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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Evaluation reports on country presence: Excerpts of texts

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For: **Information**

Evaluation reports on country presence: Excerpts of texts

Ethiopia CPE 2009: The assessment of financial/ HR requirements and training needs should begin with the field presence office whose resources deserve to be increased (from ACP).

Since 2005 a pilot field presence scheme has been run with encouraging results for implementation support and partnership building.

The OE Evaluation of FPPP found that the field presence experiment was beneficial to project implementation support and partnership development although short on resources.

Although the Field Presence Officer (FPO) has only been working for a little over a year he has already made many tangible contributions to implementation support and partnership development. Successes in policy dialogue and even more so knowledge management have understandably been slower to develop. However, the indication at this point is that the FPO can also be successful with these, particularly if he is provided additional time and resources. Some of these resources could come from cost savings from having the FPO. For example, the FPO organizes more efficient and effective missions which should cut the number of days required by consultants and UNOPS

Implementation support and country office. Starting with AMIP and PASIDP, more projects will henceforth be supervised directly by IFAD which requires adequate budget and human resources, currently not at the disposal of the Field Presence Office. Therefore, IFAD needs to implement a proper assessment of financial and human resources requirements and training needs for managing direct supervision, beginning with its **field presence office whose resources deserve to be increased.**

The field presence experience had been running for only two years at the time of the evaluation. Nonetheless it is clear that this has facilitated the flow of information and the timely identification of implementation problems, as the Field Support Manager has participated in supervision mission. At the same time it has facilitated dialogue with the Government and other partners, as IFAD can have a representative attend meeting convened by Government and other donors on sectoral and development issues.

Country presence established in 2005 and a country programme forum in 2007 have provided a "platform to facilitate contacts and meetings between IFAD project stakeholders (Government, IFAD, other donors) with the view of exploring synergies between projects and different actors". Further, a lesson learnt is that "assigning objectives for non-lending activities without dedicated resources is not a solid starting point" (para 19, Executive Summary)

IFAD was earlier seen as a distant partner but that is changing with the establishment of field presence and "IFAD's Field Support Manager is now participating regularly in supervision and implementation support missions, but effectiveness is constrained by limited resources". (para 20).

Among the recommendations, increased resources for the field office is indicated: "As more projects will be supervised directly by IFAD, the Fund needs to implement a proper assessment of financial and human resources requirements and training needs for managing direct supervision, beginning with its field presence office,

whose resources need to be increased.” (para 39) (also in the recommendations in para 227)

Again benefits from the country presence have been indicated, but the lack of resources was highlighted: “The OE Evaluation of FPPP found that the field presence experiment was beneficial to project implementation support and partnership development although short on resources” (para 62, pg 17)

Nigeria CPE 2009: IFAD should seek ways and means of strengthening its country presence, for example in terms of human and financial resources, infrastructure, roles and responsibility (from ACP).

The option of out-posting the country programme manager (CPM) should be explored. Such an IFAD country presence could eventually have a sub-regional dimension, which would entail the CPM covering and based in Nigeria also assuming responsibilities for IFAD operations in selected neighbouring countries (from ACP).

Of the key elements, development of effective rural institutions has had the greatest effect; policy advocacy has been problematic without an IFAD country presence, which was not established until 2006.

IFAD’s performance has been constrained by lack of an in-country presence and the complexities of dealing with government without field presence and relying on cooperating institutions for supervision.

...the current human resources arrangements, level of delegation of authority and resources deployed for the country presence are not of a calibre that would ensure that the country office can play an appropriate role in improving IFAD assistance.

Given the vast number of rural poor, the increasing financial allocations under the performance-based allocation system (PBAS) and the proposed re-emphasis on promotion of replicable innovations, it is recommended that **IFAD should seek ways and means of strengthening its country presence**. In this regard, the option of out-posting the country portfolio manager should be explored. Such a country presence might also have a sub regional dimension. A stronger country presence would allow IFAD to be more fully engaged in policy dialogue, further its commitment to meeting the provisions of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, improve its knowledge management, and ensure even better implementation support.

Operational activities and participation in in-country meetings and working groups’ activities have improved with the recent establishment of the country presence office (CPO). The CPE acknowledges that the sound move towards direct supervision and implementation support in recent operations should further contribute to better development effectiveness on the ground. As such, the evaluation commends IFAD for strengthening its presence by establishing an office in such a large and important country as Nigeria. However, its view is that the current human resources arrangements, level of delegation of authority and resources deployed for the country presence should be of a calibre that would allow it to play a greater role in improving IFAD’s assistance to Nigeria.

India CPE 2009: ...two of the projects with the highest ratings had project directors who remained in place for most of the life of the project at their own insistence. In the cases of the two projects in the portfolio with less than satisfactory ratings, the problem was a lack of a clear up-front understanding and

acceptance of the relative roles of the state government and the leading NGO in the management of the project. The evaluation noted that many of these problems were related to the period before IFAD had a significant country presence in India. **It is of the view that the expansion of IFAD's Country Presence Office has contributed to greater efficiency of programme management in recent years.**

... knowledge management was another area where more could and should be done by IFAD to broker some of the good practices that are emerging at the project level, and also to promote the development of new knowledge in areas which it identifies as constraints to progress. It was noted, however, that there had been a quantum advance in this area with the expansion of the role of the Country Presence Office in India.

Mozambique CPE 2009: ...with the establishment of a proxy country presence in 2003, IFAD has been gradually augmenting its implementation capacity in the field to the benefit of improved programme coordination and harmonization. This has made it possible for IFAD to support activities (including the development of project monitoring and evaluation [M&E] systems) that are helping to foster portfolio quality. Though IFAD's achievements in terms of harmonization are relatively modest thus far, the Fund has made significant efforts in this regard, which coupled with the country presence, bodes well for the future.

... The establishment of a proxy country presence in 2003 contributed to enhancing IFAD's profile in Mozambique. Though limited in terms of resources and authority, this country presence has allowed for better dialogue with the Government and enabled IFAD to further its commitments in relation to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness as well as the United Nations "Delivering as One" pilot initiative.

Sudan CPE 2008: Field presence has enhanced implementation support and knowledge management. In December 2005, an IFAD CPO started work under the Field Presence Pilot Programme. **The CPO has been participating in supervision and design missions, providing backstopping to project teams and generally enhancing the implementation support provided by IFAD28.** The CPO has been instrumental in implementing knowledge management initiatives, while the Government's Central Coordination Unit (CCU) will continue to play a crucial role in procurement and liaison. The operations of the field presence have however been negatively affected by the limited financial resources available.

... the important contribution of the IFAD Field Presence to the policy dialogue activities is also acknowledged. The FPO has participated in several forums including the Multi Donor Trust Fund, Darfur Donors Coordination Group, Avian Influenza UN/Donor Forum, the UN Expert Meeting and the Joint Assistance Mission but the process has just started.

Pakistan CPE 2008: Overall, the evaluation supports enhanced country presence and concludes that **"overall development effectiveness would be enhanced by establishing a more consolidated, permanent and better-funded country presence"** (foreword, pg. v)

IFAD's performance from being a passive player previously has improved: change in the CPM and the establishment of a proxy country presence in 2005 has improved IFAD's visibility, donor coordination and relations with government partners. However the PCP is not institutionalised and has limited authority and

resources allocated. (paragraph 13, pg ix). Non-lending activities have been weak in the programme, but policy dialogue has been reinvigorated by country presence. (para 15, pg ix)

Among key recommendations, the evaluation recommends adjusting the operating model, including establishing a more consolidated, permanent and better-funded country presence (and suggests the option of out-posting a CPM from Rome). This arrangement for direct supervision and implementation support would improve both knowledge management and project and country-level M&E. (paragraph 22, pg xi). The need to enhance the capacity of country presence officers for strategy development is highlighted (para 90, pg 23).

Country presence is highlighted in the context of IFAD performance: it has widely improved the “way IFAD is represented and perceived in Pakistan”. Six monthly meetings with project directors is conducted. Specific improvements include: participation in donor coordination groups, engagement in supervision and wrap-up meetings coordination with UN, successful trouble shooting. Some areas of problems include: no formal delegation of authority, it cannot count on administrative support and recruitment modality (long term retainer contracts over six months) do not assure continuity. (para 185). Contributions of the country presence to the One UN Initiative (para 213) and to Paris Declaration commitments (para 231) have been indicated.

Philippines Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project 2007: IFAD was constrained by having no field presence, and supervision was handled by UNOPS.

The continuation of direct supervision and the strengthening of the field presence officer are contingent on available resources allocated within the wider framework of IFAD activities related to field presence and direct supervision.

Brazil CPE 2006: The Latin America and Caribbean Division should explore the possibility of enhancing its country presence in Brazil. The options for using Brazil as a sub-regional office covering the MERCOSUR countries (and others) should also be explored (from ACP).

...country presence is an important factor in furthering IFAD’s overall objectives in partner countries, especially but not only in terms of contributing to better implementation support, policy dialogue, partnership building and knowledge management.

Non-project activities (NPA) were marginal components of IFAD’s programme in Brazil. Notwithstanding important recent initiatives at the sub-regional level, policy dialogue was limited, which is particularly of concern given that it was one of the four strategic directions in the COSOP. This may be partly explained by the fact that PL allocated few resources and efforts for undertaking policy dialogue on key topics, as well as a lack of a more permanent country presence which is crucial to engage effectively and proactively in policy dialogue.

Ethiopia Southern Region Cooperatives Development and Credit project 2006: And support from IFAD through supervision mission mounted annually by the designated cooperating institution the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was insufficient. However, it should be recognized that during the time of SOCODEP, IFAD did not have modalities such as direct supervision or field presence to support project implementation (para 41).

Projects need to be much more decisively managed. It is recommended that new approaches be explored, either through IFAD itself taking a more hands-on role during execution, facilitated by the Fund's field presence officer, which allow closer monitoring and follow-up to implementation (para 48).

The field presence officer can, among other tasks, provide implementation support to IFAD-funded operations and has the potential to enhance partnerships and policy dialogue in Ethiopia. Hence, **the country presence should be further strengthened**, so that it can play a greater role in enhancing IFAD's development effectiveness in Ethiopia.

Mali CPE 2006: Decentralizing IFAD's presence through a technical field office in Mali (from ACP).

Bangladesh CPE 2005: The partners agree to review the current arrangements of employing a Dhaka-based international consultant to facilitate IFAD operations in Dhaka. **They agree to propose to management for approval of an improved arrangement for IFAD in Bangladesh (from ACP).**

Mexico CPE 2005: IFAD should explore the possibility and viability of maintaining an active presence in Mexico. There are other ways of ensuring an effective institutional presence so that IFAD can perform several essential roles: (a) maintain a more effective dialogue with all IFAD's major partners in the country; (b) ensure closer monitoring of ongoing projects, follow-up on IFAD's missions in the context of the country programme (preparation of new projects, supervision of existing ones, project completion reports) in such a way as to contribute enormously to the consistency and permanence of the Fund's vision of the country's development (from ACP).

Rwanda CPE 2005: Active involvement in this matter will require a stronger local presence and specific material resources. This could realistically be achieved by formalizing the Country Team facilitated by the locally appointed IFAD Liaison Officer (from ACP).

Ghana LACROSEP II 2005: In view of its lack of field presence, IFAD should estimate the level of human and financial resources to be devoted to it (summary recommendations).

The lack of IFAD field presence in Ghana constrains implementation support as well as policy dialogue and coordination with other donors. Problems such as the inadequate performance of GIDA in the irrigation component are difficult to address through a two-week UNOPS mission per year (para 32)

Ghana Upper West Agricultural Development Project 2005: In view of its lack of field presence, IFAD should estimate the level of human and financial resources to be devoted to it (summary recommendations).

Niassa Agricultural Development Project 2005, Mali: At the end of the implementation period, IFAD established country presence and there is no doubt that **NADP would have benefited from having an IFAD representative in Maputo throughout the entire project period.** This would have helped to identify various constraints faced by the implementing institutions, and to ensure a more timely response to deviations from project design. An additional benefit could have been a more active participation in donor coordination and in policy dialogue processes (para 22, 135).

Uganda District Development 2005: IFAD is to be commended for the very energetic and effective supervision which in turn has led to the fostering of a direct dialogue with central government. However, the recent Thematic Evaluation complains that **'the area of dialogue and upscaling has not been seriously explored', for which a full-time country presence is necessary** (para 35).

...in Uganda as elsewhere, a more direct and involved country presence is called for in order to ensure real policy impact and the dissemination of lessons learned from DDSF (para 123).

Evaluation of Field Presence Pilot Program (conducted in 2006, covered under ARRI 2007): Key findings: IFAD's effectiveness- as measured by the key dimensions of implementation support, policy dialogue, partnership development and knowledge management- is greater in countries with field presence than in countries without. (Ratings across all the four dimensions were significantly higher in countries with field presence). Evaluation covered 35 countries (including the 15 field presence pilot program-FPPP- countries) with field visits to 25 countries.

"In particular, the FPPP countries have performed particularly well in providing implementation support and in enhancing communication between IFAD and a range of partners at the country level." Further, even though the sample was small, the evaluation found that the out-posted CPM model yielded the best results in all dimensions, and especially in knowledge management activities.

Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined (among CPMs and field presence officers) (para 8).

The pilot program was also characterised by the inability to capture reliable cost data.

All other comparator organisations considered field presence to be essential to their development effectiveness.