

Designing a CLPE strategy for a COSOP

COMPANION TOOL 3

Introduction

Current country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) guidelines and templates do not require a country-level policy engagement (CLPE) strategy as one of the mandated annexes. As such, this note is to support COSOP design teams in developing a working document that can facilitate the creation of a main COSOP document, including specific paragraphs related to CLPE and the identification of outcomes to include in the COSOP results framework. This working document does not form part of the mandated elements of the COSOP proper.

Preliminary steps when designing a COSOP CLPE strategy

(based on the *Country-level policy engagement IFAD. Guide book.*)

1. Dedicate a minimum of two weeks for in-country teams to provide the COSOP design team with input for developing the elements of the strategy

The rationale of this recommendation is to leverage as much as possible the knowledge of the country context and of relevant policy issues that in-country team colleagues hold, and to ensure close and sustained exchanges between the in-country team and COSOP design consultants.

2. Identify relevant knowledge sources required to build the strategy

Relevant sources of knowledge may include government institutions, performance-based allocation system (PBAS) rural policy assessments, in-country partners, national and international policy research institutes, NGOs, farmers' organizations and relevant industry associations or chambers of commerce.

3. Structure information-gathering using one or more tools designed for this purpose

The CLPE guide book offers examples of relevant tools including the context-evidence-links framework, horizon scanning, the alignment of interest and influence matrix, and the K* framework. All these tools (and others) can be used to organize information, depending on context and purpose. The guide book contains examples and practical tips to use each of the tools.

An example from experience

2015 COSOP in Bangladesh

(Country-level policy engagement in IFAD. Guide book.)






A call for “increased proactive engagement” and “policy and institutional support” in Bengali ministries in a 2015 country programme evaluation of Bangladesh prompted the then country programme manager to hire a consultant to draw up a framework for IFAD to support the national policy process. The consultant conducted an in-depth review of past project design and supervision documents and held discussions with present and former project directors and experts to identify issues to target for policy reform, and held meetings with key officials and selected NGOs and agencies. By using guiding questions such as those provided in the Context-Evidence Links Framework (CEL), the consultant created an Action plan for policy engagement that provided the IFAD country team with an agenda for its CLPE that built on existing experience and instruments in the programme.

A COSOP strategy or plan for CLPE may include the following elements:

- **A review of the current country policy framework and institutional context**, addressing specific characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. This review may provide:
 - The political framework for policymaking and the nature of key policy processes
 - An overview of key sectoral policies, strategies and programmes
 - A deeper dive into particular policies that either hinder or can be leveraged to help achieve country programme strategic objectives (e.g. through support for design or implementation), including:
 - The capacity of relevant institutions to formulate or implement these policies
 - Key implementation gaps or challenges related to these policies
 - The political economy of decision-making related to these policies, including the role of IFAD’s target groups in this political economy
 - Relevant policy-related activities of other development partners.
- **A review of IFAD’s past experiences with policy engagement**, if any, in the given country programme, including successes and lessons learned.
- **The specific policy issues that IFAD will focus on in the country programme.**
- **The approaches (within investment projects or alongside them)** that will be used to pursue the strategy, activities likely to be carried out, and the level of resources – both financial and human – required to deliver on it. This may include:
 - The role of IFAD in the country and the types of instruments, assets and capabilities it can leverage for CLPE
 - Likely activities (as discussed in Companion Tool 1) for CLPE
 - Resource requirements
 - How progress will be measured and reported on.
- **How the CLPE agenda will leverage and contribute to scaling up, strategic partnerships, and knowledge management in the country programme.**



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