

# **Breakout Session 1**



## Innovative digital tools for evaluation

# Learning from COVID experience: enriching data collection methods and evaluation tools.

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- 1. | Drawing from evaluation under COVID
- 2. Harnessing ICT potential for evaluation
- 3. Just in time evaluation





# **Evaluating under COVID**What we learnt







## **COVID:** from challenges to opportunities



No international missions, domestic travels restricted. NB: IFAD-funded projects are in remote rural areas.

#### **Reactions / opportunities:**

- 1) Rediscover under-utilized secondary data (e.g. surveys conducted by projects)
- 2) Remote interviews with national counterparts; **remote mini-surveys** of local organizations
- 3) **Geographic information systems** and remote sensing technology
- 4) For most evaluations, **national consultants** visited the field → caveat: impartiality?
- 5) 'Vicarious' field visits in extreme cases (more on this later on)
- 6) Quality assurance process: reviewers with knowledge of country / local context for further 'reality check'





# Coastal Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project in Bangladesh



Infrastructure for market and market access

#### **Exceptional case in 2020**

- ✓ No travel, including national consultants
- ✓ Natural experiment 'Cyclone Amphan'

#### Changes to adapt the approach to the pandemic

- **√**GIS
- ✓ Phone interviews with project end-users
- ✓ Vicarious visits: through network of national consultant, local users / persons took photos / videos of project sites







## Images / videos taken by local stakeholders



Gathered 103 ground images, 11 videos

Roads and embankments
Market infrastructure

... and their use

#### **Triangulation with**

- Technical expert: infrastructure engineer (construction, quality, materials, damages...)
- GIS images
- Phone interviews with local users







Banishanta Bazar, Dacope, Khulna



Banishanta Bazar, Dacope, Khulna



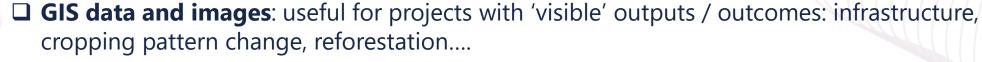


# Some of these evaluation features are there to stay











Some changes not detectable 'from the sky' (power relationships, gender equality...). Need triangulation (expert interpretation, interviews with local people, surveys)



☐ **Vicarious field visits** for situations of insecurity (can train local people to collect basic information, photos, short videos)



☐ 'Greening' our evaluations and focus on field visits. Reduced our international travels. For country-level evaluations from four to one or two (and increased % of time spent in the field)





# Harnessing Information and Communication Technology for Evaluation





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## **Guidance on Geospatial Tools for IOE**





#### **Global Forest Watch**



#### **Earth Map**



**Geofolio** 

Experiences in using geo-based data since 2017

Produced Guidance note (2023) to make more consistent use of geo-tools and seize opportunity of massive data on-line (many free of charge)

- Focus on online applications, requiring limited input of external expertise
- Ex. retrieve data before and after intervention: infrastructure vegetation cover, cropping patterns, soil characteristics,
- Project Evaluation in Cuba 2022: GIS coordinates of the field sites visited → SoilGrids: carbon content in soil as indicator of soil health (triangulated with other evidence)



## Some insights – ICT for evaluation



- Our emphasis has been on Geo-based data. Additional source of evidence analysis, to complement traditional methods (field visits, interviews, focus Group, mini-surveys....)
- So far, focus is on low-cost tools, involving time-bound consultant input
- Artificial intelligence: an opportunity to synthesize from very high number of sources and interface between different databases
  - > manage expectation on software analytical capacity
  - ➤ lengthy teething period (algorithm training, software adjustment)
  - >we plan to build on current work done by ICT unit of IFAD





## 'Just in time' Evaluations









### 'Just in time' Evaluations



- 'Just in time' = to produce findings to feed into design of new policy strategy: exceptionally tight schedule
- ☐ Contemplated in 2021 IOE Evaluation Strategy, piloted in 2022: Synthesis note on Targeting.
- > Methodology: based on synthesis of available evaluations, small set of interviews and focus group discussions
- ☐ Just in time evaluations can be used *in lieu of* conducting a repeat valuation on an already evaluated topic, when it is too early or too costly
- ☐ IOE-IFAD <u>not</u> receiving large demand of just in time evaluations
- ☐ ≠ 'Real time' evaluation: feedback during early implementation, can be a process review. Question: 'how early'? When is this for independent evaluation? In many cases, should be responsibility of Management of funding / implementing entity, particularly if it is for programme design revision.