



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
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PROGRESS REPORT ON EVALUATION

1. The present annual progress report and work programme is divided into four parts: part I reviews the main evaluation activities undertaken during 1997; part II provides an overview of lessons learned from evaluations and studies; part III summarizes other related activities undertaken during the course of the year; and part IV gives an outline of the evaluations and studies planned for 1998. Annex I presents a synthesis of all project completion, ex-post and country portfolio evaluations; details of the evaluation-related activities undertaken in 1997 are shown in annex II; and a list of completion, ex-post and country portfolio evaluations planned for 1998 is given in annex III.

I. Review of the Main Evaluation Activities Undertaken in 1997

2. In all, 17 evaluations were undertaken in 1997, involving 13 projects, three technical assistance grants (TAGs) and one country portfolio evaluation (CPE). Of the 13 project evaluations, six were undertaken of projects at mid-term (three of which were joint mid-term review-cum-evaluation exercises): four in Asia and the Pacific and two in the Near East and North Africa ((NENA). Eight interim evaluations were undertaken, four in Latin America and the Caribbean and two each in Africa and Asia and the Pacific. Of these, two were focused evaluations, a new approach for the Fund, aimed at drawing lessons for future operations. The evaluation in the United Republic of Tanzania focused on the credit component of three projects; whereas that in Lesotho focused on soil and water conservation with a view to drawing lessons that are crucial in this difficult field for future interventions in Lesotho and areas of similar ecology. One completion evaluation and one ex-post evaluation were carried out in Africa. Two of the TAG interim evaluations were in Latin America and the Caribbean and one in Asia and the Pacific. The second and final phase of the Mauritania CPE was undertaken in 1997, covering all eight IFAD-financed projects in the country. Finally, over and above the 17 evaluations, representatives of the Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE) and the Programme Management Department (PD) undertook a mid-term evaluation of the grant to CARE International, Zimbabwe, provided under the IFAD/Non-Governmental Organizations Extended Cooperation Programme (IFAD/NGO ECP).



3. Of the 13 projects evaluated, 11 were financed through IFAD's regular programme and two from the resources of the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification (SPA). Eight of the 13 projects were initiated by IFAD and cofinanced by other donors, and five were initiated and exclusively financed by the Fund.

4. In addition to the above-mentioned activities, as requested by the Executive Board, an evaluation of the SPA was carried out in 1997, representing the first comprehensive evaluation of the programme. The findings and conclusions of the exercise, and the lessons learned, will be presented to the Evaluation Committee of IFAD's Executive Board in April 1998. More than ten rapid project evaluations were undertaken within the framework of the evaluation, including field visits. In addition to the main report, the SPA evaluation includes: 24 case studies; two thematic studies (one on small-scale irrigation development in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and another on rainfed agriculture development and land husbandry in semi-arid areas of SSA); and a set of 35 lessons regarding rural development in SSA, which will be introduced into the Evaluation Knowledge System (EKSYST). An earlier study on rural finance in West Africa has been updated and expanded and now contains 41 case studies. As a separate exercise, a thematic study was made on agroforestry in the Sahelian zone.

Evaluations and Other Related Missions in 1997

Type of Evaluation	Africa	Asia and the Pacific	Latin America and the Caribbean	Near East and North Africa	Total
Mid-term	-	4	-	2	6*
Interim	2 ^{a)}	2***	4**	-	8
Other (CE, ex-post, CPE)	3 ^{b)}	-	-	-	3
Subtotal	5	6	4	2	17 ^{c)}
Special support missions/workshops	-	-	2	1	3****
Total	5	6	6	3	20

(a) The focused interim evaluation in the United Republic of Tanzania covered three projects.

(b) The Mauritania CPE covered eight projects.

(c) As a result of (a) and (b) above, the 17 evaluations involved 23 loans and three grants.

* Includes three joint mid-term review-cum-evaluations.

** Includes evaluations of TAG 231 (Regional and National Training Programme for Rural Development) and TAG 234 (Zacapa-Chiquimula Smallholders' Rural Development Project).

*** Includes evaluation of TAG Poverty Alleviation Training Programme in Asia and the Pacific (PATAP).

**** In addition to these three activities, an additional one was undertaken: technical support for the review of the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP).

5. As may be seen from the above table, IFAD organized and participated in several missions to support monitoring and evaluation systems (M&E) at the grass-roots level. Four such missions were undertaken in 1997: assessment of baseline conditions in Peru; establishment of a provincial agricultural development monitoring system in Tunisia; support and supervision of the Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Evaluation of Rural Poverty Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (PREVAL); and technical support for the review of the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP).



II. Lessons from Evaluation and Studies

Evaluation Knowledge System (EKSYST)

6. In order to further disseminate knowledge acquired and lessons learned from poverty alleviation projects, in 1997, OE published an Internet version of EKSYST which was initially developed as a personal computer-based system for capturing and sharing information, experience and lessons learned from evaluations of IFAD's projects and programmes. This initiative was undertaken within the overall framework of developing an experimental evaluation website, known as IFADEVAL. The evaluation website was inaugurated by the President of IFAD at the Global Conference on Knowledge for Development in the Information Age, held in Toronto in June 1997. In his address to the Conference, President Al-Sultan confirmed the Fund's intention to become a knowledge organization, that is, in the words of the Rapid External Assessment "the world's leading repository of information on rural development and the world's most influential adviser in this challenging complex activity", and mentioned four IFAD initiatives: EKSYST and its Internet version, IFADEVAL; the Integrated Participatory Season's Observatories Systems (IPSOS); the information network linking IFAD-financed projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (FIDAMERICA); and the Knowledge Network on Land Reform and Tenurial Security. These initiatives were discussed in the Workshop on Knowledge Generation for and by the Rural Poor, organized by OE for the purpose of the Conference and attended by 70 participants (see paragraph 26 below). IFAD's booth was visited by around 300 visitors, including the President of Uganda and the President of the World Bank.

7. Through IFADEVAL, users now have access to more than 60 lessons drawn from evaluations on a variety of subjects, including credit and rural financial services, farm technology generation, research and extension, institutional frameworks for project implementation, etc. During the course of 1998, OE intends to add further lessons to the website as and when they become available. Other functions of IFADEVAL include: (i) two interactive evaluation discussion forums on the website enabling both the general public and development experts/partners to discuss evaluation findings and lessons. In this way, a general forum is open to all interested parties, whereas one of a more specialized nature is available only to members of the United Nations Administrative Coordination Committee (ACC) Network on Rural Development and Food Security. The specialized forum is linked to a new cooperation mechanism among agencies of the United Nations (UN), World Bank and other governmental and non-governmental agencies; (ii) information on forthcoming international conferences and workshops on evaluation; (iii) a section on publications, giving abstracts and titles of selected IFAD studies which can be ordered on-line; and (iv) links to websites of other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral institutions, to NGOs and other evaluation websites.

8. A presentation on IFADEVAL was made to the Eighteenth Session of the Evaluation Committee in September 1997. Members of the Committee expressed appreciation of this initiative, as it provides on-line access to IFAD's store of experience and lessons learned in the field of rural poverty alleviation and represents an important step in building up IFAD as a knowledge organization.



Lessons Learned

9. **Household food security and gender.** A workshop took place at IFAD headquarters in 1997, during the course of which a review of experience in household food security and gender issues was presented, based on a sample of 50 operations financed and evaluated by the Fund. The lessons drawn from that experience can be summarized as follows:

- (a) A major limiting factor to greater project impact on food security is the lack of technology appropriate to the resource constraints on the target groups. The availability and relevance of improved technical packages should be considered primarily from the farmer perspective: while a specialist may assess a technical package in terms of productivity and increased income, the farmer will be concerned about its usefulness, returns on scarce resources, opportunity costs and associated risks.
- (b) A thorough assessment of existing farming systems should be undertaken before completing the formulation of any new project. Particular attention should be paid to farmers' practices and to the availability and results of on-farm trials over a number of years, for the purpose of assessing the year-to-year variability of yields and associated risks. In the absence of such information, scenarios of good/bad years should be worked out through dialogue between agricultural scientists and target group farmers familiar with local conditions.
- (c) Food security does not necessarily mean that there is more food for consumption, especially for the smaller farmers. Cash-crop and non-farm income are often crucial to the food security of poor households. Furthermore, targeting poor communities is more practical than targeting food-insecure households.
- (d) Credit has been used frequently in IFAD-financed projects to promote household food security. IFAD's methods of group lending, peer pressure and gender sensitization have produced favourable results, especially in the case of loan amounts extended beyond critical thresholds.
- (e) Women's preference for livestock activities is based on tradition and on their concern for family food security. Realistically, therefore, poor women with little land have few other options. This should receive more recognition, and more importance should be placed on livestock activities.

10. The lessons mentioned in subparagraphs (a) and (b) are further elaborated below:

- (a) **Extension activities.** Transfer of agricultural technology has often failed to benefit the small and marginal farmers, particularly in regions defined as agro-ecologically diverse, resource-poor and risk-prone. It is recognized that farmer-led approaches facilitate the integration of research and extension functions by drawing upon the knowledge and research capacities of local communities and combining them with those of formal research and development organizations. Local capacity for experimentation must be supported so as to allow for technology to be adapted to the constraints of IFAD target groups. Local and outside knowledge should interplay in a mutually-enriching manner.
- (b) **Importance of recognizing research and development needs.** It is essential to identify, early in the design stage, the various recommendations and institutional



innovations available, i.e., those tested, tried out and adapted to the point where they are found suitable for extension purposes. This also involves identifying innovations for further development and adaptation to the conditions of the target area/group. Decisions on research and development needs should be reached with the target group in representative locations with a view to gaining a better understanding of farmers' preferences and community-level constraints and avoiding unsuitable or ineffective extension activities.

- (c) **Knowledge generation and diffusion.** Four consecutive steps are required:
- i) methodology and processes relating to research and development and the pursuit of institutional innovations must be defined, explained and understood at the outset;
 - ii) capabilities for these processes must be clearly defined;
 - iii) this process should start at the design phase by means of workshops involving agricultural scientists, extension officers and beneficiaries; and
 - iv) training should continue throughout project life. Since research and development is a lengthy process, due account should be taken in order to secure continuity of the approach beyond the end of the project.
- (d) **Innovative solutions for technical assistance.** Where long-term technical assistance is involved, a compromise is required between the need to reduce costs and secure continuing benefits from the knowledge-generation process. Long-term partnership arrangements with institutions specializing in research and development are called for, with regular support missions, training courses and attendance at workshops. Such "twinning" arrangements should be explored with both bilateral and multilateral donors.

11. **Learning from local knowledge in Lesotho.** In 1997, IFAD conducted an evaluation of the soil and water conservation components of the IFAD-financed Soil and Water Conservation and Agroforestry Programme (SWaCAP) in Lesotho. The implementation of conservation activities by the rural poor is often hampered by the intrinsic conflict between the short-term need for immediate food production through the use of fragile resources and the long-term requirement of conserving natural resources to maintain production levels.

12. Despite the fact that SWaCAP-supported activities have been affected by the above-mentioned difficulties, staff of the programme identified an endogenous production-cum-conservation farming system that appears to have resolved the conflict. The system was developed by Dr. J. J. Machobane more than 40 years ago in the face of numerous economic and political obstacles.

13. The "Machobane" farming system follows four basic principles for crop production: full use of the calendar year; use of organic sources to build up and maintain soil fertility; maximization of plant arrangements; and production of cash and subsistence crops. The system involves a five-year cycle, adding components and complexity as farmers gain experience and knowledge. Its main technical parameters are as follows:



- the resource base and farm residues are used to grow several crops simultaneously in the same field; improved soil fertility and moisture-retention capacity can be achieved through application of ash and manure;
- the household waste produced by a typical farm family (manure and ash) is sufficient for one acre of land;
- intensive cropping of one acre of land is sufficient to grow enough, between home consumption and sale, to secure adequate food for the family;
- continuous intensive cropping, using organic matter, offers a synergistic, effective means of soil and moisture conservation; and
- it substantially reduces farm-income instability by lowering yield fluctuations and spreading, over several crops, the risk of variations in yields and prices.

14. The system's agronomic and conservation benefits include:

- intercropped agricultural systems are more productive per unit of land;
- when judiciously selected, plants in combination do not compete for nutrients as their uptake patterns are different;
- plants have a variety of leaf structures: when upright, trailing and climbing plants are mixed, they maximize solar radiation and provide protection from excess dampness and destructive hail storms, with positive effects on yields;
- for conservation purposes, the constant plant cover and fine root growth implied in the system protect the soil from the impact of rain, which can break up soil aggregates; and
- from the soil protection standpoint, the mixture of tubers and leaf crops implicit in the system is superior to monocropping.

15. The staff of SWaCAP's persuaded Dr. Machobane to become involved in reinstalling his farming techniques, which had practically ceased since the mid-1960s, and SWaCAP funds were used to test and promote the system. Yields from "Machobane" fields proved to be triple those of monocropped plots and, between 1991 and 1997, the number of farmers adopting the system increased from 22 to 2 000, a ninetyfold increase. New "Machobane" farmers received free potato seeds in the first season only. By 1996, with the exception of training from fellow farmers, growers were receiving no subsidies or assistance.

16. While several reasons can be advanced for such wide adoption of the system, the evaluation revealed that the single most important factor is that, within one season of adoption, it offers what appeals to be a sustainable increase in net income from cash/food crops. This prospect is so attractive that, despite the scarcity of labour, farmers are willing to invest their time in training others in its use. The low cost of this technology, its endogenous origin and the results obtained by other farmers in the community are also crucial factors. However, despite the system's apparent advantages and potential, a number of emerging constraints will need to be closely monitored and assessed. Occasional excess supply of potatoes due to competition from South Africa, the possible need for more farm labour to maintain the system, and the availability of sufficient manure and ash at the farm level are aspects that will need close monitoring over the medium term.



III. Other Evaluation-Related Activities

Workshops and Round Tables

17. **Africa.** The Round Table Conference (RTC) on the Ghana Country Portfolio Evaluation took place in Accra, Ghana, from 26 to 31 May 1997. The purpose of the RTC was to discuss the CPE's findings and recommendations with the national entities involved in implementing IFAD-financed projects and other development partners in Ghana, for the purpose of establishing policies and operational directives for future IFAD interventions in the country. The Conference was attended by about 150 participants, comprising national and regional ministers, deputy ministers, directors and senior staff of the Ministries of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Science and Technology, Finance, and Land and Forestry. Also participating were staff of the project and of various implementing agencies at the national and regional level, agricultural credit institutions, NGOs involved in the Fund's projects and representatives of IFAD project beneficiaries. Representatives of multilateral and bilateral agencies operating in Accra, United Nations (UN) agencies, Ghanaian universities and research institutions, and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) were also present at the Conference.

18. The IFAD delegation comprised four Executive Board Directors (from Egypt, India, the United States and Venezuela), members of the Evaluation Committee (EC), and staff of OE and PD. Field visits were organized for members of the Evaluation Committee to the Upper-East Region Land Conservation and Smallholder Rehabilitation and Development Project and the Smallholders Credit, Input Supply and Marketing Project. The EC members were fully briefed by the management and staff of the projects, and visited rehabilitated dams and irrigation sites, valley bottom rice production schemes and local rural banks, and held discussions with members of water users' associations (WUAs), women's income-generating activities groups and other credit groups.

19. Participants were divided into four groups to discuss the major themes emphasized by the CPE as containing crucial learning aspects and issues requiring attention by both the Government of Ghana and IFAD. These were as follows: (i) organization and management; (ii) rural credit; (iii) technology development/dissemination and rural infrastructure; and (iv) targeting and participation. The four working groups held discussions over two days on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the CPE in these four areas.

20. **Latin America and the Caribbean.** In April 1997, a workshop was held in Guatemala for staff of IFAD-financed projects in Brazil, Central America and Panama to provide information and training on M&E issues. The opportunity was taken to conduct an M&E training needs assessment and to strengthen a network of M&E practitioners in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Another workshop on M&E experience in Paraguay was organized at IFAD in July 1997 to review ten years' M&E at the project, sector and national level.

21. In January 1997, staff of OE participated in two workshops organized by the World Bank on indicators and methods to measure participation and local organizational capacity, and participatory M&E. The objectives of the first workshop were to: (i) achieve clarity on three key concepts critical in community-driven projects (participation, demand-orientation and local organizational capacity); (ii) share experience among workshop participants; and (iii) identify strategies for disseminating lessons based on field activities. The second workshop aimed at: (i) exploring and sharing key elements of participatory M&E; and (ii) exposing participants to a variety of methods and tools, and designing a participatory evaluation framework.



22. In July 1997, OE organized a workshop in Rome on participatory M&E (PM&E) systems, the objective of which was to introduce IFAD staff to the concept of PM&E and identify practical strategies for expanding the role of participation in IFAD's project cycle. The workshop highlighted the benefits of PM&E, outlined the basic steps involved, and described several practical approaches (namely, logframe, participatory rural appraisal, and the balanced scorecard) to building up PM&E systems for IFAD-funded projects. A number of practical recommendations were formulated for introducing PM&E into the IFAD context.

23. In April 1997, an OE staff member participated in a workshop funded by Danish Cooperation on the theme of "Technology Development and Transfer: How to maximise the influence of the user? Can Alternatives to the Training and Visit System be Found?". The IFAD representative presented a case study entitled "A Successful Institutional Innovation: the IFAD-Initiated Diagnostic Team Concept in the North Western Province in Zambia", based on a proposal made by OE during the 1990 interim evaluation of an IFAD-financed project in Zambia. From discussions at the workshop, it was learned that Danish Cooperation is experimenting on a similar concept.

24. An OE staff member participated in an eco-development workshop, organized by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in New York in March 1997, on the interdependence and close links between problems of environment, economic and population growth and, above all, poverty. The organizers of the workshop solicited IFAD's participation in order that it might contribute to the formulation of lessons regarding the implementation of sustainable mechanisms for planning and allocating funds for natural resource management initiatives at the local level.

International Meetings

25. IFAD took an active part in the Global Conference on Knowledge for Development in the Information Age, which was held in Toronto, Canada, in June 1997 and organized jointly by the Government of Canada and the World Bank. IFAD was a co-sponsor of the Conference, which brought together almost 1 500 participants, including senior government officials, members of the UN community, NGOs, knowledge builders, industry and business leaders, and other personalities and experts from around the world. The Conference focused on three themes: (i) understanding the role of knowledge and information in economic and social development; (ii) sharing strategies, experience and tools in harnessing knowledge for development; and (iii) building new partnerships that empower the poor with information and knowledge.

26. For the purpose of the Conference, OE organized a workshop entitled "Knowledge Generation For and By the Rural Poor", at which four IFAD initiatives were presented: the IFADEVAL website; the local action-research-based Integrated Participatory Seasons' Observatories System (IPSOS); FIDAMERICA; and the Knowledge Network on Grass-Roots Initiatives in Land Reform and Tenurial Security, a major follow-up to the 1995 Conference on Hunger and Poverty.

27. An OE staff member participated in the Annual Conference of the European Evaluation Society, held in Stockholm in March 1997, which provided an opportunity to participate in several discussions on issues relating to OE's work programme. Of particular interest was the session on evaluation capacity-building, at which a number of international organizations, including IFAD, described their programmes in this field.

28. The Director of OE was invited by the Research Council of Norway to address the Conference on "The Brundtland Commission's Report - 10 years" in October 1997. His contribution, entitled "Societal Diversity, People's Mobility and the Environment", focused on IFAD's efforts to develop multipurpose participatory action-research systems, referred to as IPSOS, and to cross-fertilize local and external knowledge. He was also invited by the Council for Agricultural Science



and Technology to attend the Conference on Food Safety Sufficiency and Security, held in the United States in November 1997 and to make a presentation on "Food Security for Developing Countries".

29. IFAD took an active part in the Technical Consultation on Decentralization, held in Rome in December 1997 and sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNCDF, IFAD, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and World Bank. The consultation brought together policy-makers, practitioners and academics from the developed and developing world to review the contribution of decentralized and participatory strategies to rural development.

IV. Tentative Evaluation Activities for 1998

30. In 1998, evaluation activities will continue to combine, on the one hand, knowledge-creation through field evaluations and the conceptualization of lessons learned, and on the other, the dissemination of knowledge through building knowledge networks and further developing EKSYST and IFADEVAL. A tentative list of completion, ex-post and country portfolio evaluations to be carried out in 1998 is given in annex III.

31. In order to supplement its field evaluations, OE intends to undertake several special/thematic studies in 1998, including:

- (a) a study on marketing in Central America to draw lessons from both IFAD's experience and that of other agencies/institutions in the region, and provide guidance on ways of addressing marketing issues to achieve sustainable poverty alleviation with a gender perspective;
- (b) a study on small island developing states (SIDSs), to review IFAD's implementation experience and assess the impact of its projects on their socio-economic advancement. To this end, the study will assess implementation performance in SIDSs where IFAD has financed project and programmes; identify the causes of implementation difficulties and provide insights into positive factors of performance; draw lessons; examine the possibility of applying a programme approach to project development and implementation in SIDSs; and formulate recommendations for IFAD's future strategy and operations; and
- (c) the first phase of a study on the involvement of WUAs in IFAD projects, which will provide the basis for a programme of field assessments in a second phase.

32. A thematic study on rainfed agriculture in the NENA region will be launched in April 1998 with the purpose of assessing IFAD's past experience in this field and drawing up a regional assistance strategy for the development of drylands farming and livestock. The study will cover three subregions of NENA, namely, North Africa, the Sahelian zone, and the eastern Mediterranean area. In each area, a country case study will be developed based on existing evaluation results and knowledge drawn from key national/regional research and academic institutions or networks. As required, the existing stock of evaluations will be completed with additional focused evaluations on IFAD-financed projects. One such evaluation in Syria is included in OE's programme of work for 1998, and it is expected that an additional one or two evaluations may have to be organized.

33. It is intended to develop a common approach to the implementation of country-level M&E systems which can be adapted to different projects in accordance with their particular circumstances.



To this end, a participatory M&E workshop will be held in Bolivia for IFAD projects in Latin America; and systematic support will be provided to M&E systems in India, where IFAD has so far financed 13 projects, with a view to developing an evaluation strategy.

34. A round table conference will be held in Mauritania in 1998 to discuss the conclusions, recommendations and lessons drawn from the CPE exercise. The CPE, undertaken at the request of the Africa I division, is expected to propose future investment and strategic directions for IFAD's operations in the Mauritania. The round table is tentatively scheduled for June 1998.

35. The completion evaluation of two IFAD-financed projects in the Sidi Bouzid Governorate of Tunisia elicited great interest from the Government and other partners, including French cooperation. The lessons learned from these evaluations should be used to both increase the effectiveness of current projects and improve the design of future interventions of this nature. Based on the results of this exercise, the Government of Tunisia and IFAD have agreed to hold a follow-up workshop at Tunis in early May 1998. The aim of the workshop is to enrich the knowledge of decision-makers, both within the Government and at IFAD, with regard to developing the poor and marginalized areas of Tunisia. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss a draft country strategic opportunities paper (COSOP) currently under preparation at IFAD.



SYNTHESIS OF PROJECT COMPLETION, EX-POST AND COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS

1. The most salient features of the project completion, ex-post and country portfolio evaluations undertaken in 1997 appear below, by IFAD regional division and in alphabetical order.

I. Africa I

Mauritania Country Portfolio Evaluation

2. The evaluation of the IFAD-financed project portfolio in Mauritania is the seventh of its kind, and, as with the others, it was undertaken in response to the need to understand: how far the Fund had complied with its mandate over the long term; the causes of success/failure; and the constraints encountered. The evaluation was carried out at the request of the IFAD regional division concerned for the purpose of developing strategic proposals to enable the Fund more effectively to combat poverty in Mauritania. The standard portfolio evaluation was accompanied by an analysis of the socio-economic changes that have occurred in the country since Independence and used to review national policies and their effects on poverty, particularly in the rural environment. This comparison, substantiated with the lessons learned directly from IFAD's experience, subsequently formed the basis of a set of recommendations for strategic guidance. Once it has been discussed within IFAD, the CPE's conclusions and recommendations will be shared with the Government of Mauritania during the round table conference tentatively scheduled for June 1998.

3. **The project portfolio.** The eight IFAD-financed projects in Mauritania were designed and implemented within the context of the Government's well-established policy of giving priority to irrigated agriculture in the Senegal River Valley. Over the past decade, a set of economic reforms have gradually brought about radical changes in the institutional and political environment in which the projects are being executed, with a pronounced disengagement of the State.

4. To date, IFAD's total financial commitment to Mauritania has reached USD 52.4 million, namely, 30% of all project costs. This makes Mauritania Africa's leading borrower in terms of numbers of loans and ranks it third in terms of the volume of loans per rural inhabitant (USD 48). IFAD's assistance also accounts for a substantial proportion of all development aid provided to the country's rural sector, particularly that supplied by UN agencies.

5. **The results.** As far as the closed projects were concerned, the CPE demonstrated that, their impact on agricultural productivity had generally fallen short of expectations, comparable with the performance of the irrigated sector as a whole. However, the projects' contribution to national output has been far from negligible. For instance, in the case of paddy rice, they contributed approximately 25% of total production and 15% of national consumption. On the other hand, the CPE showed that the second-generation projects were innovative and generated models for future replication. This is particularly true of land tenure management (Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project).

6. Approximately 9 000 households have benefited directly from IFAD support in Mauritania (not counting the Oasis Development Project - Phase II), representing an average commitment per household of around USD 6 000, or between USD 800 and USD 900 per person. This high level of expenditure reflects both the condition of the country — resources and population scattered over a



vast territory very high unit costs of infrastructure development, etc. — and the substantial proportion of expenses which are allocated to institutional support, in some cases exceeding 50%.

7. The achievement of project objectives has been hampered by: weak national facilities and structures; inefficient management; ineffective arrangements for supporting grass-roots organizations, particularly in terms of methodology; inadequate M&E systems; poor supervision of inputs; and insufficient counterpart funding.

8. With the benefit of hindsight, the development policies now appear to have been overambitious because the success of their implementation depended on newly-established government institutions. Since 1988, the rapid disengagement of the State has considerably weakened the relevance of projects designed within the framework of earlier policies which gave an important role to the State.

9. **Avenues for improvement.** Project implementation could be improved through careful selection of project managers and better technical support and supervision. This will require that the Fund, or its official representatives, has a much stronger presence in the field. At the same time, attention should be paid to economies of scale in terms of the size of the project portfolio, in particular by regrouping the monitoring and support functions for a number of projects under one structure.

10. In the particular case of proposal for new approaches, projects should be designed for one geographical area only which, if required, could be extended gradually on the basis of prior experience. It would be advantageous to have a longer preparatory phase for projects in Mauritania, which could be financed by non-project resources, for example, technical assistance grants. This would make it possible to define the operational strategy for a particular project, based on a participatory approach, and avoid having to mobilize loan proceeds unnecessarily over a long period of time (as in the case of the Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project and the Oasis Development Project - Phase II). Lastly, this would help build up an accurate database on the target group and the project area, an essential precondition for sound project monitoring.

11. From IFAD's 15 years of experience in Mauritania, many lessons can be drawn and used to foster improvements in the design and execution of future projects. These improvements mainly relate to the participatory approach, organization of projects, land tenure aspects, and rural credit.

12. **Strategic proposals.** The objective is to help the marginalized small farmers/livestock herdsman living in rainfed and flood-recession cropping areas to overcome the two main constraints on their growth and integration into the market, namely: poor capital-accumulation capacity; and vulnerability to uncertain weather conditions.

13. It will be possible to trigger off an accumulation process, only in the event projects can contribute to a significant reduction in poverty and, at the same time, prevent vulnerable groups from becoming impoverished. For this reason, projects must contribute towards initial capitalization, without matching funds; and take appropriate action to safeguard capital assets, particularly small livestock, in the event of drought.

14. This approach could be applied for programmes/projects targeted at the poorest areas of Mauritania (Assaba, Hodhs, North Brakna and North Gorgol). The CPE also identified a number of possible solutions whereby investments could have a positive impact on the target groups.

15. Training is of great importance to target groups engaging in areas of activity for which they have had little or no experience (e.g., irrigation, cropping in the case of nomadic populations, etc.).



16. It should be noted, however, that as a general rule the projects have done little in this regard. Individual strategies for future projects should become more specific in terms of sectoral development policies, and the idea that the only way to combat poverty is to support national institutions and policies must be abandoned. Not only have these ideas proved to be inadequate, but they have been overtaken by changes in the institutional framework and national economic policies.

17. The CPE concluded that, in the particular case of Mauritania, there was little scope for credit and saving systems — a major factor underlying the Government's continued inability to build up sustainable financial institutions aimed at rural development. Instead, project resources should be allocated for training target populations and project staff.

18. While ensuring that the specificity of IFAD's work for the benefit of a particular target group is always brought out, the development of partnerships with other major donors would enable the Fund to influence development policies and projects to the benefit of the target groups. There are several possibilities for cooperation here:

- participating in funding national programmes for the agriculture sector (Integrated Development Programme for Irrigated Agriculture in Mauritania (PDIAIM) and the Programme for the Management of Natural Resources in a Rainfed Zone (PGRNP)), particularly with World Bank;
- sharing methodological achievements (UNCDF/Assaba; GTZ/Aftout and Hodhs), FAO (Special Programme for Food Security), the European Union (EU) and the Caisse française de développement (French Development Fund) (particularly for land tenure problems), etc.;
- research on synergies (geographic investment localization) and common approaches (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Programme (WFP), non-governmental organizations (NGOs)); and
- seeking better linkages between future IFAD interventions and major infrastructure investments financed by the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development (AFSED), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and EU in the proposed target area.
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II. Africa II

Mauritius

19. An ex-post evaluation was made of the Small-Scale Agricultural Development Project (SSADP). The total cost of this project was USD 8.71 million, of which IFAD's share amounted to USD 6.3 million. The project, which became effective in May 1983 and closed in December 1991, was originally designed to help poor farm families develop their own farm enterprises. Through an agricultural credit programme (70% of total costs), the project was intended to support small-scale cultivation and livestock production and provide a new source of livelihood to 630 participant farmers and about 1 400 goatherds. In all, some 12 000 persons were expected to benefit directly from the project.

20. Project implementation was slow during the first three years, mainly as a result of the rapid (and unexpected) growth and evolution of the overall macroeconomic situation in Mauritius; and, more specifically, owing to difficulties in the agricultural credit programme which was constrained by a scarcity of land for development. The lack of a clear interest rate policy led farmers to seek



funds elsewhere, resulting in slack initial demand for credit from IFAD's loan. The project was reformulated in 1986 to include a general line of credit from both the Mauritius Cooperative Central Bank (MCCB) and the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) for agricultural and off-farm activities, and to raise the eligibility threshold for smallholder credit. By the end of the project, the number of small loans granted under the general line of credit from the two implementing banks came to more than 3 500. Overall, substantial progress was made in project implementation after 1986 and, by project closure, IFAD's loan had been fully disbursed.

21. From a developmental perspective, the SSADP achieved good results. To a great extent, the project achieved its objective of promoting small-scale enterprises in rural areas and creating credit facilities for a section of the population which would not otherwise have benefited from loans on concessional terms. It also contributed substantially to establishing a number of health and veterinary centres, which are still operating well, and provided useful assistance for improving the goat breeding stock of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). Finally, by the end of the project, farmers engaged in SSADP's mixed vegetables and litchi subprojects had registered increased incomes and a general improvement in their living conditions.

22. In general, the overall long-term impact of SSADP has been positive. IFAD's line of credit acted as a catalyst for promoting small loans for agricultural and non-agricultural activities and helped in the creation of small and medium-size enterprises. Moreover, SSADP contributed to the generation of a culture of entrepreneurship among the poor.

23. The project had a positive impact on DBM which, as a result of its participation in the project, is now a leader in Mauritian development banking. SSADP instilled a sense of responsibility in the DBM to provide loans to small farmers and entrepreneurs and, to facilitate operations in this area, the bank created a special window for small loans for agriculture and off-farm activity loans.

24. As far as the sustainability of SSADP is concerned, some activities were identified as truly self-sustaining. For instance, the health centres and veterinary services funded under the project have been integrated into the overall national health service and have contributed significantly to improving health standards in rural areas. As far as agricultural activities are concerned, two successful SSADP subprojects — the litchi and vegetable production schemes — are operating well. Average yields of vegetables increased fourfold over the period 1990-96, mainly thanks to fertilizer, crop protection chemicals and better irrigation practices. Litchi production has increased as a result of better extension advice and proper tree maintenance.

Uganda

25. A completion evaluation of the Southwest Region Agricultural Rehabilitation Project (SWRARP) was undertaken in 1997. Total project costs amounted to USD 27.1 million, of which IFAD's share was USD 12.0 million, financed under the SPA. As part of a countrywide programme to revitalize agriculture in Uganda and assist small farmers to improve their income levels and living standards, the objectives of the project centered on the provision/improvement of rural water supply, health and nutrition, seed production, livestock, input supply, research and extension, and rural roads.

26. A large degree of design flexibility was applied during the implementation of the project. Modifications in initial project design in response to evolving circumstances included: the overall length of the feeder roads was reduced from 2 000 km to 488 km; the addition of 1 000 km of roads for rehabilitation by direct labour; emphasis on community development, group formation and women's organizations; incorporation of a credit sub-component to enhance targeting of the rural poor; and the addition of a mini-dams and valley tanks sub-component to service human beings and livestock.



27. The SWRARP loan was extended twice for a total of about 20 months ending in February 1996 (except for the valley dams component which was extended to June 1996). The Government decided to continue funding the for an additional year (up to June 1997) so as to complete the road and small dams components and to tie up loose ends in the credit component. For all practical purposes, the implementation period amounted to eight years instead of six years as originally planned.

28. During implementation, the project used 92% of the International Development Association (IDA) credit and 89.3% of IFAD's loan. The project got off to a slow start but much momentum was gained after the 1992 MTR and evaluation. This was possible thanks to the efficiency, commitment and stability of a decentralized project management, provision of technical assistance, and a favourable policy environment. Specifically, the adaptive research and extension component of the project injected life into an extension service which was effectively non-operational prior to SWRARP. The adaptive research methodology introduced by the project proved successful and vetted numerous varietal releases which were subsequently adopted in many parts of the project area. This resulted in productivity increases and marketable surpluses for farmers. The work on feeder roads helped improve marketing channels within and outside the region. Within this framework, SWRARP effectively promoted group mobilization — particularly women's groups — to engage in income-generating activities.

**Annex II****EVALUATION ACTIVITIES JANUARY-DECEMBER 1997**

Country (Loan No.)/ Project (Cooperating Institution/ Dates of Effectiveness and Closing)	Project Financing	Remarks	Period of Mission Staff/Consultant
EVALUATION MISSIONS (17)			
I. Mid-Term Evaluations (6)			
Asia			
1. India (325-IN) Maharashtra Rural Credit Project (UNOPS 06.01.94-30.09.00)	f	MTR/E	24.03.97-21.06.97 Staff/Consultants
2. Indonesia (301-ID) South Sumatera Smallholder Tree Crops Development Project (AsDB 29.09.92-31.03.01)	e	MTR/E	24.10.97-17.12.97 Consultants
3. Indonesia (350-ID) Eastern Islands Smallholder Cashew Development Project (UNOPS 29.07.94-30.09.02)	f	MTR/E	24.10.97-17.12.97 Consultants
4. Nepal (352-NP) Groundwater Irrigation and Food Rehabilitation Project (UNDDSMS 01.11.94-31.12.01)	f	MTE	06.11.97-26.11.97 Staff/Consultants
Near East and North Africa			
5. Jordan (329-JO) Income Diversification Project (AFESD 06.06.94-31.12.01)	f	MTE	08.11.97-30.11.97 Staff/Consultants
6. Sudan (268-SU) Southern Roseires Agricultural Development Project (UNOPS 10.01.92-31.03.00)	e	MTE	14.11.97-03.12.97 Consultants
f	=	IFAD-initiated and cofinanced	
e	=	IFAD-initiated and exclusively financed	
c	=	Initiated by other and cofinanced by IFAD	
MTE	=	Mid-term evaluation	
IE	=	Interim evaluation	
CE	=	Completion evaluation	
Ex-Post	=	Ex-post evaluation	
CPE	=	Country portfolio evaluation	
WS	=	Workshops	
SM	=	Special support mission	



Country (Loan No.)/ Project (Cooperating Institution/ Dates of Effectiveness and Closing)	Project Financing	Remarks	Period of Mission Staff/Consultant
II. Interim Evaluations (8)			
Africa			
1. Lesotho (SRS-013-LE) Soil and Water Conservation and Agroforestry Programmet (UNOPS 26.04.89-31.12.96)	e	IE	06.02.97-03.04.97 Staff/Consultants
2. Tanzania, United Republic of (242-TZ) Smallholder Support Project in Zanzibar (IDA 07.03.91-31.12.97)	e	IE	01.10.97-20.10.97 Staff/Consultants
Southern Highlands Extension and Rural Financial Services Project (324-TZ) (IDA 30.06.93-31.12.99)	e		
Smallholder Development Project for Marginal Areas (SRS-024-TZ) (UNOPS 05.10.90-30.06.97)	f		
Asia			
3. Laos (256-LA) Xieng Khouang Agricultural Development Project (UNOPS 08.03.91-31.12.98)	f	IE	27.08.97-03.09.97 and 25.09.97-18.10.97 Staff/Consultants
4. TAG 261 Poverty Alleviation Training for Asia and the Pacific (IFAD/Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organization)		IE	17.03.97-14.04.97 Staff/Consultants
Latin America and the Caribbean			
5. Bolivia (266-BO) Consolidation and Development of Smallholder Settlements in the Department of Santa Cruz Project (Andean Development Corporation (CAF) 23.09.91-30.06.98)	f	IE	03.07.97 - 13.09.97 Staff/Consultants
6. Guatemala (251-GM) Zacapa-Chiquimula Smallholders' Rural Development Project (UNOPS 21.03.91-30.06.97)	f	IE	07.02.97-06.04.97 Staff/Consultants
7. TAG 234 Regional Programme in Support of Indigenous People in the Amazon Basin (IFAD /CAF)		IE	25.03.97-28.04.97 Staff/Consultants
8. TAG 231 Regional and National Training Programme for Rural Development (IFAD/Foundation for Training & Applied Research in Agrarian Reform)		IE	16.09.97-30.11.97 Staff/Consultants



Country (Loan No.)/ Project (Cooperating Institution/ Dates of Effectiveness and Closing)	Project Financing	Remarks	Period of Mission Staff/Consultant
III. Completion and Ex-Post Evaluations (3)			
Africa			
1. Mauritius (078-T) Small-Scale Agricultural Development Project (IBRD 30.07.94-31.03.00)	e	Ex-Post	13.03.97-29.03.97 Staff/Consultant
2. Uganda (SRS-010-UG) Southwest Region Agricultural Rehabilitation Project (IDA 17.08.88-30.06.94)	f	CE	15.02.97-15.03.97 Staff/Consultants
IV. Country Portfolio Evaluation			
Africa			
1. Mauritania (044-MR) Gorgol Irrigation Project (IDA 27.08.81-30.06.90)	c	CPE	12.11.96-18.12.96 Staff/Consultants
(092-MR) Gorgol Farmers' Training Project (IDA 28.07.83-30.06.90)	e		
(169-MR) Small-Scale Irrigation Project (IDA 30.01.86-30.06.93)	c		
(318-MR) Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project (UNDDSMS 10.06.93-30.04.00)	f		
(SRS-001-MR) Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme (AFESD 10.12.86-30.06.94)	c		
(SRS-022-MR) Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme - Phase II (AFESD -06.11.90-31.12.96)	f		
(SRS-031-MR) Banc d'Arguin Protected Area Management Project (UNOPS 18.05.93-30.06.99)	f		



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Country (Loan No.)/ Project (Cooperating Institution/ Dates of Effectiveness and Closing)	Project Financing	Remarks	Period of Mission Staff/Consultant
(SRS-043-MR) Oasis Development Project - Phase II (AFESD 08.02.95-30.06.02)	f		
M&E SPECIAL SUPPORT MISSIONS/WORKSHOPS			
1. TAG-312, Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP)		SM**	26.10.97-28.10.97 Staff
Latin America and the Caribbean			
2. Bolivia, El Salvador and Peru Support to establish monitoring systems, including baseline surveys.		SM	15.08.97-30.08.97 Staff
3. Support and supervision of TAG-302 Programme for strengthening the Regional Capacity for Evaluation of Rural Poverty (PREVAL)		SM	29.09.97-30.09.97 Staff
Near East and North Africa			
4. Tunisia Support for the establishment of a principal agricultural development monitoring system		SM	21.07.97-31.07.97 Staff/Consultants

** Support to the review/evaluation of CGAP's operations.

**TENTATIVE LIST OF COMPLETION,
EX-POST AND COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS IN 1998**

Country (Loan No.)/ Project (Cooperating Institution/ Dates of Effectiveness and Closing)	Project Financing	Evaluation Type
Asia		
1. (214-IN) India Orissa Tribal Development Project (UNOPS 27.05.88-31.12.97)	f	CE
Nepal		
2. (010-NEP) Integrated Rural Development Project (Sagarmatha Zone) (AsDB 11.01.79-31.12.88)	c	CPE
(057-NE) Small Farmer Development Project (AsDB 10.07.81-31.12.87)	e	
(082-NE) Command Area Development Project (AsDB 01.10.82-30.09.89)	c	
(166-NE) Second Small Farmer Development Project (AsDB 03.03.86-30.06.91)	f	
(191-NE) Aquaculture Development Project (AsDB 15.10.87-31.12.92)	c	
(208-NE) Production Credit for Rural Women Project (UNOPS 30.11.88-31.12.97)	f	
(250-NE) Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project (UNOPS 18.02.91-14.07.00)	f	
(352-NE) Groundwater Irrigation and Flood Rehabilitation Project (UNOPS 01.11.94-31.12.01)	f	
(452-NE) Poverty Alleviation Project in Western Terai (UNOPS 12.03.98-31.12.04)	e	



III-2

Country (Loan No.)/ Project (Cooperating Institution/ Dates of Effectiveness and Closing)	Project Financing	Evaluation Type
3. Sri Lanka (219-SR) Small Farmers and Landless Credit Project (UNOPS 28.03.89-31.12.97)	f	CE
Latin America and the Caribbean		
4. Costa Rica (235-CR) Northern Zone Agricultural Credit Development Project (Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) 29.11.91-30.06.96)	f	CE
