for example, by assessing the relevance of targeting strategies adopted.
Coherence***	The compatibility of the country strategy and programme with corporate policies as well as interventions by other actors. Internal coherence refers to synergies and interlinkages between key elements of the country strategy and programme. External coherence refers to consistency of the country strategy and programme with other development partners, including complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Rural poverty impact	Impact is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
Sustainability of benefits	The likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life.
<b>Other performance criteria</b>	
Gender equality and women's empowerment	The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment, for example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making; work load balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods.
Innovation	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction.
Scaling up	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have been (or are likely to be) scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.
Environment and natural resources management	The extent to which IFAD development interventions contribute to resilient livelihoods and ecosystems. The focus is on the use and management of the natural environment, including natural resources defined as raw materials used for socio-economic and cultural purposes, and ecosystems and biodiversity - with the goods and services they provide.
Adaptation to climate change	The contribution of the project to reducing the negative impacts of climate change through dedicated adaptation or risk reduction measures.

\* As IOE is piloting a new CSPE structure in 2021, this information is subject to change.

\*\* With the exception of "Coherence", these definitions build on the OECD-DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management; the Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation agreed with the Evaluation Committee in September 2003; the first edition of the Evaluation Manual discussed with the Evaluation Committee in December 2008; and further discussions with the Evaluation Committee in November 2010 on IOE's evaluation criteria and key questions.

\*\*\* Current working definition of "Coherence" in IOE based on the OECD-DAC Revised Evaluation Criteria, December 2019

## SRE Evaluation framework

<i>Evaluation key questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Source of data / information</i>	<i>Type of analysis</i>
<b>Relevance:</b> - To what extent have the design of country strategies, programmes and projects been relevant, taking into account fragility drivers and the principles of working in fragile situations? - How adequate and adaptive have intervention approaches and elements been, for a delivery in the sub-regional contexts featured by economic, natural, social, institutional and security constraints?	1) To what extent did COSOPs, programmes and projects incorporate a sound analysis of fragility drivers, for improving the population resilience and reduce risks of conflicts? 2) How were COSOPs relevant in light of fragility issues and risks for improving the population resilience? 3) To what extent did IFAD's Interventions meet the needs of the target communities despite the fragility constraints? 4) How were the designs of projects and programmes (including grants and other initiatives) relevant and adaptive in light of fragility drivers? 6) How adequate are the IFAD's tools, and approaches in delivering programme activities given the fragile contexts, including transboundary issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COSOP documents</li> <li>• Programme design documents.</li> <li>• Key Informant Interviews with Country teams; hub teams (present and past);</li> <li>• Interviews with governments actors</li> <li>• Interviews with RBAs players, regional networks of stakeholder organisations; local institutions; direct individual beneficiaries.</li> <li>• IOE reports</li> <li>• Surveys (by SRE team)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis</li> <li>• Mapping</li> <li>• Frequency tables</li> <li>• Categorisation</li> <li>• Success stories</li> </ul>
<b>Coherence:</b> - How has IFAD's engagement (strategies and operations) assumed internal coherence, and had similar or complementary developmental purposes, in order to contribute mitigating fragility constraints?	1) To what extent was IFAD's country programme support internally coherent and did this enhance the ability to address the challenges of fragile situations? 2) To what extent was IFAD's country programme support coherent with other international partners' interventions and did this enhance the ability to address the challenges of fragile situations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme and project design reports</li> <li>• IOE reports</li> <li>• Key Informant Interviews with Country teams; hub teams (present and past);</li> <li>• Interviews with governments actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis</li> <li>• Framework matrices: summarising and analysing qualitative data in a two-by-two matrix table.</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency:</b> - How efficient has IFAD's support been in those challenging fragile contexts, considering financial instruments and procedures, managerial approaches (including field presence), tools and processes?	1) Based on available evidence to what extent did approaches and tools applied contribute to efficiency in those fragile contexts? And why? 2) What are explanatory factors of positive or negative efficiency performance in those contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes and projects documentation</li> <li>• IOE reports</li> <li>• Key Informant Interviews;</li> <li>• Partners programmes &amp; projects documents (within the sub-region)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross tabulations: using contingency tables of two or more dimensions to indicate the relationship between variables.</li> <li>• Frequency tables</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness:</b> - How effective was IFAD's past support (at national and sub-regional levels) in achieving results that contribute addressing key fragility drivers?	1) Which results (adaptive to transformative capacities) have been achieved considering those fragile contexts? How and why? 2) What are the contributing and constraining factors for achieving results and what are the barriers at national and sub-regional levels? 3) Which approaches have been applied to address them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Monitoring reports, including supervision and completion</li> <li>• Key Informant Interviews with various stakeholders</li> <li>• RIA Impact assessment reports</li> <li>• IOE reports</li> <li>• Surveys ( by SRE team)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis</li> <li>• Mapping and Framework matrices</li> <li>• Frequency tables</li> <li>• Cross tabulations: using contingency tables of two or more dimensions</li> </ul>

<i>Evaluation key questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Source of data / information</i>	<i>Type of analysis</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners programmes &amp; projects documents (within the sub-region)</li> </ul>	
<u>Impact:</u> - Based on evidence, to what extent have past supports contributed to build resilience and fostering rural transformation in these fragile situations?	1) What transformative results can be reported amongst the target communities? And why? 2) How have programmes outcomes contributed to these changes, especially those related? 3) To what extent were outcomes inclusive (e.g. gender equality, youth promotion and pro poor groups)? 4) How did programmes contribute to manage risks of harmful events and their negative outcomes (displacement of population; plunder and destruction)? 5) What are explanatory factors of contribution to impacts in those contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme reports (completion)</li> <li>Impact assessment report</li> <li>Key Informant Interviews</li> <li>IOE reports</li> <li>Partners programmes &amp; projects documents (within the sub-region)</li> <li>Beneficiaries success stories</li> <li>In-depth analysis of cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content extraction</li> <li>Mapping</li> <li>Exploratory Techniques</li> <li>Cross tabulations</li> </ul>
<u>Sustainability and scaling up:</u> - To what extent have achievements and/or results been sustained and up scaled in these fragile contexts, and which lessons are relevant to IFAD's future engagement in this sub-region?	1) How has the continuum of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capabilities been sustained with IFAD's support within the sub-region? 2) To what extent are successful interventions (at all levels) scaled up, in those fragile situations? 4) What are explanatory factors of sustained achievements in those contexts considering both IFAD and partners' experiences? 4) What are explanatory factors of scaling up results in those contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme reports</li> <li>Beneficiaries success stories</li> <li>Key Informant Interviews with various stakeholders</li> <li>IOE reports</li> <li>In-depth analysis of cases</li> <li>Partners' documentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content analysis</li> <li>Exploratory techniques</li> </ul>

## List of projects for the evaluation period

<i>Project name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Total project cost US\$ million</i>	<i>IFAD approved financing US\$ million</i>	<i>Cofinancing US\$ million</i>	<i>Counterpart US\$ million</i>	<i>Beneficiary contribution US\$ million</i>	<i>Executive Board approval</i>	<i>Loan effectiveness</i>	<i>Project completion date</i>	<i>Cooperating institution</i>	<i>Project status</i>
1. PASPRU	Burkina Faso	25 213 000	16 150 000	5 100 000	3 867 000	96 000	30/04/2009	08/12/2010	31/12/2016	IFAD	Completed
2. Neer-Tamba Project	Burkina Faso	117 452 000	80 140 000	7 269 000	24 134 000	5 909 000	13/12/2012	30/08/2013	30/09/2022	IFAD	Ongoing
3. PAPFA	Burkina Faso	71 700 000	38 000 000	20 000 000	6 400 000	7 300 000	11/12/2017	15/03/2018	31/03/2024	IFAD	Ongoing
4. PAFA-4R	Burkina Faso	72 052 000	52 290 000		12 000 000	7 762 000	12/09/2019	13/03/2020	30/06/2026	IFAD	Ongoing
5. PROHYPA	Chad	22 590 000	19 500 000		2 510 000	580 000	15/09/2009	26/01/2010	31/03/2015	IFAD	Completed
6. PADER-G	Chad	20 119 000	17 401 000		2 529 000	189 000	15/12/2010	18/10/2011	31/12/2016	IFAD	Completed
7. PARSAT	Chad	36 234 000	17 200 000	12 308 000	6 107 000	619 000	01/12/2014	17/02/2015	31/03/2022	IFAD	Ongoing
8. RePER	Chad	72 804 000	60 896 000		8 882 000	3 026 000	13/09/2018	28/02/2019	31/03/2025	IFAD	Ongoing
9. Rural Microfinance Programme	Mali	38 564 000	25 045 000	9 259 000	3 666 000	594 000	30/04/2009	21/07/2010	30/09/2018	IFAD	Completed
10. PAPAM	Mali	171 075 000	41 935 000	97 600 000	23 700 000	7 840 000	16/09/2010	13/10/2011	31/07/2018	IFAD	Completed
11. FIER	Mali	49 006 000	30 095 000	10 884 000	4 070 000	3 957 000	11/12/2013	20/08/2014	30/09/2022	IFAD	Ongoing
12. INCLUSIF	Mali	103 507 200	43 707 200	53 300 000	4 600 000	1 900 000	17/04/2018	09/11/2018	31/12/2024	IFAD	Ongoing
13. MERIT	Mali	50 611 000	29 821 000	11 390 000	4 873 000	4 527 000	16/10/2019	09/12/2020	31/12/2026	IFAD	Ongoing
14. Oasis Sustainable Dev.	Mauritania	17 562 510	11 407 600		4 894 910	1 260 000	18/12/2003	18/11/2004	30/04/2014	IFAD	Completed
15. ProLPRAF	Mauritania	16 308 000	12 008 000	2 000 000	2 300 000		15/09/2009	19/02/2010	31/03/2016	IFAD	Completed
16. PASK II	Mauritania	38 400 000	27 400 000	3 500 000	5 200 000	2 300 000	15/09/2011	12/06/2012	30/06/2019	IFAD	Completed
17. PRODEFI	Mauritania	45 300 000	15 000 000	23 100 000	5 000 000	2 200 000	03/12/2016	12/01/2017	31/03/2025	IFAD	Ongoing
18. PROGRES	Mauritania	44 000 000	23 700 000	14 000 000	5 300 000	1 000 000	02/06/2020	13/10/2020	31/10/2026	IFAD	Ongoing



19.	PUSADER	Niger	19 360 000	13 000 000	6 360 000		15/12/2010	07/02/2011	31/03/2014	IFAD	Completed	
20.	PASADEM	Niger	35 906 204	22 200 381	6 900 400	5 554 000	1 251 423	13/12/2011	12/03/2012	31/03/2018	IFAD	Completed
21.	RUWANMU	Niger	25 652 400	2 781 100	18 757 400	4 113 900		21/09/2012	19/02/2013	30/06/2018	IFAD	Completed
22.	ProDAF	Niger	27 016 987	18 996 170	4 398 756	2 722 128	899 933	22/04/2015	21/09/2015	30/09/2023	IFAD	Ongoing
23.	ProDAF-Diffa	Niger	25 482 800	12 500 000	10 365 900	2 473 900	143 000	29/09/2018	21/03/2019	31/03/2025	IFAD	Ongoing
24.	PRECIS	Niger	170 905 200	83 380 400	52 002 200	29 930 800	5 591 800	12/09/2019	05/08/2020	30/09/2026	IFAD	Ongoing
25.	VCDP	Nigeria	104 400 000	74 900 000	2 800 000	24 600 000	2 100 000	03/04/2012	14/10/2013	31/12/2024	IFAD	Ongoing
26.	CASP	Nigeria	80 569 029	58 445 338	14 949 000	5 774 691	1 400 000	11/12/2013	25/03/2015	30/09/2021	IFAD	Completed
27.	LIFE-ND	Nigeria	97 934 000	60 000 000	30 000 000	7 934 000		11/12/2017	21/02/2019	31/03/2025	IFAD	Ongoing

## List of grants reviewed

<i>Project/grant name</i>	<i>Grant number</i>	<i>Grant amount US\$</i>	<i>Grant recipient</i>	<i>Approval date</i>	<i>Effective date</i>	<i>Completion date</i>	<i>Focus countries</i>
Smallholder Poultry Development	1000003362	800 000	FAO	30/04/2009	03/09/2009	30/09/2012	Burkina Faso, Mauritania
Enabling Sustainable Land Management, Resilient Pastoral Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction in Africa	1000003612	1 511 000	IUCN	17/12/2009	24/03/2010	31/08/2014	Chad
Parkland Trees and Livelihoods: Adapting to Climate Change in the West African Sahel	1000003831	1 500 000	ICRAF	07/10/2010	06/12/2010	31/12/2013	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger
Strengthening capacities of Farmers' Organisations in relation with IFAD country programs	1000003914	1 550 000	Agricord	05/12/2010	17/02/2011	30/09/2014	Mali, Niger
Building Farmer's income and safety nets while securing local energy supply in West Africa	1000004148	4 300 000	MBSA	13/12/2011	13/01/2012	31/08/2016	Mali
Technical and Capacity Strengthening Support for Country Level Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems (SAKSS) in Selected African Countries	1000004221	9 828 000	IFPRI	07/04/2012	05/06/2012	31/12/2016	Mali
Participatory Microfinance for Africa (PAMIGA)	1000004303	4 400 000	PAMIGA	12/08/2012	01/11/2012	31/12/2015	Mali
Rainwater Harvesting for Food Security; Setting an enabling institutional and policy environment for rainwater harvesting	1000004304	3 613 644	RAIN	12/08/2012	11/10/2012	31/12/2015	Burkina Faso
More Effective and Sustainable Investments in Water for Poverty Reduction	2000000119	2 000 000	IWMI	09/12/2013	14/04/2014	30/06/2018	Mali, Niger
Capacity building in WCA	2000000239	1 896 500	2iE-BurkinaFaso	09/12/2013	21/05/2014	30/09/2018	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania
Humid Tropics	2000000175	2 500 000	IITA	09/12/2013	13/03/2014	31/03/2017	Nigeria
Youth Agribusiness	2000000216	402 500	IITA	17/01/2014	14/03/2014	31/03/2016	Nigeria

Cassava Flour in Bread	2000000289	458 745	IITA	17/01/2014	11/03/2014	30/06/2016	Nigeria
Agribusiness IITA NG KE DRC	2000001099	498 346	IITA	24/08/2015	22/09/2015	30/09/2017	Nigeria
Climate change Large Grant	2000000474	1 510 000	FAO	13/09/2014	22/01/2015	31/03/2019	Mali, Niger
Rural finance support	2000000477	950 000	DID	13/09/2014	08/01/2015	30/09/2018	Mali, Nigeria
ASAP Learning Alliance	2000000517	3 100 000	CIAT	01/12/2014	30/01/2015	31/03/2018	Mali, Niger, Nigeria
Direct Support to FO-Agricord	2000001137	250 000	Agricord	23/11/2015	03/02/2016	31/03/2019	Burkina Faso
Capitalizing on experiences for greater impact rural development	2000001091	1 500 000	CTA	04/12/2015	21/03/2016	31/03/2019	Niger
Improving the articulation between social protection and rural development interventions in developing countries: Lessons from Latin America and Africa	2000001102	1 820 000	Uni_Andes_COL	12/12/2015	01/07/2016	31/12/2020	Mali
Beyond IYFF 2014: Support to National Committees for Family Farming	2000001045	1 650 000	WRF	30/12/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2020	Burkina Faso, Chad
Strengthening capacity for assessing the impact of tenure security measures on IFAD supported and other projects within the SDG framework	2000001310	220 000	UN Habitat	12/08/2016	20/01/2017	31/12/2019	Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger
Rural Youth & Malian Diaspora	2000001291	509 850	ABC	22/09/2016	15/11/2016	15/10/2020	Mali
Pastoralists driven data_CSO	2000001308	450 000	FAO	26/09/2016	03/01/2017	30/09/2019	Chad
Tools for Youth Large Grant	2000001320	2 400 000	PROCASUR	23/12/2017	23/02/2018	30/06/2022	Mali, Nigeria
Leveraging SSTC	2000002380	1 099 750	AGRA	29/11/2018	22/01/2019	31/03/2022	Burkina Faso, Mali
NEPAD	2000002054	1 238 000	NEPAD	22/12/2018	09/10/2019	17/06/2022	Mali
TAF for the ABC Fund	2000001991	3 500 000	Agritererra	30/12/2018	05/07/2019	05/07/2022	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger
Nutritious Water Productivity	2000002864	2 400 000	FAO	29/11/2019	06/02/2020	06/02/2023	Niger
Farm Trac	2000002817	4 499 800	CILSS	18/12/2019	27/04/2020	30/06/2023	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger
ASAP Learning Alliance	2000003388	7 428	CIAT	04/05/2020	04/05/2020	30/06/2020	Mali

Promoting sustainability and resilience of smallholder irrigation impacts in sub-Saharan Africa	2000002828	1 490 000	UNL_DWFI	24/07/2020	18/12/2020	30/04/2024	Niger
Women's land rights initiative	2000003133	2 360 000	CIFOR	28/10/2020			Niger
Rural youth employment Nigeria	2000002860	3 135 000	IITA	11/12/2019	15/06/2020	30/06/2024	Nigeria

## Complementary background and information overview

### Box A1

#### Evolution of OECD criteria

- The 2007 list was assembled by identifying states in the bottom two quintiles of the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) ranking as fragile; it also included non-ranked states such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as well as several states that clustered just above the fourth quintile cut-off.
- From 2008-10, the list was compiled using the bottom two CPIA quintiles, data from the Brookings Index of State Weakness in the Developing World (Rice and Patrick, 2008 and the Carleton University Country Indicators for Foreign Policy Index, 2007). Since 2010, the fragile states list has been produced by combining the Harmonized List of Fragile Situations produced by multilateral development banks including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank, with countries scoring 90 or above on the Fragile Country States Index produced by The Fund for Peace.
- The 2015 States of Fragility presented present five dimensions of fragility that relate directly to post-2015 objectives at the national level: 1. Violence: reduction of violence 2. Justice: access to justice for all 3. Institutions: effective, accountable and inclusive institutions 4. Economic foundations: economic foundations, inclusion and stability 5. Resilience: capacity to prevent and adapt to shocks and disasters. The main goals of this approach are to identify groups of countries – both fragile and non-fragile – that will face similar challenges in making progress on the emerging post-2015 development agenda; to highlight countries facing stress factors that are likely to affect their ability to deliver sustainable development in the coming decades; and to illustrate differences in the geography and context of fragility, as compared to the traditional list of fragile states and economies. The specific approach taken is to disaggregate fragility, by presenting five discrete indices and sets of country rankings. These include peaceful societies, justice for all, and effective and accountable institutions.
- OECD introduced its multidimensional fragility framework in States of Fragility 2016. This framework captures the diversity of those contexts affected by fragility, measuring it on a spectrum of intensity across five dimensions: economic, environmental, political, security and societal. States of Fragility 2020 marks the third iteration of this multidimensional framework. There are 44 indicators across 5 dimensions of fragility. The choice of indicators has been driven by selection criteria in line with the OECD's fragility concept of high risk and low coping capacity.

Table A1

#### Recommendations of 2015 Corporate Level Evaluation of IFAD's Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected States and Situations

Area	Detailed recommendation
Policy and strategy	<p><b>Reconsider the current classification of fragile states.</b> The way forward needs more careful planning than trying to reconcile a coherent corporate strategy with recognition that development effectiveness will require bespoke programming in most countries. A particular problem is in trying to predict where the majority of the poor will live in the future. The MICS synthesis evaluation pointed out contrasting scenarios as to whether most absolute poverty will be in low-income and African states or, as today, mostly in middle-income states. That will depend to a large extent on the levels of growth achieved in those countries. Whilst IFAD's primary focus will continue to be rural poverty, the close interaction between conflict, fragility and poverty means that even if the locus of poverty shifts away from MICs, IFAD is likely to still be working in remote, hard to access locations where pockets of poverty persist. Instead of the current all-encompassing approach take the opposite stance and differentiate clearly among countries. A starting point is those states with weak national-level policy and institutional capacity, as reflected in the low CPIA score, which we have seen is correlated with weak project performance. But the IFI lists exclude middle-income countries and this is where more use could be made of the rural sector performance assessments that IFAD already employs, possibly with some modification, to classify such countries. All other settings would then reflect context specific factors and should draw on data from United Nations and independent sources to discriminate among conflict prone, conflict, post conflict, and transition settings and also include countries at risk from natural disasters. In view of the speed with which context can change, such assessment needs to be more frequent than current COSOP practice.</p> <p><b>Draft a statement that defines a set of principles to guide how IFAD plans to engage with fragile and conflict-affected states and sub-national situations.</b> This is long overdue. It should distinguish clearly between natural and man-made disasters and it should put forward a working definition of fragility that identifies the major drivers of conflict and provide clear distinctions about how to deal with various</p>

fragility dimensions and whether they are connected with proneness to conflict. The principles should also include discussion of how IFAD will respond to specific country needs when fragility and conflict are contained in subnational situations. They should take account of distinct vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters. They should also assess the resilience associated with disaster preparedness and institutional capacities geared to coping abilities. This should link to the 2011 Guidelines for Disaster Early Recovery.

**Change the approach to analysis in the COSOP.** Situational or context analysis is essential and the COSOP is widely considered to be the right instrument. IFAD needs to provide adequate resources, draw more explicitly on analysis done by partner IFIs and United Nations agencies and find a means to update the information more frequently than the current period between COSOPs. One solution would be to prepare a transitional COSOP after three years in all fragile and conflict-affected states and situations. A simpler approach could be to commission a separate working paper from time to time, dealing more specifically with drivers of fragility and conflict. Instead of listing full synopses of pipeline projects in the COSOP, a short menu of possible interventions would bring more flexibility and choice that could be followed up depending on country performance. In many countries, the present poverty focused analysis will be enough and IFAD should therefore focus on enhancing the quality and comprehensiveness of the analysis and strengthening the link between analysis and what it and partners decide it should do. At the other extreme are countries where conflict looms or major conflict has recently been resolved by a peace agreement. In such cases, fragility analyses are often available and other security and development institutions are involved and the challenge for IFAD will be to draw on their analyses and identify its niche as part of multi-donor coalitions. In between is the large number of countries in which aspects of fragility will be found at either national or sub-national level. In these cases, IFAD needs to assess the risks, share them with other partners and manage them while concentrating on its comparative advantage.

#### **Project and programme implementation**

**Expand implementation support in quantity and technical content.** Opportunities exist to strengthen implementation support in several ways. (a) More resources for implementation support: Regional spending on implementation support should be made more transparent and allocated according to country needs so that relative effort can be monitored and managed across the whole portfolio. PTA already plans to increase technical involvement and this is to be welcomed. (b) IFAD country offices and outposting: Explicitly prioritize the establishment of new IFAD country offices and outposting of CPMs in countries affected by fragility and conflict. (c) Strategic partnerships: In fragile states where statebuilding is an objective IFAD could take a more radical approach and expand partnership with IFIs and multilateral agencies that can provide a higher level and broader basis of implementation support. IFAD's policy on supervision still provides for contracted arrangements and these could be used selectively to expand IFAD's reach in countries where IFAD has a small presence but partner IFI's have large country teams. Such an approach is directly compatible with IFAD's core policy of innovative designs leading to scaling up, for which close partnership working is desirable.

#### **Empowerment of staff**

Efforts should be made to introduce specific incentives for staff working in fragile states and conflict-affected situations, including those based in headquarters discharging similar functions. Working in fragile situations should be included as a main criterion for professional development and diversification as well as career advancement within the broader framework of IFAD's performance evaluation system. Greater attention to capacity-building and training needs of staff should also be explicitly promoted, and platforms for exchanging knowledge, good practices and experiences of working in fragile states (across regional divisions) should be introduced.

#### **Results measurement**

**Plan and resource project M&E more selectively.** The persistent problem of weak M&E needs to be reversed. It might help to develop a core competency within PTA. But greater attention needs to be paid to planning for monitoring and evaluation during project design. At present, the approach is one size fits all. But some project interventions are well proven and arguably need little or no evaluation. Others may be innovative and require a counterfactual evaluation design to test their effectiveness. Most projects will fall somewhere between these extremes. All projects should be required to defend their design with proven evidence from earlier phases or other locations that the intervention will work in the planned context. That process leads logically to a decision on the necessary effort for evaluation. Where evidence is lacking, or contexts are very different, or where a project is an acknowledged innovation or pilot, evaluation will need more resources. More selective evaluation designs, supported by grants or partnerships with other donors, would enable resources to be concentrated where they are most necessary for learning.

**Revise IFAD's results measurement framework to include indicators of outcomes related to fragility.** The major gaps are in measurement of women's empowerment and institutional performance. Indicators and means of measurement need to be established in both areas.

Table A2

**RBA conceptual framework for resilience: absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities**

<b>Absorptive capacity</b>	<b>Adaptive capacity</b>	<b>Transformative capacity</b>
The capacity to withstand threats and minimize exposure to shocks and stressors through preventative measures and appropriate coping strategies to avoid permanent, negative impacts.	The capacity to adapt to new options in the face of crisis by making proactive and informed choices about alternative livelihood strategies based on an understanding of changing conditions.	The capacity to transform the set of livelihood choices available through empowerment and growth, including governance mechanisms, policies/regulations, infrastructure, community networks, and formal and informal social protection mechanisms that constitute an enabling environment for systemic change.

Source: FAO, IFAD and WFP (2015). Strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition.

Box A2

**Detailed SRE methodology**

- The SRE applied a mixed-methods approach, combining desk review, interviews of stakeholders, in-depth review of specific field (project) cases. The methodological steps are presented as below. They are not always sequential.
- Desk review of documentation. This was the main source of information. It will be undertaken throughout all the SRE stages, with a high intensity until halfway (at least). It will cover documents related to IFAD country strategies, loan portfolio and grants programmes, IOE evaluations and databases, relevant studies, national strategies, other partners' reports (WFP, FAO, WB and AfDB). Both quantitative and qualitative data will be extracted. Documentation on IFAD non-lending activities (i.e. knowledge management, partnerships, policy influence) and on other special initiatives will also be reviewed. The review will enable generating preliminary trends in attempting to respond to the evaluation questions. Moreover, it will help completing the stakeholders mapping, as well as the identification of key informants at regional, national or field levels. At the end of this stage, the SRE team will prepare internal working papers highlighting preliminary trends and information gaps, as well as suggest field cases to be subject to in-depth review and assessment. The team will therefore define how to fill evidence/information gaps identified.
- Interviews of stakeholders. The SRE team conducted semi-structured interviews with the categories of stakeholders mentioned in Table A3 below. Modalities of engagement previously defined will be applied throughout the evaluation stages, using virtually meetings and/or in-person (when applicable). Responses were cross-checked within respondents and with other sources of information.
- Self-assessment. In parallel to stakeholders' interviews, and aligned with IOE practices, a self-assessment review was organised, in form of a seminar (online), with the participation of relevant IFAD country teams and RBA partners. The aim is to gather perspectives and opinions on some aspects, for instance the transboundary and regional dimensions of IFAD's support in those contexts.
- Electric questionnaire. In addition to the previous data sources, a survey has been carried out online, to capture opinions and views of IFAD partners. The survey results were used to confirm/infirm findings and conclusions.
- Field data gathering. Team members within the countries implemented field visits for data gathering. Direct beneficiaries and representatives of implementing and local institutions working with them were visited and interviewed, in compliance with national rules related to the Covid 19 crisis. The aim was to validate preliminary trends identified through the desk review, as well as to fill information and evidence gaps (to the extent possible).
- Data analysis. Analysis was based on triangulation of evidence and findings from the various sources to develop lessons learned from various experiences analysed, around key assumptions on what, how and why results are likely to be delivered, under contextual constraints. The IFAD learning frame was complemented by lessons from experiences of other partners – IFIs (WB, AfDB) and RBAs (FAO and WFP) – within the sub-region and over the same period (as much as possible).



- Report preparation. Following the field data gathering, the evaluation report was drafted by the SRE team. A workshop was organised with the focal groups of SD3C, to present and discuss emerging findings, as well as areas of recommendations, before sharing the draft report.
- The final report was issued after comments are received from IFAD Management and other SD3C players. The last SRE stage will be the organisation of a learning event. The form, timeframe and modality of this event will be specified toward the end of the SRE.

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Table A3  
**Categories of SRE stakeholders, their potential interest and engagement**

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Interest</i>	<i>Engagement modality</i>
IFAD Management (PMD) Relevant IFAD Country Directors and WCA Staff members	Primary intended users of the SRE findings. Better understanding of explanatory factors of performance in fragile situations. Learning from the evaluation findings. Processing of knowledge for improving current and future operations within the sub-region, especially at a regional scale.	Regular consultations throughout the evaluation process to (1) validate trends and preliminary findings (2) conduct an internal or self-assessment. A learning group, with relevant country directors and others will be established for continuous interactions.
(National or State level) Central government resource persons	Expressing views on Government strategies to strengthen resilience, support rash recovery in post conflict situations in the fragility contexts as well as align cross border interventions, and the contribution of IFAD's support Ability to learn from interventions, replicate them and upscale from practice to policies	Individual interviews for data collection
Managers of IFAD supported projects in the countries (project teams)	Learning from past experiences (on the above); usage of lessons to improve further projects or programmes Expressing views on IFAD's supports and operational procedures to implement them in fragile contexts	Engagement in individual and collective discussions Contribution for purposely selection of cases for in-depth analysis; Feedback on findings Interviews during the SRE process
Beneficiaries (organisations and individuals) – ie regional farmers organisations and networks; cross border traders and transporters, etc.	Expressing views on processes and mechanisms enabling resilience strengthening in their fragile contexts; then on the contribution of IFAD's operations	Interviews for primary data collection Field visits for in-depth analysis of cases where beneficiaries underwent relevant experiences (specific types of fragility and conflicts; successful and unsuccessful)
Intermediate institutions operating in close interactions with beneficiaries (including local government and service providers; NGOs; IFIs; civil society representatives; etc.)	Expressing views on processes and mechanisms enabling resilience strengthening in their fragile contexts; then on the contribution of IFAD's operations Contribution to understand factors for (in)effectiveness and (un)sustainability	Interviews for primary data collection, coupled with beneficiary level investigations.
Other SD3C partners: FAO, WFP, G5 Sahel Secretariat	Secondary intended users of the SRE findings. Learning from past experiences and usage of lessons to improve the programme Expressing views on processes leading to fragility and conflicts and on mechanisms enabling to strengthen resilience in such contexts, based on their own experience (in their organisation) Expressing views on IFAD's supports and the suitability of approaches	Consultative group established at inception and used during the SRE process Feedback and validating findings and lessons to be learnt at regional level
Other partners within the sub-region (e.g. WBs, AfDB UNDP,) and their teams	Expressing views on IFAD's interventions, taking into account context specificities	Interviews as deemed necessary; Contact with relevant staff or resources persons of these organisations

Source: Evaluation team elaboration

Table A4  
**Importance of the agriculture sector for the six countries**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2019</i>
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)	Burkina Faso	23.2	22.6	20.1
	Chad	46.5	50.3	42.5
	Mali	31.7	37.7	37.3
	Mauritania	19.1	20.6	18.6
	Niger	34.7	32.4	37.8
	Nigeria	26.7	20.6	21.9
Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (ILO estimate)	Burkina Faso	52.7	29.7	26.2
	Chad	77.8	75.3	75.0
	Mali	68.9	62.2	62.4
	Mauritania	36.4	32.9	30.8
	Niger	75.4	73.7	72.5
	Nigeria	42.1	36.9	34.9

Sources: World Bank indicators

Table A5  
**Food security situations in the G5+1**

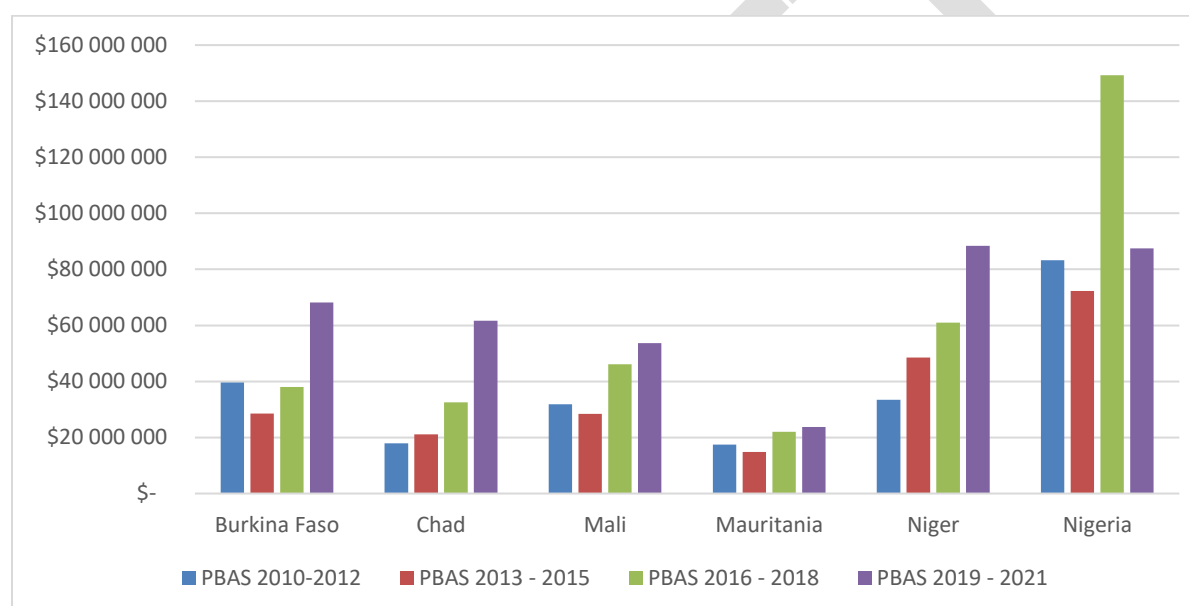
<i>Country</i>	<i>2020 Global Food security index score</i>	<i>2020 Global Food security index rank (Rank/113)</i>	<i>Overall situation of food security over the period 2012 – 2020</i>
Burkina Faso	47.4	88	The value increased from 40.6 to 47.4, well below the average value 60.4 of the 113 countries. Significant difference compared to average value were recorded with respect to Affordability (-20.5) and Quality and Safety (-21.7) components.
Chad	39.4	103	The country experienced a rise passing from a score of 32.4 to 39.4. This improvement was mainly to the significant increase of the "Availability" component that rose from 23.1 in 2012 to 32.2 in 2020.
Mali	52.7	79	The improvement was slight, with the score that went from 49.7 to 52.7. It has to be mentioned the "Availability" component remained around the average for the period.
Mauritania	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Niger	47.6	87	The index increased from 43.2 to 47.6, the increased derived from the "Availability" component that jumped from 35.2 to 48.8.
Nigeria	40.1	100	A decrease from 40.9 to 40.1 was recorded. The , Affordability (-33.0) and Quality and Safety (-26.1) components account for the main gap discrepancy with the average score.

Source: <https://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/> , The Economist Intelligence Unit

Table A6  
Detailed PBAS allocation

Country	PBAS 2010-2012	PBAS 2013 - 2015	PBAS 2016 - 2018	PBAS 2019 - 2021	PBAS total
Burkina Faso	39 575 310	28 495 294	37 999 891	68 155 269	174 225 764
Chad	17 913 423	21 138 603	32 500 000	61 683 313	133 235 339
Mali	31 838 547	28 421 542	46 154 146	53 645 308	160 059 543
Mauritania	17 459 795	14 817 769	22 086 014	23 696 976	78 060 554
Niger	33 399 790	48 560 040	61 024 540	88 387 501	231 371 871
Nigeria	83 203 697	72 230 927	149 200 000	87 465 926	392 100 550
Total	223 390 562	213 664 175	348 964 591	383 034 293	1 169 053 621
WCA total	544 812 425	538 604 761	630 103 454	827 004 994	2 163 881 479

Graph A1  
Evolution of the G5+1 Countries' PBAS allocation



Source: IFAD Oracle BI

Table A7  
SD3C main elements

Element	Details
SD3C components	<p>The SD3C financing includes loans (of highly concessional terms) and grants (under Debt Sustainability Framework, DSF) to countries individually, in the framework of their respective PBAS allocation. A regional large grant, to be implemented by the G5 Sahel Secretariat, is also included in the financing. There is an important co-financing of the Green Climate Fund, aligned with climate change challenges faced by those countries.</p> <p>The first component, related to productivity and production increase, aims at boosting production and productivity in the agricultural sector (crop farming, forestry, livestock and fishery) by climate-resilient practices and technologies in combination with the sustainable management of natural resources. It will strengthen productive assets (increased approximately by 30 per cent at the end) and resilience, as well as human capacity building and peacebuilding. It is complementary to the regional programme submitted by IFAD to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).</p> <p>The second component addresses regional economic integration issues, by contributing to expand (by 10 per cent at the end) the domestic and regional trade. Interventions in this component are intended to strengthen cross-border markets and make border transactions more secure. Activities under the first and second components are implemented at national level.</p> <p>The third component relates to policy dialogue, coordination and management. It uses a regional approach to enable greater institutional support for the programme's implementation.</p>

<i>Element</i>	<i>Details</i>
SD3C Regional Grant	The grant component of the SD3C aims at supporting regional coordination, policy dialogue and knowledge generation, as well as strengthening regional dialogue on issues related to COVID-19, conflict and climate change (3Cs) in the Sahel region. Its objectives are to: (i) promote inclusive policy and social dialogue related to the 3Cs in support of peace and security, and regional integration with the active involvement of producers' organizations; and (ii) support regional planning, management, KM/M&E to ensure harmonization and coherence of the approaches, tools and products adopted by the SD3C. Thus, the grant will play a significant role in view of fragility challenges identified. The recipient is the G5 Sahel Secretariat, which will be reinforced to broaden its influence on policy dialogue on rural and agricultural development.

Source: Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change President's report, 2020

Table A8  
**SD3C financing per country (in euros)**

	<i>IFAD Loan</i>	<i>IFAD DSF</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>Regional grant</i>	<i>Co-financing (GCF)</i>	<i>Financing gap</i>	<i>total</i>
Burkina	1 085 000	-	-	-	-	11 188 000	12 273 000
Chad	875 000	3 505 000	-	-	-	7 011 000	11 391 000
Mali	15 155 000	5 605 000	-	-	-	7 287 000	28 047 000
Mauritania	-	-	-	-	-	10 517 000	10 517 000
Niger	3 200 000	1 185 000	-	-	-	13 146 000	17 531 000
Senegal	5 700 000	-	-	-	-	8 326 000	14 026 000
G5 Sahel Secretariat	-	-	1 710 000	62 600 000	-	-	64 310 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 015 000</b>	<b>10 295 000</b>	<b>1 710 000</b>	<b>62 600 000</b>	<b>57 475 000</b>	<b>158 095 000</b>	

Source: Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change President's report, 2020

Table A9  
**Number of persons interviewed by category of stakeholders**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Non-governmental organizations and associations</i>	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>
Burkina Faso	22	2	-	23
Chad	21	2	1	88
Mali	8	3	2	70
Mauritania	20	-	2	14
Niger	13	-	3	85
Nigeria	38	4	6	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>291</b>

Table A10  
**List of areas visited by country**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Visited areas</i>
Burkina Faso	Dedougou, Gourcy, Kaya, Nouna, Ouahigouya, Tougan,
Chad	Abtouyour, Barth-Signaka, Dababa, Fitri, Guéra
Mali	Ségou , Mopti , Bougouni, Kolondjèba, Sikasso, Kangaba
Mauritania	Adrar, Assaba, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Tagant
Niger	Badaguichiri, Diffa, Guidan Roumdji, Madarounfa, Maradi, Ngourti
Nigeria	Niger, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa

## Additional analytical information to chapters 3 to 6

Table B1  
Review of the COSOPs strategic objectives

Country	Main focus areas and/or themes
Burkina Faso	The 2017 CSN called for the development of agricultural value chains as key-entry points to sustainably increase income and employment opportunities as well as resilience to climate change for rural populations. The actions were confirmed by the 2019 COSOP by adding the focus on the development of rural microenterprises.
Chad	The 2010 COSOP poverty and vulnerability analysis helped to identify the regions to deepen IFAD's intervention based on the number of vulnerable people and agricultural potential. Interventions were aimed at strengthening local people's capacity to sustainably manage soil and water. The 2010 COSOP review and the 2017 CSN confirmed the relevance of those actions, as well as the development of resilient family farming, to ensure food and nutritional security for rural populations. No explicit discussion of whether political/military instability that leading to severe conflict influenced decisions on geographical location of projects.
Mauritania	The 2007 COSOP outlined as the most vulnerable poor person in Mauritania is rural, lives in the southern regions and practices rainfed cultivation. She is vulnerable to drought, insect plagues and desertification. The goal of the IFAD COSOP and was to build inclusive and sustainable institutional systems that are supported through pro-poor investments and policies and relevant innovation and learning engagements. This is to be achieved through the following three strategic objectives: (a) strengthen the institutions of the rural poor using community-driven development approaches; (b) promote sustainable rural financial services; and (c) achieve sustainable agricultural development and food security. The 2018 COSOP confirmed the relevance of these interventions as the specific development objective is the empowerment of poor rural populations and their organizations in relation to the following aspects: i) sustainable access to natural resources and communal amenities; and ii) inclusive value chains. Geographically, priority was given to rural areas in the south of the country, which are the poorest, the most populated and whose agricultural potential is the most promising.
Mali	The 2007 COSOP targeted small agropastoralists, farmers and breeders in the Sahelian belt and the northern regions. These three groups have in common: (i) weak diversification of productive activities making them vulnerable to climatic fluctuations, which are particularly severe in the Sahelian belt and in the north; (ii) localization in isolated areas that have weak economic potential and degraded natural resources; (iii) limited access to basic social services; and (iv) weak levels of organization, which limits their economic outreach. The 2016 CSN aimed at supporting agricultural production resilient to CCs, in response to the increase need of food and nutritional security of poor rural households while taking climate change into account. IFAD's interventions focused on increasing productivity and production through small-scale local irrigation and adaptation to climate change such as agro ecology. With respect to 2020 COSOP, its lines of interventions reflected IFAD's five-change-drivers for the Sahel, namely: creation of jobs, tackling climate change, cross-border operations, addressing conflict and coleadership. Moreover, some specific activities to counter the effects of the fragility were foreseen: (i) Develop and strengthen partnerships with other development agencies with complementary mandates on humanitarian interventions, (ii) Design and implement operations that focuses on the most vulnerable groups such as women and young people while promoting climate smart and resilient economic activities, and (iii) Strengthen Institutional support (with the technical, logistical and financial means) to empower government agencies and local authorities with skills and capacities needed to effectively coordinate, monitor and evaluate the ongoing projects/programmes.
Niger	For the 2006 COSOP, IFAD strategy was articulated around 3 main axes: (i) reduction of vulnerability and strengthening of food security for rural households, (ii) improvement of income and access to markets for target groups and (iii) better access to basic social services for the most vulnerable populations. The actions responded to two of the four key priorities of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: (a) development of productive sectors and job creation, (b) access of the poor to essential social services. After focusing on Maradi region, IFAD entered a phase of expansion in Tahoua and Zinder with the 2013 COSOP. Strategic objectives were formulated as follows: i) intensification and diversification of small-scale production systems; ii) the adaptation of these systems to the effects of climate change (rehabilitation of degraded lands, development of watersheds, etc.); (iii) strengthening of the socio-economic tissue of the community and of rural entities; and iv) participatory targeting.
Nigeria	COSOP 2016 acknowledged that in some states, low counterpart contributions hampered project implementation while in other states, counterpart contributions have been regular. Thus, States/area of intervention were selected by the following key criteria: poverty; tangible commitment and political will to support a joint programme; clear focus on community development and smallholder agriculture; strong track record of public accountability and financial management; and willingness to work with the private sector. Within states, targeting was based on reliable poverty data. Fewer but better-performing states would have been selected to benefit from focused IFAD support.



Table B2  
Available guidance to orient the analysis of fragility drivers

Driver	Existing relevant guidance related to development of:	
	COSOPs	Loan operations
High poverty and related economic situation	<p>SECAP background study – Part 1: Situational analysis and main challenges (socio-economic situation and underlying causes).</p> <p>Reference documents: Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies (May 2019) IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025 Policy on Improving Access to Land and Tenure Security (2008) Rural Finance Policy (2021)</p>	<p>As part of the Integrated Project Risk Matrix of the PDR Project Design Guidelines (2019); Rural Finance Policy (2021)</p>
Social inequality and weak social cohesion	<p>SECAP background study – Part 1: Situational analysis and main challenges (socio-economic situation and underlying causes).</p> <p>Reference documents: Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies (May 2019) Mainstreaming Gender Transformative Approach at IFAD Action Plan (2019-2025) Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy (2012) Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2009) Policy on Improving Access to Land and Tenure Security (2008) Framework for Operational Feedback from Stakeholders (2019) IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021 IFAD Strategy and Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2019-2025 Mainstreaming Nutrition in IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025 Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting (2020)</p>	<p>As part of the SECAP analysis at the project design stage</p> <p>Reference documents: IFAD's Social Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures(SECAP) (2021) Operational Guidelines on Targeting (2019) Policy on Improving Access to Land and Tenure Security (2008); Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2009) IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2012) Environment and Natural Resource Management Policy (2012) Framework for Operational Feedback from Stakeholders (2019) IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021 Mainstreaming Gender-transformative Approaches at IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025, IFAD Strategy and Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2019-2025 Mainstreaming Nutrition in IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025 Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting (2020); How-to-do Note on Free, Prior and Informed Consent</p>
Degradation of natural resources and climate change burdens	<p>SECAP background study.</p> <p>Reference documents: Page 16-19, Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies (May 2019) IFAD Strategy and Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2019-2025 Environment and NRM Policy (2012) Policy on Improving Access to Land and Tenure Security (2008) Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2009)</p>	<p>As part of the SECAP analysis at the project design stage Reference document: IFAD's Social Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures(SECAP) (2021) Policy on Improving Access to Land and Tenure Security (2008) Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2009) IFAD Strategy and Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2019-2025</p>
Erosion of trust in public institutions and weak social contracts	<p>Fragility assessment note. Reference document: Appendix V, Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies (May 2019)</p>	<p>As part of the SECAP analysis at the project design stage Reference document: IFAD's Social Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures(SECAP) (2021) How-to-do Note on Free, Prior and Informed Consent</p>
Greater insecurity and violent conflicts due to extremist groups	<p>Fragility assessment note. Reference document: Appendix V, Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Country Strategies (May 2019)</p>	

Table B3

**Relevance of fragility drivers by country, according to field stakeholders**

Driver	Burkina Faso	Chad	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Nigeria	Sub-region
Poverty leading to asset depletion	3.2	2.8	3.5	3.0	3.0	4.2	3.3
Unemployment and lack of incomes	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.3	4.1	4.0
Food insecurity and malnutrition	4.2	4.3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.9	3.8
Social inequality and exclusion	3.8	2.5	2.0	2.5	1.0	4.1	2.7
Environmental /natural resources degradation	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.7	4.0
Climate/weather disturbance	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.0	3.5	3.7	4.1
Poor availability of services linked to production	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.3	4.0	4.2	3.9
Insecurity and violation of human right	4.3	2.8	3.8	1.5	2.3	3.0	3.0
Violence and civil unrest	1.7		2.8	1.5	0.8	2.9	2.0
All fragility drivers average	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.0	2.8	3.8	3.4

*Appreciation level varies from (0) inexistent to (5) very high*

Table B4

**Reference to internal coherence in COSOPs**

Country	Period COSOPs/CSNs	Statements with linkage to internal coherence
Burkina Faso	CSN 2017-2018	The CSN focuses on consolidating and scaling up the achievements of PAMER, PROFIL and PASPRU and will extend these achievements with new targets, especially young people and women.
	COSOP 2019	The loan portfolio to support government investments consists currently of two ongoing projects, Neer-tamba (2013-2022) and PAPFA (2018–2024). Two new projects will be designed, namely a geographic extension of PAPFA (PAPFA-Extension) in 2019 and a youth and entrepreneurship project.
Chad	CSN 2017-2019	The 2017 CSN called for the adoption of a country program approach for effective management of IFAD's portfolio. This approach would make it possible to invest in the long term both on a thematic and territorial level and to build synergies in the implementation with other technical and financial partners (TFP) in order to harmonize the interventions and maximize the positive impacts. No evidence in documents reviewed on what this meant in practice.
		The actions of PARSAT, by emphasizing the development and resilience of agricultural systems were complementary to those of PADER-G (development of socio-community infrastructures, the structuring and support producer organizations and the development of microfinance instruments in the Guéra region) and PROHYPA (development of communities and pastoral systems in the regions) where PARSAT would intervene.
Mali	CSN 2017-2018	Mali internal coherence is achieved as most of projects are built upon the achievements of the previous ones, enabling both area of support and intervention area coherence.
Mauritania	COSOP 2018-2024	The 2016 CSN described the establishment of the country program management team to support the creation of a program approach. In this context, a joint PASK II / PRODEFI support unit bringing together permanent expertise and ad hoc technical assistance in terms of monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, procurement, internal audit, communication, etc. will be incorporated. The country program will facilitate policy dialogue with the government, particularly on themes relating to: i) inclusive value chains; ii) promotion of local products; and iii) support for inter-professional organizations. In order not to disperse portfolio interventions, after almost 25 years of support in the oases and the government's decision to create an Oasis Development Agency, priority will be given to rural areas located in the south of the country, which correspond to both in the most populated areas, the poorest and with the best agricultural potential

Niger	COSOP 2013-2018	<p>The Maradi Region has been the depository of a significant capital of experience in agricultural and rural development, and IFAD investments in Niger for more than 30 years, which has enabled a long-term contribution to strengthening the resilience of populations.</p> <p>An example is the RUWAMNU which operates on complementarities in terms of productive sector, geographical area, and intervention logic with: (i) other projects financed by IFAD: for the strengthening of municipalities as master structure (IRDAR / PAC2), the targeted productions (PASADEM), market infrastructures (PASADEM but also IRDAR / PAC2 for the tracks) as well as the PPILDA and the PUSADER in the completion phase;</p>
Nigeria	COSOP 2016-2021	<p>IFAD will continue working in rural and peri-urban areas most affected by conflict and fragile ecology. Projects will focus on a smaller number of states where commitment to IFAD projects is high.</p> <p>Projects will continue to include strategies for gender equality and women's empowerment to support women's participation at all levels and in all spheres – public, private and community – and will scale up the GALS methodology and successes from VSCGs</p> <p>Three successful approaches will be scaled up: (i) CDD for planning at the local level; (ii) the enterprise incubator model; and (iii) rural financial inclusion. The pathway towards scaling up will integrate projects, KM and policy engagement</p>

Table B5  
Average values of efficiency indicators

	<i>Burkina Faso</i>	<i>Chad</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Niger</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>
Appraisal costs (USD millions)	71 604 250	37 936 750	82 552 640	32 314 102	50 720 599	94 301 010
Actual costs (USD millions)		20 603 772	71 923 445	17 909 247	24 245 775	
IFAD funding approved (USD millions)	46 645 000	28 749 250	38 278 640	16 003 120	23 280 132	69 431 446
IFAD Disbursement rate (%)	56.9%	93.9%	98.2%	90.2%	97.0%	
Overall Disbursement rate (%)	39.2%	97.0%	79.9%	80.1%	89.8%	
Approval/ Entry into force lag (number of months)	9.4	5.7	11.4	6.2	5.3	16.3
Approval/ First disbursement lag (number of months)	16.0	7.9	18.5	16.0	8.5	47.4
Entry into force/ First disbursement lag (number of months)	6.7	2.2	7.7	9.7	3.2	31.1
Appraisal Programme Management costs (%)	9.88%	16.43%	15.42%	14.98%	14.15%	13.23%
Actual Programme Management costs (%)	37.0%	19.6%	17.75%	28.17%	22.10%	
Estimated number of beneficiaries	231 000	366 833	458 062	134 000	579 626	336 660
Actual number of beneficiaries		222 776	464 919	110 279	344 730	
Estimated cost per beneficiary (USD)	138.8458	127.8	468.7	262.9	54.8	1 400
Actual cost per beneficiary (USD)	651.0	92.9	532.9	184.5	74.9	

	<i>Burkina Faso</i>	<i>Chad</i>	<i>Mali</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Niger</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>
Estimated Internal Rate of Return (%)	18.23%	16.30%	17.30%	14.75%	17.28%	11.87%
Actual Internal Rate of Return (%)	9.78%	15.75%	20.65%	15.97%	21.01%	

## Box B1

**Example of social contract diagnostic as part of the World Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostic for Mauritania**

The World Bank carried out a systematic country diagnostic (SCD) in 2017 for Mauritania to identify key constraints and priority interventions needed for the country to achieve the twin goals of the World Bank Group: i) ending extreme poverty and ii) improving shared prosperity among the poorest forty percent of the population (the bottom 40). The Bank used the findings and conclusions of the SCD to stimulate dialogue with the national authorities and relevant stakeholders.

One of the areas covered by the SCD is fragility. It was found that the underlying fragility stresses associated with Mauritania's delicate and complex social fabric and the environmental challenges of an encroaching coastline and an expanding desert risk undermining the development gains made to the time it was conducted. On environmental fragility, the SCD noted that in a nation that depends so heavily on its natural resource endowments, the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on economic development and on the livelihoods of the poor could be catastrophic, as Mauritania is caught between an expanding desert and an eroding coastline.

On social fragility, the SCD noted that social cohesion in Mauritania is precarious and risks derailing economic and social progress. The difficulties involved in cultivating a strong shared national identity are deeply rooted in ethno-racial divisions, sociopolitical tensions, historical grievances over discriminatory state practices, and the slow pace of integration of marginalized groups excluded from social and economic opportunity. The government addressed these challenges by undertaking concerted efforts to harness the richness of the country's ethnic and cultural diversity and breaking away from the historical legacy of slavery and ethnic stratification.

The SCD further noted that Mauritania has been a bulwark against regional instability, as it shares a long border with Algeria and Mali and suffered numerous attacks from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in 2005–2011, shutting down a small, but promising desert tourism industry. The continued rebellion in Mali has had many negative spillovers, including large numbers of refugees, trade disruptions, and illegal trafficking.

Based on these and other analyses, and the Government's own recognition of the importance of reinforcing national identity as a basis for building a stronger state-society relationship, the SCD concluded that the weak social contract represents a priority cross-cutting sustainability constraint to development in Mauritania. To strengthen the social contract the SCD presented solutions in the areas of national identity, protecting the vulnerable, and enhancing political inclusion. On protecting the vulnerable, it listed the following solutions

- Explore options for positive discrimination in employment, and geographic targeting of public investment, and access to credit
- Improve the targeting and consolidation of the Social Protection System
- Strengthen the skills and youth agenda: develop a steady job creation plan for young workers; reinforce out of school programs; youth training programs
- Improve access to justice amongst the most vulnerable including protection for women, slaves and former slaves and the landless.

Source: "World Bank Group. 2017. Islamic Republic of Mauritania : Turning Challenges into Opportunities for Ending Poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity. Systematic Country Diagnostic. World Bank, Washington, DC. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27997> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO."

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### Burkina Faso

Abdine Koeta, Member of « Association des jeunes leaders entrepreneurs » of Kossi Nouna  
Abdoul Nourou Oueadraogo Lamine, Youth group  
Abdoulaye Diallo, Youth group  
Alassane Ganame, Youth group  
Alidou Tiembre, Youth group  
Alimata Traore, Benkadi Nouna group  
Amadou Ouaba, Poultry farmer  
Ami Belem, Women group

Amnatou Kindo, Women group  
 Bakari Boro, Member of « Association des jeunes leaders entrepreneurs » of Kossi  
 Nouna Mamadou Sissoko, Member of « Association des jeunes leaders entrepreneurs » of Kossi Nouna  
 Bintou Karambiri, President of « Société Coopérative Kadi Jeunesse »  
 Boukaré Zabre, AGRODIA  
 Boukary Bamogo, AVAD President  
 Boukary Sana, Youth group  
 Drissa Traore, Member of « Association des jeunes leaders entrepreneurs » of Kossi Nouna  
 Kadiatou Drabo, President of « Société Coopérative Kadi Jeunesse »  
 Ouandegma Tankoano, President of Union Bwayala  
 Pakoundi Simboro, Member of « Association des jeunes leaders entrepreneurs » of Kossi Nouna  
 Rasmata Basbila Kone, Member of Union Bwayala  
 Salmata Ganame, Women group

#### Chad

Abakar Adoum, Secretary General of CEP agriculture  
 Abakar Mahamat, Secretary General of COGEA  
 Abdelaziz Bechir, Auditor of COGEM  
 Abdelkerim Mosso, Mobile cashier at the Caisse Urbaine  
 Abdoulaye Baine, Director General of Moustagbal NGO  
 Abdoulaye Mahamat, Auditor of the cereal bank  
 Ache Aboulaye Hassan, Learner  
 Ache Mahamat Abdramane, « Maman lumière »  
 Achta Ahmat, Auxiliary  
 Adoum Bebe, Instructor  
 Adoum Mahamat, Secretary General of the cereal bank  
 Ahmat Borkou, COGEM Advisor  
 Ambineye Moussa, Member of the Banque de soudure  
 Arisala Ourdi, President of the Union of Women's Groups  
 Assi Moussa, President of the Rural Caisse  
 Bani Garboyo, COGEA Advisor  
 Bani Kodo, Member of COGEA  
 Baye Idriss, President of the cereal bank  
 Beindjere Gamane, Nursery gardener  
 Brahim Kadre Kaïdallah, Member of the seed group Al Nadja Wadjat  
 Daoud Boïkina Tinga, Mobile cashier at the Caisse Urbaine  
 Djamila Adoum, Auxiliary  
 Djaya Baye, Member of the Environment Club  
 Djibrine Adjalou, President of Groups Union  
 Djibrine Mahamat Adoum, Member of the seed group Al Nadja Wadjat  
 Fanne Modou, Member of Transformation Cooperative  
 Fatime Abakar, Member of the Banque de soudure  
 Fatime Adoum, Member of the Amkachayé cooperative  
 Fatime Djimet, President of CEP élevage  
 Fatime Mahamat Hassan, Member of CEP élevage  
 Fatime Zara, Member of the Oil Cooperative  
 Gabi Banatine, Secretary General of the Momdomo Market Gardening Association  
 Gabreke Tassi, President of the Momdomo Market Gardening Association  
 Gasi Tchere, Member of COGEA  
 Godi Rass, Nursery gardener  
 Goni Mahamat, Secretary General of the seed group Al Nadja Wadjat  
 Goudja Adoum, Member of COGEA  
 Goudja Garboubou, CEP Agriculture Advisor  
 Hadje Hawa Mahamat, Nutritional Facilitator

Halime Alhad, President of the Oil Cooperative  
Halime Mahamat, Member of the Oil Cooperative  
Hamat Saleh, Member of CEP agriculture  
Hamit Mahamat, Vice-president at the NGO Amtine  
Hassan Adaoum, Instructor at the Literacy Centre  
Hassan Djibrine, Member of the Environment Club  
Hassan Djidrine Adoum, President of the seed group Al Nadja Wadjat  
Hassan Mahamat, Secretary General of COGEM  
Hassan Tosdom, Member of the Momdomo Market Gardening Association  
Hassane Awada, Member of the NGO Amtine  
Hassane Mahamat Abakar, Supervisor at the NGO Amtine  
Hawa Abakar Abdramane, Member du CEP élevage  
Hawa Ahmat, Learner at the Literacy Centre  
Hawa Haroun, President of the Amkachayé cooperative  
Hawa Issa, Member of the Amkachayé cooperative  
Ibrahim Adoum, Storekeeper of the cereal bank  
Issa Tamour, Agriculture technician of Moustagbal NGO  
Kaltouma Adoum, Member of the Amkachayé cooperative  
Kevin Moity, Technical assistant of Moustagbal NGO  
Khadidja Abdramane, Learner  
Khamis Adef, Secretary General at the NGO Amtine  
Kherallah Soumaine, Educational supervisor at FAPLN  
Koubra Abdraman, Learner at the Literacy Centre  
Mabrouka Youssouf, Auditor at Transformation Cooperative  
Mahamat Harouin, Deputy Secretary General of COGEM  
Mahamat Oumar, Instructor at the Literacy Centre  
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Mahamt Idriss, Member of the Momdomo Market Gardening Association  
Maïtara Djimet, Member of the Rural Caisse  
Mankaga Daboubou, Officer for materials of CEP Agriculture  
Manserke Gamane  
Mariam Ibrahim DOUNGOU, « Maman lumière »  
Mariam Mahamat, Deputy Secretary General of Transformation Cooperative  
Michel Kerim, Administrator at FAPLN  
Moumine Alkhali, IPAENF of the Education Delegation  
Nafissa Youssouf, Sales Manager at Transformation Cooperative  
Oumar Dieudonne, President of the Banque de soudure  
Ousmane Saleh, Nursery gardener  
Sadia Abdallah Choroma, Nutritional Facilitator  
Saleh Ali, Member of the Momdomo Market Gardening Association  
Seid Manecga, Member of CEP agriculture  
Tassi Kondgargue, Secretary General of COGEA  
Tchere Gaba, President of COGEA  
Tollo Offi, Member of CEP Agriculture  
Yaya Djegougta, Member of the Momdomo Market Gardening Association  
Yobo Hassan Abakar, Member du CEP élevage  
Yoboide Totro, President of CEP agriculture  
Zarga Abakar Hissein, « Maman lumière »  
Zenaba Djaba, Member of FAPLN

Mali

Adairatou Koné, Treasurer of the youth association Kotognogotala  
Adiaratou Sinayogo, President of the youth association Kotognogotala  
Afoussatou Coulibaly, Administrative secretary of women association Benkadi  
Aguechatou Maïga, President of the association of women market gardeners  
Aïchatou Koné, President of the youth association Kènèyatou  
Ali Bagayogo, Supervisor of REFOR

Alima Koné, Treasurer of the human powered pump management committee  
Amidou Coulibaly, President of youth association Benkadi  
Aminata Bakayoko, Treasurer of the communal union of cooperative societies of the cereal sector  
Aminata Dicko, Member of the association Fafadoboyé  
Aminata Traoré, Member of women association Moussala  
Arouna Karabenta, Member of the youth association Kaboundé  
Assetou Haïdara, Member of women association Moussala  
Awa Cissé, Member of women association Moussala  
Awa Tamboura, Member of the association Fafadoboyé  
Babani Koné, External relations Officer of the youth association Kènèyaton  
Bakaye Coulibaly, Président of the communal union of cooperative societies of the cereal sector  
Baye Konta, Organisation secretary of the youth association Nyèta  
Bekaye Coulibaly, Administrative secretary of the communal union of cooperative societies of the cereal sector  
Bintou Dicko, Member of women association  
Bintou Koné, Treasurer of women association Yiriwa  
Bintou Togola, Treasurer of women association Kalandé  
Bouacar Niènta, Member of the youth association Nyèta  
Broulaye Koné, Beneficiary of FIER  
Chata Koné, Vice-president of Flammation Benkady Cooperative  
Cheick Oumar Coulibaly, Supervisor of REFOR  
Daouda Koné, Beneficiary of FIER  
Daouda Mariko, Committee member of the management committee of the bridge in the commune of Zantiebougou  
Fanta Sangaré, Information secretary of the management committee of a market garden in Ouré  
Fatoumata Doumbia, Administrative secretary of women association Yiriwa  
Fatoumata Maïga, Member of the association Fafadoboyé  
Fatoumata Sangaré, Member of women association  
Fatoumata Traoré, Member of the youth association  
Issa Traoré, External relations Secretary of the youth association  
Kadia Coulibaly, President of women association Benkadi  
Kadiatou Doumbia, President of the management committee of a market garden in Ouré  
Kandia Kamissoko, Information secretary of the youth association Landaya  
Kandia Sinayoko, Administrative secretary of women association Moussala  
Karia Doumbia, Administrative secretary of the youth association  
Kariata Fofana, Administrative secretary of the youth association Landaya  
Konza Koné, Administrative secretary Flammation Benkady Cooperative  
Madou Mariko, Village chief and committee member of the management committee of the bridge in the commune of Zantiebougou  
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Maïmouna Coulibaly, Administrative secretary of women association Kotoyogotala  
Mamadou Mariko, FIER beneficiary  
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Mariam Guindo, Member of women association  
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Moussa Sylla, Member of the youth association Landaya

Nakamissa Coulibaly, President of the youth association Landaya  
Nouhoum Koné, External relations Officer of the youth association Kotognogotala  
Salamanta Issa, President of the youth association Kaboundé  
Salif Tangara, External relations secretary of the youth association Landaya  
Saran Maguassouba, Member of the youth association Landaya  
Sata Coulibaly, President of women association Yiriwa  
Sata Koné, Information secretary of women association Yiriwa  
Satan Traoré, Member of supervisory committee of women association  
Kotoyogotala  
Selin Traoré, President of women association Kalandé  
Siré Koné, Member of women association  
Sitan Coulibaly, Cashier of the women association Kotoyogotala  
Souleymane Coulibaly, Administrative secretary of the youth association Benkadi  
Soyi Keita, Beneficiary of FIER  
Tiefolo Tamboura, President of women association  
Zoumana Mariko, Committee member of the management committee of the bridge  
in the commune of Zantiebougou

#### Mauritania

Abdallahi Ould Mohamed Ould Yergene, President of the Koub ehl Jaavar gas  
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Abderrahmane alassane Ly, LY Family Cooperative  
Amadou Sow, Diawbe Dindi Cooperative  
Beyye Ould Sidi, President of the youth association "Espoir Gueveire"  
Cheikh Ould Sidi, President of the Gueveire AGLC  
Fatimetou Mint Mohameden, El Kheyra Cooperative  
Khadiatou abdoulaye Ly, Hamadi Diom Cooperative  
Khouerate mint barkke, Butchery Helle  
Mariem Mint Messoud, Al Wehde Cooperative in Thiouth  
Mohamed Ould Abderrahman, Chairman of the Lekleybiya Dam AGLC  
Mohamed Ould nagi Ould Sidahmed, Veterinary Assistant  
Rakya Alassane Thiam, Santianary Cooperative  
Sidi Ould Mewlound, President of the Association of Milk and Meat Producers (APLV)  
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#### Niger

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Ahmad Goumar, Group COGES TA Toubout  
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Elh Idi Abdoulaye, Group GIE TA Badaguichiri

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Harouna Alhadji, Group AUE TA Sabara  
Harouna Chipkaou, Organization MI AUE MADAROUFA  
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Hassia Yacouba, Women group  
Ibrahim Habibou, Group COGES RNA MI EL kolta  
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Ismaguel ALio, Group AUE TA Sabara  
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Mamane Gadi Mahamat, Women group in N’Gourty  
Manirou Mamane, Group ACAP  
Maria Soumaila, Women group  
Mariama Ibrahim, Women group  
Massaouda Ali, Women group  
Mohamed Souleymane, Supervisor CRA/Tahoua  
Moumouni Moussa, Group GIE MI Guidan Roumdji  
Moussa Abdallah, Women group in N’Gourty  
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Moussa Mahamane, Group COGES TA Toubout  
Moussa Mahamat, Resource person groups DA N’Gourty  
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Moustapha Madadou Adj, Organization CRA Diffa  
Nana Fatouma Sanoussi, Women group  
Nassara Salami, Women group



Noura Oumarou, Groupe MER PI MI  
Oubeida Ousmane, Women group  
Oumarou Ibrahim, Group COGES RNA MI EL kolta  
Ousmane Karré, Resource person groups DA N’Gourty  
Ousseini ELH Yacouba, Group GIE MI Guidan Roudmji  
Rahida Chaibou, Women group  
Rawa Samaila, Group COGES TA Toubout  
Saadou Idrissa, Group GIE TA Badaguichiri  
Sahiyo Yahaya, Group GIE TA Badaguichiri  
Salissou Laouali, Groupe MER PI MI  
Salissou Na Inna, Mi Safo Cooperative  
Sallah Ibrahim, Group AUE TA Sabara  
Sani Moussa, Organization MI AUE MADAROUFA  
Tiemogo Aboubacar, SP/CRA  
Tsahirou Mahamane, Group COGES RNA MI EL kolta  
Yaché Bouda, Women group  
Yahouza Idi, Group GIE MI Guidan Roudmji  
Zali Saidou, Women group  
Zayanou Halilou, Groupe MER PI MI

Nigeria

Gamande Salisu, Women Representative  
Hamza Abdullahi, Youth Representative  
Inuwa Ismaila Reza, Seed Farmer  
Laure Abubakar, Women Leader Representative  
Mamuda Adamu, Producer Representative  
Muhammad Lukman, Farmer  
Muhammad Musa, Farmer  
Rabi Madugu, Women Representative  
Salisu Ibrahim, Youth Representative  
Sanin Salihu, Youth Representative  
Shehu Abdullahin, Apex Chairman

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