Executive Board

Arab Republic of Egypt
Country strategy and programme evaluation

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the country strategy and programme evaluation for the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Technical questions:

Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
e-mail: i.naidoo@ifad.org

Steven Jonckheere
Senior Evaluation Officer
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
e-mail: s.jonckheere@ifad.org

Investing in rural people

Evaluation Committee
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Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
e-mail: i.naidoo@ifad.org

Steven Jonckheere
Senior Evaluation Officer
Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
e-mail: s.jonckheere@ifad.org

Contents

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Executive summary

A. Background

1. IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) conducted a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in the Arab Republic of Egypt, as approved in 2024 by the 140th session of the IFAD Executive Board. This third CSPE in Egypt covered the period 2017–2023, including five projects with a total cost of US$646.3 million, of which US$330 million was financed by IFAD. The rest was contributed by the Government, beneficiaries and other cofinanciers.

2. **Objectives.** The CSPE aimed to evaluate the IFAD country strategy and programme results, and provide recommendations for future collaboration with the Government of Egypt to enhance development effectiveness and sustainable rural development. It also reviewed the implementation of the 2017 CSPE recommendations. Its findings and recommendations will be useful for the development of a new IFAD country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) in 2025.

3. **Country context.** With a population of 102.8 million in 2022, Egypt is the most populous country in North Africa and the Arab world. As a lower-middle-income country, it has faced economic challenges. After the Arab Spring in 2011, Egypt experienced economic instability. To address structural issues, economic reforms were implemented, leading to more stable GDP growth. However, recent external pressures, global economic conditions, oil price fluctuations and the COVID-19 pandemic have hindered progress. Foreign investment has declined, global trade has slowed and supply chains have been disrupted. Inflation exceeded 30 per cent in 2023 and is expected to remain high, affecting household spending. Recovery conditions are improving despite slower growth, thanks to significant reforms.

4. In 2020, Egypt's poverty rate declined for the first time in 20 years due to public investment in services, health, education and expanded social protection. However, high inflation impacts vulnerable groups, emphasizing the need for stronger social safety nets. Tackling poverty in rural Upper Egypt remains crucial because of higher-than-average poverty rates. Food insecurity rose slightly from 2016 to 2022. Key factors include reliance on grain imports, limited food accessibility for low-income households, climate change effects on agriculture, high food waste and concerns over quality. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated the situation, raising food prices and forcing many households to cut back on consumption.

5. Over the past decade, Egypt has made significant progress in gender equality indicators, particularly in educational attainment and women's participation in the public sphere. However, substantial gender disparities persist. Women continue to face limited access to education, health care, employment and productive resources. In 2022, Egypt's young people, representing 21 per cent of the total population, faced challenges in accessing financial resources and entering the labour market. The unemployment rate, among those aged between 15 and 24 years of age stood at 19 per cent, more than double the national average.

6. Although agriculture's share of GDP has decreased, it still accounts for 11 per cent of GDP and 20 per cent of export revenue, providing jobs for about 19.8 per cent of the workforce. Egyptian agriculture comprises two types of land: "old lands" along the Nile Valley and Delta, making up 85 per cent of agricultural land, with smallholders focused on improving productivity; and "new lands" reclaimed from the desert, featuring larger holdings and capital-intensive technologies. Agriculture is also practised in rainfed areas and oases, although less commonly. Many people living in rural areas rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Smallholders struggle with outdated technology, poor irrigation, limited access to quality inputs, services and market information. The lack of digital solutions for water, soil and pest

management compounds their challenges. Overuse of water and agrochemicals results in high costs, reduced soil fertility, production losses and low incomes.

7. **IFAD's strategy and operations for the CSPE period.** The 2011–2018 COSOP aimed to reduce rural poverty and enhance food security in Egypt through three goals: strengthening rural skills for economic opportunities, promoting sustainable resource use and improving access to services. The 2019–2024 COSOP was informed by the 2017 CSPE, which called for more focused targeting, refined thematic project design, a programmatic approach, improved knowledge management and strategic capacity-building for community institutions. The COSOP's objectives are to improve rural incomes and livelihoods by boosting agricultural productivity and profitability, and by developing policies for inclusive, sustainable rural transformation. This CSPE examined five loan-funded projects (two closed and three ongoing) and 22 IFAD-funded grants that included Egypt as a country of interest. It also assessed how the investment portfolio and non-lending activities, such as knowledge management, partnership-building and policy engagement, contributed to achieving the country strategy, as well as the roles of the Government and IFAD.

B. Main findings

8. **Relevance** is rated moderately satisfactory. The COSOPs and projects were developed in collaboration with the Government, leveraging IFAD's partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation. However, the Government's conservative fiscal stance and expectations regarding cost recovery increasingly complicated project design. While the portfolio aligned with IFAD's policies, rural finance interventions and tribal community engagement were not demand-driven, and the Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE) lacked a mandatory Free, Prior and Informed Consent plan. IFAD's portfolio continued to address issues relevant to rural poverty, such as water scarcity, unemployment and landlessness, with increased emphasis on strengthening water user associations, youth inclusion, climate change adaptation and value chain development.

9. Project designs were often unrealistic. They failed to incorporate lessons from earlier rural finance initiatives. Value chain development efforts lacked coherence due to insufficient analysis. The focus was more on supply than demand, financial institutions had limited experience, and project units often lacked the necessary expertise.

10. The quality of poverty analyses in the COSOPs and project design showed a decline over time. While target groups were identified, strategies to reach them were often insufficiently detailed, ambitions modest and outreach inconsistently monitored. The Sustainable Transformation for Agricultural Resilience in Upper Egypt (STAR) project was a notable exception, with a more robust targeting strategy. The programme focused on the poorest populations and fewer governorates. PRIDE, which worked exclusively in north-western Egypt, stood out as an exception within the portfolio's overall focus on Upper Egypt.

11. **Coherence** is rated moderately satisfactory. The country programme maintained continuity and built on proven methods from previous projects. Recent projects have adopted a clearer geographic focus. However, strategic consistency was sometimes compromised by the need to respond to Government requests, as seen in the choice of intervention areas for the Sustainable Agriculture Investments and Livelihoods Project (SAIL) and PRIDE. The absence of a coordination platform limited the potential for synergies across projects. IFAD was well regarded for its focus on rural poverty reduction and its contribution to United Nations goals. It also supported major Government initiatives, such as Haya Karima. Nonetheless, there were missed opportunities to strengthen collaboration with development partners, particularly in supporting community institutions, rural finance and value chains. Existing coordination platforms were not used effectively.

12. **Knowledge management** is rated moderately unsatisfactory. Although the 2019 COSOP emphasized its importance, it lacked strategic direction and adequate resources. Collecting and applying knowledge from projects proved challenging. At the project level, knowledge management focused mainly on training and extension activities within technical components. While several initiatives benefited from the expertise of governmental research institutions, there was still scope for these centres to better leverage the experiences gained from these projects. Grants were used only to a limited extent to strengthen knowledge management, and South-South and Triangular Cooperation activities remained scarce.

13. **Partnership-building** is rated moderately unsatisfactory. While the 2019 COSOP expressed strong ambitions in this area, these were not backed by sufficient resources. Although collaboration with the Government expanded, progress in engaging bilateral and multilateral agencies remained limited. Additionally, despite the growing involvement of project participants as contractors in civil works and other service provision, success in forming partnerships with the private sector to enhance market access was limited.

14. **Policy engagement** is rated moderately unsatisfactory. Policy engagement was a central tenet of the 2019 COSOP, constituting one of its two primary strategic goals. However, the programme lacked a well-defined policy agenda with practical entry points and failed to create essential strategic partnerships. National platforms, such as the Nexus of Water, Food and Energy programme, were not used effectively to support policy engagement. Projects also struggled to consolidate and communicate field-level lessons, limiting their influence on policy processes. Overall, there was a notable discrepancy between the ambitious goals of the COSOP and the resources allocated in terms of time, expertise and funding. Consequently, despite some attempts to engage in policy development, the outcomes fell short of expectations.

15. **Effectiveness** is rated moderately satisfactory. Some projects failed to meet their outreach goals due to overestimated targets and implementation delays. SAIL achieved its outreach targets, while the rural finance components of the On-farm Irrigation Development Project in Oldlands (OFIDO) and the Promotion of Rural Incomes through Market Enhancement Project (PRIME) reached around half of their targets by completion. PRIDE had reached only a third of its targets by midterm. While outreach to women was generally strong, there were difficulties in effectively reaching the poor, landless and youth due to vague or absent targeting strategies.

16. Regarding the first impact pathway – improved land and water management – the country programme demonstrated satisfactory performance in water and livestock development. OFIDO achieved 76 per cent of its targets for land under improved water management by completion. PRIDE had reached 30 per cent of its targets by midterm, while SAIL exceeded its targets by 446 per cent as of December 2023. Recent projects have strengthened institutional capacities for the operation and maintenance of water and irrigation systems, although water user associations had not yet become self-sustaining entities. Furthermore, the delivery of agricultural services and extension programmes was rated only moderately satisfactory, as projects continue to explore more effective and sustainable approaches.

17. Under the second impact pathway, the portfolio achieved mixed outcomes in market access and value chain development. For example, under PRIME, only 29 out of the 178 farmers' marketing associations supported by the project established robust business relationships. Rural finance interventions performed poorly, offering limited additionality and insufficient consideration of target groups' needs. Under PRIME, 75 per cent of loans from the Agricultural Development Programme went to larger-scale farmers and agroenterprises, while only 6 per cent of recipients were women.

18. The third pathway saw successful implementation of social infrastructure (although with some delays, especially under PRIDE), while efforts toward improved nutrition were moderately satisfactory, hindered by delays in behavioural change activities. SAIL, for example, supported the construction and rehabilitation of nine clinics, 11 nurseries, six schools, two youth centres, four veterinary facilities, nine sewing units, and one computer and women's centre. It also supported water supply projects now serving seven villages. PRIDE's achievements across various infrastructure types remained modest (approximately 10 to 30 per cent of targets) due to delayed project start-up and limited construction capacity in the governorate.

19. **Innovation** is rated moderately satisfactory. The country programme made only modest progress in advancing its innovation agenda. Notable successes in agricultural water systems included fibre-reinforced canal linings, improved water storage, and PRIDE's approach to wadi development, rainwater harvesting and rangeland rehabilitation. However, innovations such as aquaculture, aqua- and hydroponic systems, technical desalination and marketing platforms were less successful. Drawing on insights from OFIDO, new technical and institutional approaches were developed to improve irrigation water management. Nonetheless, the high cost of modernization investments remains a barrier, highlighting the need for long-term financial and collaborative solutions.

20. **Efficiency** is rated moderately satisfactory. Projects had to navigate a challenging economic environment marked by tighter fiscal policies and high inflation. The cost of project management was kept at a reasonable level, averaging 7.2 per cent at design and 14 per cent during implementation. Planning capacity improved, mainly due to changes in project management, as seen in PRIME and SAIL. Service providers generally performed well. Ex post economic and financial analyses were positive for the two completed projects, with an economic internal rate of return of 28 per cent for OFIDO and 17 per cent for PRIME. However, projects faced staffing constraints, and the portfolio consistently struggled with timeliness – including slow start-up, multiple extensions, and low disbursement rates. For example, the average time from effectiveness to first disbursement was 24.2 months, compared with a regional average of 8.3 months. OFIDO, PRIME and SAIL all required extensions.

21. **Rural poverty impact** is rated moderately satisfactory. The reliability of impact assessments in the two completed projects was low due to missing or inadequate baselines, the complexity of establishing a counterfactual and difficulties in linking outcomes to actual programme interventions or trickle-down effects. There were indications that the country programme contributed to improvements in household incomes and assets, particularly through rural finance for both farm and non-farm investments. To some extent, gains were also observed in agricultural productivity, marketing and income-generating activities, although results varied considerably across projects. The programme contributed in many ways to human and social capital strengthening, especially through farmer field schools, literacy training and support for community development associations, water user associations, system- and farm-level groups, and agricultural cooperatives. However, there was limited evidence of sustained behaviour changes resulting from this capacity-building. The country programme also contributed to improvements in food security and nutrition by increasing agricultural yields, reducing post-harvest losses and raising incomes. After project completion, community-level institutions supported by the programme maintained weak links with local administrative bodies, rural services and ministries. Skills development tended to respond to immediate project needs rather than being based on long-term capacity assessments.

22. **Gender equality and women's empowerment** is rated moderately satisfactory. Outreach targets for women were largely achieved. OFIDO had very low outreach,

with only 12 per cent of beneficiaries being women. Other projects exceeded their targets: PRIME at 41 per cent, SAIL at 56 per cent and PRIDE at 50 per cent. The strongest results were achieved when projects adopted a multipronged approach to tackling women's exclusion, using strategies such as literacy training, provision of identity cards and collaboration with women's groups. The projects supported women's economic empowerment through rural finance and income-generating activities. Certain opportunities to boost women's economic empowerment were overlooked, with training focusing primarily on women's traditional domestic roles or failing to include them specifically in market contracts. While women-only groups received support, greater effort was required to ensure equal participation in mixed groups. Efforts to reduce women's workload and address discriminatory social norms remained limited.

23. **Sustainability** is rated moderately satisfactory. The participation of line ministries helped to ensure the ongoing operation and maintenance of social infrastructure and roads. The overall technical sustainability of water systems was positive, with increasing attention to participatory water management. However, earlier projects faced issues with equipment quality, with numerous farmer complaints about pumps, hydrants, and pipes, and there was a continuous need to strengthen capacities for regular operation and maintenance. Evidence on the long-term adoption of improved farming practices was insufficient. In general, the market linkages established through the projects were weak, and financial inclusion among IFAD's target groups remained uncertain.

24. **Environment, natural resource management and climate change** is rated moderately satisfactory. The country programme implemented a number of initiatives that introduced, evaluated and expanded methods and infrastructure aimed at improving environmental and natural resource management, particularly by promoting water efficiency and managing soil fertility. Several activities unintentionally improved farmers' resilience to climate change, even though this was not an initial objective. In older projects, climate change resilience and mitigation were not an explicit objective. In contrast, SAIL and PRIDE integrated climate considerations from the outset. For example, improved irrigation systems and water efficiency measures indirectly increased farm resilience to climate-induced water scarcity and salinity intrusion. Several projects more explicitly supported agricultural research and extension for climate resilience through climate-smart agriculture. However, there was insufficient support for a comprehensive, integrated strategy for transforming agriculture and food systems that fully account for the risks linked to natural resource degradation and climate change.

25. **Scaling up** is rated moderately unsatisfactory. While replication mainly occurred through follow-up projects, there was no clear evidence of wider scaling up. Neither in the closed projects, nor in the ongoing ones was there any indication that innovations or successful practices from the country programme were being adopted and disseminated by development partners, that stakeholders were investing resources, or that the Government was adopting a policy framework to bring these practices to scale. The lack of space for innovation and the limited focus on non-lending activities contributed to the minimal results in scaling up.

26. **IFAD performance** is rated moderately satisfactory. IFAD remained a reliable and proactive partner for the Government. Although the portfolio initially received inadequate attention, it improved significantly following IFAD's decentralization and the assignment of staff exclusively dedicated to the country programme. Supervision and implementation support helped resolve key bottlenecks and successfully turned around at least one project. However, responses were not always timely, as seen in the PRIME project, where efforts to integrate components were delayed or insufficiently followed up. Additionally, IFAD could have provided more support in areas such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), knowledge

management, and its mainstreamed themes, including safeguard procedures. This intensive focus on project support had an impact on IFAD's engagement in non-lending activities.

27. **Government performance** is rated moderately satisfactory. The Government demonstrated commitment, primarily through counterpart funding, took stronger ownership in more recent projects and improved intergovernmental cooperation. Despite ongoing staffing challenges, such as high turnover, limited incentives and capacity gaps, including a lack of specialized marketing expertise, the appointment of dedicated project coordinators yielded positive outcomes. However, projects continued to face recurring problems with M&E and financial management. Common M&E issues included limited staff capacity, an excessive focus on outputs and upward accountability, and underuse of information for knowledge management and decision-making. All projects experienced slow disbursement. Project management units generally had weak procurement capacity, particularly in planning and compliance with guidelines. Additionally, audits processes were frequently delayed.

C. Conclusions

28. During a period of external pressures, exogenous shocks and reduced government fiscal space, IFAD remained a key partner for the Government but has been seeking a suitable response to the Government’s more conservative fiscal policy. The strength of the partnership was evident in the Government’s selection of IFAD to co-lead the food pillar of the Nexus of Water, Food and Energy programme. However, the Government became increasingly reluctant to use loans for soft investments, instead requiring clear cost-recovery pathways and greater private sector involvement. Cost recovery and reductions in agricultural water infrastructure received insufficient attention, contributing to delays in project approval and start-up. Although several cofinancing partnerships were planned to boost grant resources, only one came to fruition.

29. **The country programme showed continuity in strategic themes and some progression.** Efforts continued to address water scarcity, unemployment, landlessness and support for farmers' organizations. More recent projects incorporated lessons from past initiatives by engaging with water user associations earlier, improving market linkages and placing greater focus on climate change risks. However, projects struggled to apply lessons in rural finance, offering standardized financial products that failed to meet the diverse needs. The STAR project aims to innovate and improve competitiveness in rural finance. Additionally, PRIDE was created to support Bedouin communities in north-western Egypt – a departure from the portfolio's focus on Upper Egypt – and concentrated on water harvesting and watershed management, despite IFAD's limited experience in these areas.

30. **Over time, projects became more effective in delivering infrastructure and other rural services.** While earlier projects struggled to meet their goals, later ones showed improvement due to better project management. Positive outcomes included the development of water infrastructure, more equitable water distribution, and integrated community support initiatives. The sustainability of water systems improved, but water user associations still required additional support to become self-sustaining.

31. **Critical gaps remained in marketing and rural finance.** Despite a number of success stories, results in market access and value chain development fell short of expectations. Poor coordination of project interventions, such as rural finance activities, undermined overall performance. The country programme lacked innovation in inclusive rural finance due to insufficient partnerships with financial institutions and limited government focus on analysing financial demand or providing technical assistance.

32. **Focus on sustainability increased**, with early engagement of water user associations and the involvement of line ministries in infrastructure maintenance. However, issues persisted regarding the associations' capacity to manage water resources sustainably, the adoption of improved farming practices, linkages between market actors and limited integrated support for natural resource management and climate change adaptation.

33. **Geographical targeting and integrated community support positively contributed to improved living conditions, but outreach to target groups was hindered by inadequate or unclear targeting strategies.** All projects targeted the poorest governorates, with some offering a full range of interventions in specific areas to maintain a poverty focus. However, analyses of poverty and vulnerability failed to consider the capability, opportunity and motivation for change among target groups, as well as regional differences. This led to overestimated outreach targets and unclear targeting strategies. While women were generally well-served, a number of opportunities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment were missed. Additionally, there were challenges in reaching young people and poorer households, including elite capture and strategies to reach the landless were lacking.

34. **The expected increase in engagement with non-lending activities associated with greater country presence did not materialize, thus constraining efforts to broaden IFAD's impact and influence.** The 2019 COSOP aimed to enhance knowledge management, partnerships and policy engagement, making policy engagement a strategic goal. However, results were limited due to underestimated resource needs (time, skills and funding), a lack of robust evidence and insufficient strategic guidance. Priority was given to project management over non-lending activities, resulting in few strategic alliances and limited lessons for higher-level actions.

35. **While a programmatic approach was emerging, synergies between projects remained limited.** Although the 2017 CSPE recommended establishing a framework for effective coordination and technical assistance, the Government was reluctant to introduce additional bureaucratic layers. However, coordination improved when the same project management unit oversaw both SAIL and STAR, and projects occasionally shared experiences, especially in procurement. There remains significant potential to strengthen the programmatic approach through better collaboration on M&E, financial management, procurement, IFAD's mainstreaming themes and non-lending activities.

D. Recommendations

36. The CSPE made the following five recommendations to inform the preparation of the upcoming COSOP.

37. **Recommendation 1. Incorporate natural resource management and adaptation to climate change into the upcoming strategic priorities, addressing them in a holistic manner.** The country programme's engagement in these areas should be well-informed, integrated and based on a holistic approach to transforming agricultural and food systems, with full attention to the risks of natural resource degradation, water scarcity and climate change. The ambition should be to catalyse system-level changes that go beyond project boundaries – a critical factor in attracting more climate finance. For that purpose: (i) the role of natural resource management and climate change experts and advisers within project coordination units needs to be strengthened; (ii) support and guidance should also be sought from IFAD's regional and country-level natural resource and climate experts, as well as focal points within the Ministry of Environment and Global Environment Facility, where appropriate; and (iii) related milestones and outcomes should be tracked to facilitate adaptive learning. Additionally, innovative solutions that generate environmental benefits and climate

change resilience alongside smallholder income gains are essential for practical implementation. This will require engaging specialized national service providers in this field, while seeking partnerships with other key stakeholders when necessary, including with governmental research centres, such as the Agricultural Research Center and the Desert Research Center. This work should be done in accordance with the Government's Nexus of Water, Food and Energy Programme and other environmental and climate-related strategies.

38. **Recommendation 2. Given Egypt's escalating challenges of water shortages, investments in interventions that address water use efficiency should continue to be a priority, but with greater emphasis on sustainability, including operation and maintenance arrangements and cost-recovery pathways.** In addition to enhancing irrigation water delivery systems, this should involve continued investment in (i) capacity-building for water user associations and the promotion of on-farm water use behaviour change and farmer engagement in water management; (ii) providing farmers with finance to acquire adequate inputs and knowledge to improve soil quality and market access, (iii) developing replicable models for local coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation to incentivize farmers and agencies. Projects and supervision missions should regularly assess the quality of progress in developing water user associations and groups, not merely monitor their numbers. To enhance sustainability and align with the Government's conservative fiscal policy, greater focus is needed on cost reduction, cost recovery and private sector engagement in agricultural water infrastructure.

39. **Recommendation 3. Sharpen the country programme's marketing and value chain interventions while catering to the unique financial needs of value chain participants.** To achieve this, it is important to (i) ensure that the entire project cycle is based on sound analysis of commodity markets and the constraints faced by small-scale producers; (ii) focus on the developing downstream segments, such as processing and marketing stages; (iii) pursue regular collaboration with development partners with strong value chain expertise to leverage mutual experiences; (iv) rely more on markets and private initiative for economically-driven investments. Moreover, more attention should be given to ensuring the institutional sustainability of producers' organizations by building the required business and management capacities and by fostering good governance structures. Finally, the country programme needs to move beyond the traditional financing of small-scale producers and offer tailored financial products and services that meet the diverse needs of the various value chain actors, through the development of partnerships with relevant organizations and service providers. This will also contribute to strengthening the capacities of project management teams.

40. **Recommendation 4. Develop explicit strategies and guidelines for the targeting approaches to be employed by the programme.** The coming COSOP should include clear strategic orientations and new project designs should incorporate explicit strategies and guidelines to reach distinct target groups, including indicators and targets to be monitored, based on a thorough analysis of poverty and vulnerability. Interventions and approaches should be aligned with the needs and capacities of priority target groups, including the poorest and most vulnerable people. The effectiveness of the targeting strategy should be continuously verified, including through the regular collection of poverty-disaggregated data. Given high youth unemployment and the limited results achieved so far, more effort is needed to reach young people. This calls for: (i) increased support to young farmers in gaining access to land and financial resources; and (ii) greater inclusion of youth in profitable value chains and contract farming. The country programme's geographical focus should remain on Upper

Egypt, where most of the poor live and where IFAD can continue to build on its comparative advantage.

41. **Recommendation 5. Emphasize the strategic value of non-lending operations in the next COSOP and create a clear and actionable plan for these operations to enhance IFAD's influence and impact.** Many lessons can be learned from the Egypt country programme in the areas of agricultural water infrastructure development and rural finance. These should be documented and presented in a format that can contribute to strengthening partnerships or influencing policies. The emerging national programme unit has a crucial role in managing knowledge, summarizing such lessons, communicating them and engaging in policy dialogue, and should have the human and financial resources needed to fulfil these tasks. Strategic alliances should be pursued to bring in technical expertise (e.g. in value chain development) and innovations; mobilize additional resources (e.g. from bilateral donors, the private sector or climate funds, especially given the Government's conservative fiscal policy and emphasis on enhancing private sector participation); and advance work towards policy reforms. A coherent action plan for knowledge management, partnership-building and policy engagement should therefore be developed. The plan should be realistic in terms of available resources, and clear in the assignment of roles and responsibilities, especially between the IFAD country office and national programme unit/projects and their interactions. The plan should incorporate clear targets to guide implementation.

Main Report

Contents

Currency equivalent, weights and measures

Currency equivalent

Currency unit = Egyptian Pound (EGP)
US$1.00 = 48.31 EGP (September 2024)

Measures

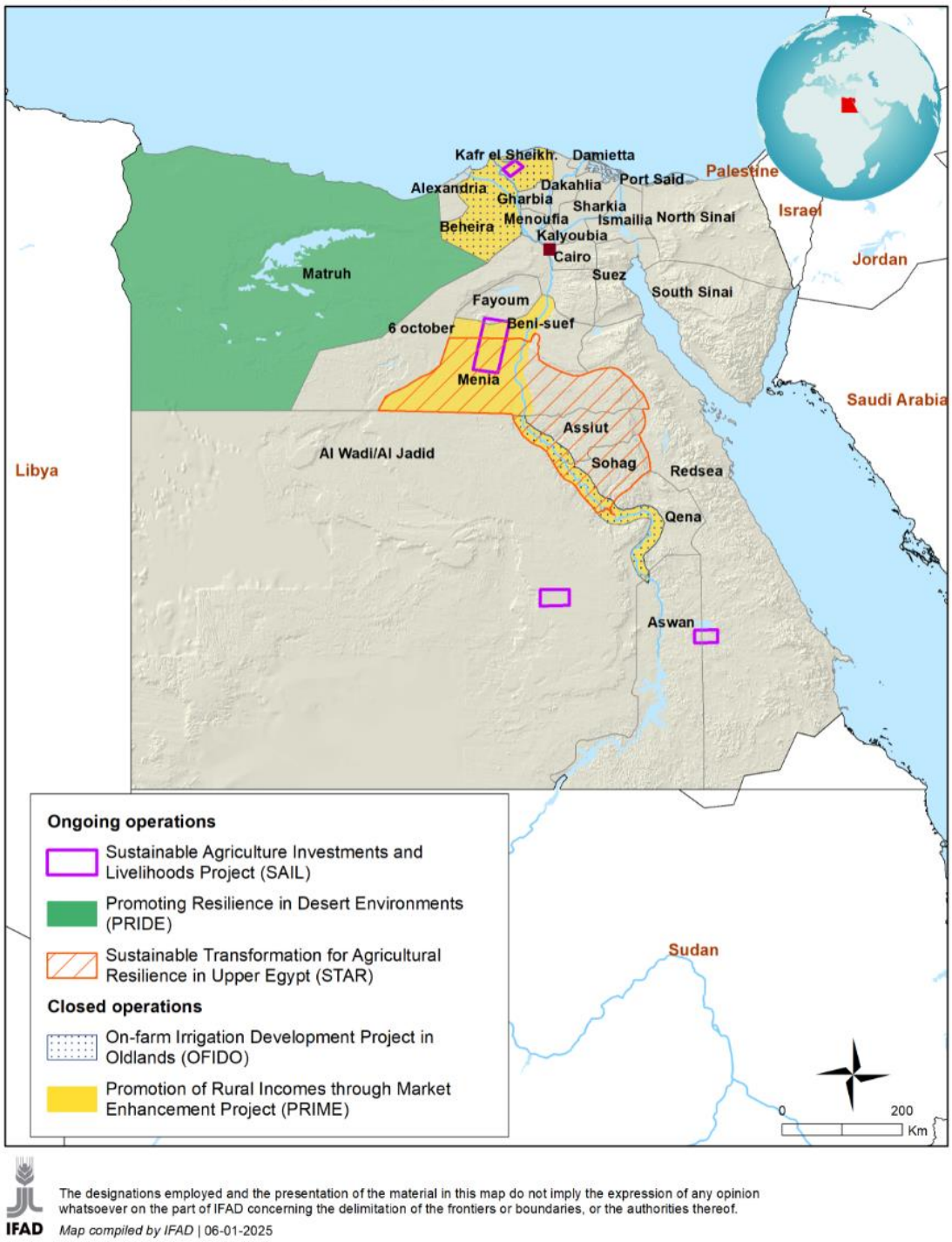
Metric measure
1 feddan (fd) = 0.42 hectares (ha)

Abbreviations and acronyms

AIDA	Arab Investment for Development Analyzer
ARC	Agricultural Research Center
ARDF	Agriculture Research and Development Fund
CDA	Community development association
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CROWN	Climate-Resilient On-Farm Water Management In Nile Valley & Delta
CSPE	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
DRC	Desert Research Center
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFS	Farmer Field School
FMA	Farmers' marketing association
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoE	Government of Egypt
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
KM	Knowledge management
MA	Marketing association
MALR	Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
MPEDIC	Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation
MSMEDA	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency
MTR	Midterm review
MWRI	Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NEN	Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia Division
NRM	Natural resource management
NWFE	Nexus of Water, Food, and Energy
OFIDO	On-farm Irrigation Development Project in Oldlands
O&M	Operation and maintenance
PCR	Project Completion Report
PCRV	Project Completion Report Validation
PPE	Project Performance Evaluation

PRIDE	Promoting Resilience in Desert Environments
PRIME	Promotion of Rural Incomes through Market Enhancement Project
SAIL	Sustainable Agriculture Investments and Livelihoods Project
SECAP	Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SSTC	South-South and triangular cooperation
STAR	Sustainable Transformation for Agricultural Resilience in Upper Egypt
SVR	Supervision Report
WFP	World Food Programme
WNRDP	West Noubaria Rural Development Project
WUA	Water Users' Association

Map of IFAD-supported operations in Arab Republic of Egypt



IFAD

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

Map compiled by IFAD | 06-01-2025

Arab Republic of Egypt

Country strategy and programme evaluation

I. Background

A. Introduction

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) of IFAD conducted its third country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in Egypt, as sanctioned at the 140th Session of its Executive Board. The primary goals were to: (i) evaluate the results and performance of the IFAD strategy and operations in Egypt; and (ii) provide findings and recommendations for future collaboration between IFAD and the Government of Egypt (GoE), which can be incorporated into the new Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP).

2. Egypt joined IFAD in 1977, and its initial investment project was approved in 1980. Table 1 details the portfolio, which has seen investments totalling US$1.1 billion to date. It represents the largest country portfolio within IFAD's Near East, North Africa, Europe, and Central Asia Division (NEN).

Table 1
Summary of IFAD operation in Egypt

First IFAD-funded project	1980
Number of approved loans	14
On-going IFAD investment projects	3
Total amount of IFAD financing (since 1980)	US$519.3 million
Government contribution (since 1980)	US$247.8 million
International co-financing (since 1980)	US$174.2 million[1]
Total portfolio cost (since 1980)	US$1.1 billion
Total amount of IFAD financing (5 projects under review)	US$330 million
Government contribution (5 projects under review)	US$71.5 million
Domestic contributions	US$114.2 million
International co-financing (5 projects under review)	US$130.6 million
Total portfolio cost (5 projects under review)	US$646.3 million
Current loan conditions	Ordinary
COSOPs	2000, 2006, 2011, 2019

Source: COSOPs, Financial Management Dashboard (FMDB), Oracle Business Intelligence (OBI)

3. The CSPE covers the period between 2017 and 2023, during which five projects were active, for a total cost of US$646.3 million: On-farm Irrigation Development Project in Oldlands (OFIDO); Promotion of Rural Incomes through Market Enhancement Project (PRIME); Sustainable Agriculture Investments and Livelihoods Project (SAIL); Promoting Resilience in Desert Environments (PRIDE); and Sustainable Transformation for Agricultural Resilience in Upper Egypt (STAR).[2]

[1] It includes contributions from the following organizations: African Development Bank (AfDB); International Development Association; OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); World Food Programme (WFP); Adaptation Fund; Global Environmental Facility (GEF); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
[2] The Climate-Resilient On-Farm Water Management In Nile Valley & Delta Project (CROWN) is not included in the CSPE, as its design had not been finalised when the evaluation commenced.

B. Methodology and process

4. **Evaluation criteria.** According to IFAD's Evaluation Manual, the country strategy and programme was evaluated based on the following criteria: relevance, coherence (encompassing knowledge management, partnership development, and policy dialogue), efficiency, effectiveness (including innovation), impact on rural poverty, gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainability and scaling up (encompassing environment and natural resource management and adaptation to climate change), and the performance of partners (IFAD and government). Each criterion was rated on a scale from one (highly unsatisfactory) to six (highly satisfactory).

5. **Theory of change.** The evaluation team formulated a theory of change to outline the expected impact pathways within the country strategies and programme. This theory captures the causal relationships, outcomes, and underlying assumptions. During the evaluation, the theory of change was methodically analysed, confirmed, and refined. A narrative explanation is provided below, while the graphical depiction is available in Annex III.

6. People living in rural areas, especially women, young people, and vulnerable groups, are at risk of being left behind as Egypt transitions to a market economy under its Vision 2030 plan. They contend with water and land shortages worsened by population growth and climate change. Limited access to resources, knowledge, and water infrastructure also keeps production and productivity low. Rural communities often lack the scale, funds, assets, and capacities for efficient market production. Underdeveloped value chains fail to provide sufficient jobs for youth and land-poor households. Limited access to social services leads to harsh living conditions, particularly in new lands, and unbalanced diets worsen food and nutrition security.

7. Three key pathways strengthen climate and social resilience, enhance nutrition, and boost incomes and assets, all of which lead to reducing rural poverty and improving food security in Egypt:

   - Through the adoption of improved and climate-smart farming systems and modernized on-farm irrigation, smallholders use land and water resources more efficiently and experience production and productivity gains, thus enhancing their resilience to climate change.
   - Providing micro, small and medium enterprises with credit, business and vocational training, strengthening linkages between value chain actors and improving market infrastructure allows for increased sales, economic diversification and employment creation in rural areas, enabling the rural poor to increase their incomes and assets.
   - Comprehensive infrastructure contributes to increase access to social services thus improving living conditions in the new lands, and further leading to increased social inclusion and resilience; while nutrition education leads to increased nutrition awareness and consumption of nutritious food.

8. These measures are supported by intentional efforts to develop improved policies that encourage inclusive and sustainable rural development and stimulate innovations.

9. However, various risks exist, such as climate shocks, extreme weather, market disruptions, weak rural organisations, and low female participation. For success, political and economic stability, government commitment, effective partnerships, project synergies, relevant good practices, private sector investment, and focused efforts on women, youth, and vulnerable groups are essential.

10. **Thematic areas.** Five thematic areas were recurrent and required specific analytical attention: (i) rural finance; (ii) access to markets; (iii) rural

infrastructure; (iv) natural resource management and climate change; and (v) support to rural organisations.[3]

11. **Methodology.** A mixed-methods approach was used to allow triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data collected from various sources. Steps included: desk review; virtual stakeholder interviews; online survey; field mission (including direct observation, key informant interviews and focus group discussions); data analysis; and report writing.[4]

12. **Evaluation process.** The evaluation commenced with the dissemination of the approach paper on 8 May 2024. The inception phase continued until the end of May 2024, involving secondary data collection, virtual interviews, and an extensive desk review. Upon conclusion of this phase, the evaluation team prepared working papers that offered preliminary responses to the evaluation questions and pointed out evidence gaps. Between 3 and 14 June 2024, a field mission was conducted aiming to address the evidence gaps identified in the working papers and to gather additional evidence for effective triangulation of information sources.[5] Preliminary findings were shared in a virtual meeting with IFAD, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR), the Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation (MPEDIC), and project units on 18 July 2024. Further data analysis and drafting of the report ensued. After internal peer review, the report was sent to NEN and the GoE for feedback, which has been incorporated into the final report. Ultimately, IOE and the GoE hosted a Stakeholder Workshop on 17 February 2025 to review the findings and insights from the evaluation with various partners.

13. **Limitations.** Data availability issues were the major limitation for this CSPE, particularly regarding data quality and incomplete beneficiary information (including disaggregated data). Project M&E systems prioritized output over outcome data. Moreover, weaknesses in the impact assessment methodology for the two concluded projects compromised the robustness of the findings.[6] To mitigate these, the CSPE triangulated data from various sources. Furthermore, the time needed to obtain the government's security clearance influenced the organisation of the field mission. This limited the number of governorates that could be visited, impacted consultant participation due to other commitments, and did not allow for an in-country wrap-up meeting. To address this issue, the mission divided into two groups to cover a larger area and held a virtual wrap-up meeting afterwards.

Key points

- This CSPE is the third country-level evaluation in Egypt and covered the period 2017–2023.
- The total cost of the portfolio evaluated was US$646.3 million (US$330 million financed by IFAD).
- This CSPE covered all evaluation criteria in line with the IFAD evaluation manual (2022).
- A theory-based and mixed-methods approach was applied to evaluation.
- The evaluation was conducted from April 2024 to October 2024, with the main mission in the country carried out between 3 and 14 June 2024.
- A key limitation of the CSPE was the lack of evidence in terms of contribution. This was addressed through triangulation of information.

[3] See Annex VI.
[4] See Annex IX for a list of people met.
[5] In addition to meeting stakeholders in Cairo, the mission visited four governorates: Asyut, Kafr El Sheikh, Matrouh and Minya.
[6] The impact assessments were commissioned by the projects and their methodology was reviewed and approved by IFAD experts before launching the field surveys.

II. Country context and IFAD's strategy and operations

A. Country context

Economic and social development

14. **Demographics and governance structure.** With a rapidly increasing population of 102.8 million in 2022, Egypt is the most populous nation in North Africa and the Arab world.[7] From 2010 to 2022, its population grew by an average of two percent annually, but this rate has been decreasing since 2018.[8] Women and youth constitute 49 per cent and 21 per cent of the population, respectively.[9] Due to Egypt's extreme aridity, about 95 per cent of the population resides in the Nile Valley and Delta. There are 27 governorates, 217 cities, and 4,617 villages in the country.

15. **Economy**. Egypt is a lower middle-income country[10] with a Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (current US$) growing from US$1,942 in 2008 to US$4,295 in 2022.[11] Since 2010, its economy has experienced a series of challenges and transformations. Following the political upheaval of the Arab Spring in 2011, Egypt faced a period of economic instability marked by declining foreign direct investment, a decrease in tourism revenues, and elevated inflation and unemployment rates.[12] Subsequent economic reforms, initiated by the GoE with support from the International Monetary Fund and development partners, aimed to address structural issues and improve fiscal discipline. These reforms included subsidy reductions, tax reforms, and a shift towards a more flexible exchange rate.[13] Despite initial hardships, these measures contributed to economic stabilization, with GDP growth gradually picking up (see Table 2 below). In the period 2015-2019, Egypt was the fastest growing economy on average in the North Africa and the Near East,[14] with a GDP growth rate of 5.6 per cent in 2019. Nonetheless, a number of issues required more attention such as high youth unemployment, income inequality, significant public debt, and dependence on the informal economy and remittances.

16. In recent years, the country faced external pressures and exogenous shocks, such as the impact of global economic conditions and oil price fluctuations. The effects of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a decline in foreign investment flows, a slowdown in global trade and a disruption of international supply chains.[15] The Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 further resulted in wheat import disruptions, price shocks and shortages of food commodities.[16] Growth

[7] Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), Statistical Yearbook, 2022.
[8] Although Egypt saw an impressive decline in the country's total fertility rate, from 4.5 to 3.0 births per woman, between 1988 and 2008, the total fertility rate then climbed sharply to 3.4 births per woman in 2014 before falling again to 2.85 in 2021. (World Bank (2023), Country Partnership Framework).
[9] World Bank databank 2022 and CAPMAS 2021. According to CAPMAS, youth is defined as the population in the age group 18-29.
[10] According to the World Bank Classification, Egypt was classified as follows: (i) 1987-1989: lower-middle income country; (ii) 1990 – 1995: low-income country; (iii) 1995 – 2022: lower-middle income country. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, The World by Income and Region, https://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/the-world-by-income-and-region.html
[11] The country GDP per capita saw an increase from 2008 to 2015 (from US$1,942 to US$3,370). A decrease was observed in the period 2016-2017 reaching US$2,440 in 2017. From 2018 to 2022 a sustained increase was observed from US$2,531 to US$4,295. Source: World Bank databank.
[12] World Bank databank.
[13] To promote the private sector, Egypt initiated a series of bold reforms in 2016. Despite the adoption of important reforms, private investment remained modest. (World Bank (2020). Country Private Sector Diagnostic – Creating Markets in Egypt. Realizing the full potential of a productive private sector).
[14] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2021). Production Transformation Policy Review of Egypt: Embracing Change, Achieving Prosperity.
[15] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, (2021), Egypt Human Development Report.
[16] World Bank Group, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Finance Corporation (2023), Multilateral Investment Guarantee, Agency Country Partnership Framework for Arab Republic of Egypt for the Period 2023–2027; World Trade Organization (2022), The Crisis in Ukraine, Implications of the War for Global Trade and Development.

slowed down in 2022 as government debt mounted, inflation surged and massive capital outflows occurred with advanced economies tightening their monetary policy, which led to foreign currency shortages and a more than 50 per cent devaluation of the Egyptian pound. Financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund was put in place in late 2022 to support Egypt to expand the scope of policy reforms and reduce public debt and macro-economic imbalances.[17] Inflation surpassed 30 per cent in 2023 (Table 2) and is expected to stay high in the near future, impacting household spending. The 2023 conflict in Gaza has significantly impacted Egypt's economy, particularly affecting sectors such as Suez Canal revenues and gas exports.[18] The heightened uncertainty surrounding the conflict's future also undermined confidence among consumers and businesses, potentially leading to reduced spending and investment.[19] Despite slower growth, recovery conditions are improving, amongst others thanks to significant reforms.[20]

Table 2.
Economic indicators

Indicator	*2010*	*2011*	*2015*	*2017*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023*	*2024*
GDP growth (annual%)	5.2	1,8	4.4	4.2	5,6	3,6	3,3	6,6	3.8	2.4
Agric., forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)	13.3	13.8	11.4	11	10.7	11.2	11.4	10.9	10.6	n.a.
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-2.1	-2.3	-3.7	-5.8	-3.4	-2.9	-4.3	-3.5	-1.2	-4.3
Inflation consumer prices (annual%)	11.3	10	10.6	30.2	14.4	5.3	4.5	8.8	31.9	35.7

Source: World Bank databank, databank.worldbank.org; World Bank (2024). Growth in the Middle East and North Africa.

17. **Poverty.** The percentage of the Egyptian population below the national poverty line declined for the first time in 20 years in 2020 to 29.7 per cent, down from 32.5 per cent in 2018, while the proportion of population in extreme poverty dropped from 6.2 to 4.5 per cent.[21] The mobilisation of public resources in basic services, health, and education, alongside expanded social protection programs, contributed to improvements. High inflation severely affects vulnerable populations, underscoring the need to strengthen social safety nets. Addressing poverty in rural Upper Egypt is crucial due to higher poverty rates than the national average.[22] From 1990 to 2021, Egypt's Human Development Index (HDI) increased by 27.8 per cent. In 2021, Egypt was positioned 97th among 191 countries with an HDI value of 0.73. The Gini Index shows that inequality has remained stable in recent years.[23] Income inequality in Egypt remains a significant area of focus, particularly concerning inflation and economic reforms. This issue is more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban regions, indicating opportunities for targeted support and development initiatives.[24] Government-supported social safety net interventions,

[17] OECD (2024), OECD Economic Surveys, Egypt 2024, Executive Summary.
[18] Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation (2024). Egypt's GDP developments for the fourth quarter and FY 2023/2024.
[19] International Monetary Fund (2023), Blog, Middle East Conflict Risks Reshaping the Region's Economies.
[20] OECD (2024). OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2024 Issue 2: Egypt.
[21] Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (2021), Egypt's 2021 Voluntary National Review.
[22] World Bank (2019), Understanding Poverty and Inequality in Egypt.
[23] The Gini index in Egypt was 31.9 in 2019 (World Bank databank).
[24] United Nations (2023). United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – Arab Republic of Egypt.

such as the Takaful and Karama programmes, have aimed to reduce the impact of macro-economic reforms on low-income and vulnerable populations.

18. **Food and nutrition security.** As reported by the 2022 Global Hunger Index, Egypt maintains a moderate hunger level, ranking 57th out of 121 countries. Between 2020 and 2022, 31.1 per cent of the population faced moderate or severe food insecurity, up from 27.8 per cent in 2014-2016, indicating a small increase.[25] Egypt ranks 77th globally on the Global Food Security Index, with a score of 56. Strengths include affordable food through safety-net programs and stable food prices. However, access to high-quality and safe food needs improvement.[26] The war in Ukraine has further impacted food security leading to rising food prices, which forced many households to reduce their food consumption.[27] Undernourishment increased from 5.2 per cent in 2000-2002 to 7.2 per cent in 2020-2022. Though stunting among children under five dropped from 25.9 per cent in 2000 to 20.4 per cent in 2022, 2.5 million children remain affected. The country faces a double burden of malnutrition, with nearly 40 per cent of adults suffering from obesity alongside undernutrition.[28] Major constraints to food and nutrition security include heavy dependence on grain imports, food accessibility and affordability for low-income households, climate change impacts on the food supply chain and agricultural productivity, high levels of food loss and waste, and concerns about food quality and safety.[29] Food subsidies through the Good Subsidy System are the cornerstone of the country's social protection system.[30]

19. **Gender and social inclusion.** Over the past decade, Egypt has achieved notable advancements in gender equality indicators, especially concerning educational attainment and women's presence in public spheres. In 2024, Egypt ranked 135th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index and 10th out of 15 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region with a total score of 0.63. Despite these achievements, significant gender gaps remain. Women continue to face lower access to education, health, employment and productive resources.

20. In addition to women, there are specific groups often identified as especially vulnerable, including:

- **Youth**: Egypt's young population is rapidly growing, representing 21 per cent of the population in 2022. They face relevant challenges in accessing finance and the labour market with 19 per cent of youth in the age group 15-24 being unemployed, over twice as high as the national rate;[31]
- **Persons with disabilities**: It is estimated that there are between 12 and 15 million persons with disabilities in Egypt. Despite legal and constitutional guarantees, they face a wide range of barriers, including access to information, education, health care and job opportunities;[32]
- **Refugees**: Egypt hosts more than 792,783 registered refugees and asylum-seekers from 62 nationalities, and particularly from Sudan and Syria.[33] They

[25] Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), FAOSTAT, Suite of Food Security Indicators.
[26] Economist (2022). Global Food Security Index 2022. Country Report: Egypt.
[27] UNICEF (2023), Economic Research Forum, Policy Research Report, The Socioeconomic Impact of the Russia-Ukraine Crisis on Vulnerable Families and Children in Egypt: Mitigating Food Security and Nutrition Concerns.
[28] UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/egypt/nutrition.
[29] IFAD, Arab Republic of Egypt Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2019-2024, 2018; WFP, Egypt, https://www.wfp.org/countries/egypt.
[30] International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI (2021), Food Subsidies and Cash Transfers in Egypt, Evaluating general equilibrium benefits and trade-offs.
[31] World Bank databank, databank.worldbank.org, 2023.
[32] Egyptian Cabinet - Information and Decision Support Center (2024). Egypt's Efforts to Address Challenges Facing Persons with Disabilities: Enhancing Progress and Exploring Barriers; US Department of State (2023). Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Egypt; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2020). Persons with disabilities dashboard – Disability in the Arab region.
[33] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Refugee Context in Egypt. (accessed December 2024).

encounter various obstacles in accessing economic opportunities, which can contribute to intricate social dynamics and necessitate protective measures.[34]

Agricultural sector and rural development challenges

21. **Agriculture.** Although agriculture's contribution to GDP has fallen over time, the sector still accounts for 11 per cent of GDP[35] and 20 per cent of export revenue (making it a fundamental source of exports and foreign exchange) and provides employment for about 25 per cent of the labour force. Egyptian agriculture is characterized by two types of land. The first type is represented by the "*old lands*", which cover 85 per cent of Egypt's agricultural land and are mostly located along the Nile Valley and Delta. These farming areas are dominated by smallholders focusing on strengthening agricultural productivity. The second type of land consists of "*new lands*", reclaimed from the desert. Landholdings on "*new lands*" are larger in size and more subjected to the use of capital-intensive technologies. Furthermore, agriculture is practiced in rainfed areas and oases, yet to a much lesser extent. The most common crops cultivated in Egypt include wheat, maize, rice, sugar cane, sugar beet, tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, onions, green pepper, and green haricot beans. Livestock is an integral part of agriculture, accounting for about 37.5 per cent to the total value of agricultural production and supporting the livelihoods of a large share of the population.[36] Only 10 percent of primary production is processed in Egypt, highlighting the need for improved value chains. Strengthening these could unlock new market opportunities and boost employment and income in agriculture.[37] The significant government involvement in agribusiness limits private sector participation, and the regulatory environment is challenging.[38]

22. **Rural poverty and smallholders.** The rural population comprises around 57 per cent of the total population who largely depend on agriculture as a main livelihood.[39] Nevertheless, further progress is required in poverty reduction and achieving food security in rural areas, especially in rural Upper Egypt, where 51.9 percent of the population struggles to meet their basic needs.[40] Farms are typically small, with an average of about one feddan or 0.42 hectare (90 per cent are less than three feddans). Most rural workers are self-employed on their own farms or in small rural non-farm enterprises.[41] Large segments of the rural population work informally in unpaid family or subsistence occupations.[42] Smallholders face various challenges, including outdated technologies, poor irrigation infrastructure, and limited access to quality inputs, services, post-harvest technologies, market information, and public extension services. The absence of digital solutions for better water, soil, and pest management compounds these issues. Excessive use of water resources and agrochemicals leads to high production costs, reduced soil fertility, wastage, losses, and low farm income.[43]

23. **Rural women and youth.** Gender gaps persist in rural regions. Approximately 70 per cent of rural women are engaged in unpaid work on family farms and businesses, and a mere two percent have land ownership.[44] Women actively participate in various informal activities, such as fertiliser application, weeding, harvesting, sacking, marketing, and storing agricultural products. Additionally, they

[34] WFP (2023), Executive Board, Annual Session, Egypt country strategic plan (2023-2028).
[35] World Bank Databank, databank.worldbank.org, 2022.
[36] FAO (2020). The long-term future of livestock and fishery in Egypt.
[37] World Bank (2021). Accelerating the transformation of Egypt's agri-food system: Impact of investments in selected value-chains.
[38] For instance, despite the reforms introduced in 2014, the Agriculture Cooperatives Law remains limited in its ability to permit commercially oriented market links for small farmers (World Bank 2020. Creating markets in Egypt).
[39] CAPMAS (2024). Population.
[40] UNDP (2023), Rural Resilience in Egypt: Exploring finance as a tool.
[41] FAO (2022), Gender, Water and Agriculture Assessing the Nexus in Egypt, 2022.
[42] IFAD, Arab Republic of Egypt, Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2019-2024, 2018.
[43] IFAD (2019), STAR, Project Design Report; Adaptation Fund (2020), Project/Programme Proposal to the Adaptation Fund
[44] WFP (2023), Executive Board, Annual Session, Egypt country strategic plan (2023-2028).

handle all household chores, including water and fuel collection.[45] Women face difficulties than men in obtaining loans due to requirements for land and assets as collateral, higher illiteracy rates, and institutional biases of service providers, which can hinder business growth. Furthermore, women farmers in general have limited access to agricultural resources and equipment compared to men.[46] Although many people living in rural areas are young, they face challenges in starting businesses due to a lack of capital and vocational skills, as well as restricted access to land.[47]

24. **Climate change and water scarcity.** Egypt is facing increasingly severe impacts from climate change and growing difficulties related to water shortages.[48] Climate change is likely to raise average temperatures and heat extremes in Egypt's dry climate, worsening existing vulnerabilities. This could intensify long-standing human development and regional disparities. Poor and vulnerable populations in Egypt are at higher risk due to geographical factors, limited resources to handle shocks, and greater involvement in informal and agricultural work. The Nile River, which provides approximately 97 percent of Egypt's freshwater supply, is under growing pressure as temperatures rise and precipitation patterns shift. Egypt is consuming more water than its renewable resources can provide, and water demand is expected to grow further due to population increases and the needs of productive sectors. Projections indicate Egypt will hit severe water scarcity by 2033.[49] The government promotes seawater desalination as one of the solutions to address water scarcity.[50]

25. **Land scarcity**. Egypt has about 3.1 million hectares of arable land, which makes up just 3.1 per cent of its total land area.[51] Egypt has experienced a concerning trend in land scarcity, primarily driven by rapid population growth, urbanization, and agricultural expansion. The country's limited arable land has been further diminished by the encroachment of urban areas into fertile regions, exacerbating the challenge of sustaining a growing population. Additionally, climate change impacts, such as water scarcity, desertification and sea level rise, have further reduced viable land for cultivation. Many rural people are landless, either relying entirely on wage labour for their survival or working as sharecroppers.[52] The government is working to increase arable land by encouraging private sector participation.[53]

26. **Rural finance**. Rural finance in Egypt faces ongoing difficulties, as financial services rarely reach remote regions, stalling rural economic progress. The country relies on an informal financial sector with community-based groups like rotating savings, village savings and loans, accumulating savings and credit associations, community development associations (CDAs), and occasional borrowing from relatives and friends. Finance is primarily controlled by a State-owned Bank, limiting the roles of nonbank finance companies and microfinance institutions, which are usually significant contributors in agri-financing. Institutional finance in agriculture remains at just one percent.[54] The Government and development partners have launched initiatives to boost financial inclusion, for example through the promotion of prepaid electronic payment cards.[55] However, efforts to enhance financial inclusion are hindered by the absence of a collateral market for agricultural land, inadequate tailored services, poor infrastructure, low literacy

[45] FAO (2022), Country Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and Rural Sector: Egypt.
[46] FAO (2022), Gender, Water and Agriculture Assessing the Nexus in Egypt, 2022.
[47] IFAD, Climate-Resilient on Farm Water Management in the Nile Valley and Delta, Concept Note, 2023.
[48] In 2022, Egypt ranked 104th among 185 countries in the Notre Dame Gain Index (index ranking countries' climate adaptation performance).
[49] World Bank (2022). Egypt – Country climate and development report.
[50] EBRD (2023). EBRD and IFC support seawater desalination and renewables in Egypt.
[51] World Bank databank, databank.worldbank.org.
[52] United States Agency for International Development, USAID (2010). Country profile – Property rights and resource governance: Egypt.
[53] See e.g. the 1.5 Million Feddan Project: https://www.investinegypt.gov.eg/English/pages/reef.aspx
[54] World Bank (2020). Country private sector diagnostic – Creating markets in Egypt.
[55] See e.g. UNESCWA (2024). Egypt Post expands financial inclusion for underserved populations (2004–present).

rates, and the dominance of informal economies, making it hard for rural residents to access formal financial services. The Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) relies heavily on the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) to enhance rural finance access, but it has failed to effectively reach IFAD's target groups.[56]

Agricultural policy and institutional framework

27. **Policy framework**. The Government's development plans, guided by "Egypt Vision 2030" (updated in 2023), aim for a productive and efficient economy with sustainable and inclusive growth. In agriculture, the focus is on boosting irrigation investments, improving production efficiency, reducing post-harvest losses, and enhancing market access.

28. The 2009 Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy towards 2030, revised in 2021, outlines its key objectives as follows: ensuring the sustainable utilisation of natural agricultural resources; enhancing land and water productivity; bolstering food security for essential crops like wheat and rice; boosting the competitiveness of agricultural products in both local and global markets; fostering a favourable climate for agricultural investments; elevating the living standards in rural communities; and decreasing poverty levels in rural regions.

29. Other key policies and strategies include: several land reclamation strategies and initiatives, the National Water Resources Plan for Egypt (2017-2037), the Water Resources and Irrigation Law (2021), the National Youth Strategy (2021-2030), the Financial Inclusion Strategy of the Central Bank of Egypt (2021-2025), the National Climate Change Strategy 2050 (2022), the Industry and Trade Development Strategy (2016-2020); the National strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 (2017), the Food and Nutrition Policy and Strategy (2007–2017), the national food and nutrition strategy 2022–2030, and the Presidential Decree no. 141 (2014) on rural finance.

30. **Institutional framework**. The main players in the agricultural and rural development sector are the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR), the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI), the Agricultural Bank of Egypt, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA, formerly Social Fund for Development, SFD), the Agriculture Research and Development Fund (ARDF), the Ministry of Environment, the National Council for Women, the Ministry for Youth and Sports, agricultural cooperatives, farmers' marketing associations (FMAs), water users' associations and CDAs.[57] Donor coordination is facilitated through the Development Partners Group (consisting of key bilateral and multilateral development partners) and the Global Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation, a multi-stakeholder platform launched by MPDEIC to coordinate development partner engagement with the government.[58]

31. **Investments in the agricultural sector**. Government investment in the agricultural sector has decreased from 6.5 in 2017-2018 to 4.4 per cent of total public investments in 2021-2022, standing at EGP 3.77 billion.[59] Financial support by development partners for the agricultural sector decreased from US$151 million in 2017 to US$121 million in 2022.[60] IFAD is the primary multilateral investor in the agriculture sector in Egypt. The country's large market is attractive to foreign agro-food investors. Since 2016, Egypt has been the third-largest recipient of agro-food foreign direct investment in Africa.[61] High inflation and anticipated currency depreciation have made international investors cautious amid tightening monetary

[56] IOE (2017). Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation – Egypt.
[57] Coordination amongst these main players has proven to be a challenge in the past, for example between MALR and MWRI (see the 2017 CSPE).
[58] See
[59] Ministry of planning and economic development, National Data Accounts, Public Investments,
[60] OECD, Query Wizard for International Development Statistics, https://stats.oecd.org/qwids/.
[61] OECD (2021). Production Transformation Policy Review of Egypt: Embracing Change, Achieving Prosperity.

policy in advanced economies. Furthermore, migrant remittances have been one of its main sources of external finance, nearly making up 10 per cent of GDP in 2019.[62] Most of it is used for daily household consumption expenses.

B. IFAD's strategy and operations for the CSPE period

32. **Evolving strategies.** IFAD articulated its partnership with the government around four COSOPs covering the periods 2002-2005, 2006-2009, 2011-2018 and 2019-2024 respectively. Performance over the first three COSOPs was assessed in the 2004 CPE and 2017 CSPE. The **2011-2018 COSOP** aimed to contribute to the reduction of rural poverty and the enhancement of national food security in Egypt. The strategy included three strategic objectives: (i) strengthening the technical skills and organizational capacity of poor rural men and women to take advantage of rural on and off farm economic opportunities; (ii) enhancing the sustainable use if natural resources; and (iii) improving access to services. Emphasis was put on working closely with smallholder farmers and their organizations, small rural entrepreneurs and rural women, with a geographical focus on Upper and Middle Egypt and the poorest governorates of Lower Egypt. The COSOP was updated and extended in 2015. While the three strategic objectives remained unchanged and some targets were updated, the major change was the reintroduction of the intention of IFAD to support settlements in the new lands.

33. The **2017 CSPE**, covering the period 2005–2016, generated recommendations for the subsequent COSOP and called for: (i) sharpening the poverty and geographical focus; (ii) sharpening the thematic focus and feasibility at design; (iii) a progressive programmatic approach; (iv) improved knowledge management (KM); and (v) a more strategic approach in building the capacities of community-level institutions.

34. The **2019-2024 COSOP** aims to contribute to the sustainable improvement of rural incomes and resilient livelihoods in Egypt. It includes two strategic objectives: (i) improve livelihoods of rural men and women by enhancing productivity and profitability of agriculture related activities; (ii) foster the development of enhanced polices that support inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. Building on the lessons learned from IFAD's experience in Egypt, the 2017 CSPE and MPEDIC's own evaluation of the 2012-2018 COSOP, the following changes were integrated in the country strategy: (i) a reduction of the geographic coverage by focusing on one or two governorates in the same region; (ii) an increased emphasis on gender and nutrition; (iii) a sharper thematic focus on rural water infrastructure, access to markets and finance and adaptation to climate change;[63] (iv) an enhanced programmatic approach; and (v) a greater attention given to KM and policy engagement.

Table 3.
Comparison of COSOPs

	2011-2018 COSOP (updated in 2015)	2019-2024 COSOP
Overall objective	Contribute to the reduction of rural poverty and the enhancement of national food security.	Contribute to the sustainable improvement of rural incomes and resilient livelihoods.
Strategic objectives	(SO1) Strengthen the technical skills and organizational capacity of poor rural men and women to take advantage of rural on and off farm economic opportunities;	(SO1) Improve livelihoods of rural men and women by enhancing productivity and profitability of agriculture-related activities;

[62] OECD (2020). Tackling Coronavirus (COVID-19) Contributing to a Global Effort, The COVID-19 Crisis in Egypt.
[63] In particular, the COSOP seeks to: (i) improve water use efficiency at scale, promote the use of renewable energy in irrigation and incentivize, build capacities and provide evidence to inform policy process and agricultural investment decisions on the crucial role of water use efficiency; (ii) support greater competition for access to rural finance, and promote the capacities of CDAs, as a key conduit for microfinance delivery in rural areas; (iii) create better linkages to value chain and marketing, including through farmers fields schools, FMAs, extension, public-private partnerships and the use of contract farming arrangements.

	(SO2) Enhance pro-poor sustainable use of natural resources, especially land and water; (SO3) Improve access of poor rural farmers to better quality services (technology, finance and markets).	(SO2) Foster the development of enhanced policies that support inclusive and sustainable rural transformation.
Geographic priority	Upper and Middle Egypt and the poorest governorates of Lower Egypt	One or two priority governorates, to be identified with the government
Main target groups	Smallholder farmers, poor rural entrepreneurs, and landless youth. Special focus on women. Work with cooperatives, FMAs, WUAs, CDAs.	Rural households that constitute the poor inhabitants that are currently or potentially economically active. Special on the inclusion of smallholders cultivating less than one feddan, landless labourers, unemployed youth and women-headed households. Work with cooperatives, FMAs, WUAs, CDAs.

Source: 2012 and 2019 COSOPs

35. **Loan portfolio.** Five projects were active between 2017 and 2023.[64] This includes one project (OFIDO) approved under the 2006 COSOP, three (PRIME, SAIL and PRIDE) under the 2011 COSOP and one (STAR) under the 2019 COSOP. OFIDO and PRIME are closed, while the other three are ongoing. The possibility to assess these projects using the evaluation criteria mentioned above, depends on their implementation status (see Table 4). The Climate-Resilient On-Farm Water Management In Nile Valley & Delta Project (CROWN) is not assessed by the CSPE, as its design had not been finalised when the evaluation commenced.

Table 4.
Projects covered by the CSPE (million US$) and their evaluability

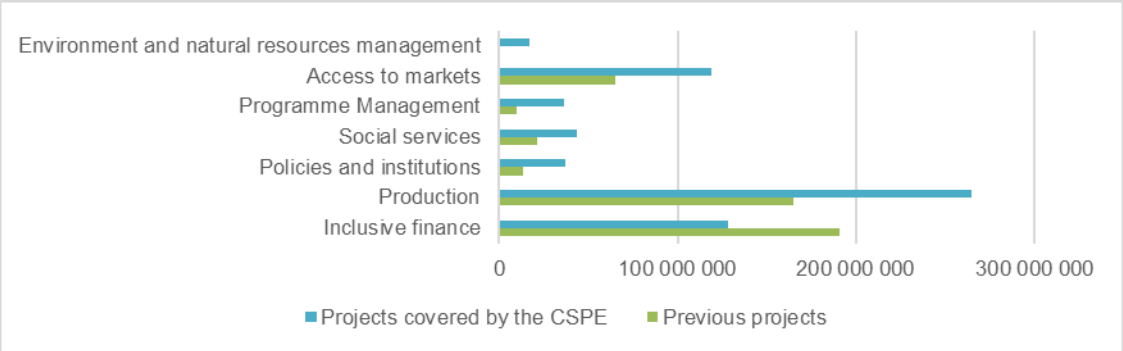
Name	*Type*	*Implementation period*	*Total cost*	*Status*	*Evaluation criteria*
OFIDO	Irrigation	2010-2020	92.1	Closed	All criteria
PRIME	Credit	2012-2021	108.2	Closed	All criteria
SAIL	Credit	2015-2024	94.6	On going	Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency
PRIDE	Rural Dev.	2019-2026	81.6	On going	Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency
STAR	Irrigation	2022-2025	269.6	On going	Relevance

Source: OBI

36. During the period under review, the highest investment in terms of portfolio thematic areas was production (41 per cent), followed by inclusive rural finance (20 per cent) and access to markets (18 per cent). The lowest investment categories were social services (7 per cent), policies and institutions (6 per cent) and environment and natural resources management (3 per cent). In comparison to before, a shift can be witnessed in the portfolio under review, with the production sector (focused on irrigation infrastructure and improved crop farming) replacing inclusive rural finance as the main area of investment and the introduction of environment and natural resources management as a new area of support.

[64] The design of Climate-Resilient On-Farm Water Management In Nile Valley & Delta (CROWN) was only finalised in July 2024 and was therefore outside of the scope of this CSPE.

Graphic 1.
Comparison of thematic area investments for the reviewed portfolio versus earlier projects (US$)



Source: OBI

37. **Performance Based Allocation system and lending terms.** Performance-based allocations are determined by the IFAD over a three-year period and are modified yearly. Egypt has received the following allocations: 2010-2012: US$84.9 million; 2013-2015: US$67.7 million; 2016-2018: US$62.9 million; 2019-2021: US$64.5 million; and 2022-2024: US$50.3 million. While there has been a significant decrease in 2022, Egypt has become eligible for IFAD's Borrowed Resource Access Mechanism. IFAD lending in the period under review was provided on intermediate terms for OFIDO and PRIME, and on ordinary terms for SAIL, PRIDE and STAR.[65]

38. **Grant portfolio.** Twenty-two grants listed Egypt as a country of interest between 2017 and 2023, for a total financing of over US$20.4 million.[66] Except one, all were regional or global. The main thematic areas included food security and nutrition, policy dialogue, KM, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), access to markets, climate change and sustainable production (agriculture, aquaculture), as well as support to farmers' organizations. An increasing emphasis is also placed on south-south and triangular cooperation (SSTC) for agricultural development and food security in line with the strategy outlined in the 2019 COSOP. Most grant recipients were NGOs, farmers' organizations, research centres, and international organizations.

39. **Non-lending activities.** IFAD COSOPs, and particularly the 2019 COSOP, prioritized policy engagement for sector-wide transformation with special focus on women and youth participation in the rural economy, rural institutions, cooperative reform, water use efficiency, access to finance and promoting higher value crops and nutrition. This included a policy-related evaluation of field results, and technical assistance to provide analysis and recommendations. Furthermore, the regional hub in Cairo was expected to enable stronger involvement in existing and new working groups on key technical and policy issues. In November 2022, the Government of Egypt selected IFAD to lead the multi-billion-dollar food and agriculture pillar of the Platform for Water, Food and Energy Programme (NWFE). NWFE encourages climate finance and private investments to support Egypt's green transition, linking climate action with development efforts. It includes nine projects with a total cost of US$14.8 billion, while the food and agriculture sector includes five projects totalling US$ 3.4 billion.[67]

[65] Since the beginning of IFAD operations in Egypt, lending terms evolved as follows: highly concessional in 1980-1982 and 1994-1998; intermediate in 1984-1992 and 2002-2011; ordinary since 2014.
[66] See Annex V for a list of the grants listing Egypt as a country of interest.
[67] IFAD is expected to lead the coordination of developing Egypt's strategic vision for the agricultural sector, and support the government in the mobilization of financial and technical resources for the five projects under the food pillar. IFAD, News, IFAD to lead the food pillar of Egypt's Nexus for Water, Food and Energy, November 2022. IFAD's contribution is mainly through the CROWN project. Besides IFAD, strategic partners of the Nexus of Water, Food and Energy Programme include the United Nations, EBDR, AfDB, EIB, Climate Investment Fund, Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero Emissions and International Renewable Energy Agency. Regarding the food pillar, specific partners include the World Bank, EIB/EU and IDB.

40. The COSOPs also highlighted the need for strong partnerships with government institutions (MALR, MPEDIC and MIWR), autonomous semi-public organizations (ARDF, SFD), the private sector (agro-processing and export), Rome-based agencies and development partners (AfDB, the Agence Française de Développement, the German Development Agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, UNDP, USAID, the World Bank).

41. Finally, KM was also a key dimension of IFAD strategies to support learning, innovation, policy engagement and scaling up. Engagement was foreseen at four levels (project, cross-project, national and regional), while leveraging partnerships with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and IFPRI. In addition, the 2019 COSOP foresaw support to SSTC (within the NEN region and specifically with Moldova, Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia) with a focus on opportunities for smallholder agricultural business development and innovative activities that foster rural transformation for improved livelihood. The 2019 COSOP identified the two potential areas for knowledge transfer from Egypt: (i) implementation of improved rural water infrastructure and modern irrigation applications; and (ii) integration of community infrastructure and institutions in newly created irrigation schemes.

42. **Implementing partners**. IFAD's main counterpart in Egypt is MALR, which houses project management units. Another key partner of IFAD is MPEDIC, which is acting as borrower on behalf of the Government of Egypt.[68] MPEDIC is also coordinating the implementation of Vision 2030 on behalf of the Government and is thus an important strategic partner. Other partners include MWRI, MSMEDA and the Agricultural Development Program (ADP).

43. **Programme management.** IFAD established its country presence in 2005, as part of a field presence pilot. The Host Country Agreement was signed in November 2011. In 2016, the country office was upgraded to the North Africa and Middle East hub (becoming fully operational in 2018).[69] In 2021, the hub converted into a multi-country office.[70] The country office currently includes the Country Director, a Country Programme Assistant; a Country Programme Analyst, a Country Administrative Assistant, a Junior Professional Officer, a Country Programme Coordinator, a Procurement Consultant; Programme Liaison Associate and a number of regional thematic specialists.

[68] MPEDIC coordinates national economic cooperation with international organizations and signs financial and technical agreements for the Egyptian government.
[69] IFAD, ICO/24/18, Note Verbale, 2018, https://xdesk.ifad.org/sites/NENop/Lists/EGY/00.Country%20Documents/Correspondence/ICO_24_18_NV%20to%20MoFA_Communication%20of%20the%20selection%20of%20Egypt%20office%20as%20Hub.pdf.
[70] The multi country office covers the following countries: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

Key points

- Egypt is a lower middle-income country. Its economy has experienced a series of challenges in recent years, including the impact of global economic conditions, oil price fluctuations and high inflation levels.
- Although agriculture's contribution to GDP has fallen over time, the sector still provides employment for about 25 per cent of the labour force.
- While the proportion of population in poverty dropped over the last years, food insecurity increased. Current high inflation is particularly painful for the most vulnerable. The face of poverty is rural and female and mostly concentrated in rural Upper Egypt.
- With only three per cent of its total land area being arable, Egypt has experienced a concerning trend in land scarcity, primarily driven by rapid population growth, urbanization, and agricultural expansion.
- Egypt is grappling with the exacerbating effects of climate change and escalating challenges of water scarcity.
- The 2019 COSOP introduced several changes: reduced geographic coverage, increased emphasis on gender and nutrition, sharper focus on water infrastructure, access to markets and finance and climate change, enhanced programmatic approach, and greater attention to KM and policy engagement.

III. Performance and rural poverty impact of the country programme and strategy

A. Relevance

Alignment with priorities of the government and IFAD

44. **The portfolio remained closely aligned with GoE's agricultural policies.** The COSOPs and projects were developed collaboratively with the government, leveraging IFAD's solid partnership with MALR to ensure alignment. The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs and five loan investments were designed under SADS, aiming to modernize Egyptian agriculture, enhance food security, and improve rural livelihoods. Their goals matched SADS' focus on sustainable natural resource use, increased land and water productivity, better food security for key commodities like wheat and rice, enhanced agricultural competitiveness, a favorable investment climate, improved rural living standards, and reduced rural poverty. The portfolio also aligned with GoE's Vision 2030 and various national policies.[71]

45. **The government's expectations regarding IFAD loans, international co-financing partners, and cost recovery increasingly complicated project design.** IFAD is grappling with the GoE's conservative fiscal stance, as the National Debt Committee resists more debt, including from IFAD, and closely examines proposed loans. The government shows reluctance to fund soft investments unless there is a clear cost recovery and repayment plan from sector ministries and agencies. This challenge is evident in the delays with STAR and the complications in designing and approving CROWN.[72]

46. **The portfolio was generally aligned with IFAD's corporate policies and strategies.** Consistent with IFAD's Strategic Frameworks, efforts concentrated on improving rural people's capacity, productivity, and market involvement, increasing access to sustainable resource management, and creating pro-poor agricultural value chains.[73] Although the 2012 COSOP highlighted issues like gender equality, youth employment, and climate change adaptation, the 2019 COSOP paid more attention to IFAD's mainstreaming themes, including nutrition. PRIDE was designed as a youth and nutrition sensitive project and STAR as a gender transformative, youth and nutrition sensitive and climate focused project.

47. **There were inconsistencies related to rural finance projects and engagements with tribal communities.** The provision of support for rural finance did not align with the guiding principles outlined in IFAD's 2009 Rural Finance Policy.[74] This policy emphasizes enhancing access to various financial services, engaging a broad spectrum of providers and delivery models, utilizing innovative and demand-driven approaches, collaborating with the private sector through market-based systems to minimize distortions, and implementing sustainable, long-term strategies aimed at poverty reduction and fostering an enabling environment through policy dialogue.[75] Interventions were not demand-driven and used subsidised interest rates that might distort markets. Conversely, building on the lessons of their predecessors, STAR and the newly designed CROWN aim to address these issues. As stipulated by IFAD's 2009 Policy on

[71] See Box 3 in Annex VIII. It is important to highlight that SAIL has also been playing a role in the Haya Karima social protection initiative, which was launched by the President in 2022. This programme addresses not just material poverty but also various dimensions of poverty. Notably, seven out of the thirty communities targeted by SAIL are designated as Haya Karima villages.
[72] See COSOP Completion Report 2024.
[73] The 2012 COSOP, OFIDO, PRIME and SAIL were designed during the implementation of IFAD's Strategic Framework 2011-2015, while PRIDE and STAR were designed under IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025.
[74] Although IFAD introduced a new Inclusive Rural Finance Policy in 2021, the projects under review were designed based on the 2009 Policy. Nevertheless, the 2021 Policy also emphasizes offering diversified and customized financial products and services while avoiding market distortions.
75 This was also confirmed during key informant interviews with IFAD. The 2017 CSPE already pointed out issues with support to rural finance (e.g. #175).

Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and its Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP), securing the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of tribal communities is mandatory, and an FPIC Plan must be included in project designs. Despite this, PRIDE did not implement it; however, their community-driven approach partially compensated by enabling extensive consultations with the tribal communities involved.

48. **The 2019 COSOP set forth an ambitious agenda focused on KM, policy engagement and partnership development, which was very relevant but lacked a clear implementation strategy.** The portfolio holds extensive expertise in areas such as irrigation development, creation of community-level institutions, and rural finance. IFAD's proximity to field operations affords it an advantage in leveraging local insights. Proper documentation and dissemination of this knowledge can enhance policy discussions, scaling initiatives, and IFAD's value proposition among its peers. The 2017 CSPE underscored the portfolio's poor performance in non-lending activities. Consequently, the 2019 COSOP introduced a distinct strategic objective focused on policy development, while also enhancing efforts in partnership-building and KM. However, there was neither a realistic evaluation of the necessary human and financial resources nor a clear implementation strategy to realise its goals.[76]

49. **IFAD's portfolio continued to address relevant issues of rural poverty.** Key issues faced by smallholder farmers in Egypt were addressed in a comprehensive and consistent manner: water scarcity (supporting modernised on-farm irrigation, water harvesting and climate-smart practices), land scarcity (promoting new land development and off-farm employment opportunities), low productivity (promoting improved agricultural practices, e.g. through farmer field schools - FFS), low profit margins (supporting market aggregation, improving quality and facilitating linkages between value chain actors), limited access to credit (involving rural financial grassroots institutions), weak basic service coverage (investments in education and health) and limited decision-making power (support to rural organisations, especially for water infrastructure management, creating economies of scale and inclusion of vulnerable groups).

50. **Some progress was made in terms of approaches to address rural poverty issues.** Specific focus continued to be on tackling water scarcity and access, unemployment and landlessness, and supporting farmers' organisations. All projects promoted improved water efficiency, by supporting on-farm irrigation, improving drainage or water harvesting and strengthening WUAs. SAIL, PRIDE and STAR addressed previously neglected areas: first, more attention to climate change adaptation (e.g. strengthening extension services and promoting the use of renewable energy) and, secondly, including interventions beyond mesqa level[77] (in the case of STAR). Young graduates were targeted by projects like SAIL, PRIDE and STAR (e.g. as extensionists, veterinarians or for land allocation), while newer projects, namely PRIDE and STAR, were designed as youth-sensitive projects (with a focus on youth enterprises and vocational training). The landless were targeted by all projects, e.g. by creating off-farm employment opportunities or land allocation. A broad set of farmers' and community-based organisations were created or supported to improve market access, namely community development associations (CDA; non-profit organizations providing a range of social as well as economic services), agricultural cooperatives and marketing associations (MA; usually as committees within agricultural cooperatives and CDAs). The 2019

[76] The section on coherence in this report contains a more elaborate assessment of the portfolio's performance on non-lending activities.

[77] The structure of the water distribution network in Egypt involves successive levels of canals comprising the main feeders from the river to main (primary) canals, branch (secondary) canals, mesqa (tertiary) canals, and Marwa (quaternary) canals or field ditches. Main and branch canals are publicly owned and are managed and maintained by MWRI. Mesqa and marwa canals are located on private land and are owned, operated, and maintained by farmers (Molle et al. 2015. "Irrigation Improvement Projects in the Nile Delta: Promises, Challenges, Surprises. IMWI).

COSOP and STAR placed emphasis on creating stronger value chain linkages. Nevertheless, a coherent approach/strategy for effective capacity-building of community-level institutions was still lacking and these organisations remained weak.[78]

Project design

51. **Although the designs relied on proven methodologies, there were instances where lessons from past projects could have been better integrated.** IFAD's portfolio has been focusing on support for (i) settlement in lands reclaimed from the desert and (ii) productivity improvement in old lands. Tested approaches have been built into the design of subsequent projects. For example, SAIL and PRIDE built on the successes of the West Noubaria Rural Development Project (WNRDP) in terms of providing an integrated package of support in the new lands. In old lands, more productive farming systems were promoted, with increased attention to WUAs, market linkages and off-farm employment opportunities under SAIL, PRIME and STAR. Nevertheless, an important area where shortcomings and mistakes were repeated in the portfolio was that of rural finance. Projects continued to work exclusively with ADP and MSMEDA, which inhibited possibilities for expanding the variety of accessible, useful, innovative and affordable financial products and services that rural poor people need, address demand-side constraints and are offered by a wide spectrum of providers.[79]

52. **Project designs were often overly complex and unrealistic.** The 2017 CSPE already recommended increasing the feasibility of project designs. Recurrent design issues during the period under review included: (i) complex project set-ups with a lack of thematic focus (e.g. very wide set of interventions and proposed innovations, involvement of many implementing agencies, little guidance on commodity prioritisation, ambitious targets in terms of mainstreaming themes, in all projects); (ii) unrealistic geographical spread (OFIDO, PRIME and SAIL); (iii) contextual factors not sufficiently considered (e.g. coordination between different institutions, role of the private sector, existence of NGOs and willingness to join associations in Matrouh, lack of WUA and promotion of aquaponics and hydroponics in Upper Egypt); (iv) unrealistic assessment of implementation capacities (e.g. implementation and new product development capacities of ADP and MSMEDA, roles and capacities of targeted farmer and community organizations, implementation capacity of MALR, implementing partners and project coordination units); and (v) unrealistic budgeting (e.g. capacity building, marketing support) and overdependence on uncommitted co-financing (e.g. STAR).

53. **The design of market access and value chain development interventions showed weaknesses.** A step-by-step process has been adopted in the portfolio, by focusing first on primary production (previous projects), followed by access to markets (OFIDO and PRIDE, the latter mainly through feeder roads), and finally value chain development (PRIME, SAIL and STAR). Nevertheless, value chain analysis was often insufficient and resulted in incoherent implementation strategies.[80] Capacities of community-based and producers' organisations and their roles in the project were only partly understood and considered at design. In addition, budget allocations for market access and value chain development were often insufficient, especially in terms of capacity development. The involvement of the private sector in the design was also limited, resulting in interventions being

[78] The absence of a unified strategy for efficient capacity-building at the community institution level was previously identified by the 2017 CSPE, which also included a specific recommendation to address this issue. See also sections on effectiveness and impact.
[79] See also IFAD (2024). Enhancing Rural Finance Design and Implementation - Lessons from IFAD's Operations in Egypt.
[80] PRIME, SAIL and STAR foresaw to work with a very high number of different commodities (fruit, vegetables, field crops, medicinal plants, poultry, small ruminants, beekeeping. dairy, fish, etc.). Design documents did not include thorough analyses of these different value chains. See also e.g. PRIME PPE #52

more supply- than demand-driven.[81] Moreover, the partnering financial institutions had limited experience in value chain financing. Finally, the project implementation units lacked in-depth understanding of and expertise in how value chains can be developed (e.g. SAIL).[82]

54. **Projects addressed some design flaws during implementation.** For example, in 2016, the Government decided to reallocate US$2.3 million from the IFAD loan under PRIME for capacity building. Although this supported market efforts, it failed to prevent the cancellation of capacity development for financial institutions in 2017, resulting in limited progress on financial product development. Another example can be observed in PRIDE, which aimed to help young settlers and small farmers in El Moghra with sustainable agriculture, but water scarcity and salinity posed challenges. Mid-term changes shifted the focus to develop a saline-adapted farming model for small farmers. Additionally, funds intended for a drainage study in Siwa Oasis were redirected toward livestock activities and women's empowerment, including additional literacy classes and small business initiatives.

Targeting

55. **The quality of analyses on poverty, vulnerability, and livelihoods in the COSOPs and project design for intervention areas declined.** The 2012 COSOP featured an in-depth poverty analysis that highlighted regional disparities, causes, and trends. However, this analysis was not updated in the 2015 or 2019 versions of the COSOP. The differences between the poverty conditions in the different regions (e.g. Lower, Middle and Upper Egypt) were not explicitly addressed, blurring the specificities of the poverty situations and proposing blanket approaches. Similar problems arose in project designs. While operating in various regions, OFIDO, PRIME, and SAIL did not account for differences in poverty both between and within regions and governorates. Poverty, vulnerability and livelihood analyses were often descriptions of current conditions, rather than actual analysis considering capability, opportunity and motivation for change of target groups.[83] PRIDE's community-driven development strategy largely ensured that interventions aligned with the needs of its target groups. However, certain contextual factors were not sufficiently considered (e.g. very restrictive gender norms, intra-community poverty differences and unwillingness to form associations).

56. **Target groups were defined, but the strategies to reach them were often not clearly elaborated, ambitions were low, and outreach was not always monitored.** The country programme targeted smallholders, the landless, unemployed youth, women and – in the case of PRIDE - Bedouin communities.[84] Nevertheless, targeting strategies were missing, developed late or did not provide sufficient guidance. For example, SAIL lacked a clear targeting strategy based on an in-depth identification of the various target groups, a clear description and analysis of their livelihood characteristics and socio-economic levels, which hampered beneficiary selection during implementation.[85] PRIME lacked direction for proactively managing targeting objectives and did not possess a comprehensive targeting strategy for the entire project, which hindered the connection between its marketing and rural finance components.[86] PRIDE was still lacking a social inclusion strategy at mid-term.[87] On the other hand, STAR's design addressed the 2017

[81] Key informant interviews with private sector
[82] E.g. see IFAD (2024). Stocktake of IFAD value chain projects in the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia region.
[83] E.g. PRIME PPE, SAIL SVR 2018.
[84] See table in annex VII for information on target groups and targeting approaches by project
[85] SAIL SVR 2018.
[86] PRIME PCR, PRIME PPE
[87] PRIDE MTR

CSPE's recommendation to enhance project targeting by incorporating a higher-quality targeting strategy.[88]

57. Low ambitions in poverty targeting heightened the risk of elite capture.[89] For instance, OFIDO and PRIME initially had a limited poverty focus, while SAIL and PRIDE took years to set clear criteria for selecting beneficiaries, resulting in instances of elite capture.[90] Poverty-disaggregated data was not consistently gathered. Although projects aimed at working with the landless, there were no detailed strategies outlined for this group, and, except for STAR, no targets were established or tracked. Following supervision mission recommendations, SAIL began efforts to track its outreach among landless people.

58. **The targeting of women and youth improved in more recent projects, but issues remained.** OFIDO and PRIME lacked comprehensive gender and youth strategies and had limited ambitions in terms of outreach to women and no targets for youth outreach.[91] SAIL developed its gender strategy only in 2022 and PRIDE had yet to develop a social inclusion action plan at mid-term. Gender targets were more ambitious under PRIDE and STAR, with 48 and 45 per cent respectively. STAR was classified by IFAD as a gender-transformative project at design, but it did not include any interventions that address discriminatory gender norms.[92] Moreover, PRIDE and STAR were classified by IFAD as youth-sensitive projects at design (with ambitious targets of 45 and 41 per cent respectively), but elaborated youth strategies were missing, while PRIDE's design lacked a clear definition of youth. Intersectional dimensions of outreach were not monitored. Project designs and implementation made limited use of the expertise from partners like the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the National Council for Women.

59. **Self-targeting and direct targeting were the main targeting measures and methods used within communities.** Self-targeting approaches were used for training and capacity building, but also included the promotion of microloans (with a maximum amount only of interest to the poor) and focusing on certain interventions areas where target groups were already involved (such as horticulture and livestock). Direct targeting was done mainly through setting quantitative targets for participation in project activities; applying positive discrimination towards target groups while assessing proposals for projects support, using quota to ensure target groups represented are among the membership of producer groups, enterprises, etc. and in leadership positions, and earmarking funds for vulnerable groups (e.g. SAIL's women's grants initiative). To identify the poorest households PRIDE used a poverty score to select beneficiaries of social infrastructure interventions, while SAIL used information from social protection programmes (such as Takaful and Haya Karama) for beneficiary selection.

60. **The country programme targeted the poorest and a smaller number of governorates.** In general, the projects focused on governorates with the highest levels of rural poverty and unemployment. In particular, over the CSPE period, the country programme covered 10 governorates where 37 per cent of the population[93] live with an incidence of poverty of 47.4 per cent on average.[94] The intervention governorates, have an unemployment rate at 4.7 per cent average, ranging from a

[88] E.g., STAR's design incorporates targeted interventions and allocated funds to assist various groups, such as landless individuals, poor subsistence farmers, market-oriented smallholders' households, women, and youth, based on their socio-economic profiles.
[89] See also lessons learned in CROWN PDR
[90] See OFIDO PCR, PRIME PPE, PRIDE MTR and section on outreach effectiveness
[91] PRIME did develop a gender strategy, but just before closure. Outreach targets for women were 20 and 30% for OFIDO and PRIME respectively.
[92] IFAD 2022. Review of gender transformative design in IFAD's loan portfolio.
[93] CAPMAS, Statistical Yearbook, Population, Estimated Population and their Percentage Distribution by sex and Governorate on 1/1/2023, https://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/StaticPages.aspx?page_id=5034.
[94] CAPMAS-HIEC survey (2017/2018).

value of 1.1 per cent in Luxor, up to 13.7 per cent in Aswan.[95] The female unemployment rate is also high, averaging 16.2 per cent against a national average of 18.4 (and ranging from of 7.1 per cent in Luxor to 53.3 per cent in Aswan).[96] It is worth mentioning that previous initiatives such as OFIDO, PRIME, and partially SAIL also encompassed governorates in Lower Egypt which had relatively lower poverty rates. Poverty was the main criterion for geographical targeting, not taking into consideration factors like landholding, unemployment, and access to infrastructure and credit. The CSPE in 2017 recommended narrowing the geographical spread of the portfolio to enhance its effectiveness. OFIDO, PRIME, and SAIL continued operating in eight, seven, and four governorates across the country, while PRIDE and STAR limited their activities to one and three neighbouring governorates, respectively.[97]

61. **PRIDE stood out as an exception in the portfolio's focus on Upper Egypt.** Rural Upper Egypt is the region with the highest poverty rates, with 58.2 per cent of its population living in poverty, compared to 22.3 per cent in rural Lower Egypt. Based on the 2004 CSPE recommendation, the 2017 CSPE noted a gradual shift in IFAD's focus to Upper Egypt and its poorest governorates. OFIDO, PRIME, and SAIL worked in Upper Egypt but also remained active in Lower Egypt. Conversely, STAR focused exclusively on three Upper Egypt governorates, while PRIDE operated solely in Matrouh in Northwestern Egypt. Nevertheless, Matrouh is among the most impoverished Governorates, placing 24th out of the country's 27 Governorates.[98] The design responded to a specific request from the government to assist the Bedouin communities living there who face challenges in access to public services and facilities and are at risk of being left behind. PRIDE focused on water harvesting and watershed management, despite IFAD's limited experience in this field.

62. **The strategies and criteria for targeting poorer communities were often unclear.** SAIL targeted settlements primarily based on landholdings, where the majority were formerly landless people, unemployed graduates and female-headed households. OFIDO used a technical irrigation criterion for selecting the project area, which was based primarily on the selection of the branch and sub-canals that satisfied minimal technical criteria in terms of cost effectiveness of required maintenance works, water reliability and satisfactory functioning of the canals. Moreover, under OFIDO and PRIME, village selection was made mainly based on the presence of strong partner or cooperatives and not based on poverty targeting or marketing-based criteria.[99] Inspired by OFIDO and PRIME, STAR planned to use a command area clustering approach, targeting poor villages in branch canal regions that required immediate rehabilitation. Each village within a cluster would benefit from comprehensive interventions, encompassing credit provision, water management, production enhancements, and marketing assistance. PRIDE anticipated allocating a marginally larger budget to the two poorest of the six districts where it operates. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has developed poverty maps at the village level, but they have not been used so far, although STAR intends to utilise them in the future.

63. **Overall relevance.** The country programme stayed in line with Government policies and IFAD priorities, addressing critical rural poverty issues like water scarcity, unemployment, and landlessness. It increasingly focused on climate change adaptation and value chain development. STAR, the sole project designed

[95] CAPMAS, Statistical Yearbook, (Unemployment Rate 15 Years & Above) by Governorate (2019-2022), Https://Www.Capmas.Gov.Eg/Pages/Staticpages.Aspx?Page_Id=5034.
[96] CAPMAS, Statistical Yearbook, Unemployment Rate (15 Years & Above) by Governorate (2019-2022), https://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/StaticPages.aspx?page_id=5034.
[97] PRIDE works in Matrouh, while STAR's implementation area includes the following governorates: Minya, Asyut and Sohag.
[98] PRIDE PDR
[99] See STAR PDR.

during the review period, incorporated lessons from previous initiatives, such as rural finance and targeting. While designs used tested approaches, they were often too complex and unrealistic in terms of capacity and budgeting. Though the programme targeted the poorest governorates, its targeting strategies were missing clearer elaboration (e.g., lacking solid analysis, ignoring regional differences, or missing clear strategies for targeting each group). The CSPE rates relevance as **moderately satisfactory (4).**

B. Coherence

Internal coherence

64. **Recent projects have shifted towards greater geographical focus.** OFIDO and PRIME concentrated on fewer interventions like irrigation and marketing but over a broader area than their predecessors. Meanwhile, SAIL, PRIDE, and STAR aimed to provide extensive support within smaller regions.[100]

65. **IFAD's adjustments to GoE priorities occasionally compromised strategic consistency in geographic targeting.** The decision to support the Government's settlement programme with SAIL was based on a GoE request rather than COSOP justification or adequate poverty analysis. Similarly, PRIDE was designed in response to a GoE request to aid Bedouin communities in Matrouh (a governorate in Northwestern Egypt), focusing on water harvesting and watershed management, despite IFAD's limited experience in this field.

66. **While some efforts were made to foster synergies amongst projects, they remained limited and were hindered by the absence of a platform for greater programme coordination.** The country programme maintained continuity and built on proven methods. SAIL leveraged WNRDP's expertise in new lands, while PRIDE replicated its integrated approach. PRIME tackled a gap in marketing strategy within the country programme. STAR incorporated a stronger focus on market access and expanded on OFIDO's irrigation successes as well as learned from its shortcomings. Some projects built on the physical achievements of previous projects. STAR, for example, foresaw to consolidate and expand OFIDO's achievements in terms of irrigation development. On occasion, ongoing projects exchanged experiences and learned from each other. This was for example the case between SAIL and PRIDE regarding the implementation of social infrastructure interventions and project procurement issues.

67. However, there were various instances where potential synergies in the country programme were not fully utilized. OFIDO's water infrastructure projects did not align with PRIME's marketing and rural finance efforts or its beneficiaries. Similarly, SAIL did not integrate several of PRIME's initiatives—despite geographic proximity—including the "market opportunity bank" for direct sourcing from FAs, the e-commerce platform "Shari," and social media channels for promoting best agricultural practices. Furthermore, there was little evidence of synergy between old and new land investments, as already highlighted by the 2017 CSPE.

68. To enhance inter-project coordination, the 2017 CSPE recommended forming a centralised project coordination unit to provide oversight, set standards, and align elements across all IFAD-financed projects. However, the government was hesitant to add more bureaucratic layers. Although projects sometimes shared experiences, such as in procurement, there remained considerable potential for a stronger programmatic approach through closer cooperation on issues like M&E, financial management, procurement, IFAD's mainstreaming themes, and non-lending activities. The creation of a unified project implementation unit for SAIL and STAR

[100] . SAIL's intervention area, however, was still spread over Lower and Upper Egypt, but it focused on just 30 communities and provided them with an integrated support package.

was a preliminary step to promote greater synergy, but the launch of STAR has faced significant delays and still needed to become fully operational.

69. **Grants were not used to enhance the country programme.** The country portfolio benefited from loan-component and global or regional grants. The 2019 COSOP emphasized effectively managing grant knowledge to enhance learning, innovation, and policy engagement. Four out of the five projects under review included a loan-component grant, ranging from US$1 million (OFIDO, PRIME and PRIDE)[101] to US$1.4 million (SAIL). However, they were not exclusively used for the intended purpose, which is to finance capacity-building or innovations. Instead, they were also funding project management activities (such as contractual and consultancy services).[102] While the global and regional grants focused on issues relevant to the country programme (food security and nutrition, policy dialogue, KM, M&E, access to markets, climate change and sustainable production - agriculture, aquaculture - as well as support to farmers' organizations), linkages with the loan portfolio were weak. The extent of involvement by the IFAD country office in overseeing these grants was minimal. There was no record that these grants were actually used to support broader learning, innovation and policy engagement within the country programme.[103]

Box 1

Missed linkages between global/regional grants and the loan portfolio

Three international grants reveal the missed opportunities for thematic and geographic connections with projects in the country portfolio. Firstly, the "Advancing Technologies and Capacity Building for Aquaculture in Arid Lands" grant, managed by the WorldFish Centre, successfully tested climate-smart aquaculture systems. However, no linkages were made with SAIL or PRIDE, both active in the same area.[104] Secondly, the "Water Use Efficiency for Sustainable Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture" grant, implemented by FAO, was intended to create synergies with PRIDE and was quite relevant, given PRIDE's challenges with its nutrition-related activities. Nonetheless, no connections were established as FAO could not adapt its approach to the local context and project needs. Lastly, the "Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme," executed by Fert (a French NGO), failed to establish links with IFAD-supported projects, despite the portfolio's difficulties in developing a coherent strategy for supporting rural institutions.[105]

External coherence

70. **IFAD's interventions contributed to the United Nations' joint efforts to support national development goals.** IFAD signed up to the different subsequent frameworks coordinating the work of the various agencies of the United Nations in Egypt. This included the 2013-2017 United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the 2018-2022 United Nations Partnership Development Framework and the 2023–2027 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Through its investments, IFAD contributed mainly to the areas of food security, natural resource management and inclusive economic development. Interestingly, IFAD did not foresee a considerable contribution to women's empowerment between 2018-2022, but this changed for the period 2023-2027. Additionally, IFAD supported the GoE's "Haya Karima" initiative, a major programme focused on reducing poverty and promoting rural development. Out of the 5,000 villages benefiting from the initiative, SAIL focused on seven.

71. **IFAD was highly regarded for its focus on specific sectors and rural poverty reduction efforts.** While its comparative advantage is not clearly

[101] For PRIME this grant was increased during implementation by US$2.3 million.
[102] IFAD's 2015 Grant Policy states that "grants could not be used to finance activities that would normally be funded from the administrative budget.
[103] See section on non-lending activities and IOE (2024). Corporate Level Evaluation on Knowledge Management (#59)
[104] Grant Completion Report (2023).
[105] FERT 2021. Bilan simplifié de l'action de Fert en Egypte.

articulated in the 2019 COSOP, development partners saw IFAD's value added in focusing on rural development in the poorest areas of Egypt, with an emphasis on sustainable management of water and land. IFAD was chosen to lead the multi-billion-dollar food and agriculture sector of the Platform for Water, Food, and Energy (NWFE), showcasing the Government's trust in IFAD's leadership and its ability to mobilise climate finance for a green transition. This also boosted IFAD's visibility among development partners.

72. **There were missed opportunities to enhance harmonisation and coordination.** The 2019 COSOP spotted many chances for synergy with other development partners, but little came of it.[106] Collaboration could have been better in supporting community institutions, rural finance, and value chain development. IFAD did not make use of development partners' coordination platforms like the Development Partners Group or the Global Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation. Stakeholders also noted that IFAD's role under the NWFE was hindered by limited human resources.

Non-lending activities: knowledge management; policy engagement; partnership-building

Knowledge management

73. **Knowledge management lacked strategic direction and sufficient resources.** Following the 2017 CSPE recommendation, the 2019 COSOP focused heavily on knowledge management, promoting systematic learning for policy advocacy and scaling, and positioning IFAD as a key knowledge broker in Egypt. However, there was no clear KM strategy at the country level that defined explicit responsibilities and allocated a specific budget (an IFAD KM focal point was only appointed in 2023).[107] Informal knowledge sharing was the main method of exchanging information. Thematic IFAD staff based in Cairo or at IFAD headquarters also played a limited role in KM. Moreover, the lack of clear higher-level guidance through an IFAD regional KM strategy was another challenge.[108] In general, staff had limited or unclear incentives to engage in KM activities, with no financial or career incentives and heavy workloads, lack of time allocation, and competing priorities of portfolio management acting as disincentives. Finally, strategic partnerships for KM were limited. Although the 2019 COSOP highlighted partnerships with IFPRI and ICARDA as crucial for KM in the country programme, there was no evidence of their significant contribution.[109]

74. **Gathering, sharing, and utilising operational and grassroots insights from projects proved difficult.** OFIDO did not have a KM strategy or action plan and did not systematically document or share emerging lessons.[110] PRIME received external support at a late stage of its implementation, which helped to improve its performance on KM. Projects, like SAIL and PRIDE, developed a KM strategy, but their practicality remained unclear.[111] Project-level KM focused primarily on training and extension activities in technical components.[112] PRIME's use of WhatsApp groups for delivering extension messages is a noteworthy example. Various projects have popularised the FFS approach, facilitating the spread of collaborative and participatory knowledge. However, there has been a lack of thorough documentation and widespread sharing of this knowledge. Several initiatives benefited from the expertise of governmental research institutions, such as the

[106] See also Table 12 in Annex VIII.
[107] See IOE (2024). Corporate Level Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study
[108] This challenge was already pointed out in the 2017 CSPE.See also IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study
[109] IFPRI did implement the Arab Investment for Development Analyzer (AIDA) grant, but it had limited long-term impact (see below).
[110] OFIDO PCR
[111] The strategies lacked detailed targets, a strong monitoring plan and emphasis on dissemination (see e.g. PRIDE SVR 2023).
[112] See Annex VIII for a list of knowledge products developed by different projects.

Desert Research Center (DRC) in the case of PRIDE and the Agricultural Research Centre (ARC) under PRIME and SAIL. However, there were still opportunities for these research centres to better leverage the experiences gained from these projects.[113]

75. There was a poor grasp of KM concepts and a limited ability to use appropriate tools and methods. Furthermore, there were challenges in curating lessons learned and preparing them for activities like policy engagement and scaling-up. Training would have been necessary to enhance the quality of the projects' KM initiatives. Additionally, shortcomings in M&E systems, as well as intra-governmental communication, hindered the efficient sharing and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, the intention to establish a centralised project coordination unit with a KM specialist in Cairo did not materialise. Despite the 2017 CSPE recommendations, a database for sharing lessons learned was never created. Effectively documenting and sharing its field knowledge would help IFAD to bolster policy dialogue, scaling efforts, and IFAD's added value among peers and would respond to a strong request from the Government.

76. **Grants were leveraged to a limited extent to improve KM.** The KM activities within the SAIL project were entirely funded by GEF and ASAP grants, making them essential. Two international or regional grants had significant potential to impact KM. The Arab Investment for Development Analyzer (AIDA) grant, implemented by IFPRI from 2017 to 2020, resulted in the development of the Egypt Online AIDA, a tool to designed assess the impact of agricultural investments on economic growth, job creation, and household welfare, with the aim of influencing policy. While the tool offered valuable insights, its long-term influence on broader outcomes like substantial policy changes or rural development was more difficult to gauge.[114] The "Advancing Climate Smart Aquaculture Technologies" (ACliSAT) grant by WorldFish produced valuable knowledge, but its focus was not aligned with IFAD's main strategies or loans in Egypt, reducing its potential impact.[115] Additionally, global/regional grants often lacked integration with country programmes, limiting their added value for knowledge management.

77. **There were few activities involving South-South and Triangular Cooperation.** Egypt’s extensive experience with intensive farming and irrigation, along with challenges in market development and rural finance, shows it can both teach and learn from South-South cooperation. The 2019 COSOP anticipated a range of interactions with IFAD-supported projects in other nations, including rural refinancing facilities in several former Soviet states, effective public-private partnerships and bank investments in rural finance in Ghana, smallholder irrigation initiatives in Kenya and Ethiopia, and climate change adaptation in the NEN region. However, these expected activities did not come to fruition. There were two exchanges that did take place: (i) SAIL and PRIME project staff visiting Turkey to learn about marketing and contractual farming and (ii) staff from IFAD-funded projects in Sudan visiting PRIDE to learn about wadi cultivation. The limited outcomes in this field were due to insufficient resources and COVID travel restrictions.

Partnership building

78. **The aspirations for building partnerships were not supported by adequate resources.** The 2017 CSPE observed minimal advancement in forming partnerships. The 2019 COSOP therefore sought to enhance and expand partnerships to facilitate scaling up initiatives, generate and share knowledge, and engage in policymaking and advocacy. The partners identified in the COSOPs were

[113] See IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study
[114] See IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study
[115] For example, a report on optimal management practices for commercial tilapia breeding in Northeast Africa and a research paper on the current state of the aquaculture industry in Egypt.

pertinent and operated within the areas targeted by IFAD interventions. Yet the outcomes of the partnerships were not clearly articulated, nor were indicators established to monitor results. Critically, the necessary resources, including staff and counterpart time, skills, and funding, to achieve its partnership goals were underestimated and a more thorough cost-benefit analysis was missing.[116]

79. **Partnerships with the government were strong and broadened.** While MALR remained IFAD's primary partner, collaboration with MWRI improved. Limited coordination under OFIDO impacted results, so SAIL and MWRI signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Although communication improved, many stakeholders noted ongoing coordination issues between MALR and MWRI.[117] IFAD maintained a strong relationship with MPEDIC, which serves as the borrower on behalf of the Ministry of Finance and oversees the engagement with development partners. This positive rapport was evidenced by MPEDIC's decision to have IFAD co-lead the NWFE food pillar. At the project level, partnerships existed with various other ministries, primarily through regional directorates such as those from the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Health and Population, and the Ministry of Education, and these collaborations were generally positive. The relationship with the Ministry of Environment was primarily maintained through administrative interactions with the GEF Operational Focal Point.

80. **There were limited results in terms of partnerships with bi- and multilateral agencies.** While several co-financing partnerships were envisaged, only one materialised (GEF funding under SAIL). The design of STAR counted on financial contributions from the Adaptation Fund, the African Development Bank, OFID and WFP, making up 45 per cent of project costs, but these partnerships fell through.[118] The 2019 COSOP's target of an overall cofinancing ratio of 1:1.4 was far from being reached. The Government furthermore expected IFAD to increase its efforts to attract more grant financing (e.g. climate or bilateral funding). Operational partnerships were also limited: GIZ continued to work with 10 FAs supported by PRIME after its closure and carried out an institutional assessment of a number of MAs, agricultural cooperatives and CDAs supported by SAIL, while OFIDO and SAIL had some collaboration with FAO (see below).[119] As mentioned above, few results were achieved by IFAD in terms of leveraging multi-stakeholder platforms, such as the Development Partners Group and NWFE, in terms of coordination or fostering synergies.

81. **Although FAO assisted with project support, the Rome-based agencies missed chances to benefit from collaborative efforts and outcomes**. The Rome-based agencies collaborated on a rapid assessment of COVID-19's impact on agriculture and nutrition in Egypt, and a campaign on healthy nutrition and food safety with MALR. There was some collaboration with FAO, including the implementation of the FFS approach under SAIL, and support for the global/regional grant "Increasing Water Productivity for Sustainable Nutrition Sensitive Agricultural Production and Improved Food Security" (although anticipated collaboration with PRIDE did not occur). Additionally, FAO supported the global/regional grant "Support for the establishment of the Arab Forum for Rural Advisory Services", enhanced the execution of OFIDO as a "problem project", and conducted a technical assessment of OFIDO's outcomes. However, beyond the joint efforts and project-level collaboration with FAO, there was limited evidence of stronger collaboration or sustainable KM partnerships among them.[120]

[116] These are key features according to IFAD's 2019 Partnership Framework and its 2021 Partnering Toolkit.
[117] The new CROWN project (not under review) foresees dedicated resources for MWRI and the set up of two separate PMUs: one under MALR and another under MWRI.
[118] The primary issue stemmed from weak initial commitment by co-financiers, GoE's preference for those co-financiers to focus on other interventions and delays in starting up STAR.
[119] See Annex VIII for a table of engagement with identified partners
[120] IOE 2021. Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies Summary Evaluation Report; IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study.

82. **Partnerships with the private sector remained below expectations.** The 2017 CSPE noted weak or absent private sector partnerships. The 2019 COSOP thus emphasized these partnerships to enhance smallholders' finance access, production techniques, post-harvest management, and marketing. There was furthermore a clear expectation from the Government for IFAD to increase its efforts in pursuing blended finance solutions and fostering private sector investments within its projects. Despite more involvement as contractors in civil works and rural services, market access partnerships with the private sector showed limited success.[121] PRIME was an exception, as it supported the signing of 11 protocols of cooperation with private sector entities and developed a database of potential buyers, but results and sustainability of these partnerships remained unclear. Opportunities to strengthen partnerships with private banks engaged in rural finance to promote greater inclusion were not fully utilized.

83. **Wholesale lenders involved in the national programme faced considerable challenges in implementation, and there was a lack of meaningful progress in establishing partnerships with a wider range of financial institutions.** With a pronounced emphasis on rural finance, ADP and MSMEDA emerged as key partners in the execution process due to their roles as wholesale lenders. ADP contributed to both PRIME and SAIL initiatives, whereas MSMEDA participated in OFIDO, PRIME, and SAIL, with a particular focus on the microfinance sector. Despite their involvement, these projects faced challenges, including limited absorption capacity, difficulties in creating innovative financial products tailored for the rural poor (notably within the agricultural sector), and inadequate coordination with other project interventions. These concerns were pointed out in the 2017 CSPE, yet no major actions were taken to address them, such as expanding the selection of financial institutions involved in projects and making sure the products meet the needs of IFAD's target groups. Particularly, the sustained emphasis on the partnership with ADP is debatable due to its limited reach and advantages for IFAD's target groups.

84. **Organizations offering services in rural development played a crucial role in the country programme.** Agricultural cooperatives, CDAs, WUAs, and MAs were pivotal in managing infrastructure, offering agricultural advice, enabling smallholder producers to benefit from economies of scale, and including women and youth in projects. Efforts aimed at building or enhancing these organisations were frequently hampered by insufficient resources, resulting in limited capacity.[122] Although the 2017 CSPE recommended developing a strategy for effective capacity-building of rural institutions supported by IFAD, this was not realised.[123] Consequently, the programme maintained a somewhat opportunistic approach to developing community capacities necessary for delivering project services. Funding for capacity building in SAIL and PRIDE increased in part due to co-financing contributions from ASAP and GEF.[124]

85. **Collaborations with national agricultural research institutes continued to focus on creating applied technologies for improved water efficiency and more productive farming systems.** SAIL and PRIDE capitalised on the experience of government research institutions. ARC aided in setting up weather stations, implementing early warning systems, and promoting FFS under SAIL, while DRC is PRIDE's main implementing agency. Nevertheless, as previously discussed, there remained chances for these centres to more effectively utilise the insights obtained from these projects.[125]

[121] See OFIDO PCRV, SAIL SVR 2024, PRIDE MTR
[122] See IFAD (2024) COSOP Completion Report and sections on effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
[123] SAIL conducted a basic assessment of some community organizations (9 CDAs and Agricultural Cooperatives) in one governorate (Menia), but the study has yielded few new strategic insights.
[124] Republic of Egypt COSOP 2019-2024. Nov. 2018. Appendix IIL Agreement at Completion Point
[125] See IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study

Policy engagement

86. **While policy engagement was included in project designs and prioritized in the 2019 COSOP, a strategic approach was lacking.** While the 2012 COSOP took a cautious and rather vague stance on the opportunities for policy engagement, it became a key pillar of the 2019 COSOP being the focus of one of its two strategic objectives. It would be enabled by an enhanced IFAD country presence in Cairo, prioritization on a limited number of themes and start with an evaluation of field results and lessons. The 2015 updated COSOP's policy agenda focused on agriculture cooperatives, water policy, WUAs, land reform and rural finance, while the 2019 COSOP identified the following themes: cooperative reform, water use efficiency, access to rural finance, nutrition, promotion of higher value crops and value addition. The 2019 COSOP indicated that this was an indicative list to be refined in close consultations with the Government and key partners. However, there was no evidence that these close consultations took place and resulted in a refined policy agenda, nor were realistic entry points and strategic alliances identified. A thorough context analysis was missing, for example recognising the capacities of the ICO or Government as potential bottlenecks and considering a high turnover of ministers.

87. The projects' policy agenda included the following themes: on-farm irrigation development (OFIDO); adapting to climate change in new lands (SAIL); oases development in Egypt (PRIDE); rural finance (PRIME, SAIL); community rangeland development (PRIDE); gender-sensitive and nutrition mainstreaming measures (PRIDE); the use of technology in water quality monitoring, inducing behavior change (PRIDE); the development of a regulatory framework of cooperatives (SAIL); rural youth and women agribusiness development (STAR); use of digital technologies in agriculture (STAR).

88. **Some attempts were undertaken to inform policy development, yet the outcomes fell short of expectations.** IFAD's policy engagement primarily occurred through the active participation of Government representatives in supervision and implementation support activities, focusing on issues which directly concerned lending operations. Additionally, IFAD took part in several policy forums, including: (i) the AgriTech Meet in 2022, where dialogues on digital technologies in agriculture were promoted, though no concrete policy outcomes emerged; (ii) COP27, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2022, where IFAD presented papers on SAIL's climate-smart agriculture practices, increasing its visibility but with limited post-event engagement; (iii) Arab League Fora, where IFAD contributed perspectives on the strategic framework for SDG2 and the Arab Water Forum. Furthermore, the AIDA grant executed by IFPRI, which aimed to evaluate the impact of agricultural investments on economic growth, job creation, and household welfare to influence policy, did not lead to significant policy changes. As previously noted, national platforms like the Development Partners Group and NWFE were not utilized effectively for policy engagement.

89. Several factors contributed to the lack of results in policy engagement. Firstly, there was a scarcity of systematic knowledge generation at the project level, leading to a limited amount of solid evidence available for policy engagement. Secondly, interaction with government platforms, such as NWFE, was insufficient.[126] Thirdly, IFAD failed to leverage strategic partnerships to amplify influence. Fourthly, grants were not effectively utilised for policy aims. Lastly, there was a disconnect between the ambitions and the available resources, including time, skills, and funding. These elements resulted in missed engagement opportunities. One such example is the National Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. Although the 2017 CSPE recommended that IFAD support its revision, FAO

[126] IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study; Key informant interviews

capitalised on the opportunity and led the initiative. Given IFAD's field experience, there were missed chances to foster dialogue on efficient water use and inclusive rural finance, particularly value chain financing.

90. **Overall coherence.** The country programme demonstrated consistency, with subsequent projects incorporating insights from earlier ones. This was accompanied by a stronger geographical focus. Stakeholders acknowledged IFAD's significant contribution through its focus on rural development in Egypt's most impoverished regions, particularly emphasising sustainable water and land management. However, there were limited attempts to create synergies among different projects, and grants were not leveraged for wider learning, innovation, or policy advocacy. Additionally, opportunities to enhance harmonisation and coordination were missed. The CSPE rates coherence as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

91. **Overall knowledge management.** Although the 2019 COSOP highlighted the importance of KM, it did not provide sufficient strategic direction or resources. The systematic capture, sharing, and utilization of operational and grassroots insights from projects proved challenging. KM at the project level concentrated mainly on training and extension activities within technical components. Additionally, the plan to set up a centralised project coordination unit with a KM specialist in Cairo was never realized. The CSPE rates coherence as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

92. **Overall partnership building.** The 2019 COSOP's goals for forming partnerships were not adequately addressed. Although collaborations with the government expanded, progress was limited concerning partnerships with bilateral and multilateral agencies. Additionally, projects, despite their growing involvement as contractors in civil works and other service provision, demonstrated limited success in forming partnerships with the private sector to enhance market access. The CSPE rates partnership building as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

93. **Overall policy engagement.** Policy engagement was a central tenet of the 2019 COSOP, as one of its two primary strategic goals. However, the initiative lacked a well-defined policy agenda with practical entry points and failed to create essential strategic partnerships. Moreover, the projects struggled to effectively consolidate and communicate field lessons, which hindered their ability to influence policy processes. Overall, there was a notable discrepancy between the ambitious goals and the available resources in terms of time, expertise, and funding. Consequently, despite some attempts to impact policy development, the outcomes fell short of expectations. The CSPE rates policy engagement as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

C. Effectiveness

94. This section starts with an assessment of effectiveness in terms of beneficiary outreach. It is followed by a review of the country programme's accomplishments in terms of outputs and outcomes across the three impact pathways of the reconstructed theory of change[127]: (i) smallholders using improved, climate-smart farming systems and modernised on-farm irrigation optimise land and water resources, achieving production and productivity gains, which boost their resilience to climate change; (ii) supporting micro, small and medium enterprises through credit, business, and vocational training, enhancing value chain linkages, and upgrading market infrastructure leads to increased sales, economic diversification, and job creation in rural areas, helping the rural poor raise their incomes and assets; and (iii) comprehensive community infrastructure improves access to social services, thus enhancing living conditions and nutrition in new areas, while also promoting greater social inclusion and resilience; nutrition education raises awareness of nutrition and encourages consumption of nutritious food, improving

[127] See Section I.b and Annex III.

diet diversity and quality and contributing to better nutrition.[128] Lastly, the contribution of the country programme in terms of achieving the COSOPs' strategic goals is discussed.[129]

Outreach

95. **Some projects failed to meet their outreach goals due to overestimated targets and delays.** The COSOPs did not set specific outreach targets for the country programme. Targets in OFIDO and PRIDE were greatly overestimated (see table 6 below), and household numbers in SAIL target villages were uncertain due to untracked migration and non-registered households.[130] From the outset, OFIDO's goal of serving 250,000 individuals was overly ambitious, considering its water infrastructure was intended for approximately 40,000 farmers (totaling around 50,000 rural households), and only about two-thirds of these were ultimately reached. PRIDE also overestimated the actual number of households across the 42 communities it aimed to serve, raising doubts about achieving its original target of benefiting 36,000 households or 75,575 individuals. By mid-term, the project had only managed to reach 13.8% of its targeted households and it was agreed to reduce the original end-targets to 28,947 households, while increasing the number of persons served to 117,227.[131]

Table 6
Outreach: Direct beneficiaries (persons receiving services) and households

Project	*Direct beneficiaries (persons receiving services)*					*Households*		
	Target at design (no.)	*Cumulative outreach (no.)*	*Outreach against target (%)*	*Share of women (%)*	*Share of youth (%)*	*Target at design (no.)*	*Cumulative results (no.)*	*Cumulative result (%)*
OFIDO	250,000	124,149	49.7	12.1	-	50,000	54,327	108.7
PRIME[2]						50,000	34,967	69.9
(marketing)								
(rural finance)	50,000 47,030	59,186 26,864	118.4 57.1	48.4 41.1	- 45.9			
SAIL	40,000[3] (design) 95,475 (recount in 2024) (14,000)	40,834	102.1	55.4	5.6[1] (-)	40,000 (design) 41,080 (recount in 2024)	18,729	46.8
(ASAP)		(4,618)	(33.0)	(28.6)				
PRIDE	70,575 (design) 117,227 (changed at mid-term)	24,705 (mid-term)	35.0	50.4	12.7	36,000 (design) 28,947 (changed at mid-term)	4,958	13.8
COSOP	None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	None	n/a	n/a

[128] See theory of change developed by the Evaluation Team in section I.B (methodology and process) and Annex III
[129] See annex VIII for a detailed list of major achievements by impact pathway and project (mainly based on logframe results reporting) and a comparison with achievements presented in the COSOP 2019-2024 completion review (CCR). See annex VIII for figures on PMD supervision ratings of overall implementation performance and effectiveness by project over time
[130] The overestimation by OFIDO was attributed to unmet water infrastructure goals and the larger-than-expected average land sizes of beneficiaries (OFIDO PCR). In PRIDE, the overestimation was primarily caused by overly ambitious targets set during the design phase (PRIDE MTR).
[131] PRIDE MTR

Source: OFIDO PCR Logical Framework, PCRV; PRIME PCR Logical Framework; SAIL Project updated information of Dec. 2023 (obtained during the CSPE mission); PRIDE MTR 2024; COSOP completion review 2019-2024
1 Data on the number of young persons reached by the project has only been collected since 2023. It is not clear whether the data for 2023 also includes young persons reached in previous years
2 The PRIME logframe targets did not differentiate between households reached and persons receiving services in its total outreach number. The persons receiving services were reported separately for the marketing and finance component, the overlap between both categories is unknown (but their delivery was disconnected). For this reason outreach targets and achievements are reported separately for marketing and finance.
3 Targets of HH and persons receiving services were the same.

96. SAIL had achieved its intended target by serving 40,834 beneficiaries across the 30 communities, but its ASAP climate-related activities only reached one-third of the intended target.[132] For an extended period, SAIL was unsure about the exact count of households in its newly established settlements, as many were unregistered. A subsequent recount revealed that the number of households in the 30 designated SAIL villages were nearly identical to the initial estimates (41,080 compared to 40,000). The project reached only about 47 per cent of its intended households compared to the design targets.[133]

97. Finally, there were ambiguities concerning PRIME's outreach since its marketing and rural finance initiatives tended to engage distinct households and beneficiaries at varying times. The marketing efforts surpassed the target by 18.4 per cent, whereas the rural finance sector underperformed, reaching just 57.1 per cent of the anticipated participants because of far fewer micro-credit loans than expected.[134]

98. **Concentrating programme activities in select priority governorates and communities improved service integration, although it affected outreach in SAIL and PRIDE.** SAIL emphasized scaling up and building on the successes of previous projects, such as WNRDP, but scaling up was understood more in geographical terms than broadening the project's outreach numbers. SAIL stayed focused on 30 villages or communities across five sites stretching from Lower to Upper Egypt. In contrast, OFIDO and PRIME were stretched across seven or more Governorates which broadened the number of communities and beneficiaries served.

99. **Training and finance activities saw the greatest outreach.** The number of individuals trained in various activities exceeded expectations in PRIME and SAIL, whereas OFIDO lagged, particularly in training for income-generating activities. By the mid-term review, PRIDE had limited agricultural training but had already achieved its outreach targets related to nutrition, at least in terms of the total number of beneficiaries reached. By the mid-term mark, approximately 70 per cent of the targeted households received nutritional assistance. Unlike PRIME and OFIDO, which exceeded their rural finance access goals primarily by extending beyond the initial target areas, SAIL surpassed its goal for reaching women but had not met expectations when it comes to men.[135] Achieving water infrastructure targets has proven more challenging; OFIDO fell short by a third in this area, whereas the SAIL project made significant progress in its final year and is anticipated to exceed beneficiary targets upon completion.

100. **While women within specific IFAD target groups were generally well-served, there were difficulties in effectively reaching the poor, landless and young due to vague or missing targeting strategies.** Although OFIDO's engagement with women was minimal at just 12.1 per cent, other initiatives were significantly more effective, engaging between 40 and 55 per cent of women, with SAIL achieving the highest outreach. Women were predominantly involved through activities related to rural finance, nutrition, and income generation.

[132] SAIL M&E data provided to the CSPE team (referring to achievement by December 2023)
[133] SAIL M&E data provided to the CSPE team (referring to achievement by December 2023)
[134] PRIME PPE #58-60
[135] See e.g. OFIDO PCRV#6, SAIL SVR 2023

101. Regarding interaction with Bedouin communities, the challenges primarily arose in obtaining community consent for externally suggested actions, rather than achieving comprehensive and substantial involvement in setting and influencing priorities and development initiatives. Additionally, identifying effective avenues for women's empowerment proved difficult (as discussed in a later section of this report). These issues were somewhat resolved by collaborating with project staff and facilitators who are part of or closely linked to the Bedouin communities, and by engaging women independently.

102. Targeting the poor had some success through geographic and self-targeting methods. Farmers with less than three feddans (1.26 hectares) were partly reached, although OFIDO and PRIME did not select villages based on poverty or farm size. OFIDO sites were chosen for water availability and conveyance losses, benefiting poorer farmers at the end of mesqa canals. PRIME focused on villages with existing production and marketing associations, especially in horticulture. Overall, targeting farmers with less than three feddans was mostly achieved, with few exceptions. Both SAIL and PRIDE established clear criteria for identifying beneficiaries and households only after several years of implementation. This delay resulted in early instances of elite capture and the exclusion of certain IFAD target beneficiaries, particularly within the PRIDE project.[136] The situation showed improvement after the mid-term reviews for both projects. However, credit delivery in OFIDO, PRIME, and SAIL often targeted wealthier farmers and associations due to low micro-credit shares and high loan amounts from ADP. Many loans also went to non-targeted villages (OFIDO and PRIME). It was unclear if the programme reached special groups like smallholders with less than one feddan (0.42 hectares) and landless labourers, as these groups were not separately tracked As mentioned earlier, projects had no clear strategies for involving the landless, a key target group, so any results were mostly unintentional.

103. Young beneficiaries were primarily reached in SAIL's new settlements, though overall youth outreach in the programme fell short of expectations. SAIL enhanced youth participation in CDAs by establishing youth centers, supporting youth enterprises and skills like veterinary training, and providing access to finance. However, youth involvement was unpredictable as data on youth was not collected until 2023, when it was recorded at 5.6 per cent. Project supervision and the mid-term review noted low youth integration in CDAs and relatively weak participation in training initiatives. At the mid-term point, PRIDE's youth outreach was limited to 13 per cent, partly because activities in resettlement areas like El Moghra had yet to commence. OFIDO and PRIME lacked specific and consistent strategies for engaging youth, although a considerable portion of PRIME's credit ended up with younger beneficiaries (up to 35-40 years old).

Pathway 1 – Land and water management

104. **Except for OFIDO, water infrastructure for agriculture, including irrigation, drainage, and water harvesting, was successfully implemented, although with delays.** The modernization of old lands irrigation systems has been a major long-term objective of the Government. OFIDO developed 10,411 hectares in old lands with modern irrigation systems, a 76 per cent achievement rate.[137] Apart from introducing electric pumps the project replaced open canals with underground pipes to reduce water evaporation and seepage and improved supply at tail ends of canals. But many farmers and experts saw the new technology as too uniform and complex, it also suffered from frequent quality problems with equipment, such as valves and buried pipes.[138]

[136] See e.g. PRIDE MTR
[137] OFIDO PCR
[138] OFIDO PCRV

105. The country programme gained insights on improving farmer consultations, quality control, forming WUAs, and enhancing agricultural extension support services.[139] Infrastructure work and equipment quality are deemed superior in SAIL and PRIDE compared to OFIDO, thanks to improved project planning, contract monitoring, supervision, and beneficiary participation and moving away form a one-size-fits-all approach.

106. SAIL introduced various forms of irrigation infrastructure, better adapted to the specific agro-ecological conditions in the new settlement sites in Lower Egypt, Middle Egypt and Upper Egypt. By December 2023, SAIL had rehabilitated 41 km of main canals in LE, which covered about 2,520 ha of land, and the project transformed 524 ha in ME from surface irrigation to drip irrigation, which included a main canal and field-site water storage.[140] Drip irrigation is a high priority for MWRI to avoid water losses, and for MALR to increase agricultural productivity. SAIL installed 210 water reservoirs to facilitate drip irrigation, for which the necessary continuous water flow is not commonly available in Egypt due to traditional pumping rotations from the main canals. Effects were seen as positive for water conservation, reduced labor requirements and improved crop yields, without any major problems being reported.[141] The project also supplied solar pumps. Other SAIL irrigation and drainage work on 4,200 ha had been completed or was ongoing, greatly exceeding the targeted area of 1,833 hectares (mainly as a result of currency exchange gains from devaluation).

107. By December 2023, PRIDE had built about 60 reservoirs (300 m3) for water harvesting for agriculture and multiple use, 20 of them in wadis (valleys), apart from smaller reservoirs (gabias) for household consumption (pathway 3). The reservoirs benefited agricultural orchards (olives, figues etc.) and livestock. Among others, the project effectively improved agriculture in wadis through constructing 320 dikes and dams on 30 km of wadis to manage water flows (30 per cent completed or ongoing). Benefits of wadi development included reduced erosion/flash flood risks and better soil fertility, expanded areas for cultivation (by 10-15 per cent); and reduced water costs. Planned integrated irrigation and drainage water infrastructure for the Siwa oasis and the el-Moghra new settlement were delayed as planning was insufficient, too complex or had not yet been finished. The Center of Excellence for Saline Agriculture was expected to support better management of salinity and brackish water for agriculture in future project interventions.

108. **The enhancement of institutional capabilities for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of water and irrigation systems has progressed in current projects.[142]** Under OFIDO, WUAs were introduced late and O&M was insufficient.[143] In SAIL, MWRI trained 65 WUAs (or 155 per cent of the target), in parallel with the development of irrigation systems and water storage, leading to improvements in O&M.[144] However, WUA had not become self-sustaining entities and struggled to collect fees for future water infrastructure maintenance. They were often just one-person entities.[145] In PRIDE, wadi development was participatory from the start. Although legal reasons delayed forming wadi associations, they are essential for the project's exit strategy.[146] Local people

[139] OFIDO PCR, PCRV, FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment, key informant interview with the former OFIDO Coordinator
[140] SAIL SVR 2023
[141] SAIL outcome survey/mid-line report 2024.
[142] According to the 2017 CSPE, the absence of a unified and harmonized vision for irrigation management transfer and participatory irrigation management between MARL and MRWI was hindering the country's on-farm irrigation support programme. This issue is addressed by the 2021 Water Resources and Irrigation Law, which is essential for aligning efforts to improve water use and protect water quality, particularly through its regulations concerning water user associations.x
[143] OFIDO PCR and PCRV
[144] SAIL SVR 2023
[145] See IFAD 2024. Egypt COSOP Completion Report.
[146] PRIDE MTR

however resisted setting up these associations.[147] For other infrastructure, the project secured O&M agreements with traditional leaders and beneficiaries.[148] Involving WUA/farmer groups early also aided crop intensification and diversification.

109. **There was little focus on cost recovery and cost reductions in agricultural water infrastructure.** In OFIDO, the Government failed to recover the investment costs for enhanced irrigation as farmers were not involved in the planning and no contracts were established with them.[149] It was reportedly challenging to enforce cost recovery for shared water resources like canals and common reservoirs, especially when well-organized WUAs and other legal farmer organizations, such as agricultural cooperatives with adequate business capabilities, were not present. SAIL and STAR were intended to alter cost recovery, aiming not only to foster farmer ownership but also to support private or group investments, scaling-up, and the reimbursement of public investments in water infrastructure. However, there have been no results to date.[150] The Government increasingly emphasized the importance of repayment plans for funding agriculture and infrastructure.[151]Research exists that examines ways to lower water infrastructure costs for farmers by suggesting technical or organizational improvements to boost affordability and efficiency[152] In PRIDE, infrastructure assets required a 10-20 per cent contribution, either in cash, labor, or indirectly by attending classes, paid in installments.

110. **Projects were still exploring ways to provide agricultural services and extension efficiently and sustainably, while also further enhancing FFS.[153]** Projects were still in the pilot-testing phase and developing an extension system intended to be equally beneficial for local farmers, participatory, and sustainable without external assistance. FFS was the preferred model in OFIDO, PRIME, and SAIL, while PRIDE focused on the lead farmer concept. Institutional support from the ARC/DRC research system persisted. With Egypt phasing out the traditional public extension system, private and community-based extensions are viewed as the future. However, the legal framework is not yet established, and paid or community-based extension services remain uncommon, posing sustainability challenges. OFIDO and PRIME worked with FFS, yet the outcomes remained uncertain as neither farmer adoption rates nor productivity improvements were monitored closely.[154] SAIL made strides in developing the FFS concept and adjusting it to field conditions. About half of all planned field schools had been conducted, with a total of 3,800 participants (above target), mostly with FAO support.[155] The project created a training-of-trainers and peer-to-peer learning system tailored to regional needs and local expertise. SAIL funding from GEF supported climate-smart agriculture initiatives. FAO noted positive outcomes and early adoption through its schools and on-farm demos. Additionally, PRIDE sought assistance in expanding its agricultural extension efforts, which were dependent on a limited project team.

[147] See IFAD 2024. Egypt COSOP Completion Report.
[148] Key informant interview with PRIDE coordinator
[149] OFIDO PCR and key informant interview with SAIL coordinator
[150] The IFAD country team was talking to a private Egyptian firm, Engazaat, that introduced alternative, self-sustaining investments of electricity (solar) and water supply to farmers against regular payments, combining engineering and social interventions, and linking farmers with finance institutions and risk-sharing opportunities. https://www.engazaat.com/
[151] Internal discussions about STAR illustrate this.
[152] See for instance El Fetyani, Mohamed Ahmed Saad. 2017. Reduction of mesqa improvement costs. National Water Research Center, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Cairo. Egypt. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320635656_Reduction_of_mesqa_improvement_costs
[153] Key informant interviews with IFAD country team, SAIL staff, former IFAD regional NRM/CCA national expert, and Cultivaet, a start-up company
[154] OFIDO PCR, FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment, PRIME PPE
[155] SAIL SVR 2023

111. Creating a sustainable and well-funded system calls for innovative strategies. The country programme explored digital extension methods, like WhatsApp groups in PRIME and SAIL, ARC's updated extension information, and collaboration with the Agricultural Federation for Education's national digitalization platform. The IFAD country team also engaged with a start-up, Cultivaet, specializing in agricultural technology and extension. Cultivaet is developing a business model focused on water-efficient irrigation, soil health monitoring, crop protection, and the digitization of agronomy services. However, this has yet to produce any tangible outcomes.

112. **Agricultural productivity increased across the country programme portfolio over time, although it was too soon to evaluate this for PRIDE.**[156] Despite meeting its institutional and training goals, various factors constrained agricultural productivity growth in OFIDO.[157] Governance issues included unreliable water supply, inadequate energy for pumping, and poor on-demand water management. Furthermore, there were maintenance problems like ineffective weed control, drainage, and salinity management. There were also minimal changes in farmers' agricultural practices, limited availability of inputs, and slow transition to higher-value crops. Farmers preferred traditional crops that were easier to market or use over high-value crops. Furthermore, the use of saved land due to the installation of new underground pipes was limited.[158]

    PRIME was more successful in reorienting agriculture services in its seven target governorates to horticulture and livestock, as part of its market-oriented value-chain approach, with positive results for productivity in both sub-sectors; through FFS and demo plots, agricultural research, training and group farming.[159]

    SAIL increased agricultural productivity in various ways, including investments in water infrastructure, machinery for AC, and FFS although it is too early for quantification and validation of reported information.[160] FAO and ARC showed high rates of farmer adoption of proposed agricultural practices in FFS and mean productivity gains of 51 per cent, or between 20 and 75 per cent by crop.[161] According to SAIL's 2023 outcome survey, approximately one-third of participants in all training programs, including FFS, implemented new practices. However, other respondents faced barriers such as limited financial resources, inadequate specific knowledge, and lack of support from friends and household members.[162]

    Agricultural development in PRIDE was moving slowly, with productivity gains mostly observed in wadi development and for orchards benefiting from additional water reservoirs and organic soil management, with reported gains as high as 20-65 per cent.[163] Most productivity gains were expected in the longer run, especially for orchards and improved range land management.

113. **The country programme often provided substantial support for livestock and animal production, even unintentionally at times.** PRIDE focused on livestock and animal production, acknowledging its significance in Bedouin culture. Efforts included enhancing the genetic quality of breeding rams, distributing goats to women for economic empowerment, and aiding poultry and pigeon farming.

[156] See annex VIII for a figure of PMD supervision ratings of agricultural productivity by project over time
[157] See OFIDO PCR, PCRV; and poverty impact section.
[158] OFIDO PCRV and FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment
[159] PRIME PPE #35
[160] SAIL outcome survey 2023
[161] FAO (2023) FFS mid-term report and SAIL SVR 2023
[162] Others had several reasons for not adopting, such as lack of money (especially for solar, biogas, aquaponics) and of specific knowledge (especially on marketing), or being influenced by friends and household members. Adoption was highest for participatory agricultural workshops and on-farm demonstrations (around 50%), lower for training on group/CBO management and sustainability (40%), applying improved irrigation, climate resilient and solar techniques (around one third) and lowest in applying marketing plans (27%), biogas and aquaponics/hydroponics. Livestock had the highest adoption rates for using vaccines and youth training for para-veterinary services (close to 40%) followed by information on breeding and livestock marketing (around 30%).
[163] PRIDE MTR

Some anecdotal reports indicated productivity improvements. Initiatives for rangeland restoration involving fodder shrub-barley-leguminous species intercropping had just begun, with no visible effects yet. Certain areas planned to integrate livestock and crop production systems using salt-tolerant animal fodder. Plans also included a mobile veterinary clinic and support for laboratory and technical equipment at DRC. Livestock production received significant support from PRIME's rural finance component, as banks understood livestock better than horticulture. Women's milk production thrived in Beni Suef.[164] During the last two years of implementation, MALR added livestock training to its offers. In the end, livestock was considered as one of the PRIME unexpected success stories.[165] Livestock was less emphasized in SAIL. FAO conducted 49 FFS on animal production, many of which focused on this area, but demand for livestock training was lower than other subjects, except for youth para-veterinary services.[166] SAIL also helped spread artificial insemination practices beyond its sites, continuing efforts from previous IFAD-supported projects in Egypt.

Pathway 2 – Access to credit, training and markets

114. **Although there have been some successes in coordinating farmer-buyer contracts, the country programme has generally not met expectations in terms of marketing.** The country programme's challenges were mainly due to limited marketing expertise and the late start of marketing activities. Among the completed and ongoing IFAD projects, PRIME had the strongest focus on marketing, with SAIL coming next. OFIDO had a marketing component and high aspirations but faced challenges with establishing marketing associations due to conceptual flaws and insufficient technical capacity.[167] Their function in connecting farmers, particularly to financial credit, was minimal and proved unsustainable. Although PRIDE does not engage in specific marketing activities, it has enhanced overall connectivity, including road construction, to improve market access.

115. PRIME's major accomplishment was facilitating 287 sales agreements between FMAs and buyers, mainly for seasonal contracts at market rates.[168] These contracts were predominantly focused on the 61 most commercially active FMAs, out of a total of 178 FMAs engaged by the project, and below the initial target of 200 FMAs. The CSPE's further analysis of these contracts revealed that 29 FMAs formed robust business relationships with seasonal supply contracts between farmers and traders enduring several years. Some only managed to sign a few annual contracts during PRIME's implementation, often just for inputs, and most deals involved fewer than five farmers. Ten contracts benefited more than 50 farmers each. However, there were some problems in fulfilling these contracts, adversely affecting farmers.[169] The project lacked sufficient technical support, so only FMAs with strong leadership and commitment fully participated, missing broader marketing opportunities. It failed to enhance most FMAs' business management and marketing skills, particularly in entrepreneurship and business acumen, as training lacked clear objectives, needs assessments, or strategic partnerships recommended by the 2017 CSPE.

116. Conversely, training in crop management and livestock husbandry, primarily provided by the Farming Systems Research Unit, proved more effective and enhanced farmers' production abilities. PRIME also created some marketing outlets and Marketing Advisory Councils at the Governorate level; however, their value

[164] Key informant interview with former PRIME coordinator
[165] Key informant interview with former PRIME coordinator
[166] SAIL/FAO (2024). Success stories.; SAIL 2023 outcome survey
[167] OFIDO PCRV
[168] PRIME PCR and PPE
[169] CSPE field observations One example was that of sesame marketing in Motobas, where farmers who were under contract with a buyer opted to sell their sesame to a local trader who offered a higher price. However, once the farmers canceled their contract, the local trader subsequently lowered their buying price to below that of the original buyer.

was questionable and most were not sustainable. The project introduced several innovative electronic platforms for market intelligence, but there is no evidence that this resulted in higher sales prices, which was one of the project's main goals. The e-marketing platform for farmers is no longer active and had only 50 downloads over three years. Introduced late in the project, the electronic platforms lacked an exit strategy.[170]

Box 2. Country programme experiences with contract farming

Green Field for Export, a small and medium-sized enterprise established in Beni Suef in 2000, focuses on sorting, packing, and exporting fresh fruits and vegetables. The company offers various produce to markets in Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and numerous Arab countries. Between 2018 and 2021, Green Field signed 15 farming contracts with eight FMAs, backed by PRIME in Minya and Beni Suef. These deals assisted 143 farmers in growing dry onions, spring garlic, and dry garlic. Due to PRIME's market facilitation for FMAs, smallholder farmers, typically owning 0.3 feddan (0.13 hectare) of land, were able to reach larger markets and boost their revenues by 14 per cent.

A common problem in the PRIME and SAIL contracts was that MAs could not compel members to fulfil commitments, leading them to sell crops to other buyers for higher prices, ignoring prior investments. This is why many buyers in the PRIME project signed just one contract. In the SAIL project, several farmers broke agreements with a sesame processor, causing the processor to reduce prices for other farmers. The key lesson was that changing farmer mindsets requires time, sustained technical support, and capacity building to develop robust marketing practices, especially in MAs lacking initial strong leadership.

117. SAIL integrated insights from prior initiatives, establishing and registering five MAs, one for each key project site, and brought on board an agribusiness specialist in 2021. The MAs finalized contracts for various products like fennel, sesame, wheat, basil, and agricultural inputs, while also creating WhatsApp groups to facilitate farmer interactions. The project offered business training, technical support to the MAs, and organized visits to consumer-focused fairs such as the GIZ MAPS festival and the Dates festival in Aswan. A business-to-business (B2B) workshop held in Cairo in 2022 connected buyers, input suppliers, farmers, and their MAs. While this event marked a promising beginning, the MA members were insufficiently trained for participation, limiting the potential benefits. Additionally, MAs have not yet capitalized on implementing quality standards and certifications crucial for maintaining stable business relationships and exports.

118. **Rural finance often had weak links to project goals, planned loan purposes, and other components.** PRIME had high disbursement rates for rural finance due to its extensive geographic coverage, while OFIDO and SAIL had lower disbursements because their target villages had fewer eligible farmers. PRIME's credit facility effectively distributed a total of US$74.8 million, with approximately equal portions going to ADP and MSMEDA, primarily as a credit line through nine banks, with a minor share allocated by MSMEDA through 22 CDAs/micro-finance institutions. Nonetheless, the project inadequately demonstrated the additionality of IFAD funds and credit accessibility for its primary target groups and commodities. Revolving and targeted credit lines were not set up as intended. Only a limited number of loans were issued for horticulture production, the project's main initial focus, and those often went to large commercial farms financed by ADP, such as artichoke farms in Lower Egypt. Conversely, many loans were allocated to small- or medium-scale livestock production. A notable portion of micro-loans was directed towards commercial and informal enterprises, leaving the proportion related to agriculture unclear.[171]

[170] PE PRIME.
[171] PRIME PPE

119. SAIL's rural finance disbursements were less effective, despite exceeding beneficiary targets, especially for women. By June 2023, only 8.5 million euros of 13 million euros withdrawn were disbursed.[172] SAIL lacked clear milestones for withdrawals and disbursements, causing cancellations. Other issues were low institutional capacity of ADP/MSMEDA intermediaries, limited collateral (farmers often do not own their land), fewer traditional customers, and took precedence over business feasibility and funding solar pumps required licensed water wheels and no tubes.[173] MSMEDA participated in OFIDO but struggled to find enough credit-worthy clients within targeted districts. MSMEDA was later allowed to lend across the whole governorate, which increased disbursements. However, these loans were not linked to other project components.[174] Despite digitalization efforts, data on key rural finance performance indicators beyond disbursements were lacking, including information on active accounts, outstanding loans, savings, repayment rates, loans at risk, returns and cost per client.

120. **IFAD's rural finance initiatives were only partially aimed at their main target groups, including small-scale farmers and women.** ADP loans mainly targeted larger farmers, agro-enterprises, and a small number of women, while MSMEDA's small and micro-loans benefited many smaller farmers, SMEs, and women. Three-quarters of ADP loans in PRIME were large (>US$10,000), with unknown effects on rural employment and distribution. Only six per cent of ADP recipients were women. MSMEDA distributed small loans to 2,711 beneficiaries (8 per cent of total rural finance beneficiaries), averaging US$5,000 each. Micro-loans through Banque du Caire reached around 23,000 beneficiaries (65.5 per cent of total rural finance beneficiaries), including many small farmers and women, with an average loan size of US$1,000. Women received 39 per cent of these loans in number and 33 per cent of the total volume. Through MSMEDA's network of CDAs/NGOs, 9,000 beneficiaries (25 per cent of total rural finance beneficiaries) obtained micro-credit, averaging US$540 per loan, with women securing 43 per cent of these.[175] A similar trend occurred at SAIL: ADP issued fewer but larger loans (346), while MSMEDA provided many smaller loans (8,753), with 62 per cent of all loans going to women and 43 per cent to youth.[176] However, MSMEDA's lack of grassroots financial intermediaries limited the number of micro-finance loans for primary targets. Approval to disbursement for CDAs and micro-finance institutions took up to two years. Small farmers' distrust in banks and lack of land ownership also hindered access to those with less than three feddans.

121. **The country programme was not effectively able to help participating financial institutions in creating innovative loan and rural finance products, nor in improving their communication with beneficiaries.** The projects did not introduce new financial products and had a limited effect on rural finance institutions. ADP and MSMEDA maintained their operations without developing new loan products or processes due to unclear subsidiary agreements and lack of project funds. Additionally, credit guarantee mechanisms in SAIL were cancelled due to poor planning and a delayed project start. Participating financial institutions did not identify and engage new clients, including marketing associations and other beneficiaries targeted by IFAD. The projects lacked dedicated finance experts and did not give sufficient grants to ADP and MSMEDA for technical assistance in creating and testing new products with the participating financial institutions. PRIME and SAIL only offered basic training grants, controlled by MALR. The staff at participating financial institutions was not adequately trained, and participatory evaluations of rural markets, financial needs, and loan products were lacking. Training for CDAs was also limited. IFAD lacked a coherent strategy

[172] SAIL SVR 2023
[173] CSPE field observations
[174] OFIDO PCR #29-30
[175] PRIME PPE
[176] SAIL SVR 2023 SV report.

for collaboration between ADP and MSMEDA, revolving funds, and sustainability after the programs and projects ended. For example, successful loans for CDA/micro-finance institutions in OFIDO were discontinued after the project closed.[177]

122. In sum, there were three main reasons why rural finance did not progress further in Egypt. First, the two primary financial executing agencies, ADP and MSMEDA, were not well integrated into the projects, particularly in decisions on site selection and target groups. Subsidiary agreements placed little emphasis on detailed implementation objectives. Secondly, the projects provided limited support to these agencies in piloting and expanding loan products tailored to targeted groups and specific credit types, such as value chain finance. Thirdly, the projects lacked dedicated credit experts on their teams. Additionally, the broader project context played a role. The country programme struggled to introduce new ideas in Egypt due to the limited number of local micro-finance institutions or participating banks to extend credit to the target groups, the coordination needed with four Ministries (MALR/MWRI, MoF, and MPEDIC), and the Government's low interest in finance demand analysis or technical assistance. Financial awareness in rural areas regarding available financial products was low, particularly about when and why to take a loan.[178] Participating financial institutions, micro-finance institutions and banks were generally hesitant to manage seasonal credit due to high transaction costs, risks, and irregular repayments. Moreover, most micro-finance institutions are risk-averse and struggle to assess farm returns and risks, especially for short-term loans without adequate collateral.[179]

Pathway 3 – Access to social services and nutrition

123. **Integrated support packages aimed at enhancing social inclusion and nutrition proved to be largely effective and were well received by communities in new lands, Bedouin areas, and certain old lands sites.** SAIL and PRIDE primarily advanced the broader social aims of this pathway, whereas PRIDE also focused specifically on nutrition. SAIL enhanced earlier successful social investments from IFAD settlement projects in Lower Egypt (West Nubareya and Eastern Delta) by developing social infrastructure in 30 new land communities across Egypt. PRIDE built upon a World Bank community development project from 20 years ago, but it more effectively scaled and concentrated its social and agricultural interventions on 43 targeted Bedouin communities.

124. Many planned SAIL investments in building and rehabilitating social infrastructure became fully operational, including nine clinics, 11 nurseries, six schools, two youth centres, four vet facilities, nine sewing units, and one computer and women center, across all project sites.[180] Water supply now serves seven villages. Approximately half of the planned 99 community infrastructure sub-projects have been completed.[181] The infrastructure was of good quality, but coordinating with various ministries and governorates for operational support and sustainability was challenging, given the many contracts. Solid waste management and solar lighting were not implemented as planned.

125. In a similar vein, PRIDE launched its social infrastructure support program with an emphasis on household water cisterns and latrines. Although the water for health infrastructure was of high quality, overall accomplishments for various infrastructure types remained modest (approximately 10-30 per cent) due to the project's delayed commencement and the governorate's limited construction capacity, which is dependent on migrant labor from other regions of Egypt.

[177] CSPE field observations
[178] Key informant interview with IFAD regional technical lead for rural finance
[179] Key informant interview with MSMED Federation.
[180] SAIL SVR 2023
[181] 43% according to SAIL SVR 2023

Preparations were also underway for the construction of 15 multi-grade classrooms, three secondary schools, three health units, and five mobile clinics.[182]

126. **Programme interventions aided in community development and were participatory, though they have not fully become community-driven due to the time required for establishing community institutional structures.** To promote sustainability and participatory involvement, SAIL created and backed various types of community and farmer groups within its target villages, encompassing CDAs and agricultural cooperatives. Approximately two-thirds of the planned CDAs have now been set up, with 25 out of the intended 38 completed.[183] Of these, 17 were designed for the entire community, while eight specifically targeted women and youth. In total, there were 2,438 beneficiaries in these CDAs, with around 23 per cent being women. Nonetheless, ensuring their sustainability post-project remains a priority.[184] The project also created or assisted agricultural cooperatives in all its 30 villages. Given the tribal nature of its target groups, PRIDE opted to operate primarily through established tribal community structures and extended family networks. Project staff and facilitators, who are either members of or closely connected to the Bedouin communities, engaged with women separately.

127. **The country programme was making strides in enhancing nutrition and providing valuable insights, demonstrating various degrees of ambition and success in both longstanding and recent projects.** PRIDE launched an ambitious initiative integrating nutrition-sensitive investments and activities, with a primary focus on women. The program aimed to enhance household water, health, and educational infrastructure, thereby improving overall living standards and nutrition within communities, particularly benefiting women through empowerment and nutrition-related income-generating activities. Initially targeting literacy training for 2,000 women, the project expanded this goal to 5,000 after surpassing 1,000 trainees by mid-term. Diversified income sources for women have included distributing 450 goats, supporting pigeon and chicken production (benefitting over 1,500 women), establishing vegetable gardens, and planting drought- and salt-tolerant species with high nutritional value, such as moringa trees. Additionally, the project introduced micro-business training, goat fodder production, sewing, and handicraft activities among women. Although the recent PRIDE project perception survey indicated a positive reception of these initiatives, the anticipated integrated health and nutrition Behaviour Change Communication strategy, intended to further women's awareness, empowerment, and household decision-making roles, had not yet been developed. This strategy was also meant to foster broader communication methods within traditional contexts. Due to difficulties in finding technical skills in Matrouh, the planned activities were ultimately scaled back.[185] While PRIDE focused on tribal groups, it did not specifically aim to enhance awareness of indigenous food systems. The project partly utilized indigenous knowledge for climate change and resource management (e.g., dam and cistern construction methods), but there were no clear efforts to systematize this knowledge for learning or promote it in nutrition.

128. SAIL achieved positive nutrition effects largely through increased food diversity (thanks to a FFS programme aimed at women), competitive pricing of fresh produce, and women's financial grants for income generation (see pathway 2). Like PRIDE, rural literacy classes and support for female leaders boosted nutrition. PRIME improved dietary diversity significantly with higher agricultural production of over 50 horticultural products, reduced post-harvest losses, and overall income gains. Household dietary diversity scores showed notable improvement.[186] The

[182] PRIDE MTR
[183] SAIL SVR 2023
[184] SAIL SVR 2023
[185] Key informant interview with PRIDE coordinator
[186] PRIME outcome survey

National Council for Women also conducted local seminars on good nutrition, hygiene, and micro-nutrient preservation.

Achievements against COSOP objectives

129. While the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs shared thematic intervention areas, they differed in strategic focus. The 2012 COSOP aimed to enhance natural resource use, strengthen rural poor skills, and improve service access. Conversely, the 2019 COSOP targeted livelihood improvements broadly and prioritized policy engagement.

130. Table 5 shows how COSOP strategic objectives align with impact pathways and the results of the country programme.[187] The 2012 COSOP's second objective contributed to improved land and water management, while its first and third objectives related to increased access to credit, training, and markets. The 2019 COSOP's first objective covered all three pathways broadly, while its second objective was a cross-cutting theme in this evaluation's theory of change.

131. Regarding the first impact pathway of improved land and water management, the country programme demonstrated satisfactory performance in water and livestock development. Recent projects have improved institutional capabilities for the O&M of water and irrigation systems, although WUAs had not yet become self-sustaining entities. Furthermore, the delivery of agricultural services and extension programs was only moderately satisfactory, as projects continue to explore effective and sustainable approaches. Under the second pathway, the portfolio achieved moderately satisfactory outcomes in market access and value chain development but performed poorly in rural finance due to its limited additionality and inadequate consideration of target groups' needs. The third pathway saw successful implementation of social infrastructure (although with some delays, especially under PRIDE), while efforts toward improved nutrition were moderately satisfactory, hindered by delays in behavioural change activities. Lastly, policy engagement results were unsatisfactory, indicating a misalignment between ambitions and resource allocation (refer to the section on coherence for further details).

Table 5
COSOP objectives and achievements under the 2019-24 COSOP

CSPE pathway	2012 COSOP	2019 COSOP[188]	Projects	Interventions	CSPE assessment	Status
1) Improved land and water management	**(SO2)** Enhance pro-poor sustainable use of natural resources, especially	**(SO1)** Improve livelihoods of rural men and women by enhancing productivity and profitability of	OFIDO, SAIL, PRIDE	Water development (infrastructure and maintenance)	Water infrastructure delivered Improved O&M arrangements, but WUA not yet self-sustaining	

[187] See annex VIII for a detailed list of major achievements by impact pathway and project (mainly based on logframe results reporting) and a comparison with achievements presented in the COSOP 2019-2024 completion review (CCR). See annex VIII for figures on PMD supervision ratings of overall implementation performance and effectiveness by project over time

[188] According to the COSOP 2019-24, SO1 would have four different outcomes: (i) Enhanced water, land and labour productivity; (ii) Improved access to markets, processing and storage facilities; (iii) Enhanced financial inclusion for rural households; and (iv) Strengthened and empowered community based rural institutions. The COSOP outcomes under SO2 included : (i) Economic value of land and water resources recognized in policy; (ii) Capacity, standard procedures and investments developed to prevent or reverse land degradation induced by CC and other factors; and (iii) Enhanced policies that support rural women and youth participation in rural economies. The COSOP Completion Review also reported on a fourth outcome: Joint SSTC initiatives with partnership countries.

	land and water;	agriculture-related activities	OFIDO PRIME, SAIL, PRIDE	Agricultural extension and productivity	Still experimenting with delivery models	
			PRIME, SAIL, PRIDE	Livestock development	Strong support (although sometimes unintentionally)	
2) Increased access to credit, training and markets	**(SO1)** Strengthen the technical skills and organizational capacity of poor rural men and women to take advantage of rural on and off farm economic opportunities; **(SO3)** Improve access of poor rural farmers to better quality services (technology, finance and markets).		OFIDO, PRIME, SAIL	Marketing, processing and storage	Despite some success stories, not meeting expectations	
			OFIDO, PRIME, SAIL	Rural finance	Limited additionality, innovation and consideration of the target groups' needs	
3) Improved access to social services and nutrition			SAIL, PRIDE	Social infrastructure	Social infrastructure being delivered, with some delays in PRIDE	
			SAIL, PRIDE	Nutrition	Behavioural changes activities delayed	
Cross-cutting: policy engagement		**(SO2)** Foster the development of enhanced policies that support inclusive and sustainable rural transformation	OFIDO PRIME, SAIL, PRIDE		Ambitions not met	

Source: ORMS: Project supervision and completion reports; project M&E data provided to CSPE Team

Innovation

132. **The country programme partially achieved its planned innovation goals.** The 2019 COSOP aimed to introduce three main innovations: advanced rural financing tools, strong public-private-producer partnerships (4P) adapted to the

national context, and a unified programme management unit for IFAD projects in Egypt. The country programme made minimal headway in creating innovative financing tools and new delivery channels like value chain financing. Nevertheless, it made some strides in its secondary priority area of innovation, specifically marketing (as outlined in pathway 2). Though PRIME introduced some pioneering concepts, it struggled with design issues and was ineffective in shifting smallholders to a market-driven horticulture approach supported by innovative loan products for farmers, women, and businesses. The loans failed to be properly integrated with marketing strategies, contract farming practices, or new value-chain partnerships. Finally, while the Government had not set up a unified programme management unit for IFAD-supported projects, SAIL's project management unit effectively developed many of these capabilities. It also assisted other projects like PRIDE and took the lead in the new STAR project.

133. **The country programme introduced and refined various innovative technologies and practices with more success in recent projects in new lands and Bedouin areas.** Two successful innovations in agricultural water systems are fiber-reinforced mesqa canal linings to prevent seepage and enhanced water storage systems for continuous flow, both tailored to local conditions. However, the adoption of aquaculture, aqua-/hydroponic systems, and technical desalination has been slower and largely unsuccessful. Institutionally, significant innovations included enhancing agricultural cooperatives' governance, services, and financial access under SAIL, and to a lesser extent, testing collective farming and marketing associations for better agribusiness links under PRIME and SAIL. Additionally, further developing and testing FFS and lead farmer extension models were innovative practices in SAIL and PRIDE (see pathway 1).

134. Various projects introduced communication and ICT innovations, like early warning systems for climate adaptation using meteorological stations (SAIL, PRIDE) and GIS in PRIDE. Knowledge sharing improved via WhatsApp, websites, and social media during the pandemic (PRIME, SAIL). A marketing platform for produce was tested but had limited success (PRIME). However, usage rates of these innovations were seldom recorded. In rural finance, the shift to digital management and information systems has made progress, albeit at a gradual pace. This advancement has improved real-time reporting on key performance indicators but remains insufficient in providing comprehensive metrics such as detailed business profitability or efficiency measures like costs per client loan.

135. PRIDE employed a thorough and innovative strategy for managing natural resources and adapting to climate change (in addition to its special focus on nutrition, outlined in pathway 3). This strategy involved wadi development, rainwater harvesting, and rangeland rehabilitation, all while considering indigenous knowledge and practices. Its integrated approach to wadi restoration, which combined water and agronomic management, water storage, and soil erosion barriers, was notably successful and innovative, especially when compared to the previous World Bank project. The project also prioritized soil management and addressing degradation, including salinity, through its rainwater harvesting systems for agriculture. Furthermore, rangeland rehabilitation expanded on models introduced by the GEF HERD project, in partnership with the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe.

136. **Drawing on insights gained from OFIDO's introduction of advanced irrigation technologies, the programme integrated various technical and institutional innovations, particularly through SAIL.** Although many innovative elements were not entirely novel—having previously been used in earlier IFAD projects and other areas of Egypt—they were re-envisioned, customized, and adapted to suit various locations and target audiences. In OFIDO, while technical

advancements[189] resulted in some improvements in water efficiency and lowered water expenses, they did not manage to accomplish the intended on-demand water delivery. The social and technical advancements aimed at O&M, WUA development, production enhancements (like land leveling and soil improvements), and marketing were too ambitious and intricate, without the required capacities and institutions to ensure effective implementation.[190] OFIDO missed the chance to create innovative participatory cost-sharing plans. Learning from OFIDO, SAIL tested and expanded successful models of modern irrigation and drainage across different systems. They engaged early with WUAs, promoted solar-powered water pumps, and linked loans to new pump investments. SAIL found irrigation modernization more successful in new lands due to larger farms, flexible irrigation, and settlers' adaptability.

137. From the experience of implementing the IFAD program, the GoE now understands that not all traditional agricultural areas can be modernized as originally intended. There is a need for innovative and integrated concepts, along with tailored approaches to modern irrigation that take local conditions into account. These include developing new systems for improved flood irrigation, simpler methods for soil and water conservation, alternatives to individual water reservoirs for continuous flow, and enhanced land mobility.[191] Nonetheless, the expenses associated with modernization investments, especially those involving structures across multiple farms, remain a challenge, necessitating long-term financial and collaborative solutions.

138. **Overall effectiveness.** The effective implementation of agricultural water infrastructure resulted in higher productivity, and various initiatives also played a role in boosting livestock production. Integrated support packages were effective and valued by communities. However, the marketing interventions under the country programme fell short of expectations. Rural finance did not always align with project goals or meet the needs of IFAD's target groups. Additionally, there were challenges in reaching poor, landless and young individuals. The CSPE rates effectiveness as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

139. **Overall innovation.** The country programme had only modest success in progressing with its intended innovation agenda. It introduced, pilot-tested, and honed several innovative technologies, implementation models, and practices within its various projects, experiencing mixed outcomes. Leveraging insights from OFIDO, new technical and institutional approaches were developed for better irrigation water management. The CSPE rates innovation as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

D. Efficiency

Operational efficiency

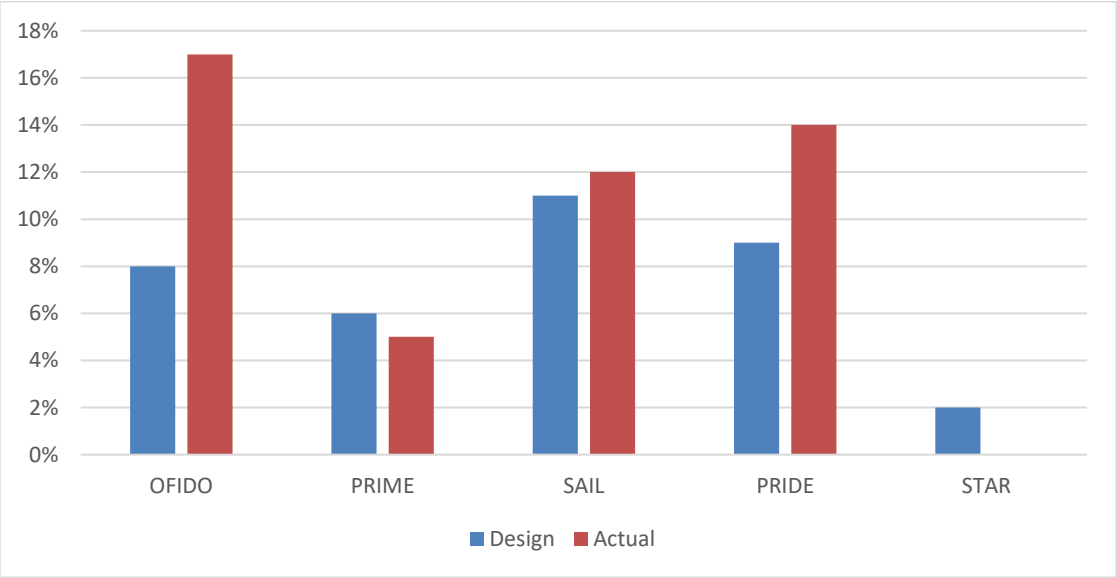
140. **Project management expenses have been kept below acceptable limits, with the exception of OFIDO.** Foreseen project management costs varied between projects, from 11 per cent in SAIL to two percent in STAR.[192] The average at design was 7.2 per cent and 14 per cent during implementation, which is below the upper limit of 15 per cent set by IFAD.[193] While PRIME and SAIL's actual project management costs were close to what had been planned[194], those of OFIDO

[189] According to the 2017 CSPE, the enhanced irrigation technology facilitated by OFIDO at the mesqa levels in the old lands was not new, having been initially introduced by the World Bank III-MP in the Kafr El Sheikh and Beheira governorates.
[190] OFIDO PCR & PCRV
[191] Key informant interview with former PRIME coordinator.
[192] It is important to recognize that the initially low figure in STAR's design was linked to the anticipated high co-financing, which ultimately did not come through. Consequently, the actual cost is projected to be higher.
[193] As per IFAD's Financial Management and Administration Manual.
[194] However, if project management costs for PRIME were compared with the costs of marketing support (US$4.7 million versus US$4.3 million) the ratio would change considerably and be considered very high.

increased from 7.5 per cent at the initial appraisal to 17 per cent at completion. OFIDO design budgets underestimated the management challenge that the project represented: the different phasing in project areas in both Upper and Lower Egypt, the engagement with multiple partners (MALR, MWRI, SFD), the hiring of competent staff outside of ministries (both in Cairo and in governorates), and the time cost of procuring consultants.[195] At mid-term, project management costs for PRIDE stood at 14 per cent (up from 9 per cent at design). These higher costs were partly due to the significant decentralization and changes in PRIDE's management arrangements, as the central programme management unit planned under this COSOP was never set up.

Figure 1

Proportion of planned and actual project management costs to overall project costs



Source: OBI/ORMS; SAIL SVR 2023, PRIDE MTR

141. **Lower or reasonable management costs resulted in reduced efficiency because of limited staff capacities.** While management costs remained low, there was a reliance on government personnel, insufficient incentives and skills, and high turnover of key personnel, as already noted by the previous CSPE.[196] Projects faced challenges in hiring qualified personnel outside the government, resulting in capacity gaps like a lack of specialized marketing expertise that affected implementation.[197] Development partners like the World Bank and GIZ reported similar staffing issues. OFIDO was an exception, enjoying more freedom to hire skilled professionals. Non-financial management staff came from older projects or the private sector, with both number and quality deemed sufficient.[198] In general, low pay and motivation led to high staff turnover and unfilled positions for long periods. PRIME faced staff capacity issues almost continuously. There were persistent shortages at both national and governmental levels. In 2019, there were advancements in project management and key roles in M&E, marketing, and gender. However, some areas still had gaps, especially in marketing and capacity-building.[199] SAIL initially face challenges due to the absence of a full-time Executive Director and necessary technical expertise to support communities, as noted mid-term. Despite the subsequent appointment of a dedicated full-time project manager and staff reassignments, there were still gaps in rural finance,

[195] IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE (#120).
[196] IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE (#121).
[197] Key informant interviews; See annex VIII for a figure on PMD quality of project management supervision ratings by project over time
[198] IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE (#123).
[199] PRIME PPE (#69-70)

agribusiness development, M&E, and procurement.[200] PRIDE faced challenges in procurement and required additional technical support for rangeland management.[201] To address the staffing shortage for implementing and monitoring its extensive agricultural productivity program, especially given the region's lack of agricultural extension personnel, hiring external consultants was being considered.

142. **In recent years, the alignment between planned activities (annual workplan and budget) and actual implementation has slightly improved.[202]** The review of supervision and implementation support ratings shows that coherence between the AWPB and implementation was below the satisfactory mark for most of the period. This was mainly linked to the disbursement issues projects faced (see below), but also poor planning.[203] Coherence however improved slightly in the last years, especially due to changes in project management, as in the case of PRIME and SAIL.

143. **Service providers generally performed well, despite encountering some difficulties.** SAIL and PRIDE civil works contractors delivered good service under project staff supervision. In contrast, OFIDO encountered capacity issues with private contractors, causing implementation delays.[204] Except for PRIDE, all projects worked closely with ADP and MSMEDA (or MSMEDA's predecessor) for the provision of rural finance services. Their performance was mixed as already reported in the previous chapter on effectiveness. While being important implementation partners, projects faced collaboration and coordination challenges with ADP and MSMEDA, especially in terms of targeting, financial product and capacity development, M&E and reporting.[205]

144. **The portfolio faced recurrent challenges in terms of timeliness.** Like the 2017 CSPE findings, projects still faced challenges with effectiveness gaps, delayed key deliverables (especially in infrastructure and marketing), and required extensions. Except for SAIL, projects experienced delays in starting up implementation. The portfolio under review showed an average duration of 12.4 months from approval to effectiveness, compared to the NEN average of 10.1 months. Additionally, the period from effectiveness to first disbursement averaged 24.2 months for the portfolio, whereas the NEN average was 8.3 months (see Table 8 below). OFIDO and PRIME were fast in becoming effective, but then took a long time to make a first disbursement (57 and 31 months respectively).[206] This was mainly due to the uncertainties following the 2011 political events, which disrupted administrative and operational processes.[207] PRIDE and STAR experienced significant delays in becoming effective,[208] but also regarding the first disbursement. In the case of PRIDE this was caused by delays in staff recruitment and AWPB preparation.[209] STAR, on the other hand, faced delays mainly due to shifts in the GoE's debt management strategy and a reduced inclination towards borrowing amidst global and domestic economic challenges, as well as the withdrawal of critical co-financiers.[210]

145. Implementation delays necessitated multiple extensions (see Table 8 below). OFIDO required four extensions due to political and economic instability post-2011, Covid-19's impact, and problems with procurement and disbursement.[211] Of the

[200] SAIL SVR 2023 (#137-139)
[201] PRIDE MTR 2023 (#136)
[202] See annex VIII for a figure on PMD Coherence of AWPB and implementation by project over time
[203] See e.g. PRIME SVR 2019, SAIL MTR 2019 and PRIDE SVR 2021 (#78)
[204] See OFIDO PCR.(#117)
[205] E.g. PRIME PPE (#8, 46, 69), SAIL SVR 2023 (#48, 55-56)
[206] This was due to government buy-in, with MPEDIC involved in the design (IOE 2017 Egypt CSPE #116).
[207] See OFIDO PCRV and PRIME PPE.
[208] Since 2016, a larger set of national stakeholders need to officially approve loan investment projects, which has slowed down the ratification process according to MPEDIC.
[209] PRIDE ISR 2020
[210] STAR ISR 2020 and 2024.
[211] PRIME PPE (#67)

ongoing projects, SAIL has been extended by 18 months, with implementation delays caused by limited capacity of the PCU to handle irrigation infrastructure, contract issues with the FFS activities and, again, disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.[212] It is anticipated that an additional extension will be requested, partly because the project now has more local currency to allocate than initially expected due to the depreciation of the Egyptian pound.

Table 8
Timeliness of portfolio under review

Name of project	Approval to effectiveness (months)	Effectiveness to first disbursement (months)	Approval to first disbursement (months)	Initial duration (months)	Extension (months)
OFIDO	1	57	58	96	30
PRIME	3	31	34	96	18
SAIL	5	5	10	108	18
PRIDE	23	11	34	84	
STAR	30	17	47	84	
Egypt portfolio average	**12.4**	**24.2**	**36.6**		
NEN average	**10.1**	**8.3**	**19**		
IFAD average*	**7.3**	**7.1**	**14.9**		

Source: IFAD's Operational Results Management System (ORMS)
*For projects approved and available for disbursement from 2011 onwards

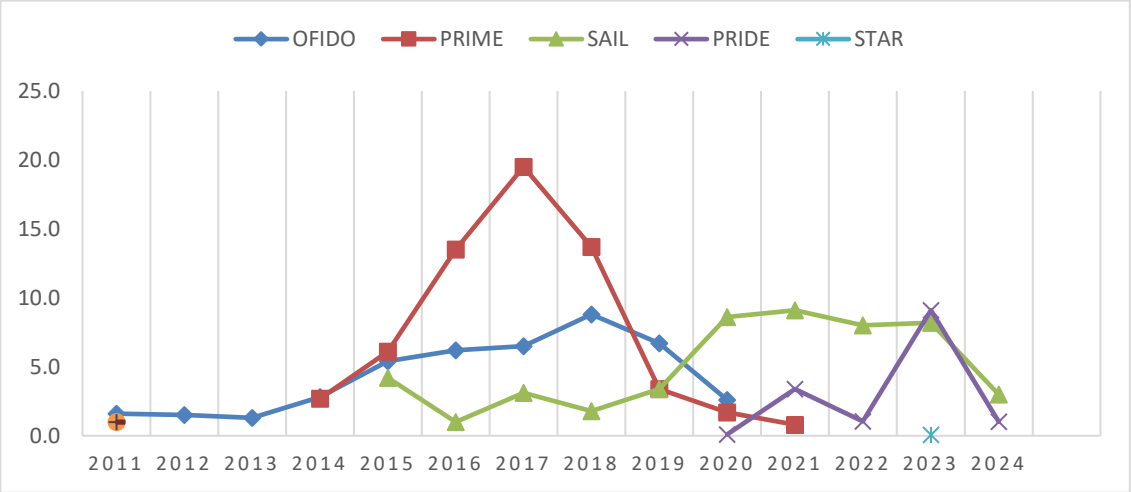
Financial Efficiency

146. **Projects struggled with disbursement rates and procurement issues, but most managed to turn this around after mid-term.** Lagging disbursements were caused by significant start-up delays, lengthy procurement processes, inadequate procurement capacity, and weak control and monitoring mechanisms (leading to inefficiencies in budget management and project implementation). External factors also played a role, such as inflation, economic challenges and the COVID 19 pandemic, which further complicated financial planning and increased operational costs. OFIDO struggled with disbursement rates throughout its implementation period. Despite receiving project management support from FAO, the project closed with an overall project disbursement of 67 per cent and 71 per cent for the IFAD loan. Although PRIME also faced disbursement issues during its first years,[213] it managed to turn that trend around, but disbursements were unequal across components. After some adaptive programmatic, institutional and procedural changes in MSMEDA and ADP disbursements improved for rural finance and peaked in 2017. In contrast, the marketing support component was significantly smaller in scale and marked by slower and delayed distributions. The unequal disbursements across components delayed implementation of the project as planned.[214] SAIL was expected to have used approximately 43 per cent of its funds by mid-term in 2019, but the actual spending was just 16.5 per cent of that projection. The situation arose partly due to the PMU's insufficient capacity to plan and carry out procurements effectively, leading to bid cancellations caused by inadequate terms of reference, criteria, and technical specifications.[215] SAIL made almost no infrastructure investments before mid-term. After the mid-term, SAIL continued to encounter disbursement issues, primarily because both MSMEDA and ADP struggled to utilise the funds assigned to the rural finance component. This

[212] SAIL Project Extension Memo
[213] PRIME did not any of the loan proceeds within the first two years of IFAD effectiveness, because the conditions for Government effectiveness had not been fulfilled (IOE 2017 Egypt CSPE).
[214] PRIME PPE #67
[215] SAIL MTR, August 2019

was partly due to a low demand driven by high interest rates.[216] Finally, PRIDE's disbursement rates for the loan and grant stood at only 23 per cent and 14 per cent respectively at mid-term (2023). This was mainly due to startup delays, inflation, and lengthy procurement processes.[217]

Figure 2
Annual disbursement trends for the projects



Source: OBI

Economic efficiency

147. **Project costs per beneficiary were relatively high.** They varied from US$399 (OFIDO) to US$2,367 (SAIL) at design, with an average of US$1,374 (against an average of US$614.6 during the previous CSPE period under review). Upon completion, PRIME's costs per beneficiary were lower than initially anticipated. The reported figures cover individuals who received both training and credit services, albeit with some overlap between these groups. However, it is challenging to fully assess these figures because they exclude indirect beneficiaries of credit-based investments or non-trained MA members. [218] OFIDO's costs per beneficiary, on the other hand, increased due to issues with outreach and high project management costs. Although still ongoing, PRIDE is facing similar issues in terms of low outreach numbers. Ultimately, SAIL's costs per beneficiary are consistent with the initial design. The higher expenses are warranted due to its extensive range of investments and services, as well as its wide geographical reach.

Table 9
Costs per beneficiary

Project	Costs (million US$)		Beneficiary outreach		Costs per beneficiary (US$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
OFIDO	92.2	61.5	250 000	124 149	369	495
PRIME	108.2	91.7	50 000	59 186	2 164	1 549
SAIL	94.7	Ongoing	40 000	38 586*	2 367	2 453*
PRIDE	81.6	Ongoing	70 575	24 705*	1 156	3 303*
STAR	269.6	Ongoing	320 000	-	843	-

*ongoing
Source: ORMS, OBI, design documents, supervision and completion reports

[216] SAIL SVR 2023; SAIL ISR 2024
[217] PRIDE MTR Report, January 2024
[218] PRIME PPE (#74)

148. **The ex-post economic and financial analyses (EFA) were positive for the two completed projects, but the updated EFAs for ongoing projects produced mixed outcomes.** OFIDO and PRIME showed an increase in their economic internal rate of return (EIRR) compared to projections at design, representing improved economic performance over time. OFIDO's EFA was positive for indicators such as a Net Present Value (NPV) of US$23.1 million and an EIRR of 28 per cent (compared with an EIRR of 18 per cent ex-ante), demonstrating resilience to changes in benefits, costs, and timing in sensitivity analyses. These results were achieved with relatively conservative assumptions of outputs (as stated in the analysis), such as yield per hectare increases between 3-16 per cent for different crops, but water costs were reduced considerably by two-thirds due to electric pumps. The EIRR at completion appears high as the project only covered 76 per cent of its targeted area and yield increases or higher market values were not achieved by all producers (chapter on Effectiveness). The EIRR analysis provides no clear information what drives its substantial increase compared to design. In comparison, PRIME an NPV of US$18.3 million and an EIRR of 16.6 per cent, showing favourable financial metrics and sensitivity to variations in costs and benefits. However, a NPV of US$78.9 million was calculated at design. This large difference between NPVs at design and completion suggests that the project may have foregone some considerable additional gains for farmers, by not implementing what was originally planned – especially for horticulture. This also shows an overly optimistic and inflated estimation of NPV during the design phase.[219]

149. SAIL's updated EFA at mid-term (2019) was unsatisfactory, due to the delays in the implementation of productive activities and limited impact achieved so far. Proposed budget reallocation towards schools and health facilities were expected to yield long-term social benefits and were not fully captured in the original assessment. Nevertheless, concerns about value for money remained in 2023 and were primarily due to implementation delays, the lack of a robust analysis of project achievements and costs and high unit costs of the irrigation model in middle Egypt.[220] PRIDE's updated EFA at mid-term (2023), on the other hand, revealed a positive NPV of EUR 7.4 million and an EIRR of 19.4 per cent, closely aligning with the original EIRR design estimates.[221] This indicates that the project remained economically viable despite significant challenges (including inflation, exchange rate volatility and relatively low outreach so far). To accommodate these rising unit costs and additional civil works, the project reallocated funds, reducing the budget for goods and services by 37 per cent. While this reallocation highlights the project's flexibility in prioritizing critical infrastructure, it also raises concerns about the potential negative impact on other vital areas, such as community engagement and capacity building, which are essential for the project's holistic success and sustainability.

150. **Overall efficiency.** Projects had to navigate a challenging economic environment marked by tighter fiscal policies and high inflation. The cost of project management has been kept at reasonable levels, management and planning capacities have seen improvements, service providers have generally performed well and ex-post EFAs were favourable. On the other hand, the projects faced staffing capacity challenges, and the portfolio consistently struggled with timeliness issues—including slow start-ups and multiple extensions—as well as disbursement rates. The CSPE rates efficiency as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

E. Rural poverty impact

151. The reliability of impact assessments in the two completed projects was low.[222] Reasons included missing or inadequate baselines (for OFIDO and PRIME), the

[219] PRIME PPE (#73)
[220] SAIL SVR 2023 (#147)
[221] PRIDE MTR 2023
[222] The impact assessments were commissioned by the projects.

complexity of establishing a counterfactual (PRIME), and difficulties in relating the impact to actual programme interventions or trickle-down effects (PRIME). Due to ineffective and rudimentary M&E of intermediate results, such as credit utilization, marketing outcomes, and capacity development, project results and impacts often remained unknown or could not be attributed to the project and its interventions (PRIME). The surveys and reports were conducted by qualified teams, but also to a certain extent micro-managed by MALR and IFAD teams, which complicated the exercises. With only rudimentary M&E of intermediate results such as changes of cropping patterns, utilization of credit, marketing outcomes and capacity development, project results and impact often remained simply unknown or could not be attributed (PRIME).

Income and assets

152. **There were indications that the country programme contributed to improvements in household incomes and assets.** Based on available data it was difficult to ascertain whether the COSOP targets of a 20 per cent increase in incomes (by mid-term) and a 20 per cent increase in household assets (by completion) had been reached. Yet, the CSPE found positive income effects across most completed and ongoing projects. These occurred especially through rural finance, both for farm and non-farm investments, and to some extent agriculture productivity, marketing and income generating activities effects, although these varied considerably across projects. OFIDO also enhanced equity of access to irrigation for tail-end users, with positive effects for often poorer farmers in these locations. Income effects were sometimes more anecdotal than broad-based, and attribution to project interventions was often not evident.

153. **Agricultural productivity gains were mixed.** They were relatively weak in OFIDO, as cropping patterns did not change, and continuous water flow was not ensured. They were stronger in PRIME, mainly in horticulture production, where farmers benefited from targeted and timely assistance through farmer field schools and demonstration plots, agricultural research, training and organizational support.[223] Higher animal production and productivity raised incomes in PRIME, through credit and marketing support.

154. **OFIDO did not significantly influence income or the improvements in agricultural productivity brought by modern irrigation systems and related packages.**[224] Where changes occurred, they could not be attributed to OFIDO. The project generated some water infrastructure assets, including new pumping and piped water systems, but their quality was inconsistent, especially of hydrants and pumps. The absence of WUAs had a negative impact. Patterns of agricultural productivity were highly variable across crops and farm types, with both increases and decreases in productivity and incomes among beneficiaries compared with non-improved control groups.[225]

155. **PRIME generated several positive income impacts, though fewer than planned, as credit and marketing components were largely disconnected.** Higher incomes often resulted from better agricultural productivity through improved extension and research linkages rather than from marketing, but there were also several examples where PRIME arranged sales contracts for targeted FMAs. For instance, there were positive examples for marketing of onions in Lower Egypt and of pomegranates, sesame and soybeans in Upper Egypt (CSPE field visits), and women could increase their incomes from milk production in Beni Suef.[226] The main income effects in PRIME were derived from rural finance support through investments and diversification in livestock (where the number of animal

[223] PRIME PPE; See also Box 4 in Annex VIII for indications of increased income and productivity under SAIL.
[224] OFIDO PCRV
[225] FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment
[226] Key informant interview with former PRIME coordinator; the CSPE team so far has not found the studies that he referred during the interview.

sales for meat substantially increased), small businesses, and higher self- and wage employment coming with the loans. Whether these loans were additional or differently targeted to commodities or beneficiaries compared to loans otherwise provided by ADP and MSMEDA was uncertain, as were the secondary income effects of the high-value ADP loans. There was no reliable information on asset changes caused by the two projects.

Human and social capital empowerment

156. **Although there were investments in training and capacity-building, there was limited evidence showing the extent of behaviour changes as a result.** The country programme contributed in many ways to individual and institutional group strengthening, especially through FFS, literacy training and management support for CDAs, water user associations and groups at systems and farm level, and agricultural cooperatives (including FMA). The quality of trainings and other forms of strengthening improved over time and between completed and ongoing projects, but community and individual capacities and training approaches could still benefit from better capacity needs assessments, more continuous follow-up and ensuring sustainability beyond project completion. SAIL observed gaps in business management and marketing capacities of marketing associations in OFIDO and PRIME, and subsequently enhanced these aspects.

157. Both OFIDO and PRIME made moderate contributions to human and social capital, largely by providing training for individuals and associations, most of which was conducted towards the end of the projects. SAIL showed more effective impact, especially through its CDAs, FFS, and business- and marketing-oriented capacity development of its five marketing associations. PRIDE worked closely with local communities and extended families.

158. OFIDO had some impact on human and social capital through training on efficient irrigation water management, farm productivity, and to a lesser extent, business approaches, partly facilitated by FAO FFS. However, these efforts were not associated with strengthened organizations and communities and started late in the project.[227] PRIME supported individual empowerment and grassroots organizations modestly and rather late in the project cycle. Although the quality of PRIME's support to community associations was not always high, it contributed to new individual and group capacities, such as horticultural knowledge and support for farmer marketing associations (FMA and various women's associations). Capacity development helped mostly with their production capacities, and was less effective in developing the business management, entrepreneurship and marketing capacities of associations and individuals.[228]

Food security and nutrition

159. **The country programme contributed to improved food security and nutrition by increasing agricultural yields, cutting post-harvest losses, and raising incomes.** For OFIDO, the limited land productivity and modest income gains were the only data suggesting possible improvements in food security and nutrition.[229] PRIME had a positive effect on nutritional diversity, but less so on the broader indicator of food security. Increases in agricultural production capacity and diversification, lower post-harvest losses, and overall income gains positively impacted nutritional diversity. Household dietary diversity scores over the last seven days and the last 24 hours showed positive and highly significant improvements.[230] The project also organized seminars on good nutrition, improved hygiene, and micronutrient preservation. Although reduced infant malnutrition was part of the original project's objectives, the project mainly concentrated on other

[227] OFIDO PCRV
[228] PRIME PPE
[229] OFIDO PCRV
[230] PRIME impact assessment survey, PRIME PCR, PRIME PPE

areas and did not implement specific activities addressing children's malnutrition. Consequently, the percentage of households experiencing nutritional challenges remained at 7 percent.[231]

Institutions and policies

160. **After project completion, community-level institutions like CDAs, WUAs, and FMAs had weak connections with local administrative bodies, rural services and ministries.** The country programme aimed to enhance community capacities in a somewhat opportunistic manner, developing skills needed to deliver project services according to the specific context and often not well grounded in prior long-term capacity needs assessments and oriented towards the whole range of capacities required (technical, social and institutional/business).[232] FMAs had the added problem of not being recognized as legal entities. Training effectiveness and the quality of established or improved community-level institutions were insufficiently monitored and reported. WUAs and CDAs were not self-sustaining, with WUAs often struggling to collect fees for water infrastructure maintenance, in some cases operating as one-person entities. However, ongoing projects in new lands and Bedouin areas put more emphasis on institutional development and linkages.[233]

161. **Insights from the completed OFIDO project and ongoing SAIL and PRIDE projects on water management and irrigation were the basis for some informal technical inputs into strategy development and policy discussions** in establishing and refining a replicable approach for on-farm irrigation development aimed at enhancing water productivity, profitability, and sustainability. Several lessons were learned that were mostly shared informally and reportedly through notes and working papers. There is limited evidence of a robust institutional partnership between MALR and MWRI and strategic IFAD country programme inputs into developing a coordinated strategy for water and irrigation management in the country.

162. **Besides this, the country programme showed few evident results in policy engagement,** as mentioned in the section on non-lending activities. One achievement in PRIME's policy dialogue was a workshop to enhance by-laws for agricultural extension to be passed by the Agriculture Committee in the House of Representatives. However, ambitious plans for PRIME to influence policies, financial products, and engagements with various stakeholders, including MSMEDA, participating financial institutions, NGOs, CDAs, and micro-finance practices of other international partners such as the World Bank and African Development Bank, did not materialize as envisioned.

163. **Institutionalization and policy dialogue in rural finance and marketing were less successful or inconsistent.** There were limited institutional learning effects among the financial institutions involved in rural finance; they did not change their operational methods or strategies for value chain financing or targeting as expected. The programme also experienced varying levels of success in creating effective and sustainable marketing associations at the district/water scheme or governorate levels, as well as marketing boards and outlets. SAIL seemed to take lessons from the PRIME project and concentrated more systematically on providing quality support and ensuring the sustainability of the MAs established by the project.

164. **Overall impact.** The country programme seemed to have increased household incomes and assets. Evidence on human and social capital was mixed. The programme contributed to improve food security, diversity, and nutrition through

[231] PRIME impact assessment survey, PRIME PCR, PRIME PPE
[232] See e.g. PRIME PPE.
[233] For instance, the SAIL mid-line outcome survey and report provided some information on training effectiveness and group capacities,

increased agricultural productivity, reduced post-harvest losses, income gains, and nutrition training. Policy engagement results were minimal. The CSPE rates impact as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

F. Gender equality and women's empowerment

165. **Strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment lacked comprehensiveness.** The 2017 CSPE noted that gender issues were overlooked in the 2012 COSOP, with minimal impact. In response, the 2019 COSOP prioritized gender equality and women's empowerment, but failed to critically analyse past experiences or provide clear strategies for better outcomes. Similarly, few project design documents clearly explained the analysis supporting the proposed interventions, identified the key gender constraints (while accounting for regional differences, such as between old and new lands), and outlined the strategies to address them. The specific needs of various groups of vulnerable women, such as very poor women, landless women, single women, female-headed households, young women, and Bedouin women, were not clearly recognized. An exception to this was the STAR project, which included a comprehensive analysis of women's situations and acknowledged the influence of social norms and values.

166. Due to the limited analysis performed, project gender strategies were frequently weak and formulated late.[234] Although OFIDO had a gender strategy from the beginning, it lacked specific actions and targets. PRIME and SAIL, on the other hand, only developed their strategies late, in 2020 and 2022 respectively. Nonetheless, these strategies were incomplete, as they did not fully encompass the three strategic objectives outlined in IFAD's gender policy and lacked specific actions, targets, and dedicated budgets. By mid-term, PRIDE had yet to establish its gender strategy. Ultimately, IFAD categorized STAR as a gender transformative project; however, its design lacked gender transformative methods aimed at changing the social norms that limit women's economic and social opportunities.[235]

167. Additionally, gender-focused staff were either absent (OFIDO) or hired late, as seen with PRIME (2019) and SAIL (2021). Conversely, PRIDE had a three-member social inclusion team in the PCU. PRIME also partnered with the National Council for Women, aided by seven gender officers in PRIME governorates, offering training on various subjects (e.g., entrepreneurship, children's clubs, nutrition, health, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and community mobilisation). However, this partnership was established too late to maximize impact and was not replicated in other projects. Although PRIDE planned to collaborate with an external partner for gender equality initiatives, no suitable candidate was found by mid-term.

168. **Outreach targets for women were achieved, except for OFIDO.** The COSOPs did not include any outreach targets for women for the country programme. At project level, targets were conservative for earlier projects (OFIDO 20 per cent, PRIME 30 per cent and SAIL 30 per cent) and became more ambitious for the more recent ones (PRIDE 48 per cent and STAR 45 per cent). OFIDO had a very low outreach with only 12 per cent of its beneficiaries being women. Other projects exceeded their targets: PRIME 41 per cent, SAIL 56 per cent and PRIDE 50 per cent. It should be noted that OFIDO and PRIME did not make any deliberate efforts to target women and their outreach to women was a result of self-targeting.[236] SAIL and PRIDE, on the other hand, had specific activities targeting women (e.g.

[234] See OFIDO PCRV, PRIME PPE, PRIDE MTR, IFAD 2022. Review of gender transformative design in IFAD's loan portfolio.
[235] In IFAD, gender-transformative approaches are programmes and interventions that create opportunities to: actively challenge the root causes of inequalities between women and men; promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities; and address power inequities between women and men. (IFAD (2019). Mainstreaming Gender-transformative
Approaches at IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025)
[236] See e.g. OFIDO PCRV and PRIME PPE

grants under SAIL and a specific sub-component under PRIDE).[237] Data on intersectional dimensions, such as outreach to young women, was missing, as was evidence on tangible benefits of project interventions for women.[238]

169. **Projects primarily enhanced women's economic empowerment through rural finance and income-generating activities.** Women made up 44 per cent of those accessing finance through project support, and even 62 per cent in SAIL. The micro loans provided through MSMEDA were specifically successful, with the loan size and delivery modalities (e.g. group solidarity) being more appealing to women and partnering financial institutions being keener to work with women given their positive past experiences in terms of repayment.

170. Projects also trained women in income-generating activities and gave them assets to start their businesses. Women comprised 36 per cent of those trained, with SAIL having the highest at 52 per cent. SAIL's approach of providing grants to women for starting businesses like livestock, beekeeping, and sewing helped diversify income, support household economies, and boost women's self-esteem and confidence. Initially, vulnerable women were not reached, but criteria were adjusted mid-term to include them. Women were notably involved in livestock production, with 62 percent of participants in livestock training being women.

171. **Certain chances to boost women's economic empowerment were overlooked.** Under PRIME, for example, ADP's outreach to women was very low.[239] For example, only six per cent of the ADP loan beneficiaries under PRIME were women. Women's financial inclusion in projects faced various obstacles. The level of trainings provided was basic and did not improve women's financial literacy as anticipated. There were no innovative financial products or systematic support to attract more women, such as simplified documentation and remote access. Women often took loans for their husbands or male relatives when applying for credit, especially when targeted with those loans.[240] In general, training for women focused primarily on traditional domestic roles like sewing, baking, and food processing (e.g., cheese making). Additionally, women were not specifically included in market contracts, and their roles within value chains were not a significant focus of the analysis.[241] Moreover, women received limited support in agriculture, with just 11 per cent trained in crop production across all projects being women.[242] Despite not owning land, they are heavily involved in Egypt's irrigation, a role often overlooked by engineers and extension services.[243] Greater support for women was needed, as well as efforts to improve their access to land.

172. **The projects effectively promoted women-only groups but needed to do more to ensure full participation and equal voice in mixed groups.** Several women-only groups were supported, such as GDAs and MAs, which allowed their participation in community decision-making and opened up opportunities for business development.[244] On the other hand, projects did not set any quota for women as members or in decision-making positions, nor was this tracked in their M&E systems (even if tracking women in decision-making positions is an IFAD reporting requirement). Overall, women only made up only 19 per cent of the members of the rural institutions supported in the country programme. Women's involvement in WUAs was irregular, partly because they seldom own land, despite

[237] See Annex VIII for a table on the project's outreach to women in general and for specific activities.
238 See e.g. PRIME PPE, SAIL SVR 2021
239 ADP lacked a strategic approach to ensure women's financial inclusion.
240 See e.g. PRIME PPE and field observations (e.g. Al Khiria CDA at Sawalem Bahari – Abanoub – Asyut involved on OFIDO and PRIME)
241 See PRIME PPE.
242 See Annex VIII 'Women's outreach in the investment portfolio' for a breakdown by project
243 See FAO 2023. Gender, water and agriculture – Assessing the nexus in Egypt.
244 Overall, projects facilitated the formation of 97 women-specific groups; these included 17 MAs and 58 women's committees within MAs under PRIME, as well as 17 specialized women's MAs and 5 CDAs under SAIL. However, the monitoring systems of the projects were inadequate for gathering consistent and coherent data on women's participation in rural organizations, suggesting that these figures may not be accurate.

their significant role in irrigation. Under SAIL, for example, women only made up 15 per cent of those involved in natural resource management. No specific efforts were made to strengthen women's voice at household level. In some cases, the benefits women received through project interventions were transferred to male members of the family (e.g. in PRIME).[245] PRIDE attempted to implement the Gender Action and Learning System (GALS) approach to empower women, but it was unsuccessful due to the absence of an Arabic-speaking international consultant with the required skills.[246]

173. **Concerted efforts to reduce women's workload were limited.** SAIL and PRIDE eased women's workload with rural water supply. Schools and nurseries also helped, as women often handle childcare. SAIL installed some biogas units, lowering fuel collection efforts and cooking costs, but on a small scale. In contrast, OFIDO and PRIME did not directly address women's drudgery. Certain interventions, including marketing support, training, and rural financial services, also increased women's workload, with the benefits mainly going to male family members (e.g., in PRIME).[247]

174. **There were no efforts to address social norms that marginalize women.** The best results were achieved when projects followed a multipronged approach. SAIL and PRIDE successfully tackled women's exclusion by using various strategies like literacy training, ID cards, and collaboration with women's groups. However, none of the projects, including STAR, which was deemed gender transformative by IFAD[248], addressed the social norms that marginalize women and constrain their opportunities.

175. **Overall gender equality and women's empowerment.** Outreach targets for women were largely achieved, especially with a multipronged strategy. The projects boosted women's economic empowerment via rural finance and income-generating activities. While women-only groups received support, more effort was required to achieve equal participation in mixed groups. Efforts to reduce women's workload and tackle discriminatory social norms were limited. The CSPE rates gender equality and women's empowerment as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

G. Sustainability of benefits

176. **The technical sustainability of water infrastructure was overall good, although challenges remained to ensure their maintenance over time.** Updating irrigation systems with high-quality pipes, hydrants, rehabilitated canals, improved drainage, upgraded pump stations, and drip irrigation enhanced water and energy efficiency, equity, and sustainability. These civil works were straightforward and did not demand advanced contractor skills, thus minimizing sustainability risks. However, the sustainability of some water infrastructure investments in OFIDO was compromised due to the poor quality of early works and equipment, which led to numerous farmer complaints about pumps, hydrants, and pipes.[249] This issue was partly due to ineffective procurement processes. While the impact of these sub-par installations on overall sustainability remains unclear, other parts of OFIDO infrastructure were technically reliable.[250] Enhanced OFIDO infrastructure remained functional following the project's completion, as confirmed by experts and interviewed officials during this CSPE and verified through multiple

[245] See IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE.
[246] GALS is IFAD's most used gender-transformative approach. See e.g. IFAD (2019). Stocktake of the use of household methodologies in IFAD's portfolio.
[247] See PRIME PPE and IOE (2017) Egypt CSPE.
[248] In IFAD, gender-transformative approaches are programmes and interventions that create opportunities to: actively challenge the root causes of inequalities between women and men; promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities; and address power inequities between women and men. (IFAD (2019). Mainstreaming Gender-transformative
Approaches at IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025)
[249] OFIDO PCR para. 96 on weak pumps and hydrants; CSPE KIIs on the need to improve the quality of pipes
[250] See OFIDO PCR, PCRV and FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment

field visits.[251] Moreover, OFIDO offered only a single technical solution, which may not have fit every situation and limited sustainability and further enhancements in areas like crop productivity.[252]

177. Secondly, both OFIDO WUA (under MWRI) and the "*marwa*" committees (water user groups under MALR) were still not strong by the end of the project and did not have the ability to manage water resources sustainably. The project began working with WUA and "*marwa*" committees and training them only in the final year after infrastructure was developed.[253] WUAs had not become self-financing and struggled to collect fees for maintaining the water infrastructure post-project, posing a significant risk to sustainability.[254]

178. Overall, the infrastructure quality of SAIL was regarded as good, not explicitly assessed yet by supervisions. An outstanding exception is the innovative reinforced concrete lining of the "*mesqa*" canals in Lower Egypt.[255] Overall, solar energy pumps were regarded as very beneficial for sustainability in regions where power outages from the grid were common. SAIL also focused on enhancing the capacities of WUAs, which appeared more proactive in newly developed areas where fees for operational maintenance were reportedly being collected.[256] However, some seemed to have few members, serving mostly to meet legal obligations. There was no data on any active "*marwa*" level groups in SAIL that could aid future sustainability efforts. The 2022 supervision recommended further capacity building for farmer groups on O&M, the formation of water user groups (WUG) to manage shared resources like water basins and assisting WUAs in selling excess solar energy to the grid, where possible, to enhance sustainability.

179. By mid-term, PRIDE had developed significant productive and community infrastructure of high technical quality and usefulness. [257] The project still needed to establish "*wadi*" associations for maintenance and fee collection, although wadi rehabilitation had begun. Residents were unaccustomed to forming associations that didn't align with tribal structures.[258]

180. **There was insufficient evidence to determine if enhanced farming practices were being maintained.** While projects trained people in improved farming practices (both crop and livestock), reliable adoption rates were not being monitored and it was therefore not possible to assess the extent to which these practices were being sustained. Although lacking a robust methodology, SAIL's 2023 outcome survey, showed that only one in three adopted the promoted improved agricultural farming practices. There was also some anecdotal evidence that training and demonstration activities did little to sustainably change behavior or significantly diversify crops. Furthermore, issues of soil and water salinity should have been addressed more consistently.

181. **Economic sustainability was not assured, as most projects had generally weak market linkages, with a few exceptions.** Producer organizations required more assistance to develop business and management skills and establish good governance, allowing them to become equal and empowered market partners. For example, very few of the marketing committees supported by OFIDO had a commercial mindset.[259] Similarly, PRIME did not enhance the capacities of farmers and marketing associations, making them more market-oriented and link them with other market players.[260] The e-marketing platform and associated mobile app

[251] CSPE key informant interviews and mission visits in Kafr el Sheikh and El Menia
[252] See IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE
[253] OFIDO PCR and PCRV
[254] CSPE key informant interviews; STAR PDR 2020, para. 27 and 31
[255] SAIL SVR July 2023. CSPE mission field visit observation.
[256] CSPE mission field visit observation.
[257] PRIDE MTR 2023 para.42, 111 and 114
[258] See IFAD 2024. Egypt COSOP Completion Report.
[259] OFIDO PCRV
[260] PRIME PPE

SHARI, which was created by PRIME and enabled small-scale farmers to market their produce online, linking them to both wholesale markets and consumers, was no longer working. SAIL supported market associations and facilitated the signature of contracts, nevertheless many faced difficulties in meeting companies' requirements in terms of volume and quality and, in some cases, they prioritized short-term gains by opting out of contracts to secure higher prices. They were generally not seen as professional business partners and several potential supply contracts did not materialize.[261] At mid-term, PRIDE had not fostered any market linkages, but would start looking into it, mainly in support of women's income generating activities.

182. **The financial inclusion of IFAD target groups remained uncertain.** The products and services provided by partnering financial institutions were not tailored to needs of target groups and other value chain actors. It therefore remained unlikely that their future needs would be catered to. Furthermore, ADP's long-term outreach was not guaranteed given that it is a quasi-public institution and therefore not operating as a sustainable financial institution.

183. **The involvement of line ministries assured the maintenance of social infrastructure and roads.** While under SAIL, CDAs played a role in the maintenance of social infrastructure, their financial sustainability had not yet been assured. However, SAIL and PRIDE intended to sign protocols to ensure maintenance and continued operation of the infrastructures. These agreements had yet to be signed.[262]

Environment and natural resources management and climate change

184. **IFAD's safeguard requirements were largely adhered to.** OFIDO did not require a SECAP note at design and no major environmental or social damages were reported. However, the lack of functional water governance systems, weak handing over of the systems and technical issues with design and quality of hydrants, pumps and some underground piping affected NRM management.[263] The project had an ad-hoc grievance mechanism to address beneficiary complaints, including a web-based platform through which complaints could be submitted to NPCU and followed up. Its effectiveness was not reported and is no longer known at this point. PRIME did not implement activities in environmentally sensitive areas or had any significant irreversible or cumulative environmental impacts.[264] There also was no evidence of negative environmental or social impacts of SAIL activities and risks were considered as low. The project had an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), a grievance redress mechanism was in place and complaints were documented. However, an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was commissioned in 2023 in response to local opposition for drainage work in Wadi el Sayda, as not all land-owners agreed with it.[265] SAIL continued to evaluate the quality of drinking water here and develop mitigation plans. PRIDE had an ESMP as part of its Project Implementation Manual, with most works being of low environmental risk. The project's participatory approach favoured beneficiary consultations and inputs and considered women's needs. Based on the project safeguards analysis, the project planned to address longstanding environmental drainage and water salinity problems through the use of salinized water for salt tolerant (fodder) crops in Siwa oasis and for algae or fish production in the El Moghra resettlement area.[266] MWRI was conducting a comprehensive study on water drainage in the Siwa Oasis to address key safeguard issues. This study was initially planned as part of the PRIDE project but was later

[261] IFAD 2024. Stocktake of IFAD value chain projects in the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia region.
[262] SAIL SVR 2023
[263] OFIDO PCR#62
[264] PRIME PPE
[265] SAIL SVR 2023
[266] PRIDE MTR

deemed unnecessary to avoid duplication. However, PRIDE lacked the required FPIC plan to guide its engagement with Bedouin communities, as previously mentioned. Overall, greater attention could have been paid to monitoring groundwater withdrawals, through the use of GIS and other integrated data collection approaches, especially in new lands and oases, in addition to MWRI's regulatory role to prevent the decline in both quantity and quality of groundwater.[267]

185. **The country programme enhanced environmental and natural resource management, particularly by promoting water efficiency and managing soil fertility.** As outlined in the effectiveness section, the country programme successfully addressed water scarcity and quality issues in agriculture by promoting more efficient water usage, enhancing irrigation and drainage technologies (OFIDO, SAIL, and PRIDE), implementing continuous flow and drip irrigation systems, and constructing water reservoirs (PRIDE, SAIL). For instance, OFIDO reported a 14 per cent increase in water savings, confirmed by an independent FAO report.[268] Better water management contributed to less water salinity in ground water (OFIDO, SAIL).[269]

186. The county programme paid more attention in recent projects to enhancing soil fertility and salinity management. It did so by providing agricultural machinery to cooperatives and marketing associations (SAIL) and promoting improved technical and organic soil management techniques (PRIDE, SAIL and PRIME). PRIME carried out soil analyses on demonstration sites and areas under contract farming to detect soil nutrient deficiencies and nematodes. Conversely, OFIDO missed the opportunity of increasing soil fertility and higher soil and water productivity through land levelling and adding gypsum. PRIDE started scaling of rangeland rehabilitation and increasing productivity through intercropping fodder and other plants. FFS and other extension curricula increasingly included environmental and natural resource management issues (SAIL, PRIDE, PRIME). PRIDE started testing 50 model organic orchards with improved water and nutrient buffer capacities in soils and intercropping, while Sekem University was being contracted to strengthen adoption of agroecological farming practices and assessing the benefits, costs and constraints of switching to new practices.

187. **Various portfolio activities contributed to farmers' climate change adaptation and rural households' resilience (and to a lesser extent, mitigation), even when not explicitly designed for climate change.** For the older projects OFIDO and PRIME, climate change resilience and mitigation were not an explicit objective. In contrast, SAIL and PRIDE mainstreamed climate change from the beginning, with SAIL having significant co-funding from GEF and ASAP and PRIDE covering an arid region exposed to increasingly unpredictable and erratic rainfalls caused by changing climate, with more droughts and flash floods.

188. Through improved irrigation systems and increasing water efficiency all country projects indirectly increased farm resilience to climate-induced water scarcity and salinity intrusion, even when not explicitly targeted (except for PRIME which did not have a water management component). Several projects more explicitly supported agricultural research and extension for climate resilience through climate-smart agriculture, especially through the country's two agricultural/rural research systems, ARC and DRC (PRIME, SAIL and PRIDE). The focus of agricultural extension and research within SAIL and PRIDE was largely on developing and advocating for crop and fodder varieties that can withstand drought and high temperatures. PRIME introduced new heat-tolerant hybrid horticulture

[267] See e.g. SAIL SVR 2024
[268] OFIDO PCRV, FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment
[269] FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment, SAIL outcome survey 2023

varieties and encouraged farmers to time their production aligned with expected heat periods, and to protect their animals from heat stress.

189. SAIL made conscious efforts to diversify women's incomes in off- and non-farm activities to reduce dependency on increasingly risky, climate-affected agriculture. In PRIME, the diversification in income sources through micro-finance also contributed to higher resilience by reducing dependence on agriculture.

190. SAIL supported an early warning system for climate related extreme weather conditions, with meteorological stations distributed across the country. However, there was no follow-up to monitor the suitability, utilization or impact of the early warning system, nor had it been taken forward programmatically in GoE/ARC to achieve a wider uptake by farmers and other beneficiaries.[270] PRIDE was also in the process of developing an early warning system for farmers to be better prepared for flash floods, such as those caused by heavy storms like Daniel in 2023 that caused major destructions in neighbouring Libya in October 2023.

191. The country portfolio contributed to higher energy efficiency and reduced greenhouse gas emissions since the OFIDO project where energy savings through electric pumping ranged between eight and 30 per cent.[271] SAIL then followed with pushing the envelope by promoting the use of solar energy water pumps in several locations and developing ways for independently financing solar pump investments (which were, however, not yet far developed). SAIL also installed 23 biogas units that contributed to less consumption of bottled LPG gas and savings of around US$11 per month, but there is no evidence of wider uptake or use of project loans for biogas.[272]

192. **The country programme offered some, but still limited support for a well-informed, integrated and holistic approach to agriculture and food systems transformation, with full attention to the risks of natural resource degradation and climate change.**[273] While interventions were broadly aligned with country policies, UNFCCC and other relevant UN Conventions, little was done on the policy side. Some positive policy dialogue by IFAD, the government and other stakeholders on environmental and climate change took place around the COP 27 in Egypt in November 2022. Although the COSOP 2019-24 stated that "The specific risks and challenges [of natural resource management and climate change adaptation] will be analyzed in detail" for areas targeted by IFAD investments" this did not happen. Several key informants for this CSPE observed that the quality of knowledge products, such as those for COP-27, could be improved in terms of linking to actual IFAD-supported projects and lessons. They also noted a need for more concrete implementation and scalability guidance, as in the case of the FAO report on Climate Smart Agriculture in Egypt.[274] Natural resource management and climate change adaptation were still seen more as a by-product of improvements in sustainable water and land productivity and efficiency, and as an add-on to attract climate finance. They were not yet systematically applied to inform and support the Government and influence its strategic orientation to address natural resource management and climate change adaptation in a mainstreamed and integrated manner. IFAD project management units lacked sufficient experts with the technical and social qualifications required to fully integrate environmental issues, natural resource management and climate change adaptation into agricultural project management and reporting. Related indicators were not well formulated, defined and measured in the country or project logical frameworks.

[270] Key informant interview with IFAD Technical Specialist - Environment and Climate Finance
[271] FAO (2020) OFIDO Technical Assessment
[272] SAIL SVR 2023
[273] Key informant interviews with former IFAD NRM/CCA national expert; IFAD regional CCA advisor, GIZ, MRWI, and MoE
[274] See https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/8327142e-2479-4035-ad46-718396257db3/content

193. **Opportunities for policy engagement on natural resource management and the environment were missed.** IFAD has extensive experience in addressing water resource scarcity and climate change adaptation at the irrigation systems level. Nevertheless, the country programme had not yet fully brought in its experiences and lessons in water use, irrigation and drainage improvements, system maintenance mechanisms and avoidance of seepage (e.g. through reinforced canal lining). It had also not yet developed and pilot-tested manageable and sustainable cost-sharing systems for financing water and energy infrastructure and institutional improvements and linking farmers with rural finance and major government programmes for agricultural water infrastructure improvements.[275] Finally, improved coordination and collaboration between MALR and MWRI would be required at all levels.

Scaling up

194. **While replication mainly took place through follow-up projects, there was no evidence of scaling up.** In general, projects built on the achievements of their predecessors in terms of irrigation development (STAR consolidating OFIDO's achievements) and providing an integrated support package (e.g. SAIL and PRIDE building on the experience of WNRDP). However, replication in subsequent IFAD-funded projects does not constitute scaling up. Neither in the closed projects, nor in the ongoing ones was there any evidence that innovations or successful experiences from the country programme were being adopted and disseminated by development partners, stakeholders' resources being invested or the Government adopting a policy framework to bring these practices to scale.[276] This was the case notwithstanding the ambitions included in the 2019 COSOP and the 2015 Country Scaling Up Note.[277]

195. **A lack of focus on effective innovations for scaling and related non-lending activities led to minimal results in scaling up.** Project designs did not always build in sufficient space for innovation and testing various options from the outset that could then be taken to scale. For example, OFIDO only offered a one-size-fits all solution for irrigation development, while PRIME promoted a rather narrow approach to marketing that did not capitalize on existing good practices, nor did it enable flexible and adaptive solutions to accessing market channels.[278] The recent SAIL project has advanced innovation testing by adapting and enhancing innovations for various ecosystems and target groups. Furthermore, projects were not successful in documenting packages that could be brought to scale. This was, for instance, the case for the SAIL model for which thorough assessment of the economic viability is still missing due to a lack of systemically collecting and analyzing outcome level data.[279] At mid-term, PRIDE faced similar challenges in packaging its experiences.[280] The limited engagement in policy dialogue and partnership building furthermore inhibited scaling up.[281]

196. **Overall sustainability.** The participation of line ministries contributed to ensuring the ongoing O&M of social infrastructure and roads. The overall technical sustainability of water systems was positive, with growing focus on participatory water management. However, early projects faced issues with equipment quality,

[275] For example those announced in 2021 by the Central Bank of Egypt, working through the National Bank of Egypt and the Agricultural Bank of Egypt. See e.g. https://www.egyptindependent.com/egypts-central-bank-announces-initiative-to-shift-to-smart-irrigation-methods/ and https://egy-africa.com/en/2021/02/14/egypts-agricultural-bank-contributes-to-contribution-to-sector-revival-countryside-development/

[276] See OFIDO PCRV, PRIME PPE

[277] The 2019 COSOP identified three areas for scaling up: (i) integrated support package in new lands; (ii) climate-friendly interventions, including climate-smart criteria in all irrigation investments; (iii) nutrition and livelihood practices being developed under PRIDE. Both the 2019 and the 2015 Country Scaling Up Note placed emphasis on partnership building, knowledge management and policy engagement to foster scaling up.

[278] See, e.g. OFIDO PCRV, PRIME PPE, IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE

[279] See SAIL SVR 2023.

[280] See PRIDE MTR 2023

[281] See section on policy engagement above

and there remained a need to enhance capacities for regular O&M. There was insufficient evidence regarding the long-term adoption of enhanced farming methods. Generally, the market connections established through the projects were weak, and the financial inclusion of IFAD's target groups remained uncertain. The CSPE rates sustainability as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

197. **Overall environment and natural resources management and climate change.** The country programme executed numerous initiatives which introduced, evaluated, and expanded methods and infrastructure aimed at improving environmental and natural resource management. Several activities inadvertently enhanced farmers' resilience to climate change, despite this not being the original goal. Conversely, there was insufficient backing for a comprehensive, integrated strategy towards agriculture and food systemic transformation that fully considered the risks associated with natural resource degradation and climate change. The CSPE rates environment and natural resources management and climate change as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

198. **Overall scaling up.** Replication occurred primarily via follow-up projects, but there was no sign of scaling up. The lack of innovation space and inadequate focus on non-lending activities led to minimal scaling up outcomes. The CSPE rates scaling up as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

H. Overall country strategy achievement

199. In the early years, IFAD did not adequately focus on the portfolio. However, the country programme advanced with the assignment of IFAD staff solely dedicated to the country programme and committed project coordinators. Concerning the strategic goals of the 2012 and 2019 COSOP aimed at boosting productivity and profitability, recent projects have shown progress by leveraging lessons learned from past efforts. This includes improvements in water infrastructure investments, a stronger collaboration with Water User Associations (WUAs), an increased emphasis on market accessibility, and addressing climate change challenges. STAR, the sole new project, applied lessons from prior initiatives and the 2017 CSPE recommendations, narrowing its geographical focus, enhancing the quality of targeting, strengthening gender and youth strategies, and prioritising market-oriented approaches and financial diversification. Notable positive outcomes included integrated support packages for communities, improved agricultural and livestock productivity, and increased income generation. However, the country programme's results were limited in boosting profitability, especially in creating sustainable market links and tailoring rural finance initiatives to meet the needs of target groups.

200. No significant progress was made in terms of the 2019 COSOP's second strategic objective related to policy engagement and its ambitious goals in non-lending activities. Capturing lessons from projects proved challenging and were not used to inform policy processes. Minimal efforts were made to enhance synergies within the country programme. Results were also limited in terms of partnership building. The 2019 COSOP heavily relied on STAR to fulfil its goals; but, because of notable start-up delays, STAR had not yet delivered any substantial outcomes and was undergoing re-design at the time of this CSPE.

Table 10
CSPE ratings

Evaluation Criteria	Current rating	2017 CSPE Ratings
○ Relevance	4	3
○ Coherence	4	n/a
○ Knowledge management	3	4
○ Partnership development	3	3
○ Policy engagement	3	3
○ Effectiveness	4	3
○ Innovation	4	4
○ Efficiency	4	3
○ Rural poverty impact	4	4
○ Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	4
○ Sustainability	4	3
○ Natural resource management and climate change adaptation	4	3.5*
○ Scaling up	3	3
OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT	**3.69**	**3.38**

* Natural resource management and climate change adaptation were rated separately, respectively 4 and 3.

Key points

- The country programme effectively matched the priorities of the Government, IFAD, and the target populations. While the design quality of projects generally adhered to existing knowledge, they were often excessively complicated and exhibited certain shortcomings. These included an unrealistic geographic scope, inadequate assessment of implementation capacities and budgeting, and insufficient consideration of contextual factors.
- While there was continuity, there also were some missed opportunities in the country programme to build on lessons learned especially regarding rural finance.
- IFAD's sectoral and poverty focus was well recognized, but some opportunities were not seized to improve harmonisation and coordination with other development partners.
- The ambitions of the 2019 COSOP in terms of KM, partnership building and policy engagement did not materialise, amongst others due to a lack of strategic thinking and resources.
- While water infrastructure was for the most part effectively delivered and integrated support packages were much appreciated, results in terms of market access and rural finance remained below expectations.
- The country programme introduced, pilot-tested, and refined various innovative technologies, implementation models, and practices, but only partially delivered on its foreseen innovation agenda.
- Projects struggled with staffing issues and disbursement rates, but ex-post economic and financial analyses were positive.
- Projects contributed to increased incomes and food security, while evidence on human and social capital and empowerment was mixed.
- Although outreach targets for women were met, there were missed opportunities to strengthen their voice, reduce their workload and address discriminatory social norms.
- The technical sustainability of water infrastructure was overall good, although WUAs had not yet become self-sustaining entities and challenges remained to ensure their maintenance over time. Sustainability of market linkages and continued financial inclusion of target groups remained uncertain.
- Many activities and practices were introduced that allowed for better environmental and natural resource management and increase climate resilience, while a holistic approach to an environmentally sensitive and climate-smart agriculture and food systems transformation was still lacking.

IV. Performance of partners

A. IFAD

201. **IFAD continued to be a trusted and responsive partner of the government, successfully addressing shortcomings of earlier project designs in its latest approved project under this CSPE.** Notwithstanding an increasingly conservative fiscal policy of the government, IFAD was successful in committing the full PBAS allocations. It maintained strong relationships with MALR and MPEDIC and broadened its partnership with the government. IFAD was also responsive to requests from the government, for example through the design of SAIL and PRIDE, even though these were not entirely in line with COSOP objectives. Earlier projects in the CSPE portfolio were often overly complex and unrealistic in design (see relevance section). Market access and value chain interventions exhibited significant flaws in analysis, selection of entry points, and phasing, with lessons from rural finance often not integrated into later projects (e.g., relying solely on ADP and MSMEDA in SAIL). On the other hand, the design of STAR (approved by IFAD's Board in 2019) clearly incorporated earlier lessons and COSOP objectives, focusing on a specific geographical area, innovative market and rural finance sector approaches, and better targeting strategies.

202. **In the early years, IFAD did not focus enough on the portfolio covered by the CSPE. However, the situation improved with IFAD decentralization and the recruitment of staff exclusively committed to the country programme.** During the period under review three Country Directors were responsible for managing the country programme.[282] Two Country Progamme Officers supported the portfolio, although this position was vacant until 2019.[283] The first Country Director combined this position with his responsibilities as Regional Economist (and was not based in Cairo), while the second one became Regional Director in 2020 (and left Cairo). From 2020 the Country Progamme Officer took on more responsibilities in overseeing the portfolio, before the appointment of a new Country Director in 2022 (based fulltime in Cairo). The years of limited portfolio attention coincided with a period during which several projects, such as PRIME and SAIL, faced implementation challenges. Improvements in project performance were seen when IFAD staff was fully dedicated to the portfolio, allowing to improve communication between the projects and the IFAD country office (although it came too late for PRIME).[284] In addition to the Country Director and Country Programme Officer, several IFAD regional technical specialists have been based in the multi-country office in Cairo. Although they were actively involved in the projects where they were part of the "project delivery team", this evaluation observed that their participation in non-lending activities or in supporting projects outside of their designated teams was minimal.[285]

203. **IFAD's engagement in supervision and implementation support helped to address bottlenecks, but sometimes came too late.** For example, IFAD supported OFIDO extensively, through the development of a performance improvement plan and monthly process follow-up meetings. It called in the support of FAO. Technical coaching and on-the-job training helped to address the technical, managerial, institutional and fiduciary constraints that hampered the performance of the project. This resulted in accelerating implementation of the irrigation development works. Nevertheless, at completion there was limited progress towards other outcomes and intended impacts for poverty reduction and livelihoods development.[286] In the case of PRIME, earlier supervision missions focused mainly

[282] Abdelkarim Sma (2017-2018; not based in Cairo), Dina Saleh (2018-2022; based in Cairo between 2018-2020), Mohamed Abdelgadir (2022-now; based in Cairo)
[283] Mohamed El-Ghazaly (2019-2022), Zeinab Awad (2022-now)
[284] See e.g. PRIME PPE
[285] See IOE (2024). Corporate Leve Evaluation on Knowledge Management – Egypt Country Case Study.
[286] OFIDO PCRV

on implementation rates and disbursements and did not address strategic implementation challenges. Later attempts by IFAD to remedy the lack of integration between the project's components came either too late or were not well followed up.[287] The supervision, implementation support, and mid-term missions by IFAD for SAIL and PRIDE effectively resolved crucial project issues and delays. This assistance was instrumental in reviving a problematic project in 2020/21 (SAIL).[288] Some concerns regarded the frequent changes of team members during supervision missions, especially in earlier projects, which sometimes led to inconsistencies in support and recommendations. Apart from support through supervisions, IFAD also made efforts to strengthen the capacity of project staff, for example in procurement and nutrition. However, there were also a few areas where IFAD could have provided more support: M&E, KM and IFAD's mainstreaming themes (including its safeguard procedures).

204. **Extensive supervision and implementation support came at the expense of engagement in non-lending activities.** IFAD's portfolio in Egypt was large, with complex projects facing serious implementation issues, especially during their first years. As a result, significant effort was directed towards improving project performance. However, this consumed time that could have been devoted to equally vital non-lending activities, which might have enhanced the impact of the country programme. This issue was previously noted by the 2017 CSPE, and the expanded country presence did not help achieve the associated goals.

205. **Overall IFAD performance.** IFAD remained a reliable and proactive partner for the government. Although the portfolio initially received inadequate attention, it saw significant progress with IFAD decentralization and the assignment of staff exclusively dedicated to the country programme. Supervision and implementation assistance helped address critical bottlenecks and successfully turn around at least one project, although occasionally it was not timely enough. This extensive project support affected IFAD's participation in non-lending activities. The CSPE rates IFAD performance as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

B. Government

206. **The government demonstrated its commitment via counterpart funding and addressing certain staffing issues.** On average, the government's contributions made up 13 per cent of total project costs and covered project management costs, civil works, as well as foregoing taxes and custom duties.[289] OFIDO and PRIME however experienced delays in the disbursement of counterpart funding. As mentioned earlier (see section on efficiency), staffing challenges hindered the execution of several projects (OFIDO, SAIL, and PRIME). However, appointing dedicated project coordinators midway through these projects led to positive implementation outcomes, including improved staffing and demonstrated government ownership. The enhanced skills and experiences of project management teams at various levels improved several projects during implementation and created robust capacities for future teams to support IFAD's programmatic approach. This was most noticeable in the areas of water management, community development, marketing and gender awareness and nutrition, but also in procurement, financial management and M&E.

207. **There were chances to exhibit greater ownership of the country programme.** Project steering committees did not provide the necessary guidance for the closed projects (OFIDO and PRIME) but were reportedly more effective for SAIL and PRIDE.[290] Recently the Government increased its scrutiny of proposed

[287] PRIME PPE
[288] SAIL MTR and PRIDE MTR. CSPE interviews with key informants.
[289] Counterpart funding was highest for OFIDO: estimated 21% and actual 28%. It was lowest for STAR (6%), given the significant amount of international co-financing, which however did not materialise. Counterpart funding for PRIDE will exceed what was planned.
[290] OFIDO PCR, OFIDO PCRV, PRIME PPE, PRIDE MTR, IFAD CSPE self-evaluation.

loan investments[291], which is reflected in the government's hesitance to use loans for soft investments and insistence on having clear pathways for cost recovery. This resulted in difficulties to get STAR started and CROWN approved. While MALR was the main implementer, coordination with other government institutions faced challenges. For example, under OFIDO collaboration with MWRI and other government agencies was very limited, while, under PRIME, MSMEDA and ADP operated independently with no coordination with other project interventions.[292] Improvements were noted for the ongoing projects. Under SAIL, for example, proactive engagement with MWRI and the Ministry of Education helped to ensure efficient project implementation, while there was still scope to improve joint planning with MSMEDA and ADP.[293] Finally, there were some cases of limited government commitment to agreed actions. For example, under OFIDO agreed actions were not always implemented adequately, while for PRIME, the Government was not strongly committed to its strategic objective of improved integration of marketing support and rural finance for the target groups.[294]

208. **There were consistent shortcomings in M&E and financial management.** Common M&E issues included insufficient staff capacities, an over-focus on outputs and upward accountability and the limited use of information for KM and decision-making.[295] Furthermore, OFIDO and PRIDE did not have a baseline, while SAIL's baseline survey was only carried out after mid-term. Challenges were also encountered with data collection by implementing partners, such as MSMEDA and ADP, who did not adhere to requested formats.[296]

209. All projects faced slow disbursement, as mentioned in the section on efficiency, and procurement issues.[297] In general, project management units had weak procurement capacities, especially in terms of planning and compliance with procurement guidelines.[298] OFIDO, for example, shifted from a force account procurement model, which proved ineffective, difficult to monitor, and resulted in poor quality of civil works, to the competitive recruitment of contractors. This change however took place too late.[299] Procurement under PRIME faced shortcomings: non-compliance with IFAD requirements, lacking sufficiently competitive procedures, good bidding documents, contract management and dedicated procurement staff.[300] SAIL and PRIDE also experienced delays in procurement.[301] Furthermore, timeliness of audits was also an issue, for example in the case of OFIDO and PRIDE.

210. **Overall government performance.** The government demonstrated dedication, primarily through counterpart funding, took greater ownership in the latest projects and improved inter-governmental cooperation. Despite ongoing staffing challenges that affected project execution, the appointment of dedicated project coordinators yielded positive outcomes. However, projects continued to encounter persistent issues with M&E and financial management. The CSPE rates the Government's performance as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

[291] In efforts to restore macroeconomic stability, the government is implementing prudent macroeconomic measures and strengthening the governance of public investments to create space for private sector participation, while ensuring efficient resource allocation to key sectors.
[292] OFIDO PCR, PCRV and PRIME PPE
[293] SAIL SVR 2023
[294] OFIDO PCRV and PRIME PPE
[295] See for example IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE, OFIDO PCRV, PRIME PPE and SAIL MTR
[296] SAIL SVR 2021
[297] See for example, OFIDO PCRV, PRIME PPE and SAIL SVR 2023
[298] See, for example, OFIDO PCR and SAIL SVR 2019
[299] OFIDO PCRV and IOE 2017. Egypt CSPE
[300] PRIME PPE
[301] SAIL SVR 2023, PRIDE MTR

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

211. The CSPE evaluated IFAD's assistance to Egypt during a time of external pressures, exogenous shocks, and reduced government fiscal space. Egypt's economy faced significant fragilities and mounting socioeconomic difficulties following the severe setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and impacts from the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. This led to a severe foreign exchange and debt crisis in 2023 amid high levels of inflation and limited fiscal space. To restore macroeconomic stability, the government is increasingly less willing to take on additional debt and applies very close scrutiny of proposed loan investments, including those from IFAD. On top of that, Egypt is grappling with the exacerbating effects of climate change and escalating challenges of water scarcity.

212. **In this context, IFAD continued to be a key partner for the government but has been seeking a suitable response to its more conservative fiscal policy.** The strong partnership with the government was demonstrated by the choice to have IFAD co-lead the food pillar of the Government's platform for Water, Food, and Energy. On the other hand, the government showed increasing reluctance to use loans for soft investments and insistence on having clear pathways for cost recovery and greater private sector involvement. However, cost recovery and cost reductions in agricultural water infrastructure were not given much attention. This also resulted in difficulties to get recent projects approved and started. Moreover, several co-financing partnerships were envisaged to increase grant resources for the country programme, but only one materialised.

213. **The country programme showed continuity in terms of strategic themes and some progression.** Focus continued to be on tackling water scarcity, unemployment and landlessness, and supporting farmers' organisations. Newer projects built on the lessons of their predecessors, for example by engaging WUAs earlier on, increasingly supporting market linkages and placing greater emphasis on addressing climate change risks. On the other hand, projects struggled to draw lessons from past experiences and IFAD's guidance in rural finance. Most financial products offered by the projects were of a uniform type and failed to meet the varied needs of the actors along the value chain. The new STAR project is designed to change its approach and become more innovative and competitive in rural finance. Moreover, while PRIDE was created at the government's request to support Bedouin communities in Matrouh, it stood out from the rest of the portfolio's shift toward Upper Egypt and concentrated on water harvesting and watershed management, areas where IFAD had limited prior experience.

214. **Over time projects became more effective in delivering infrastructure and other rural services.** While earlier projects faced difficulties with achieving their objectives and results, others initially faced similar challenges but then managed to turn their performance around through strengthened project management. Notable positive outcomes were observed, particularly regarding the development of water infrastructure (and more equitable water distribution) and the provision of integrated community support packages. The technical and institutional sustainability of water systems improved over time, although water users' associations still required further assistance to become self-sustaining entities.

215. **Critical gaps remained in marketing and rural finance.** Despite some success stories, results in market access and value chain development were not meeting expectations. The implementation of different project interventions was not always coordinated well (e.g. rural finance activities), which had a tempering impact on overall results. The country programme was not innovative in inclusive rural finance due to a lack of progress in broadening partnerships with financial institutions and the Government's limited focus on finance demand analysis or technical assistance.

216. **More attention was given to ensuring sustainability**, for example by engaging WUAs early on or by involving line ministries for the maintenance of social infrastructure and roads. Nevertheless, concerns remained regarding the capacity of WUAs to adequately manage water resources in a sustainable manner, the adoption rate of improved farming practices, the linkages established between different market actors and the limited support for a more holistic support to natural resource management and climate change adaptation.

217. **Geographical targeting and integrated community support positively improved living conditions, but outreach to target groups was hindered by inadequate or unclear targeting strategies.** While all projects focused on the poorest governorates, some provided an integrated set of interventions, from productive support to the provision of social services, in more concentrated geographical areas. This contributed to ensure the country programme's poverty focus. However, poverty and vulnerability analyses did not sufficiently consider the capability, opportunity and motivation for change of different target groups and regional differences. This resulted in overestimated outreach targets and targeting strategies not being clearly elaborated. While women were for the most part adequately served, there were missed opportunities in terms of gender equality and women empowerment. There were also some issues in reaching young people and poorer households, including instances of elite capture. Strategies to target the landless were missing.

218. **The expected increase in engagement with non-lending activities, which was associated with greater country presence, did not materialise, thus constraining efforts to broaden IFAD's impact and influence.** The 2019 COSOP included an ambitious agenda in terms of KM, partnership building and policy engagement. Policy engagement even became the focus of one of its two strategic objectives. Nevertheless, results were limited: lessons learned were not packaged for higher level activities, like policy engagement and scaling-up, and few strategic alliances materialized with development partners. This was due to several reasons, such as the underestimation of the resources needed to realise these ambitions, such as time, skills and funds, but also limited availability of robust evidence and a lack of strategic guidance. Priority was given to addressing project management and implementation issues, at the expense of attention given to non-lending activities.

219. **While a programmatic approach was emerging, synergies amongst projects remained limited.** Although the 2017 CSPE suggested setting up a framework for efficient coordination and technical assistance within a forward-looking programmatic model, the government was reluctant to add more bureaucratic levels (as indicated in the agreement at the completion point). Increased coordination between projects was seen, with the same PMU being responsible for the implementation of SAIL and STAR and project occasionally exchanging experiences, for example regarding procurement. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of room to strengthen the programmatic approach with closer collaboration and coordination on issues related to M&E, financial management, procurement, IFAD's mainstreaming themes and non-lending activities.

B. Recommendations

220. The CSPE made the following five recommendations for the preparation of the upcoming COSOP.

221. **Recommendation 1. Incorporate natural resource management and adaptation to climate change into the upcoming strategic priorities and addressing them in a holistic manner.** The country programme's engagement in terms of natural resource management and climate change adaptation should be well-informed, integrated and based on a holistic approach to agricultural food systems transformation, with full attention to the risks of natural resource

degradation, water scarcity and climate change. The ambition should be to catalyse system-level changes that go beyond project boundaries, which is also important to attract more climate finance. For that purpose: (i) the role of natural resource management and climate change experts and advisors in project coordination units needs to be strengthened; (ii) support and guidance should be also sought from IFAD's regional and country natural resource and climate experts, as well as focal points of the Ministry of Environment and Global Environment Facility, where appropriate; and (iii) related milestones and outcomes should be tracked to facilitate adaptive learning. Additionally, innovative solutions to generate environmental benefits and climate change resilience alongside smallholder income gains are key for practical applications and require engaging specialised national service providers in this field, while seeking partnerships with other key stakeholders when necessary, including with governmental research centres (such as the Agricultural Research Centre and Desert Research Centre). This should be done in accordance with the Government's Platform for Water, Food and Energy and other environmental and climate-related strategies.

222. **Recommendation 2. Given Egypt's escalating challenges of water shortages, investments in interventions that address water use efficiency should continue to be a priority, but with more emphasis on sustainability (operation and maintenance arrangements and cost recovery pathways).** In addition to enhancing the irrigation water delivery system, this should be achieved by continued investments in (i) increased capacity building for water users' associations and promoting on-farm water use behaviour changes in and farmer engagement in water management, (ii) providing farmers with finance to acquire adequate inputs and knowledge to improve soil quality and markets access, (iii) developing replicable models for local MALR/MWRI coordination to incentivize farmers and agencies. Projects and supervision missions should regularly assess the quality of progress in developing water users' associations and groups, not merely monitor their numbers. To enhance sustainability and align with the government's conservative fiscal policy, greater focus is needed on cost reductions and recovery as well as private sector engagement in agricultural water infrastructure.

223. **Recommendation 3. Sharpen the country programme's marketing and value chain interventions while catering to the unique financial needs of value chain participants.** To achieve this, it is important to (i) ensure that the entire project cycle is based on sound analysis of commodity markets and the constraints faced by small-scale producers; (ii) focus on the developing downstream segments, such as processing and marketing stages; (iii) pursue regular collaboration with development partners with strong value chain expertise to leverage mutual experiences; (iv) rely more on markets and private initiative for economically-driven investments. Moreover, more attention should be given to ensuring the institutional sustainability of producers' organisations by building the required business and management capacities and by fostering good governance structures. Finally, the country programme needs to move beyond the traditional financing of small-scale producers and offer financial products and services that are tailored to the varied needs of the different actors along the value chain, through the development of partnerships with other relevant organizations and service providers, which will also contribute to strengthening the capacities of projects management teams.

224. **Recommendation 4. Develop explicit strategies and guidelines for the targeting approaches to be employed by the programme.** The coming COSOP should include clear strategic orientations and new project designs should include explicit strategies and guidelines to reach different target groups, including indicators and targets to be monitored, based on a thorough poverty and vulnerability analysis. Interventions and approaches should be aligned with the

needs and capacities of priority target groups, including the poorest and most vulnerable people. The effectiveness of the targeting strategy should continuously be verified, including by collecting poverty disaggregated data on a regular basis. Given high youth unemployment and the limited results achieved so far, more efforts need to go into reaching out to youth. This calls for: (i) more support to young farmers in getting access to land and financial resources; and (ii) increasing their participation in profitable value chains and contract farming. The country programme's geographical focus should remain on Upper Egypt, where most of the poor live and IFAD can continue building on its comparative advantage.

225. **Recommendation 5. Emphasize the strategic value of non-lending operations in the next COSOP and create a clear and actionable plan for these operations to enhance IFAD's influence and impact.** Many lessons can be learned from the Egypt country programme, for example on agricultural water infrastructure development and rural finance. These should be documented and packaged in a way that they can contribute to strengthening partnerships or influencing policies. The emerging national programme unit has a crucial role in managing knowledge, summarizing such lessons, communicating them and engaging in policy dialogue. It needs adequate human and financial resources to fulfil these tasks. Strategic alliances need to be pursued to bring in technical expertise (for example in value chain development) and innovations, mobilise additional resources (for example from bilaterals, the private sector or climate funds, especially given the government's conservative fiscal policy as well as its emphasis on enhancing private sector participation) and work together towards policy reforms. Therefore, a coherent action plan for KM, partnership building, and policy engagement should be developed, that is realistic in terms of available resources, and clear in the assignment of roles and responsibilities, especially between the IFAD country office and national programme unit/projects and on their interactions. It should be implemented with clear targets to track over time.

Definition of the evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria
Relevance The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the /country strategy and programme are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies ; (ii) the design of the strategy, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the adaptation of the strategy to address changes in the context.
Coherence This comprises two notions (internal and external coherence). Internal coherence is the synergy of the intervention/country strategy with other IFAD-supported interventions in a country, sector or institution. The external coherence is the consistency of the intervention/strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context. Non-lending activities are specific domains to assess coherence. **Knowledge management** The extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge. **Partnership building** The extent to which IFAD is building timely, effective and sustainable partnerships with government institutions, private sector, organizations representing marginalized groups and other development partners to cooperate, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage the scaling up of recognized good practices and innovations in support of small-holder agriculture. **Policy engagement** The extent to which IFAD and its country-level stakeholders engage to support dialogue on policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions, policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty.
Effectiveness The extent to which the country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups. A specific sub-domain of effectiveness relates to: Innovation, the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product, or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction.302
Efficiency The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).
Impact The extent to which the country strategy has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. The criterion includes the following domains: • changes in incomes, assets and productive capacities • changes in social / human capital • changes in household food security and nutrition • changes in institution and policies The analysis of impact will seek to determine whether changes have been transformational, generating changes that can lead societies onto fundamentally different development pathways (e.g., due to the size or distributional effects of changes to poor and marginalized groups).

302 Conditions that qualify an innovation: newness to the context, to the intended users and the intended purpose of improving performance. Furthermore, the 2020 Corporate-level Evaluation on IFAD's support to Innovation defined transformational innovations as "those that are able to lift poor farmers above a threshold, where they cannot easily fall back after a shock". Those innovations tackle simultaneously multiple challenges faced by smallholder farmers. In IFAD operation contexts, this happens by packaging / bundling together several small innovations. They are most of the time holistic solutions or approaches applied of implemented by IFAD supported operations.

Evaluation criteria
Sustainability and scaling up The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and scaled-up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies. Note: This entails an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. It involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs. Specific domain of sustainability: Environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation. The extent to which the development interventions/strategy contribute to enhancing the environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change in small-scale agriculture. Scaling-up* takes place when: (i) other bi- and multi laterals partners, private sector, etc.) adopted and generalized the solution tested / implemented by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invested resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested / implemented by IFAD (from practice to a policy). *Note that scaling up does not only relate to innovations.
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; and in promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs underpinning gender inequality. Evaluations will assess to what extent interventions and strategies have been gender transformational, relative to the context, by: (i) addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (ii) acting upon gender roles, norms and power relations; (iii) promoting broader processes of social change (beyond the immediate intervention). Evaluators will consider differential impacts by gender and the way they interact with other forms of discrimination (such as age, race, ethnicity, social status and disability), also known as gender intersectionality.303
Partner performance (assessed separately for IFAD and the Government) The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) ensured good design, smooth implementation and the achievement of results and impact and the sustainability of the country programme. The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government, implementing agency, and project company performance in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.

303 Evaluation Cooperation Group (2017) Gender. Main messages and findings from the ECG Gender practitioners' workshops. Washington, DC. https://www.ecgnet.org/document/main-messages-and-findings-ieg-gender-practitioners-workshop

Evaluation framework

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
RELEVANCE		
This criterion measures 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.	• To what extent and in what ways was the country strategy and programme relevant and aligned to: (i) the country's development needs, priorities and challenges, national policies and strategies in the evolving context; (ii) IFAD's relevant strategies and priorities; (iii) the needs of the beneficiaries and tailored to very poor or marginalized people or special categories? • How appropriate was the targeting strategy, with attention to women, youth, landless, and other marginalized and/or vulnerable groups? Did it evolve over the years? Are geographic focus and targeting criteria of different projects/programmes (and interventions) sufficiently aligned? How robust was the poverty analysis supporting the choice of poor governorates? • Was the design quality in line with available knowledge, recognized standards (if available)? Were lessons from previous interventions/projects/programmes adequately taken into consideration in the design of strategies and projects/programmes? How was the quality of project designs? Were there recurrent or common design issues? Did assumptions hold during the programme period? • Was the design realistic in terms of suitability to the context and implementation capacity? Were government capacities (at all levels) adequately considered in programme designs? Were the capacities of other stakeholders (e.g. rural organizations, service providers, rural finance institutions, research centres) adequately considered in programme design? • To what extent and how well was the design re-adapted to changes in the context in Egypt? • Are IFAD priority themes (e.g. gender, youth, climate change, and nutrition) sufficiently addressed in the COSOPs and projects/programmes? Were adequate resources allocated to address issues related to priority themes? • How relevant, inclusive and pro-poor were the rural finance and market access interventions? How appropriate have been these interventions, given the existing legal and institutional framework? How appropriate has been the selection of partners? • To what extent do the financing priorities of government align with those of IFAD's strategies and approaches in reaching its target groups, particularly regarding capacity building of community-based organizations/institutions? How can both government and IFAD adapt their approaches to facilitate stronger alignment? To what extent and how were the institutional arrangements for programme management, coordination and oversight appropriate to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents, supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports; (iv) projects targeting and gender strategies. Review of national policies, strategies. KII with IFAD staff and national stakeholders. Interviews and FGD with beneficiaries during field visits.
COHERENCE		
This criterion comprises the notions of external and internal coherence. External coherence is the consistency of the strategy with	• To what extent were there synergies and interlinkages between different elements of the country strategy/programme (i.e. projects, lending and non-lending activities)? How coherent are the non-lending activities with the lending portfolio and the overall objectives of the programme and strategy?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents, supervision missions, mid-term review and completion

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
other actors' interventions in the same context. Internal coherence looks at the internal logic of the strategy, including the complementarity of lending and non-lending objectives within the country programme. Non-lending activities are specific domains for assessing coherence. - *Knowledge Management:* the extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge. - *Partnership Building:* the extent to which IFAD is building timely, effective and sustainable partnerships with government institutions, international organizations, the private sector, organizations representing marginalized groups and other development partners to cooperate, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage the scaling up of recognized good practices and innovations in support of smallholder agriculture and rural development. - *Policy engagement:* the extent to which IFAD and its country-level stakeholders engage, and the progress made, to support dialogue on policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions, policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty.	• How complementary are the IFAD supported interventions with those supported by other development partners working on similar themes (e.g. NRM, rural finance, access to markets, nutrition, rural organizations, infrastructure) What mechanisms exist for promoting complementarity, harmonization and coordination with other actors working in the same space? • How did IFAD position itself and its work in partnership with other development partners? What types of partnerships were established and to what end (e.g. influence policy, leverage financial resources, enable coordinated country-led development processes; generate knowledge and innovation; strengthen private sector engagement; enhance visibility)? Which results were achieved? What were key factors for successes and the main challenges? • How did IFAD position itself and its work in partnership with the private sector, civil society/rural organizations and research institutions? What type of partnerships were developed? Which results were achieved? What were key factors for successes and the main challenges? • To what extent lessons and knowledge have been gathered, documented and disseminated? How have these informed new strategies and projects design? Did the country programme engage in south-south and triangular cooperation? • How relevant knowledge materials were to the target audience? • Which knowledge management tools and approaches have been used? • How has organizational learning been enabled within the country programme? • Were knowledge management activities outlined in the COSOPs and/or is there a specific country strategy for KM? Did the projects have any KM/communication strategy? • Is there any evidence that lessons and knowledge produced through IFAD lending and non-lending activities have been effectively used to support scaling up successful initiatives? • Did IFAD contribute to policy discussions drawing from its programme experience? • Which specific policy engagement activities were implemented and how these yielded positive results? What were key factors for successes and the main challenges? • Is there any actual policy change that IFAD has contributed to? Was it documented? • How were the grants expected to support policy engagement? What has been the contribution of grants to better policy dialogue? • Was there a consistent follow-up in documenting and supervising results on IFAD policy engagement in areas of strategic focus?	reports; (iv) projects targeting and gender strategies. KII with IFAD staff, national stakeholders and other partners. Field visits and discussion with local partners Review of documents and reports from projects implemented by other partners.

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
EFFECTIVENESS (including innovation)		
Effectiveness. This criterion measures the extent to which the intervention/country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups.	• To what extent were the objectives of the country strategy and programme (outcome-level) achieved or are likely to be achieved at the time of the evaluation? • What were the key achievements of the country strategy programme, i.e. what would not have happened, or happened as quickly without the country strategy programme? • Were the objectives of the intervention/project/programme/country strategy and programme achieved, or likely to be achieved, at the time of the evaluation? • For each thematic area identified, which where the main strategies and tools adopted? What have been the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies and tools? Which were the concrete achievements? What have been the main factors explaining the performance/non-performance and what could have been done differently? • Which mechanisms and interventions were the most effective in targeting vulnerable groups? To what extent vulnerable groups benefited from IFAD-supported interventions? To what extent did the programme reduce the vulnerabilities of poor men and women (environmental and economic)? What factors contributed to the success? What were the key challenges? What efforts were employed to address the key challenges and what results did such efforts yield? • How effective have interventions been in reaching out to young women and men as well as landless and indigenous peoples? • To what extent have interventions contributed to improve the resilience and livelihoods of rural youth and landless and indigenous peoples by increasing: (i) their productive capacities (ii), their capacities to undertake/engage in economic activities, on and off farm, and employment (iii) their access to markets? • What evidence is available in terms of positive changes for youth, landless and indigenous peoples empowerment that can be attributed to programme support? • What have been the contribution of non-lending activities, especially grant supports, to those changes?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents, supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports; (iv) projects targeting and gender strategies; (v) M&E data from projects (progress on outputs and outcomes / disaggregated data), KII with IFAD staff and national stakeholders. Interviews and FGD with beneficiaries during field visits. Secondary data.

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
	• How effective have the interventions been to support the establishment and strengthening of community-level organizations? • Did the interventions/projects/programmes/strategy achieve other objectives/outcomes, or did it have any unexpected consequence? • Were there changes/challenges in the programme/project context which affected effectiveness (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic, climate and/or economic shocks)? If so, what changes were these and in what way(s) did they affective effectiveness? How were these addressed?	
Innovation: the extent to which interventions yielded a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product or rule) that is novel with respect to the specific context, timeframe and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) related to rural poverty reduction	• To what extent did the programme or project support/promote innovations aligned with stakeholders' needs or challenges? • Were the innovations inclusive and accessible to a diversity of farmers (in terms of gender, youth and diversity of socioeconomic groups)? • What innovations were successfully introduced and scaled up? What factors contributed to the successful introduction and scaling up of these innovations? Which innovations did not do well and why? What could have been done differently to make such innovations succeed? • What is the contribution of grants in leveraging the promotion of successful innovations?	
EFFICIENCY		
This criterion assesses extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely manner "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (e.g. funds, expertise, natural resources, time) into outputs, outcomes and impacts as cost-effectively as possible, compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is	• What is the relation between benefits and costs (e.g. planned and actual net present value, internal rate of return)? How did this compare with similar interventions (if the comparison is plausible)? • Are unit costs of specific interventions (e.g. infrastructure works) in line with recognised practices and congruent with the results achieved? • Are programme management cost ratios justifiable in terms of intervention objectives, results achieved, considering contextual aspects and unforeseeable events? • Is the timeframe of the intervention development and implementation justifiable, taking into account the results achieved, the specific context and unforeseeable events?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents, supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports; (iv) IFAD databases (OBI, FMDB) including historical project status reports, project financial data; (v) M&E data from projects statements, disbursement data, project financing data, economic and

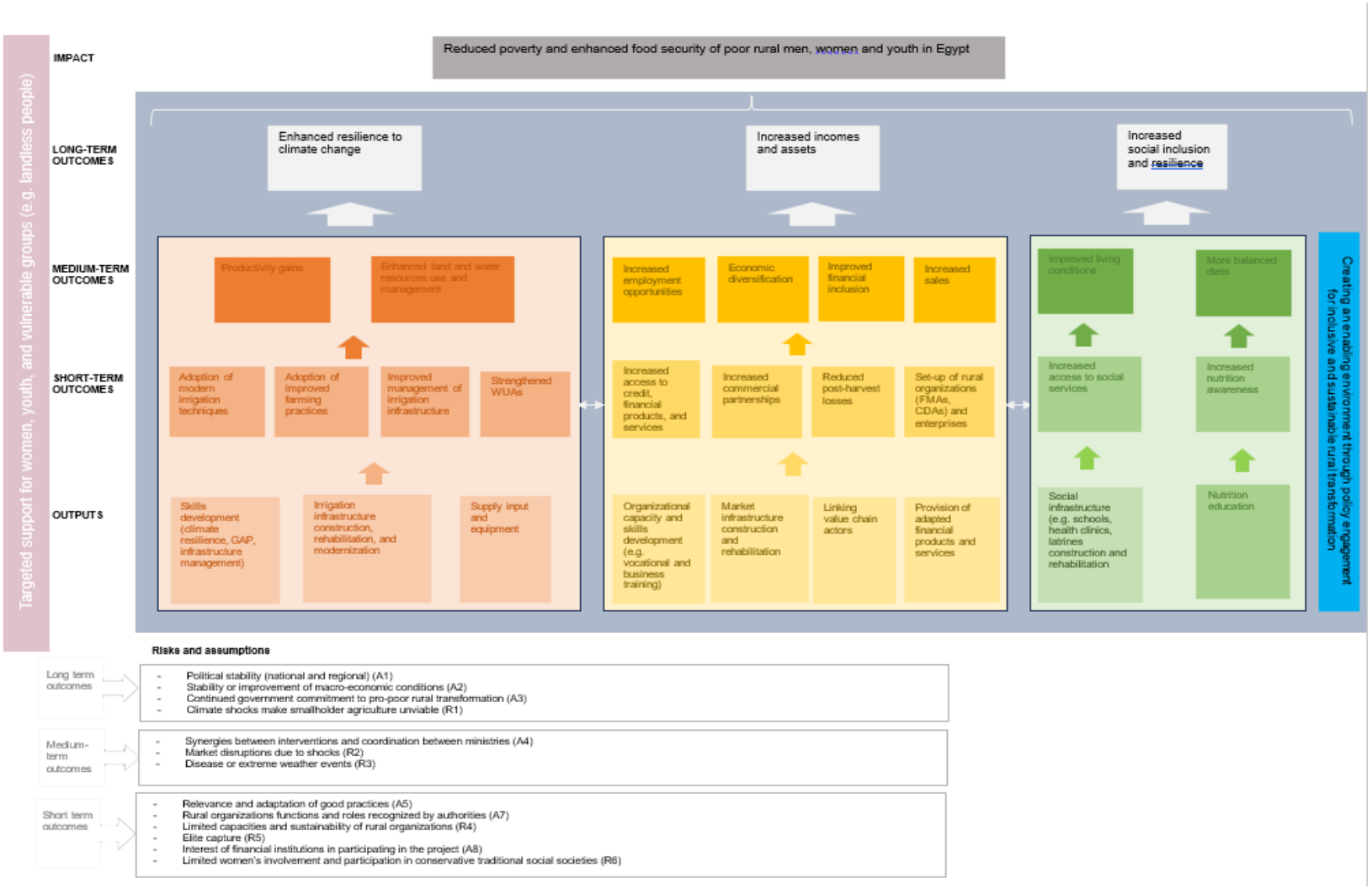
Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).	• Were the financial, human and technical resources adequate and mobilized in a timely manner? Were project management offices sufficiently staffed and effective in the execution of tasks? • What factors affected efficiency of IFAD interventions/projects/programmes? • Was the programme able to use the allocated IFAD resources as expected? • How efficiently were the projects processed and implemented, including: (i) project preparation and processing timeliness; (ii) implementation/ disbursement timeliness (including project management performance); (iii) cost-benefit, economic internal rate of return; and (iv) project management cost. • How were IFAD's human resources deployed and organized to supervise and support the lending portfolio and engage in non- lending activities? • What were the main factors affecting efficiency in the closed projects? What are the trends in the ongoing project? • What lessons can be learned from the results achieved in terms of efficiency, for better performance in the future? • How did the project management unit/project coordination units perform?	financial analyses, information on project timeline, etc.; (vi) audit reports. Cost and benefit data from other similar projects. KII with IFAD staff and national stakeholders. Interviews and FGD with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits, spot validation of reported costs, benefits.
IMPACT		
This criterion measures he extent to which an intervention/country strategy has generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. The criterion includes the following domains: (i) changes in income, assets and productive capacity; (ii) changes in social/human capital; (iii) changes in household food security and nutrition; (iv) changes in institutions and policies The impact assessment will seek to determine whether changes have been transformational, generating changes that can shift societies onto fundamentally different development pathways (e.g. due to the size or distributional effects of changes to poor and marginalized groups)	• What contribution did the country programme make to the reduction of poverty in target areas? • Has the country strategy and programme had the anticipated impact on the target group and institutions and policies? Why? • What are the observed changes in target group incomes and assets, household food security and nutrition, social/ human capital and institutions and policies over the project/ COSOP period? What explains those changes? What are the challenges? • From an equity perspective to what extent have the interventions had a positive impact on women, youth, the very poor/marginalized vulnerable groups and how? • Was there any unintended impact, either negative or positive?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents, supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports. KII with IFAD staff and national stakeholders. Interviews and FGD with beneficiaries during field visits. Secondary statistical data on poverty, household incomes and nutrition where available and relevant (possible benchmark)
SUSTAINABILITY (including environment, NRM, climate change adaptation, and scaling up)		

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
Sustainability. This criterion assesses he extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled up (or are likely to continue and be scaled up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies. Note: This entails an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacity of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. It involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs.	• To what extent did the intervention/country strategy and programme contribute to long-term institutional, environmental and social sustainability? What have been the challenges? • What is the level of engagement, participation and ownership of the government, local communities, grass-roots organizations and poor rural people? In particular, did the government ensure budget allocations to cover operations and maintenance? • How sustainable are the community organizations supported by the programme? Would they continue operation without external funding? What are the explaining factors? • How sustainable are the approaches to strengthening the institutional capacities of different providers for pro-poor financial services? Are financial institutions in rural areas sustainable? Would they continue operation without external funding? What are the explaining factors? • Are the infrastructure financed by the projects likely to be maintained? • Are adopted approaches and technologies technically viable? • Did the programme include an exit strategy?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports; (iv) M&E data from projects. KII with IFAD staff, national stakeholders and development partners Interviews and FGD with beneficiaries during field visits.
Environment and natural resource management and climate change adaptation: the extent to which the development interventions/strategy contribute to the enhancement of environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change in small-scale agriculture.	• To what extent is the intervention/strategy: (a) Addressing water scarcity, degradation of water and land resources? (b) Improving farming practices? Minimizing damage and introducing offsets to counter the damage caused by those farming practices? (c) Minimizing environmental damage and introducing compensation to counter the damage caused by these agricultural practices? (d) Supporting agricultural productivity that is sustainable and integrated into ecosystems? (e) Channelling climate and environmental finance through the intervention/country programme to smallholder farmers, helping them to reduce poverty, enhance biodiversity, increase yields and lower greenhouse gas emissions? (f) Building climate resilience by managing competing land use systems while reducing poverty, enhancing biodiversity, increasing yields and lowering greenhouse gas emissions?	
Scaling up. Scaling up takes place when: (i) bi- and multilateral partners, the private sector and communities adopt and disseminate the solution tested by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invest resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested by IFAD (from practice to policy).	• To what extent were results scaled up or likely to be scaled up in the future? • Is there an indication of commitment by the government and key stakeholders to scale up interventions and approaches – for example, in terms of the allocation of funds for selected activities, human resources availability, continuity of pro-poor policies, participatory development approaches and institutional support?	

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment		
The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to greater 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; workload balance and impact on women's income, nutrition and livelihoods; and in promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching changes in the social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs underpinning gender inequality. Evaluations will assess the extent to which interventions and strategies have been gender-transformational relative to the context, by: (i) addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (ii) acting upon gender roles, norms and power relations; (iii) promoting broader processes of social change (beyond the immediate intervention). Evaluators will consider differential impacts by gender and the way they interact with other forms of discrimination (such as age, race, ethnicity, social status and disability), also known as gender intersectionality	• What were the project's achievements in terms of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, including intersectionality issues? • What were the contributions of IFAD-supported interventions to changes in: (i) women's access to resources, income sources, assets (including land) and services; (ii) women's influence in decision-making within the household and community; (iii) workload distribution (including domestic chores) and sharing of benefits; (iv) women's health, skills, nutrition? • Were there notable changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs and policies/laws relating to gender equality? • Was attention given to programme implementation resources and disaggregated monitoring with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment goals? • Did the programme (and projects) have gender strategies and action plans? How transformational were these strategies? • Were sufficient (human and financial) resources allocated to implement these strategies? • Were indicators (and data) to monitor targets and results disaggregated (according to gender, age and ethnic groups)?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents, supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports; (iv) projects targeting and gender strategies; (v) M&E data from projects. KII with IFAD staff, national stakeholders and development partners, Interviews and FGD with beneficiaries during field visits. Evidence and testimonies gathering. Secondary statistical data on gender, youth, landless and indigenous peoples.
PARTNER PERFORMANCE		

Evaluation criteria and definition	*Key evaluation questions*	*Data sources and collection methods*
IFAD: The extent to which IFAD and the government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) supported design, implementation and the achievement of results, a conducive policy environment and impact and the sustainability of the intervention/country programme.	• How effectively did IFAD support the overall quality of design, including aspects related to project approach, compliance, and implementation aspects? • How proactively did IFAD identify and address threats to the achievement of project development objectives? • How did IFAD take into account contextual issues and challenges in working in the country? • How effectively did IFAD support the implementation of projects on aspects related to project management, financial management, and setting-up project level M&E systems? Did IFAD provide capacity building opportunities? How timely and adequate were they? • How well did IFAD perform in the support and supervision of the programme? • Did IFAD deploy the required financial and technical resources in an adequate and timely manner? • Did IFAD exercise its fiduciary responsibilities adequately? • How did IFAD position itself and its work in partnership with other development partners?	In depth review of: (i) COSOPs; (ii) IFAD evaluations (e.g. PPE, PCRVs); (iii) projects design documents supervision missions, mid-term review and completion reports; (iv) projects targeting and gender strategies; (v) M&E data from project; (vi) key correspondence. KII with IFAD staff and government stakeholders. Interviews and FGD with other non-governmental stakeholders.
Government: The adequacy of the borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government and implementing agency, for ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, support for a conducive policy environment and for laying the foundation for sustainability and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.	• How tangible was the government's commitment to achieving development objectives and ownership of the strategy/project? • Did the government adequately involve and consult beneficiaries/stakeholders at design and during implementation? • Did Government demonstrate ownership in the design and implementation of the country programme? • How did the government position itself and its work in partnership with other development partners? • How well did the project management unit/project coordination unit manage start-up procedures, implementation arrangements, the appointment of key staff and resource allocation/funding? • In how timely a manner did the PMU identify and resolve implementation issues? Was project management responsive to changes in the environment or the recommendations made during supervision missions or by the project steering committee? • How useful were the various project management tools, annual workplan and budget and the management information system, developed during implementation? Were these tools properly used by project management? • How did the PMU fulfil fiduciary responsibilities? How useful was the procurement plan and how was it used during implementation? What were the main bottlenecks? • How adequate were M&E arrangements made by the PMU, including the M&E plan, and the utilization of evaluation M&E data in decision-making and resource allocation? • Did the Government mobilize the required resources?	

Theory of change



IFAD-financed projects in Egypt

Project ID	*Project name*	*Project type*	*Date of approval*	*Date of entry into force*	*Completion date*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Government funding*	*Other domestic funding** *	*Co-financing*	*Status*	*Cooperating institution*
1100000054	West Beheira Settlement Project (WBSP)	Settlement	12/04/1980	05/08/1981	30/06/1992	30/06/2000	37.9	28.2	9.8	-	-	Financial Closure	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
1100000114	Minya Agricultural Development Project (MADP)	Agricultural Dev	12/09/1982	28/07/1983	30/06/1999	30/06/1999	46.7	23.9	22.8	-	-	Financial Closure	UNOPS
1100000157	Fayoum Agricultural Development Project (FADP)	Agricultural Dev	14/09/1984	06/12/1985	30/06/1993	31/12/1993	40	10.2	29.8	-	-	Financial Closure	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
1100000306	Newlands Agricultural Services Project (NASP)	Agricultural Dev.	15/04/1992	30/12/1993	31/12/2000	31/12/2001	41.6	22.1	19.5	-	-	Financial Closure	UNOPS
1100000355	Agricultural Production Intensification Project (APIP)	Research	20/04/1994	25/01/1995	30/06/2005	31/12/2005	39.2	20.2	15.7	3.3	-	Financial Closure	UNOPS
1100001014	East Delta Newlands Agricultural Services Project (EDNASP)	Credit	05/12/1996	25/01/1999	31/03/2008	30/09/2008	91.5	25	15.8	35.5	15.2 (IDA)	Financial Closure	IDA
1100001050	Sohag Rural Developmen	Rural Dev	10/09/1998	18/06/2001	30/06/2008	31/12/2008	93.7	25	23.6	17.2	25 (IDA) 3 (TBD)	Financial Closure	IDA

Project ID	*Project name*	*Project type*	*Date of approval*	*Date of entry into force*	*Completion date*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Government funding*	*Other domestic funding** *	*Co-financing*	*Status*	*Cooperating institution*
	t Project (SRDP)												
1100001204	West Noubaria Rural Development Project (WNRDP)	Settlement	23/04/2002	09/04/2003	30/06/2014	31/12/2014	54.7	18.5	35.7	0.2	0.4 (FAO)	Financial Closure	IFAD
1100001376	Upper Egypt Rural Development Project (RDP)	Credit	14/12/2006	24/09/2007	31/03/2017	30/09/2017	19.8	15.2 (loan) 0.9 (grant)	3.7	-	-	Financial Closure	IFAD
1100001447	On-farm Irrigation Development Project in Oldlands (OFIDO)	Irrigation	17/12/2009	16/02/2010	30/09/2020	30/09/2020	92.1	60 (loan) 2 (grant)	19.3	10.8	-	Financial Closure	IFAD
1100001571	Promotion of Rural Incomes through Market Enhancement Project (PRIME)	Credit	13/12/2012	10/04/2012	31/12/2021	20/01/2023	108.2	70 (loan) 1 (grant)	7.5	29.7	-	Financial Closure	IFAD
1100001745	Sustainable Agriculture Investments and Livelihoods Project (SAIL)	Credit	16/12/2014	15/06/2015	31/12/2024	30/06/2025	94.6	63.2 (loan) 5 (ASAP grant) 1.4 (grant)	15.2	2	7.8 (GEF/SCCF)	Available for Disbursement	IFAD
2000001280	Promoting Resilience in Desert	Rural Dev.	11/12/2017	26/11/2019	31/12/2026	30/06/2027	81.6	61.9 (loan)	13.9		4.7	Available for Disbursement	IFAD

Project ID	*Project name*	*Project type*	*Date of approval*	*Date of entry into force*	*Completion date*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Government funding*	*Other domestic funding** **	*Co-financing*	*Status*	*Cooperating institution*
	Environments (PRIDE)							1 (grant)					
2000002202	Sustainable Transformation for Agricultural Resilience in Upper Egypt (STAR)	Irrigation	11/12/2019	03/07/2022	13/09/2025	13/03/2026	269.6	63.2 (loan) 1.3 (grant)	15.4	66.9	90 (AFDB) 2.9 (Adapt. Fund) 20 (OFID) 9.9 (WFP)	Available for Disbursement	IFAD

Source: OBI, FMDB

* Discrepancies between total cost and IFAD, Co-financing, Government and Other domestic financing funding are due to rounding.

** Includes beneficiary contributions and domestic financial and private institutions

IFAD-funded grants in Egypt

Project ID	*Project name*	*Covered countries*	*Date of effectiveness*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Co-financing*	*Recipient*
1000004068	Decreasing Vulnerability to Conflict in the Middle East and Nort Africa Through Rural Development	Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen	27/10/2011	22/02/2017	US$1 609 372	US$1 000 000	IFPRI: US$609 372	IFPRI
1000004379	Smallholders Farmers' Access to Markets in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Egypt	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt	17/05/2013	08/05/2017	US$1 967 961	US$1 300 000	Oxfam Italia: US$509 961 Other: US$158,000	Oxfam Italia
200000275	Project Monitoring and Policy Scenarios	Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines Senegal, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia	19/12/2013	27/09/2017	US$500 000	US$500 000		International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
2000000165	Country Level Support to External Validity of Project Impact Evaluations across all IFAD Regions	Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia	13/12/2013	21/11/2018	US$500 000	US$500 000		International Initiative for Impact Evaluation - USA
1000004392	Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme Main Phase	Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia	09/05/2013	30/04/2019	US$283 087	US$283 087		NGO Fert
100004490	Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme Main Phase	Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia	09/05/2013	30/04/2019	EUR1 744 027	-	European Commission: US$2378 785 Swiss Development Cooperation Agency: US$319 107	NGO Fert
2000000530	Creating opportunities to develop resilient agriculture	Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, Senegal, Yemen	22/08/2014	25/07/2017	US$2 800 000	US$400 000	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development: US$375 000	International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture

Project ID	*Project name*	*Covered countries*	*Date of effectiveness*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Co-financing*	*Recipient*
							International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture: US$800 000 International Development Research Centre: US$375 000 National Agricultural Research Systems: US$850 000	
2000000112	South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Agricultural Development and Enhanced Food Security in the NEN Region	Algeria, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia. Turkey, Uzbekistan	21/05/2014	31/12/2019	US$2.9	US$1 800 000	Islamic Development Bank: US$200 000 UNOSSC: US$477 000 Other local US$418 500	UNOSSC
2000000110	Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia	18/02/2015	02/01/2019	US$3 140 000	US$1 720 000	ILO: US$1 142 000	ILO
2000001531	12th International Conference on Dryland Development	Egypt	16/02/2016	06/01/2017	US$20 000	US$20 000		International Dryland Development Commission
2000001326	Agricultural Investment Data Analyzer: Enhancing the impact of policies and rural investment on poverty, food security, and employment in the Near East and North Africa	Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Yemen	23/02/2017	02/11/2022	US$2 000 000	US$1 600 000	IFPRI: US$400 000	IFPRI
2000001855	Supporting Africa Wide Agricultural Extension Week	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda,	19/09/2017	01/07/2019	US$350 000	US$350 000		African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services

Project ID	*Project name*	*Covered countries*	*Date of effectiveness*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Co-financing*	*Recipient*
		Senegal Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe						
2000002068	Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme Main Phase	Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia	07/12/2017	30/04/2019	EUR179 546	-	European Union and Swiss Development Cooperation Agency: EUR179 546	*Union Maghrébine et Nord-Africaine des Agriculteurs*
2000002004	Mainstreaming Ex Ante Greenhouse Gas Accounting into Investments In Agriculture	Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mexico Mozambique, Tajikistan, Turkey, Vietnam,	08/04/2019	30/06/2024	US$1 538 000	US$1 080 000	FAO: US$458 000	FAO
2000001997	Advancing Technologies and Capacity Building for Aquaculture in Arid Lands	Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia	29/04/2019	31/12/2023	US$1 255 000	US$1 000 000	WorldFish Centre: US$255 000	WorldFish Centre
2000002971	Farmers' Organizations for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries	Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	04/12/2019	31/05/2025	US$898 876	US$898 876		*Union Maghrébine et Nord-Africaine des Agriculteurs*
2000002864	Increasing Water Productivity for Sustainable Nutrition Sensitive Agricultural Production and Improved Food Security	Benin, Egypt, Jordan, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda	06/02/2020	31/032024	US$2 400 000	US$2 000 000	FAO: US$400 000	FAO
2000002978	Support for the establishment of the Arab Forum for Rural Advisory Services	Egypt, Saudi Arabia	12/08/2020	30/06/2024	US$1 000 000	US$50 000	FAO: US$950 000	FAO
2000001995	Water Use Efficiency for Sustainable Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture	Benin, Burundi Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Georgia, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen	20/11/2020	09/11/2022	US$330 000	US$250 000	US$80 000	FAO

Project ID	*Project name*	*Covered countries*	*Date of effectiveness*	*Closing date*	*Total cost**	*IFAD financing*	*Co-financing*	*Recipient*
2000002942	Capacity Building for Procurement in IFAD's Project Portfolio	Afghanistan, Brazil, Egypt, Senegal, Kenya	25 /01/2021	30/09/2024	US$3 327 000	US$3 000000	ILO: US$327 000	International Training Centre of the ILO
2000003738	Digital Advisory Support Services for Accelerated Rural Transformation	Bosnia Herzegovina, Botswana, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Republic of Moldova, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen	17/03/2022	30/09/2025	US$2 209 000	US$1 997 000	Development Gateway: US$212 000	Development Gateway, Inc.
2000004720	Innovative Regenerative Agriculture Approaches to Improve Resilience and Food Security	Yemen, Republic of Moldova, Egypt.	17/10/2024	06/10/2028	US$550 000	US$550 000		

Key evaluation themes

Rural finance. Access to finance is a key instrument (20 per cent of the investment portfolio approximately) to address the bottlenecks in rural enterprise development, and enable entrepreneurs to invest in quality inputs, technology, market and production infrastructure. Projects promoted the development of loan products for the agriculture sector, provided credit/loans and business advisory services, introduced pilot schemes for risk sharing in financing agribusiness investment, and strengthened financial institutions and intermediaries such as such as NGOs, CDAs, FMAs and agriculture cooperatives. According to the 2017 CSPE, while progress was made in involving new partners in rural credit interventions, existing loan products were not designed to address the special characteristics of agricultural lending and were not able to remove some of the constraints along the value chain which required innovation (e.g. collateral requirements and the reduction of rural lending costs). The CSPE assessed the relevance, performance, innovativeness and inclusiveness of the rural finance interventions, their appropriateness to the country context, needs and capacities, as well as the alignment with national strategies and priorities, and IFAD's rural finance policy and effectiveness of support to regulatory reforms. It evaluated how effective promoted interventions were to address the needs of the target groups and enhance the sustainable access to rural finance and the impact on the lives of rural households.

Access to markets. Projects worked with farmers' organisations and rural enterprises by promoting the organization of smallholders into associations (e.g. FMAs), providing capacity building, facilitating the development of linkages with value chain actors (e.g. through contractual agreements with processors and exporters) and improving market access (e.g. through market information, partnership brokering, produce certification, digital technologies). According to the 2017 CSPE, support to marketing was provided without a coherent approach. There was room to better support actors within the value chain (e.g. marketing associations or smallholder farmers) through technical training combined with access to financial services. Access to markets had not improved, with few exceptions in Lower Egypt. The CSPE assessed the suitability, performance and inclusiveness of market access interventions. It looked at partnerships developed with the private sector and other development partners. Finally, the CSPE evaluated how effective and innovative these interventions were to address the bottlenecks that smallholders face, improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, and how sustainable the links between the various value chain actors were.

Rural infrastructure. Egypt has been among the top ten countries for IFAD's investments in infrastructure. IFAD's portfolio has focused on addressing water scarcity by improving irrigation systems at on-farm level. This was combined with the introduction of a participatory approach to manage irrigation infrastructure was promoted. Projects also invested in enhancing domestic drinking water supply (by constructing cisterns and reservoirs, as means to improve women and children's health and nutrition status) and supported the development of social (e.g., hygiene and sanitation facilities, schools and health clinics) and market infrastructure. The 2017 CSPE noted that the sustainability of irrigation systems was good, and the provision of irrigation contributed to improved land and water management practices. On the other hand, the financial sustainability of social infrastructure was unclear. The CSPE assessed how effective these investments have been in contributing to poverty reduction and improved nutrition, their efficiency, sustainability, and the respect of social and environmental safeguards. It assessed if requirements in terms of proper institutional governance arrangements, enabling policy, legal and regulatory frameworks, and capacities to perform and deliver the expected benefits were adequately addressed.

Natural resources management (NRM) and climate change. IFAD's projects focused on NRM and climate change particularly by enhancing water management practices for more rational use and equitable distribution of water and by promoting the

adoption of improved sustainable and climate resilient farming practices through technical assistance and capacity building (including through extension, farmers field schools and exchange visits). Emphasis was also given to research (e.g. on water use, irrigation and drainage) and the dissemination of technology. IFAD has furthermore supported community-based adaptation initiatives. According to the 2017 CSPE, despite being a key issue in Egypt and major theme of the country programme, NRM and climate change were not consistently addressed across the portfolio. Nonetheless, more recent projects such as SAIL and STAR placed stronger emphasis on the promotion of climate-smart practices (e.g. photovoltaic and solar energy and biogas) including through the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP). Furthermore, the 2017 CSPE called on IFAD and the Government to address the issue of a lack of a common and harmonized irrigation management transfer and participatory irrigation management vision between MARL and MRWI. The CSPE assessed the appropriateness and effectiveness of the strategies and investments promoted to address land and water degradation as well as climate change. It looked at the performance of the portfolio to open avenues for donor coordination and policy engagement on water resource management issues and it analysed if and how sustainable and climate smart NRM practices contributed to more resilient livelihoods.

Support to rural organizations. Rural organizations such as CDAs, FMAs and WUAs are key target groups of IFAD's country programme in Egypt. Considered as the institutional entry point for the inclusion of women and youth in project activities, rural organizations have been important actors to operate and maintain community level social and economic infrastructure, allow small producers to take advantage of economies of scale in production and marketing, increase their bargaining power in the market and reduce transaction costs. The creation and/or strengthening of rural organizations was strongly encouraged throughout the portfolio particularly through capacity building and technical support to strengthen their abilities to provide agricultural advice and services. The 2017 CSPE emphasized that while the IFAD portfolio supported a range of community-level organizations, they often remained too weak and ineffective. Also, it stressed that the lack of a coherent and long-term strategy for building their capacities and an insufficient allocation of funds for this purpose greatly undermined the portfolio's effectiveness. Moreover, Egypt currently borrows money from IFAD on ordinary terms and therefore looks for high return on investments. This might pose challenges in terms of reaching out to IFAD's target groups, strengthening their capacities, and staying true to its mandate. The CSPE assessed the effectiveness of the country programme in reaching out to its target groups, supporting community-level organizations as well as the impact on rural communities in terms of social capital, empowerment and inclusive development. It also evaluated the sustainability of these organizations, how well they were integrated into the existing institutional and policy framework, the effectiveness of support to regulatory reforms (e.g. regarding cooperatives) and coordination with development partners.

2017 CSPE conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The country programme is characterized by a high degree of continuity and focus. Throughout the review period it followed the two main themes, which were comprehensive infrastructure and services for the new settlements in Lower Egypt and improved farming systems in the old lands in Middle and Upper Egypt. The portfolio has been aligned with Government strategies on agriculture and its focus on major issues in rural development was continuous. The IFAD-supported projects have addressed key poverty issues and achieved some notable impacts, in particular through the improved farming systems in the old lands, and the improved water and land management practices in the new lands.

IFAD's strategy and programme was built on the resilience of the government machinery, which has a steady demand for funding of large interventions in the agricultural sector and has sufficient capacities to absorb significant amounts of funding. IFAD has maintained a close relationship with its main implementing partner MALR even throughout situations of instability and has thus been able to process a continuous flow of loans for every PBAS cycle.

Overall portfolio performance has been stable over the period. There was a slowdown of disbursements following the 2011 revolution, but this was mainly the result of delays in project effectiveness due to the political changes. Performance did not improve either because problems of programme management, coordination and ownership persisted.

Overall poverty focus was satisfactory, but the programme did not go much beyond geographic targeting approach. Geographic focus on poverty improved under the 2006 COSOP, with the notable shift of programme support to the poorest governorates in Upper Egypt. Still, the exit from Lower Egypt, recommended by the 2004 CPE, was never performed and projects approved under the 2012 COSOP continued targeting the relatively poorer communities in Lower Egypt. Although the number of poor governorates targeted is larger in Upper Egypt, the amount of support they each receive is similar or lower compared to those in Lower Egypt because of their limited capacities to absorb funding.

Strategies for targeting poor communities and farmers are not explicit and most interventions rely either on self-targeting, in the case of loans or training, or on technical targeting criteria, for example in irrigation. The programme did not invest sufficiently in a deeper analysis of poverty, beyond official poverty lines, that would have made it possible to address the specific needs of different groups within the large numbers of the rural poor, such as landless people or marginal farmers in the old lands.

Delivery of concentrated and focused approaches has effectively addressed poverty issues on a smaller scale. The portfolio has generated some positive impacts through concentrated delivery of comprehensive services and infrastructure in the new lands and focused technical approaches (research and extension) in the old lands. In the new lands, the infrastructure built or upgraded by the projects has enabled the private sector to generate some economic growth. In the old lands, the creation of a farming systems research unit together with the introduction of FFS has made a contribution to the slow transformation of the agricultural sector. Those achievements were possible because of the critical amount of support delivered in a focused way. For most of the time the portfolio has followed a logical sequence of generating good practices and "models" first before rolling those out on a larger scale. Since this important lesson was ignored in the later part of the review period, it is encouraging to see that the most recent Sustainable Agriculture Investments and Livelihoods Project has reverted to delivering an integrated set of interventions through a concentrated approach. Otherwise, there is a risk that the ongoing project portfolio is spread too thinly across geographic and thematic areas, thus diluting any potential results.

IFAD did not pursue a coherent strategy in key areas of corporate priority where it should have demonstrated comparative strength and therefore results are not consistent, for example in NRM, community capacity-building and gender. NRM and climate change were not consistently addressed across the portfolio although this was a major theme in the country programme. Environmental sustainability was only addressed in the early projects and, most recently by SAIL. Issues such as salinization, soil fertility, sanitation and waste treatment were not treated systematically throughout the portfolio. Yet there are a number of good practices from the earlier projects, which could be more systematically scaled up. Several grants were focused on climate change, but the practices and results were not integrated into the loan portfolio. This is an area where IFAD could add significant value through a more strategic approach.

Despite the long-term engagement and support, the results from community capacity-building are not satisfactory. The programme followed an opportunistic approach to building community capacities required for the delivery of project services, as fit within a given context. The approach lacked a clear vision on what type of organizations to promote and with what aim. The budgets allocated to capacity-building were insufficient. Most of the community organizations established or strengthened are still not effective or sustainable, and many of them have been operating without sufficient support through institutional and legal frameworks.

Although it is a priority area for Government and IFAD, gender equality was not consistently addressed throughout the portfolio. Women have participated and benefited, but at varying scale. They benefited in numbers from infrastructure and microloans, but overall the loan values they received were small. There were some good practices targeting women through extension and training, but those were not systematically promoted or scaled up.

Rural finance continues to play a pivotal role in the portfolio and its performance and growth will depend on expanded partnerships. Rural finance has long been a bottleneck for disbursement and outreach. Over the review period, progress has been made identifying and involving new partners in the rural credit components. With SFD as a strong partner, the performance of the rural credit portfolio has significantly improved. Yet the demand for rural credit remains huge and with the interest rates for IFAD loans increasing, the programme may not be able to effectively address this demand. The provision of microloans through CDAs is not sustainable yet and will require further support and capacity-building. Partnerships with commercial banks are much needed to ensure the sustainability of the approach, but given the terms of the commercial loans and the risks associated with lending to the agricultural sector, these may be hard to find.

The knowledge and experiences available within the programme were not adequately captured and used to enable progressive learning. Insufficient record-keeping, weak M&E and inconsistent use of lessons learned from previous projects point to clear weaknesses in KM. There has been a sequence of projects following up on earlier projects in the portfolio. Similar interventions and components were supported by different projects over a long period. Yet the opportunity to learn from this long-term engagement was not sufficiently used. There are no longitudinal studies for example on rural credit provision or access, results were not systematically documented and lessons from previous projects were not properly captured and used for the design of new projects. There was also hardly any exchange of lessons and practices between old lands and new lands.

NEN's strategy to manage knowledge and grants at a regional level is reasonable, but more attention could have been paid to strengthening Government ownership in KM and to more systematically draw from the wider lessons in the portfolio. For example, the evidence that has been systematically collected through impact studies seems underused and could have been more systematically exploited to inform future operations. The absence of clear responsibilities for KM within the Egypt portfolio is a gap which the

programme will have to address to ensure that knowledge is effectively documented and used within the country.

A wider range of partnerships and strengthened coordination of partners will be key to portfolio development and growth. The experience with marketing and on-farm irrigations in the recent projects shows the risks of getting involved into new thematic areas without a sufficiently strong partnership base and with a weak operational approach. A better institutional analysis and a more diversified partnership approach may have pre-empted some of the problems and this should be part of any future project design. The move from smaller to larger project could, in principle, have opened opportunities to engage with a larger number of stakeholders and exchange experiences across interventions and governorates. Instead, it created problems of coordinating implementing partners at different levels and they demonstrated limited flexibility to adapt to new contexts and local realities. Given the characteristics and challenges of the portfolio, IFAD could have instead used a programmatic approach that would have enabled continued support in selected thematic areas and greater flexibility to adapt to and engage with different partners.

IFAD's main entry point into Government had been through the PCU/CPMU at MALR. At national level, few opportunities have opened to engage with new strategic partners. Maintaining this exclusive partnership has been advantageous, because it was reliable and provided a degree of stability throughout the period. Yet the PCU/CPMU was also a cause of IFAD's insular position because of its insufficient capacity to convene sector-wide coordination and dialogue. IFAD would have been in a better position to leverage policy change if it had more influential interlocutors in key ministries. The relatively lean PCU/CPMU in MALR does not provide a platform for engagement on policy issues that are of strategic concern for IFAD. The relationship with MWRI remained difficult and there was no direct engagement with the Ministry at national level outside of OFIDO. Beyond MALR and MWRI, IFAD had little or no engagement with ministries and public sector institutions, even if they are directly relevant to IFAD's priority areas, for example community development or gender. Limited government ownership has been a latent issue affecting project performance. The increasing complexity of projects would require broader government ownership, starting with the involvement of a wider range of actors right from the design.

There is a clear expectation that a stronger country office will allow increased attention to partnership-building, KM and policy engagement. The CPM has only recently been out-posted and his ability to engage in non-lending activities has been limited so far because of insufficient resources and time. Therefore, the ICO has yet to demonstrate its value added through stepping up efforts on non-lending activities. Above all, it is necessary to allocate clear responsibilities and resources to the ICO. The ICO's role and influence will, however, continue to be limited as long as it relies on MALR as single entry point into Government, its partnerships remain narrow and partner capacities for programme coordination and technical support continue to be insufficient.

Finally, the new COSOP will provide the opportunity for repositioning IFAD's strategic role within the broader context of development in Egypt. By the end of this COSOP period, IFAD will have reached a defining moment. The Government has become more demanding in what it expects from increasingly expensive loans, and the scale of the challenges it has to address will require a range of solutions. In this context, IFAD cannot exclusively rely on the replication of well-tested approaches, and to step up its agenda in the country, it must go beyond filling in gaps in programme coordination and technical support. IFAD will need to demonstrate its value added through enhanced strategic focus, innovation and leverage through a wider range of partnerships and broad-based Government ownership.

Recommendations

The CSPE offers the following five recommendations for the preparation of the upcoming COSOP. For each recommendation the CSPE also suggests some specific and immediate action to start addressing the issues identified.

Recommendation 1: Sharpen poverty and geographic focus and refine poverty targeting. IFAD should reduce the geographic coverage of further interventions to fewer governorates within the same region. The interventions should target the poorest governorates and communities, based on relevant poverty indicators, and they should include explicit strategies for targeting different groups of the poor (e.g. marginal farmers, youth, and women). Targeting strategies will have to be based on good poverty analysis and followed up through appropriate monitoring of disaggregated data. New project designs and the upcoming COSOP should therefore include a poverty analysis that justifies the focus on the poorest governorates and communities, together with explicit strategies for targeting marginal farmers, youth and women.

Recommendation 2: Sharpen thematic focus and improve feasibility of design. There are good reasons for IFAD to focus on thematic areas where it has demonstrated a comparative advantage (e.g. agricultural research and extension; sustainable management of water and land) and deepen its engagement there, for example by addressing issues of institutional sustainability, equal participation of women and youth, access to land, water and credit. There is also scope to better integrate climate-smart practices into the loan portfolio. The CSPE recommends that IFAD should be more selective with regard to the thematic areas and proactively seek strategic partners to overcome the lack of sufficient implementation experience, in particular related to marketing support and SME loans. The upcoming COSOP should include a selective focus on a few thematic areas where IFAD will be able to add value through innovation and change together with identified partners.

Recommendation 3. Establish a structure for effective coordination and technical support within a progressing programmatic approach. The call for fewer and larger projects together with the urgent need to address the overall poor performance and low efficiency justify the need for a programmatic approach. Integrating complementary projects and interventions into a programmatic approach would enable effective links between projects that are currently working in parallel or are following up on other projects. With or without a programmatic approach, there is an urgent need for a sufficiently resourced and capacitated programme coordination unit at central level. The structure will require a degree of autonomy and impartiality to be able to act as go-between for different ministries and implementing partners; it requires a clear line of accountability to the borrower (the Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation (MIIC)) and the main executing partner(s) (MALR); it also needs to be able to bring in professional expertise where gaps exists in project implementation, in particular on M&E, procurement and financial management, gender and rural institutions. As an immediate step, MIIC, MALR and IFAD should establish a working group to prepare a proposal for endorsement by the relevant ministries and IFAD Management.

Recommendation 4. Manage knowledge from loans and grants to support learning and innovation. IFAD should become an honest knowledge broker, supporting systematic learning from success and failure, facilitating learning partnerships that involve partners from loans and grants, and preparing good practices and strategic lessons for policy engagement and scaling up. IFAD should establish clear roles and responsibilities for KM within the country (including ICO, government partners and projects) and at regional level. Based on the NEN regional KM strategy, the country programme should create effective links between grants and loans, M&E, implementing partners (local research institutes), and strategic partners (such as think tanks and development partners). As an immediate step, the NEN KM officer should support the ICO in the preparation of a KM action plan with clear responsibilities and allocated resources.

Recommendation 5. Prepare a strategy for effective capacity-building of community-level institutions with a perspective on scaling up under the new COSOP. The programme should take stock of the existing institutions and the legal and policy framework with support from a rural institutions specialist. The stock-taking exercise could also involve a joint workshop or conference with other development partners, which would have the added benefit of experience sharing and partnership-building. Based on this analysis, the COSOP would include a strategy for effective capacity-building and policy engagement on rural institutions supported by IFAD. To mitigate the shortcomings in the ongoing projects, some immediate actions should be taken whereby existing project component grants are better deployed for capacity-building. For the upcoming projects, IFAD must ensure that the design includes a sufficient budget for capacity-building from loans and grants. It must also ensure transparent planning and reporting on the use of project component grants for capacity-building. As an immediate action, IFAD should plan a stock-taking exercise as part of the COSOP preparation process and follow up on the proper use of project grants for capacity-building.

Follow-up 2017 CSPE recommendations

It should be noted that there was only one project under review by this evaluation that was designed after the 2017 CSPE.

CSPE Recommendation	Follow-up
Sharpen poverty and geographic focus and refine poverty targeting.	Partially implemented The country programme focused on the poorest and fewer governorates, but PRIDE was an outlier in terms the portfolio's shift towards Upper Egypt. PRIDE and STAR's geographical spread was more limited than their predecessors Targeting of women and youth improved in more recent projects, but issues remained (missing or delayed strategies, no poverty disaggregated data, STAR's design was not gender transformative as claimed, some cases of elite capture)
Sharpen thematic focus and improve feasibility of design.	Partially implemented While designs built on well tested approaches, there were missed opportunities to incorporate lessons learned from previous projects especially in terms of rural finance. Recurrent design issues included, amongst others, complex project set-ups, unrealistic assessment of implementation capacities and overdependence on uncommitted cofinancing.
Establish a structure for effective coordination and technical support within a progressing programmatic approach.	Partially implemented A programmatic approach is emerging with the same PMU being responsible for the implementation of SAIL and STAR and project occasionally exchanging experiences. There is still a lot of room to strengthen the programmatic approach with closer collaboration and coordination on issues related to M&E, financial management, procurement, IFAD's mainstreaming themes and non-lending activities.
Manage knowledge from loans and grants to support learning and innovation.	Not implemented Despite the increased attention given in the 2019 COSOP, there was a lack of strategic guidance and resources for knowledge management. Systematically capturing, sharing, and leveraging operational and grassroots knowledge from projects remained a challenge. This hampered results in terms of partnership building, policy engagement and scaling up

Prepare a strategy for effective capacity-building of community-level institutions with a perspective on scaling up under the new COSOP.	Not implemented A strategy for effective capacity-building of community-level institutions was not developed. Newer projects (especially SAIL) however did put more emphasis on institutional group strengthening. Evidence on human and social capital and empowerment was mixed

Source: Document review and interviews

Supporting information, tables and graphs

Table 11.
Target groups and targeting approaches of projects under review

Project	*Smallholders*	*Landless*	*Youth*	*Women*	*Other*	*Governorate*	*Targeting approach*
OFIDO	Smallholders cultivating an average of 3 feddans	Landless labourers	Unemployed young peoples	Women-headed households		Assiut, Beheria, Beni Seuf, Kafr Elsheikh, Luxor, Minya, Qena, and Sohag	Targeting implemented through a three-tier approach: (i) geographical targeting to identify governorates where the incidence of rural poverty is high and irrigation/agriculture conditions are diverse; (ii) in these governorates, selection of irrigation command areas that meet certain technical criteria and are located where there is a predominance of landholdings of under 3 feddans; and (iii) self-targeted interventions promoting complementary activities that are of interest primarily to the project's target group.
PRIME	Smallholders cultivating an average of 3 feddans	Landless labourers	Unemployed youth	Women and women-headed households	Small and medium entrepreneurs	Assiut, Beheira, Beni Suef, Kafr el Sheikh, Minya, Qena, Sohag	The selection of the Governorates is based on (i) the incidence of poverty in these Governorates; (ii) their potential for production of horticulture crops, livestock, herbs and medicinal plants; (iii) the agro-ecological variation in the Governorates which enables capitalizing on their year round production potential; and (iv) the potential to capitalise on IFAD's previous investments in irrigation and institutional development at the farm level.
SAIL	Smallholders cultivating an average of 2,5 – 5 feddans		Young unemployed graduates	Women, women-headed households, widows and divorced women		Aswan, Beni Suef, Kafr El Sheikh, Minya	Geographical targeting: area selected from the sites which the Government has allocated for settlement and rehabilitation (97,971 feddan spread over 30 settlements). The profile of the target group is one of poverty, food and nutrition insecurity and vulnerability. Mix of self-selection + direct targeting (e.g. through scoring systems and link with social protection programmes).
PRIDE	Smallholder livestock farmers and horticulturists[304]		Groups of youth and youth companies in Al Moghra	Women, young girls	6 tribes and 43 sub-tribes, children	Matrouh	Geographical targeting; Mix of direct targeting (e.g. through poverty and nutrition vulnerability score) and self-selection (e.g. for training and extension).
STAR	Poor subsistence households (0.5 -1 feddan); market-oriented smallholder households (1 to 3 feddans)	Landless and near landless households with less than 0.5 feddan	Unemployed, engaged in rural activities or seasonal workers at minimum wage.	Women with limited opportunities for economic engagement	Medium and large holder farmers (above 3 feddans) traders, processors, and other actors	Asyut, Minya, Sohag	Geographic area identified on the basis of the high poverty and food insecurity level. Use of command area-based geographical clustering approach, prioritising poor villages located in the command areas of branch canals requiring more significant and urgent rehabilitation. Combination of self-targeting and direct targeting (e.g. for nutrition activities)

304 According to the design document of PRIDE, in Matrouh Governorate, 70 to 85 percent of livestock farmers have herds of up to 50 animals. In Siwa Oasis, 90 percent of the farmers are small-holders owning ½ to 2 feddan. Seventy-five per cent have less than five small ruminants and a few have cows.

Project	*Smallholders*	*Landless*	*Youth*	*Women*	*Other*	*Governorate*	*Targeting approach*
	considered borderline poor				along value chains		

Box 3
IFAD's portfolio support to Egypt sectoral policies

Rural finance. Except for PRIDE, all projects had a strong focus on rural finance. They supported the development of loan products for the agriculture sector, the provision of credit/loans and business advisory services, the introduction of pilot schemes for risk sharing in financing agribusiness investment, and strengthened financial institutions and intermediaries, such as NGOs, CDAs, FMAs and agriculture cooperatives. This was consistent with the *Financial Inclusion Strategy (2022-2025)*, which aims at achieving inclusive financial systems through improved access to financial services, financial literacy (particularly in rural and remote areas) and innovative financial products, amongst others. It was also aligned with the objective of *SADS* to increase the competitiveness of agricultural products in local and international markets, projects focused on rural finance as a key instrument to address the bottlenecks in rural enterprise development. Nevertheless, investments in rural finance progressively decreased.[305]

Market access. Projects supported microenterprises, organised smallholders into associations (e.g. CDAs, MAs) and linked these to domestic and export markets. Especially PRIME, SAIL and STAR focused on capacity building, strengthening linkages between value chain actors and improving market access (e.g. through market information, partnership brokering, produce certification, digital technologies). This was aligned with *SADS,* the *Medium-Term Sustainable Development Plan (2018/2019 - 2021/2022),* and the *Industry and Trade Development Strategy (2016-2020).* The projects' strong focus on promoting women entrepreneurship was furthermore consistent with the *National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030* (2017).

Irrigation development. Except for PRIME, all projects focused on improving irrigation systems at on-farm level and worked with WUAs for their management. STAR also started including interventions beyond mesqa level. This was in alignment with *SADS'* focus on achieving improved efficiency of irrigation systems, as well as other policy documents, such as the *National Water Resources Plan (2017-2037)* and the *Water Resources Development and Management Strategy Until 2050* (2016).

Natural resource management and climate change. Through different interventions projects addressed the threats of severe water scarcity and groundwater depletion, but also increased water and land productivity: research and promotion of improved farming practices capacity building (extension, farmers field schools and exchange visits) and technology dissemination. More recent projects, such as SAIL and STAR, also placed stronger emphasis on the promotion of climate-smart practices (e.g. photovoltaic and solar energy; biogas) through the mobilization of climate finance.[306] As such, there was alignment with *SADS,* the *Water Resources Development and Management Strategy Until 2050* (2016) and the *National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction* (2011).

Nutrition. Recent projects (SAIL**,** PRIDE and STAR) introduced explicit nutrition-focused approaches and activities (e.g. the provision of nutrition packages for women, nutrition education and awareness raising, literacy classes for women, homestead production). Projects also invested in enhancing domestic drinking water supply in the new lands and supported the development of social infrastructure (e.g., hygiene and sanitation facilities, schools and health clinics). This represents a concrete response to government objectives as outlined in the *National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030* and the *National Food and Nutrition Policy and Strategy* (2007-2017).

[305] While PRIME allocated US$85.3 million of its budget to rural finance support, STAR only allocated US$13.2 million, which is approximately a decrease of 85%.
[306] E.g. SAIL includes co-financing through the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme, ASAP (US$5 million) and the Global Environment Facility (US$7.8 million). The design of STAR included an expected cofinancing from the Adaptation Fund (US$2.9 million).

Table 12
Knowledge products developed by IFAD projects

Project	Knowledge product	Contents/details
PRIME	• Research on: "Rural Women Knowledge and Implementation for Practices Improving Added Value for Dairy Products through PRIME project in Beni Suef Governorate", issued in the Journal of Agricultural, Environmental and Veterinary Sciences affiliate to the Egyptian National Institute for Research, June 2022.	• The research emphasizes the positive impact of production and marketing training and practices promoted by PRIME.
	• 51 short videos on success stories.	• Stories cover different interventions and different categories of beneficiaries (CDAs, women, youth).
	• Agricultural manuals/handbooks for 11 crops and a manual for organic farming. • 10 posters for gender related activities.	• The material was widely distributed among beneficiaries.
	• E-marketing platform Shari.	• It was created as a response to COVID-19 in partnership with the Climate Change Information Center and Renewable Energy (CCICRE).[307]
	• PRIME Story.	• A comprehensive knowledge document covering all key project achievements and lessons learned.
	• "How to cultivate right" campaign[308]	• An electronic campaign launched by PRIME in coordination with Life Vision for Development Association. Through the campaign, a set of extension and educational material are shared and agricultural technical advice through social media is provided. More than 5,600 farmers were reached through the campaign.
SAIL	• KM products on fennel cropping, soya bean and sesame cultivation, mango cropping, alfa alfa, cropping (including videos).[309]	• Distributed to beneficiaries.
	• Brochures on marketing operations and artificial insemination; aquaponic and hydroponic units pamphlets; credit pamphlets; sugarcane cultivation by seedlings; marjoram cultivation and marketing.	• Distributed to beneficiaries.
	• Success stories on women's empowerment.	
	• A documentary on FFS.[310]	• Broadcasted on FAO YouTube channel
	• Promotional and training videos targeting women focusing on health and nutrition.[311]	• Broadcasted on IFAD YouTube channel in English and Arabic.
	• Women Development Magazines.	• Distributed to beneficiaries.
	• Two animation movies on the use of solar energy and best agricultural practices.	• Movies were broadcasted on IFAD YouTube channel in English and Arabic.
	• "I Demand" documentary.	• Prepared by SAIL in cooperation with IFAD and RBAs for the international women day of 2022.
	• Study on the Transformation to Low Carbon Agrifood Value Chains in Egypt, lessons from SAIL, 2024.[312]	• The purpose of this study was to investigate climate-smart farming in Upper Egypt. It utilized data from 173 farmer FFS that were conducted by the FAO under SAIL.
	• Study on Dynamic Agriculture Information and Response System Program.	• The study focuses on ideal crop norms and rational usage model in the project working areas.
	• Two short documentaries on successful initiatives promoted by SAIL in support of rural women in Upper Egypt	• Initiatives relate to rural credit through MSMEDA and the provision of grants for sewing small enterprise development.
PRIDE	• Pamphlets on agricultural practices	
	• GRM leaflets and pamphlets	

Source: project documents; CSPE interviews; youtube.

[307] The tool enables small-scale farmers to market their produce online, linking them to wholesale markets and consumers. Online sales proved efficient and profitable for the producers and allowed them to keep selling during the pandemic. Source: IFAD, Stocktake of IFAD value chain projects in the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia region, Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division, 2024, p. 46.
[308] Further information is available here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVjrZBCGWOXOjHp4kBuGPXg.
[309] Some of the videos developed can be found at the following links: فيلم المنجاوية عن زراعة المناجو (youtube.com); حلم جدو Gedo Dream (youtube.com); فيلم الرسوم المتحركة (المناخ) تنفيذ واخراج حنيطر جروب (youtube.com).
[310] Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfSos1UQpTw&ab_channel=FoodandAgricultureOrganizationoftheUnitedNations.
[311] Available here: فيلم للنساء فقط في التوعية الصحية - YouTube.
[312] Available here: content (fao.org).

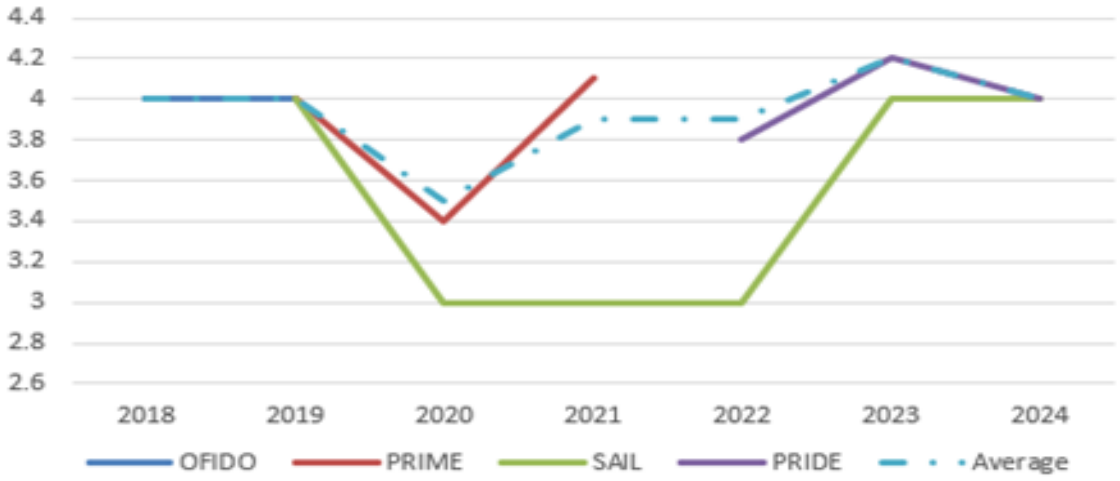
Table 13
Overview of engagement with identified partners

Potential partners identified	2019 COSOP	2012 COSOP	Engagement
AFD	✓ Knowledge sharing on credit facilities for agricultural industries (OFIDO).	✓ Irrigation.	No partnership on the ground.
AfDB	✓ Particularly relevant for OFIDO (focus on irrigation).	✓ Policy reform in the financial sector; rural finance.	- Expected STAR co-financing– not materialized. - Partner under the NWFE.
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development		✓	No partnership on the ground.
Canadia International Development Agency (CIDA)		✓ SME promotion in Upper Egypt.	No partnership on the ground.
EU	✓ Joint Rural Development Programme (focus on climate change mitigation and adaption, irrigation infrastructure).	✓ Rural finance (PRIME); possibility to establish a donor thematic sub-group on agriculture.	No partnership on the ground.
FAO	✓ Knowledge sharing on irrigation modernization for newly reclaimed areas; water harvesting interventions that will facilitate the implementation of PRIDE; Agricultural Practices GAPs (SAIL project).	✓ Research and capacity building.	- RBA/UNIDO joint publications on COVID-19 - Technical Assistance for project management (OFIDO) - Partnership for FFS (SAIL) - Expected collaboration on nutrition through grant programme (contributing to PRIDE) not materializing
GCF	✓ Climate change / coastal defense soft structures and integrated coastal management. Potential funding for STAR		No partnership on the ground.
GEF	✓ Sustainable food production systems to improve land and soil quality and agro-biodiversity in oasis agro-systems.		- Financial contribution to SAIL
GIZ	✓ Agricultural marketing, FFS, policy dialogue on financial services offered to SMEs by non-bank financial institutions.	✓ Irrigation; SME.	- Upscaling PRIME by supporting 10 MAs under the Agriculture Innovation Project - Collaboration within SAIL (institutional assessments of rural organizations; support to MAs and CDAs to sign contracts with the private sector)
JICA		✓ Horticulture sector (PRIME).	
KFW	✓ Water resources management (OFIDO).	✓ Water resources management.	
Italy	✓	Collaboration with the Green Trade Initiative + rural finance (PRIME).	
IsDB	✓	✓	- Dialogue within NWAFE - Expected STAR co-financing– not materialized.

Netherland		✓ Irrigation.	- Dialogue. No partnership on the ground
OPEC Fund for International Development	✓	✓	- Expected STAR co-financing– not materialized.
UNICEF	✓ Nutrition.		- Possible collaboration under PRIDE not materialised
UNIDO		✓ SME development.	- RBA/UNIDO joint publications on COVID-19 - Dialogue. No partnership on the ground.
UNDP		✓ Microfinance promotion.	No partnership on the ground
USAID	✓ Knowledge sharing on post-harvest processes and marketing (SAIL, PRIME, STAR).	✓ WUAs, marketing, horticulture.	- PRIME collaboration with FAS[313] project (PRIME assisting its MAs in preparing feasibility studies and cost estimates; FAS project providing grants)
WFP	✓ Nutrition.	✓ Research and capacity building.	- Expected STAR co-financing– not materialized. - RBA/UNIDO joint publications on COVID-19
World Bank	✓ Policy dialogue (micro-finance), sanitation, irrigation, private sector.	✓ Irrigation (including policy engagement), rural finance.	- Dialogue within NWAFE.

Source: Project documents; interviews conducted in the context of the CSPE.

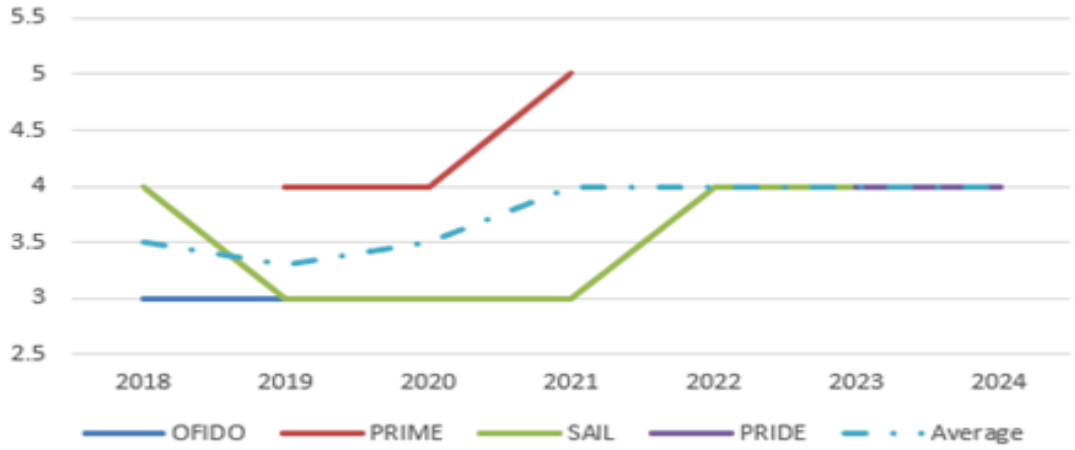
Figure 3
Overall implementation performance of projects under review



Source: ORMS

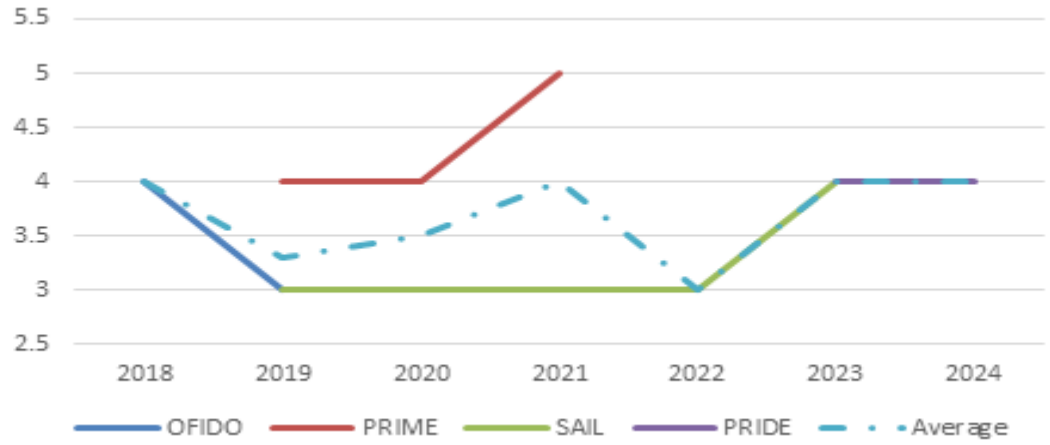
[313] I.e., Feed the Future Egypt, Food Security and Agribusiness Support.

Figure 4
Effectiveness performance of projects under review



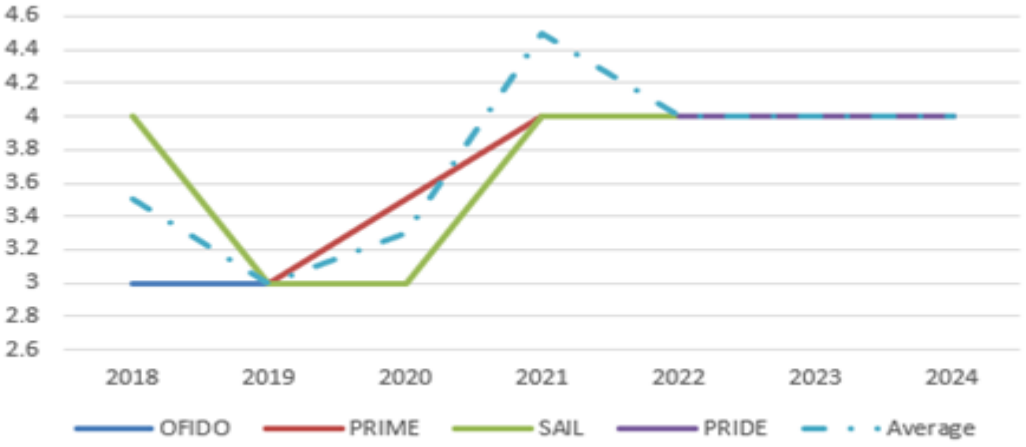
Source: ORMS

Figure 5
Agricultural productivity for projects under review



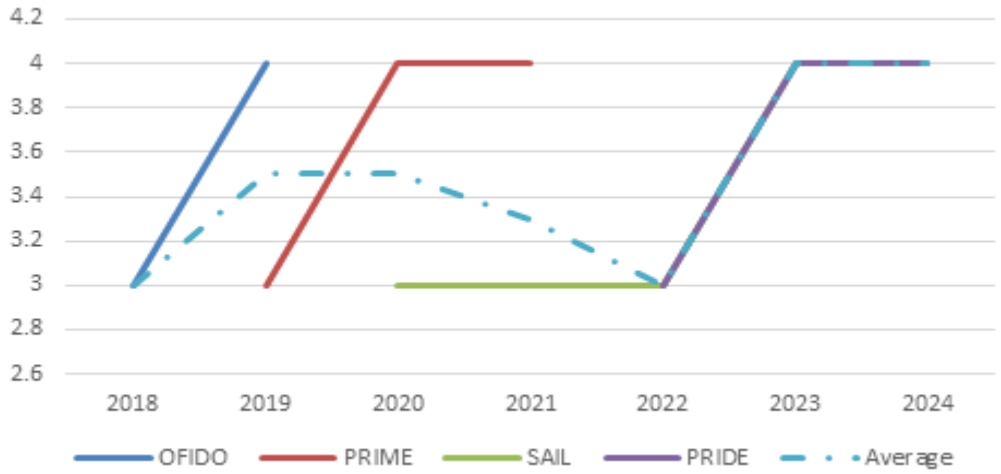
Source: ORMS

Figure 6
Quality of project management of projects under review



Source: ORMS

Figure 7
Coherence AWPB and implementation for projects under review



Source: ORMS

Table 14
Comparative ratings by PMD and IOE for completed projects. Latest and average 2018-24 PMD ratings of ongoing projects

	Completed projects				Ongoing projects			
	OFIDO		PRIME		SAIL		PRIDE	
2021	PMD ratings	IOE PCRV	PMD ratings	IOE PPE	2023 SV	AVG. SV 2018-23	2024 MTR	AVG. SV 2021-24
Overall project achievement	3	3	4.0	3.3 ↓	4.2 (likelihood of DO)	3.9 (likelihood of DO)	4 (likelihood of DO)	4 (likelihood of DO)
Project performance	3.3		4.0					
1. Relevance	4	4	4	3 ↓	4.0	3.8	5.0	4.3
2. Effectiveness	3	3	4	4	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.8
3. Efficiency	3	3	4	3 ↓	3.0 (VfM)	3.0 (VfM)	4.0 (VfM)	3.7 (VfM)
4 Sustainability	3	3	4	4				
Rural poverty impact	3	3	4					
1. Households' incomes and assets	3	3	5	4 ↓				
2. Human and social capital	3		4		4.0	4.0	5.0	4.3
3. Food security	4		5					
4. Agricultural productivity	4		4		4.0	3.3	4.0	3.8
5. Insitutions and policies	3		4		4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Additional evaluation criteria	3.5		4.0					
1. Gender	3	3	4	3 ↓	5.0	4.5	4.0	4.2
2. Innovation	4	3 ↓	3	3				
3. Scaling up	3	3	4	3 ↓	4.0 (Potential)	4.0 (Potential)	4.0 (Potential)	4.0 (Potential)
4. ENRM	4	4	4	4	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.3
5. Adaptation to climate change	4	3 ↓	4	4	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
6. Targeting and outreach	4		4		4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
7. Access to markets	3		5					
Partners performance	3.3		3.7					
1. IFAD	4	4	4	3 ↓				
2. Government	3	3	3	3				

Source: Project supervision and completion reports; OFIDO PCRV; PRIME PPE

Table 15
Supervision ratings by PMD across all COSOP projects, 2018-2024; and individually by project

	All projects									OFIDO			
2021	2016	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	AVG. 2018-24	2016	2018	2019	AVG. 2018-24
Financial management and execution	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.9	4	4.3	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.7
Project management	4	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.2	3.9	4.3	3.5	4.0	3.9
Coherence AWPB and implementation	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	3.3	3	4	4	3.5	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.3
Quality of project management	3.8	3.5	3	3.3	4	4	4	4	3.7	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.3
Social, environment and climate standards require	Chart Area		4	4	4	4	4	4	4.0			5.0	5.0
Value for money		4	3.8	3.5	3.5	3	3.5	4	3.6			4.0	4.0
Effectiveness and development focus													
Adaptation to climate change	4.3	4.5	3.7	4	4	4	4	4	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.7
Agricultural productivity	4	4	3.3	3.5	4	3	4	4	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.7
Effectiveness	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.5	4	4	4	4	3.8	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.3
ENRM	4.3	4	4.2	4	4	4	4	5	4.2	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.3
Gender	4	4	3.3	4	4	5	4.5	4	4.1	4.0	4.0	2.0	3.3
Human and social capital	3.7	4	3.7	3.8	4	4	4	5	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.7
Institutions and policy engagement	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.3
Nutrition			4	4.3	4.5	4	4	4	4.1				
Partnership building		4	3.5	3.8	4.5	5	4.5	4	4.2		4.0	4.0	4.0
Potential for scaling up	4.3	4.5	4.2	4	4	4	4	4	4.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Quality of target group engagement	4	3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.9	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.7
Targeting and outreach	4.3	4.5	3.8	3.8	4	4	4	4	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.7
Overall implementation performance (IP)	3.5	4	4	3.5	3.9	3.9	4.2	4	3.9	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.7
Likelihood of achieving the development objective (DO)	4	4	4	3.9	4	4	4.`	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

	PRIME					SAIL								PRIDE			
2021	2016	2019	2020	2021	AVG. 2018-24	2016	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	AVG. 2018-24	2021	2023	2024	AVG. 2018-24
Financial management and execution	3.7	3.5	3.4	4.0	3.7	4.2	4.2	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.2	3.8	4.0
Project management	3.4	3.4	3.9	4.2	3.7	4.3	3.9	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.0
Coherence AWPB and implementation	3.5	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.6	4.0	3.0		3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.3	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.6
Quality of project management	3.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9
Social, environment and climate standards requirements			4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0		4.0	4.0	4.0
Value for money		4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0		4.0	4.0	3.7
Effectiveness and development focus																	
Adaptation to climate change	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0		4.0	4.0	4.0
Agricultural productivity	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.3	4.0		3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.3		4.0	4.0	3.8
Effectiveness	3.5	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.5		4.0	4.0	3.8
ENRM	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0		4.0	5.0	4.3
Gender	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.5		4.0	4.0	4.2
Human and social capital	3.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0		4.0	5.0	4.3
Institutions and policy engagement	3.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0			4.0	4.0
Nutrition		4.0	4.5	5.0	4.5				4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0			4.0	4.0	
Partnership building		5.0	3.5	5.0	4.5		4.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	4.6	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2
Potential for scaling up	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0		4.0	4.0	4.0
Quality of target group engagement	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Targeting and outreach	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0		4.0	4.0	4.0
Overall implementation performance (IP)	3.5	4.0	3.4	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.8	4.2	4.0	3.9
Likelihood of achieving the development objective (DO)	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

Source: ORMS

Table 16
Achievements of country programme under 2019-24 COSOP

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
SO 1 – Improved livelihoods of rural men and women by enhancing productivity and profitability of agriculture-related activities						
Water and land management; agricultural productivity and profitability	Enhanced water, land and labour productivity	Irrigation and drainage (incl. O&M)	**OFIDO:** 25,500 farmers with secure access to irrigation water resources (64.4% of target) 10,411 ha of modern irrigation systems (76.0%) 296 WUA were established or supported (127.0%), but this happened late in the project and the WUA remained weak **SAIL:** 41 km of mesqa canal lining and drainage work benefiting 6,000 feddan (Lower Egypt) Drip irrigation in Middle Egypt of 1,248 feddan (524 ha); including 210 water reservoirs Irrigation and drainage improvements on 5,147 feddan (2,163 ha), of which 2,150 feddan (903 ha) are completed (51.5%) The total area developed by far exceeds the planned 1833 ha (due to devaluation gains) 65 WUA were strengthened (154.7%) **PRIDE:** 60 water reservoirs for agric. production (capacity of 300m^3) at mid-term (14.6%)	CCR milestones 2,670 ha under water related infrastructure (drainage and irrigation) constructed or rehabilitated On farm irrigation equipment provided: 210 water reservoirs Two financial institutions and 10 PFIs making disbursements for on farm investments Project specific CCR indicators **OFIDO:** 5,067 farmers with secure access to water 30% of HH reporting increased ag. production 2,022 HH adopting improved technologies and practices (crop or livestock) 2,363 HH reporting increased production in crops and livestock	**OFIDO, SAIL, PRIDE**	**On track**

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
			30 km of *Wadi* development as of mid-2024 (30%)	**PRIME:** 75.8 tons increase in crop yield and 3,808 kg increase livestock productivity [sic] 18% reduction of post-harvest loss **PRIDE:** 616 rural producers access production inputs and technologies		
		Ag. production inputs and technological packages	**PRIDE:** Access to production inputs and technological packages for 616 farmers (3.5%)			
		Training in crop production /livestock production	**Total across completed and ongoing projects:** 33,254 persons trained in crop production 10,232 persons trained in livestock production **OFIDO:** 17,304 persons trained in crop production (108.2%), of which 2.6% were women 4,342 persons trained in livestock production (43.4%), of which 23.1% were women **PRIME:** 11,689 persons trained in crop production (194.8%), of which 21.3% were women 4,978 persons trained in livestock production (no target available) **SAIL:** 227 Farmer field schools have taken place so far (45.4%); and more are planned until the end of the project in Dec. 2025 3,981 persons trained in crop production (165,9%), of which 17.1% were women		**OFIDO, PRIME, SAIL, PRIDE**	

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
			912 persons trained in livestock production (38.0%), of which 66.7% were women **PRIDE:** 280 persons trained in crop production (4.3%), of which 0% were women No persons trained in livestock production (target of 5,400)			
		Institutions developed / community or farmer groups	**SAIL:** 30 Agricultural cooperatives (AC) strengthened (71.4%) The 30 AC cover 70,000 feddan and 13,995 farmers/households (there was no target) **PRIDE:** Plans exist for wadi associations after the mid-term			
		NRM and climate change related infrastructure, institutions and services	**SAIL:** 4,353 persons provided with climate information services (21.8%), of which 15.0% were women 4,855 individuals engaged in NRM and climate risk management activities (24.3%), of which 15.5% were women The number of community groups engaged in NRM and climate risk management is not recorded in the logframe (42 were planned) **PRIDE:** 303 ha of land brought under climate resilient practices (0.8%)		**OFIDO, SAIL, PRIDE**	

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
			5 meteorological stations built (100%)			
Rural finance, marketing and rural income generation	Improved access to markets, processing and storage facilities	Establishment of market related associations and linkages with buyers Support of rural organizations, such as MA, FMAs, marketing committees, ag. cooperatives); Market infrastructure (market outlets and connectivity) Reduced post-harvest losses	**OFIDO:** Marketing associations and committees were established, but their role was not significant and they were unsustainable. **PRIME:** 178 groups (Farmer market associations, FMA) receiving project services (89%) 287 Marketing Committees established (there was no target) 59,186 rural producers were supported in these FMA (704.6%), of which 33.9% were women 237 sales contracts (annual) between FMAs and buyers were brokered (there was no target) 7 market outlets were established, one in each Governorate (100%) **SAIL:** 5 Market Associations were supported, on in each project site (100%) No market, processing or storage facilities were constructed or rehabilitated as planned (0%) The number of households reporting improved physical access to markets, processing and storage has not yet been reported by the project (target is uncertain, too)	CCR milestones 6 PPPs developed that facilitate viable value chains 5,264 people (men and women) and rural micro entrepreneurs trained on business methods, cost accounting and risk assessment Project specific CCR indicators **OFIDO:** 53 marketing groups formed and strengthened, of which 17 have women leadership 12,426 people in marketing groups, of which 1,789 are women) **PRIDE:** 89 km of feeder roads	OFIDO, PRIME, SAIL	**Partially on track**

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
			PRIDE: Connectivity: 89 km of roads constructed by mid-term (35.6%)			
	Enhanced financial inclusion for rural households	Increased access to credit, financial products and services Provision of adapted financial products and services Set up of rural organizations for improved finance access (FMA)	**Total across completed and ongoing projects:** 73,638 persons accessing financial services, including non-project area **OFIDO:** 10,860 persons accessing financial services, including non-project area (397.8), of which 34.9% were women and 41.1% young persons OFIDO provided no info on the following logframe indicators: (i) staff of financial institutions trained; (ii) no. of financial service providers for rural finance delivery; (iii) marketing groups formed/strengthened and their gender composition **PRIME:** 26,864 persons accessing financial services (57.1%), of which 41.1% were women, and 45.9% young people 31 financial institutions (incl. PFI and CDA) participating in the project (310%) **SAIL:** 36,914 persons accessing financial services (307.6%), of which 13.4% were women	<u>CCR milestones</u> 15,976 farmers reporting using rural financial services (savings, credit, insurance, remittances etc.) 7,537 women farmers with access to financial services tailored to their particular needs; 2 financial service providers (MSMEDA and ADP) delivering outreach strategies and financial services to target areas <u>Project specific CCR indicators</u> 57,366 persons reporting using rural financial services (OFIDO, SAIL and PRIME) 3,256 females with access to financial services (SAIL)	**OFIDO** (MSMEDA) **PRIME, SAIL** (ADP/MSMEDA)	**Partially on track/ not on track ???**

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
			202 grants provided to women for starting businesses (40.4%)			
		Improved capacities for income earning of rural beneficiaries (Organizational capacity and skills development, including business training)	**Total across completed and ongoing projects:** 33,181 persons trained in income-generating activities or business management **OFIDO:** 1,960 persons trained in income-generating activities or business management (19.6%), of which 18.6% were women **PRIME:** 18,944 persons were trained in income-generating activities or business management (440.6%), of which 34.6% were women **SAIL:** 2,045 persons were trained in income-generating activities or business management (511.3%), of which 62.2% were women The SAIL project also carried out 110 literacy classes/support for female rural leaders, issued 269 Ids for vulnerable women, and provided 30 tool kits for youth job opportunities (electricians, mechanics, first aid nurses etc.) (there were no logframe targets for these activities)			
Social infrastructure, inclusive community development and nutrition	Strengthened and empowered community based rural institutions	Improved social infrastructure and access to social services,	**SAIL:** 43 community based social infrastructure projects have been completed (43.4%)	CCR milestones 8 community based institutions trained to	**SAIL, PRIDE**	**On track / partially ???**

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
		construction or rehabilitation IGA and literacy	Construction or rehabilitation of : 7 drinking water systems at village level (116.7%), plus wells/booster transformers (ME) and rehabilitation of water filters (UE) 9 clinics (69.2%) 6 schools (85.7%) and 11 nurseries for children (73.3%) 9 sewing units (112.5%) 2 youth centers (59%) Solid waste management and community solar lighting as not been addressed as planned. **PRIDE :** 89 km of rural feeder roads constructed (35.6%) 100 water reservoirs (150m^3) for homesteads (20%) 130 *gabias (small household cisterns)* (120m^3) (32.5%) 53 Roman cisterns (400m^2 or more) for family/community use (53%) 400 sanitation facilities (HH latrines) constructed (13.3%) 1,096 women participating in literacy class (55.0%), target was extended from 2000 to 5000 at mid-term) No health units and schools constructed or rehabilitated yet as planned	provide tailored services (men, women, youth) 1,700 rural households receiveing services by community based institutions Project specific CCR indicators **SAIL:** 1,951 women provided with targeted support to improve education Social infrastructure : 7 drinking water infrastructure 9 clinics 8 schools 11 nurseries, 9 sewing units **PRIDE:** 1,114 HH provided with targeted Social infrastructure : 946 cisterns 130 gabias 100 reservoirs 60 Roman cisterns for homestead		

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
		Establishing community development associations	**SAIL:** 25 Community Development Associations (CDA) were established (65.8%); out of which 8 were specifically for youth/women These CDA have a total of 2,438 members (64.2%), of which 23.4% were women	300 sanitation units		
		Integrated nutrition support and nutrition education	**PRIDE :** 1,114 households were supported to improve their nutrition (27.9%) 5,494 persons participated in integrated nutrition interventions (134.9%), of which 46.1% were women			
		IGA for improved nutrition	**PRIDE :** IGA for women included: The distribution of 450 goats (69%) Building or rehabilitation of 400 pigeon towers (100%) Support for raising chicken (100%)			
SO 2 – Development of enhanced policies that support inclusive and sustainable rural transformation						
Recognized economic value of land and water resources in policy and investment decisions				CCR milestones 2 policy relevant knowlege products on water management completed Functioning multi-stakeholder platforms supported (IFAD leading		

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
				the NWFE platform with CROWN as flagship project)		
Developed capacities, standard procedures and investments to prevent or reverse land degradation induced by CC and other factors	Households reporting adoption of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices			CCR milestones 10,000 farmers supported to sustainably manager natural resources and climate risks 20 Training of Trainers (ToT) on improved agricultural adaptation methods 58,041 persons trained in technologies and production practices (of which 7,080 are for livestock) Project specific CCR indicators **SAIL:** New or existing rural infrastructure protected from climate events (USD 3,802,000) 3,076 individuals engaged in NRM and climate risk management activities (of which 437 are females) 322 demonstration fields introducing climate smart technologies		

CSPE pathways	COSOP outcome indicator	Achievements – Narrative summary	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(as % of target)* *(results from four COSOP projects)*	Achievement of targets, cumulative results *(CCR outcome and mile stone indicators)*	Contributing projects	Degree of achievement
Enhanced policies that support rural women and youth participation in the rural economy				Supported at least two relevant policy measures and strategies		
Joint SSTC initiatives with partnership countries				2 SSTC initiatives launched (IFAD Egypt staff exchange with Turkey; Sudan project staff exchange with Egypt)		

Source: ORMS: Project supervision and completion reports; project M&E data provided to CSPE Team

Box 4. Indications of increased income and agricultural productivity in SAIL

Under SAIL, farmers benefited from the project's highly integrated, effective and focused approach, such as through more reliable water provision, drainage and the introduction of drip irrigation, as well as early positive effects on agricultural productivity from FFS. As an ongoing project, SAIL's impact could not be assessed yet. Nevertheless, there are indications of increased income and agricultural productivity, although this cannot be quantified yet.[314] These benefits stemmed from improved drainage, reduced salinity, increased land areas, and particularly more drip irrigation, made possible by a steady water supply and the creation of water reservoirs. Reduced energy costs for pumping through solar panels also contributed. SAIL investments in heavy machinery for land treatment in agricultural cooperatives also paid off for farm incomes, as it improved the quality of services and reduced their costs. Additionally, there were benefits from reduced crop losses (13.4 per cent). High levels of adoption reported from participatory agricultural workshops and on-farm demonstrations (approximately 50 per cent), along with the application of improved irrigation, climate-resilient practices, and solar technologies (around one third of respondents), indicate at least some increase in income. Livestock provided significant income for many beneficiaries, but training participation and its impact have been relatively low, particularly in Middle and Upper Egypt. Sixty-eight per cent of surveyed SAIL MSMEDA loan recipient and 42.2 per cent of those of ADP beneficiaries experienced a rise in their incomes from rural finance (after deduction of repayment), including 30 per cent of those in the poorer segments communities. Rural finance also led to much higher rural employment and allowed small businesses to move from informal to formal ventures. The outcome survey noted that, although MSMEDA and ADP loans had many benefits, more effective management would be required to overcome loan supply barriers. Grants and loans to women and various income generating activities organized by SAIL (such as sewing) also started to show positive effects on expansion of small businesses, their incomes and especially the diversification of income sources of rural beneficiaries (for instance through livestock investments).[315]

Source: SAIL Outcome Survey (2023) and CSPE field observations

[314] SAIL Outcome Survey (2023)
[315] CSPE field observations

Table 17
Women's outreach in the investment portfolio

	OFIDO		PRIME		SAIL		PRIDE		TOTAL	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Persons receiving services	250,000	124,149	50,000	59,186	40,000	35,586	70,575	24,705	410,575	243,626
Women receiving services	50,000	15,047	15,220	24,186	12,000	20,058	33,878	12,458	111,098	71,749
Persons accessing finance	2,730	10,860	47,030	26,864	12,000	9,970			61,760	47,694
Women accessing finance	1,181	3,786	17,000	11,034	5,000	6,161			23,181	20,981
Producers accessing inputs/tech packages							17,440[316]	616	17,440	616
Women							4,000[317]	144	4,000	144
Persons trained in IGA/business	10,000	1,960	4,300	18,944	400	2,045			14,700	22,949
Women trained in IGA/business	2,000	365	800	6,560	232	1,063			3,032	8,198
Persons provided with climate information					20,000	4,427			20,000	4,427
Women					10,000	652			10,000	652
Persons engaged in NRM and climate risk mgmt					20 000	4,427			20,000	4,427
Women					10 000	652			10,000	652
Persons trained in crop production	16,000	17,304	6,000	11,689	2,400	4,836	6,500	241	30,900	34,070
Women trained in crop production	1,600	451	2,000	2,487	480	754			4,080	3,590
Persons trained in livestock production	10,000	4,342		4,978	2,400	880	5,400	0	17,800	10,200
Women trained in livestock production	5,000	3,993		1,645	1,800	671	900	0	7,700	6,304
Persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition							4,000	5,394	4,000	5,394
Women							4,000	2,487	4,000	2,487
Women provided with literacy classes							2,000	1,096	2,000	1,096
Rural organizations supported	104[318]		200	178	70	87			374	265
Women-only organizations				75		22				97
Women headed organizations	30		150	126					180	126

[316] After the MTR the target was revised as follows: 4,748 rural producers. Source: PRIDE Logframe post MTR.
[317] After the MTR the target was revised as follows: 1,051 women rural producers. Source: PRIDE Logframe post MTR.
[318] It refers to marketing groups.

Members of rural organizations[319]	40,000	42,310	13,200	134,780	3,800	2,438	57,000	179,528
Women members of rural organizations	8,000	4,960	3,000	29,080	1,140	570	12,140	34,610

Source: ORMS: Project supervision and completion reports; project M&E data provided to CSPE Team

[319] It refers to MAs for OFIDO, not specified for PRIME, CDAs for SAIL

List of key people met

IFAD

Abdelkarim Sma - Lead Regional Economist

Alessandra Garbero - Regional Economist

Alessia Marazzi - Technical Specialist- Environment and Climate Finance

Amira Mekheimar - Country Programme Analyst NEN

Dina Saleh - Director NEN

Gianluca Capaldo - Portfolio Adviser NEN

Isabelle Stordeur - Regional Analyst NEN

James Marc de Sousa-Shields - Lead Regional Technical Specialist, Rural Finance, Markets & Value Chain

Mohamed Abdelgadir - Country Director NEN

Mohamed El-Ghazaly - Country Director

Nadhem Mtimet - Senior Regional Technical Specialist: Rural Finance, Markets and Value Chains

Rikke Grand Olivera - Lead Technical Specialist - Land tenure and natural resources

Tarek Abdel Monem - Technical Specialist - Environment and Climate Results

Zeinab Awad - Country Programme Coordinator NEN

Government

Abas Zaki - Head of Agricultural System Research Center - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Abd ElMonged Saleh - Financial Manager - SAIL

Abdallah Abdelbaky Rehan - Inspector of Guidance - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Abdallah Ali Selim - Extension Manager - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Abdel Fattah Seleem - Extension Manager - Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation

Abdelhamid Esrafil - Rangeland Management - PRIDE

Ahmed Bahaa- Minya Officer - Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise Development Agency

Ahmed Esrahel Kassem – Staff - PRIDE

Ahmed Gad Ali - Head of Technical Office Agri-Administration - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Ahmed Gouda - Chief Accountant - SAIL

Amany Ali Tamer – Deputy - Directorate for Social Solidarity - Minya

Amany Tamer – Deputy - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Amr Ibrahim Mohamed - Head Biological Control Unit - PRIDE

Arbi Ali Mansour - Water harvesting and development - PRIDE

Asmaa Ahmed Farouk - Head of rangeland Unit - PRIDE

Doaa AlOraby - Financing Institutions - IFAD focal point - Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation

Ebtisam Abou Steat – Engineer - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Emad A. Galil - Public Relations Officer - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Emad Peter – Head - IDAM NGO

Esra Gamal Hassan - Public relations and Media - PRIDE

Essam Mohamed - Procurement Supervisor - PRIDE

Fatma Abdelghany - Gender Focal Point - PRIDE

Fatma Ayman - M&E Officer PRIME Project - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Fatma Elgarhary - Gender Specialist - PRIDE

Fatma Ibranem Mohamed Abdelgnany - Agronomist - PRIDE

Galal Helmy Mohamed - Secretary of Director - PRIDE

Gamal el sanat – Director - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Gomaa Anwar - M&E Manager - PRIDE

Hala Ramadan - General Manager for the Technical Office - Planning Sector - Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation

Hamdi Mahmoud Khalil - Head of Agricultural Guidance Department - Directorate for Water Management and Irrigation – Asyut

Hani Habeba - Marketing consultant - PRIME

Hany Darwish - Coordinator - SAIL/STAR

Hany Yehya Hashem - Livestock Chairperson - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Hassan El Shaer Former - Vice President of DRC, Director of Egyptian Center of Excellence for Saline Agriculture - Desert Research Centre

Hassan Shams El Din - Ex-coordinator - OFIDO

Hatm Mokhtar – Director - Directorate for Water Management and Irrigation - Asyut

Hayam Mustafa - Head of International Relations - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Heba Nour - Nutrition Focal Point - PRIDE

Hoda Elshawadfy - Assistant Minister for Ecotourism Affairs And Head of GEF unit - Ministry of Environment

Huda Saady Abdelgalil - PRIME focal point - National Council for Women

Hussein Berry - Marketing consultant - PRIME

Hussein Mohamed - Agricultural System Research Center Officer - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Hussein Mohamed Osman - Head of Agricultural Guidance Department - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Karim Ismail - M&E Manager - SAIL

KhaledAbo ElAtta - Manager of land protection – Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation

Khames Mahmoud Abdelkader - Director of Engineering Soil and Water Sector - PRIDE

Magdi Nagib – Director - Directorate for Social Solidarity - Asyut

Maha Raghen - Assistant manager - International Cooperation Sector - Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise Development Agency

Mahmoud Abdel Halim El Sayed - Deputy General Manager - Head of Foreign Agreements' Monitoring and Evaluation Sector - Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA)

Mahmoud El Amir - Executive Director - PRIDE

Mahmoud Qandil - Marketing consultant – PRIME

Mahmoud Sobhi – Director - Directorate for Agriculture - Asyut

Manal Zein Al abdeen - M&E Consultant - SAIL

Manal Zem Elabdeen - M&E Consultant SAIL

Marwan Ahmed - Minya Officer - Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise Development Agency

Ml Talaataly – Accountant - Agricultural Development Program

Mohamed Aboukota - Monitoring Responsible - Agricultural Development Program

Mohamed Ebrahim Ahmed - Director of International Funding Agencies Department - MALR

Mohamed Eid - Wheat and Rice Coordinator - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Mohamed El Kersh - Ex-coordinator - PRIME

Mohamed Hamed Saleem - M&E Officer - PRIME

Mohamed Khalaf - Head of Agricultural Affairs Department - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Mohamed Mostafa Baker - Internatinal Relations Officer - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Mostafa Sadek - Civil works Manager - Procurement Supervisor - SAIL

Mubtoka Ebrahim Abdelaziz – Staff - PRIDE

Naeem Moselhy - Coordinator - PRIDE

Nashwa Mostafa - Agricultural Engineer - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Noha Naeim - Reproductive health consultant - Ministry of Health and Population

Omar Safwat – Director - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Rabea Fazee Younes - Manager of Nigila Unit - PRIDE

Ragdah Hussein Elsayed - Agricultural Engineer - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Ramadan ElSharkawy - Development Component Manager - SAIL

Saad Mousa - Undersecratary, Supervisor of Foreign Agricultural Relations and Central Administration of Plant Quarantine - Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform

Sabri Naggar - Executive Director - Agricultural Development Program

Safaa Sharaf – Accountant - Directorate for Agriculture - Minya

Saleh Sathalla Awad - Manager Nida Unit - PRIDE

Samah Mohamed Ammar - Head of agric affairs and PRIME coordinator Kafr El Sheikh - Directorate for Agriculture - Kafr El Cheikh

Shimaa Sayed Ali - Head of NGOs Department - Directorate for Social Solidarity - Minya

Taysir Ahmed - M&E Officer - SAIL

Wafaa Refaat - Head of Technical Office - Directorate for Social Solidarity - Asyut

Wajida Anwar – Advisor - National Council for Women

Walid Hakiki - Head of Planning Sector - Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation

Yasser Mahmoud – Professor - Menia University - Faculty of Agriculture

Yousrey Hanafy - Agriculture Development Component Manager - SAIL

International development partners

Ahmed M. Rezk - Deputy Representative - UNIDO

Ahmed Nasr-Allah - Country Director - WorldFish

Cheick-Oumar Sylla - Director for North Africa & Horn of Africa - International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Clémence Vidal de la Blache - Country Director - AFD

Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases, Team Leader - FAO

Federica Ranghieri - Program Leader for Sustainable Development for Egypt, Yemen, and Djibouti - World Bank

Gianpietro Bordignon - Country Director a.i. - WFP

Khalid Abdelrahman Mohamed Ahmed - Operations Team Leader - Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

Layal Dandache- Programme Manager - DROSOS Foundation

Lotfi Allal - Country Representative a.i., Animal Health & Production Specialist

Marwa Hussein - Agriculture Programme Manager - CARE

Marwa Mahgoub - Senior Operation Officer - International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Mélanie Canet - Programme officer - FERT

Mohamed Ashmawy - Projects Manager - Water, Sanitation, Agriculture & Food Security - AFD

Mohamed Yacoub - Assistant FAO Representative - FAO

Myriam Fernando - Head of Agricultural Innovation Project - GIZ

Omar Abdellatif - Agricultural Adviser - Embassy of The Netherlands

Raphael Demouliere - Programme Manager in charge of Agriculture and Rural Development - European Union

Rosella Fanelli - Deputy Country Director - WFP

Saad Sabrah - Country Head - International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Tycho Vermeulen - Agricultural Counsellor to Egypt and Jordan - Embassy of The Netherlands

Civil society, research institutions, private sector and other resource persons

Ali Saad - Executive Director - Egyptian Federation for Financing (MSMEF)

Ayman Hamza - Khodar com Company

Dalia Abd Allah - Senior Director - AUC Innovation Hub

Ezz El-Din Gouda – CEO - Gouda Company

Hajj Ahmed Gharib – CEO - Al Naanaia

Kareem Abdel Monem - Corporate Affairs Senior Manager - Pepsico

Lamiaa Salah - Founder/Project manager - Fifth generation - SASPEN Project

Moh Fawzy - Managing Director - Agrotopia for agricultural and industrial investment

Mohamed Aboel-Ela - Research, Development & Foreign Procurement Manager - Juice and Paste Co

Mohamed El Sayed - Chief Executive Officer - Sanable Al Khair for Integrated Agriculture Solutions

Muhammad El Demerdash - Co-founder - Engazaat

Noha Tawfik - Muzaree Company

Omar Elbadawy - Regional land resources program manager - Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)

Rasha - External relations officer - Egyptian Federation for Financing (MSMEF)

Sameh Seif Ghaly – Founder - Together Association for Development and Environment

Sharaf Amr – Founder - Cultivaet

Sohair El Masry - Executive Director - Center for Egyptian Family Development in Aswan and Luxor

Beneficiaries

Agricultural cooperative - Contract farming - Bardnoha village (Minya) – PRIME

Agricultural cooperative - Contract farming Qleen PRIDE

Agricultural cooperative - Warehouse - Al Desouky village SAIL

Agricultural Cooperative SAIL Gehad village (Minya)

Agricultural cooperative/WUA - Plot - El Bashayr village OFIDO

Agricultural cooperative/WUA - Plot - Sidi Talha village SAIL

Agricultural cooperative/WUA - Plot - Zahran village OFIDO

Agricultural Cooperative/WUA SAIL Etezaz village (Minya)

Bakery - Kom Matay village (Minya) – PRIME

Biogas beneficiary - Al Desouky village SAIL

CDA OFIDO and PRIME Rural Finance Activities - Sawalem Bahari – Abanoub

CDA PRIME Marketing Activities - Sawalem Bahari – Abanoub

CDA PRIME Wholesaler Station and Factory Arab Al Awamer – Abanoub

CDA SAIL Gehad village (Minya)

Children centre and pickles unit - Ruby villgae (Minya) – PRIME

Company PRIME Marketing Activities - Badari

El Taifa Womens group PRIME

FFS - Al Desouky village SAIL

FFS - Kom Matay village (Minya) – PRIME

Grant Beneficiary Beekeeping - Al Desouky village SAIL

Grant Beneficiary Cow - Al Desouky village SAIL

Irrigation scheme WUA SAIL Wafaa village (Minya)

Kindergarten - Al Desouky village SAIL

Marketing Association SAIL Wafaa village (Minya)

MSMEDA beneficiaries - Reada village (Minya) – PRIME

PRIDE - 300m3 reservoirs for irrigated agriculture beneficiaries

PRIDE - Agricultural practices in wadi- home garden – beneficiaries

PRIDE - Backyard garden for women beneficiaries

PRIDE - Good Agricultural practices in olive orchard - Al-Negila

PRIDE - Pigeon Tower beneficiary

PRIDE - Rangeland site (Cultivation area) beneficiaries

PRIDE - Rangeland site (Protected area) beneficiaries

PRIDE - Rehabilitation of houses - 120 m3 Gabia + 120m3 cistern for domestic use + Sanitation for Women

PRIDE – Road users

PRIDE - Roman cistern beneficiaries

PRIDE - Wadi to be rehabilitated (including 300m3 reservoir) beneficiaries

Primary School SAIL Gehad village (Minya)

Processing Unit SAIL

Sewing grant beneficiary SAIL Etezaz village (Minya)

Sewing training center - Al Desouky village SAIL

Women CDA - Al Desouky village SAIL

Women CDA SAIL

WUA - OFIDO - Irrigation Scheme - Arab Metera - Abanoub (Asyut)

WUA - OFIDO - Irrigation Scheme - Atawla - Abanoub (Asyut)

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