
Republic of Malawi
Country strategy and programme evaluation

**Response of the Independent Office of Evaluation of
IFAD to Member States' comments**

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Comments from Ireland	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) response
<p>Ireland strongly welcomes this evaluation, particularly as Malawi has been a long-standing focus of our development cooperation programme.</p> <p>We would agree with the report's positive findings about the strategic focus and the policy alignment of the Malawi COSOP. Ireland in particular welcomed the focus on improved access to land as a driver of irrigation uptake and agricultural commercialisation, as well as a stepping stone to sustainable natural resource management.</p> <p>The report highlights the limited progress of the COSOP in addressing the dichotomy between sustainable transformation of agriculture, and addressing food security among the most vulnerable smallholder farmers. Despite moves by the Government to address commercialisation of agriculture, there remains work to be done, and we welcome the recommendation for a more explicit approach to food security. We expect to see future work by IFAD support a more level playing field for crop diversification, encourage more efficient targeting of subsidy programmes, and support a more enabling environment for foreign investment in agriculture, to stimulate rural job creation.</p> <p>The report recommends a stronger IFAD country presence in Malawi. Ireland's Embassy in Lilongwe reiterates this call- there are many opportunities for collaboration, joint programming and leveraging finance that are being missed due to weak engagement in-country.</p> <p>Finally, the report emphasises the importance of a structured approach to knowledge management, and integrating non-lending activities more effectively to ensure scaling up and sustainability dividends - which Ireland would be strongly supportive of.</p>	<p>IOE appreciates the feedback from Ireland. The statement endorses key findings from the Malawi CSPE, which appear to be supported by Ireland's experience in the country. IOE also values the constructive discussion on the Malawi CSPE during the recent Evaluation Committee session.</p>