



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
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REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRESIDENT

TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ON A PROPOSED

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT TO THE
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE
PROGRAMME FOR ELECTRONIC NETWORKING FOR RURAL ASIA/PACIFIC
(ENRAP) PROJECTS – PHASE II

I submit the following Report and Recommendation on a proposed technical assistance (TA) grant to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to support the Programme for Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific (ENRAP) Projects – Phase II – in the amount of USD 1 000 000 over a period of three years.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The aim of the proposed second phase of ENRAP (hereafter ENRAP II) is to build on the successful experience of the pilot phase (ENRAP I), which, over the last three years, has promoted the **sharing** of information among IFAD-funded projects in Asia and the Pacific as opposed to the usual practice of **extracting** information. In testing information technology and systems for several types of emerging knowledge networks in a dozen IFAD-funded projects, ENRAP I activities focused on involving the stakeholders and assessing their needs, and on awareness-raising workshops, studies and surveys, hands-on training, organizational capacity building, information management and technical support services (including establishment of the ENRAP website) for programme managers and IFAD staff.

2. The mid-term review (MTR) and the final evaluation of ENRAP I concluded that the programme had been successful “particularly through a very significant process of information management awareness raising among IFAD partners in Asia, and by bringing a recognition of the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in this process”. Several successful pilot activities involved village communities, project staff and local and external specialists. A multimedia guide on pruning lime and orange trees (Sri Lanka), a newsletter in the Cebuano language for farmers in Mindanao (The Philippines) and self-help group assessment manuals in Marathi and English (India) published on the Internet are examples of how rural communities have become



directly involved in knowledge networking. The commitment of project management and the benefits of applying information technology at the programme level have been demonstrated by information networking among IFAD projects in Sri Lanka, knowledge mapping for staff training in India and a database of regional development initiatives in The Philippines.

3. While this experience clearly demonstrates the potential of ICT, much remains to be done to ensure that knowledge networking does in fact add substantial value to rural development interventions in Asia and the Pacific. Both the MTR and the final evaluation of ENRAP I recommended that the programme be continued so as to: expand and sustain knowledge-sharing both within and between projects and communities; develop and consolidate knowledge networks; standardize methods and guidelines; monitor and assess technical changes relevant to rural connectivity; and develop and support extensive, customized training in infrastructure and local applications.

II. RATIONALE/RELEVANCE TO IFAD

4. As envisaged in IFAD's Strategic Framework (2002-2006), enabling the rural poor to overcome their poverty implies, inter alia: developing and strengthening organizations of the poor to confront the issues they consider critical; and increasing access to knowledge to enable poor people to grasp opportunities and overcome obstacles. That calls for further enhancing the culture of sharing ideas, experience and learning among IFAD-funded projects and greater attention to multi-stakeholder, participatory planning and the implementation of knowledge-sharing applications developed locally and useful at the local level. During the proposed second phase of ENRAP, greater focus will be placed on assisting project beneficiaries through community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government line agencies involved in IFAD-funded projects to ensure greater sustainability of activities after programme termination and wider diffusion of ICTs among participants.

5. ENRAP II will address the full range of computer applications (apart from connectivity and Internet aspects) required by projects, while building up the technical capacity of project teams. Furthermore, ENRAP II will refocus on national networking and reconfigure from a hub-and-spokes model to a network-of-networks configuration. Within that framework, ENRAP II will accord greater attention to the engagement of country focal points for IFAD work so as to buy-in to the concept of promoting knowledge sharing.

6. In order to strengthen project capacity for the monitoring and documenting of implementation progress and for assessing impact at programme completion, ENRAP II will assist in the establishment of comprehensive management information systems (MIS) within individual IFAD projects. The ENRAP website will be redesigned, in consultation with participating projects, in such a way as to enhance the dissemination of project highlights among IFAD projects in the region.

III. THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

7. The main objective of ENRAP II is to improve the impact of IFAD-funded projects on the livelihoods of poor rural communities in the Asia and the Pacific region by strengthening and deepening networking and knowledge-sharing at all levels. In line with IFAD's Strategic Framework (2002-2006), those activities will help improve the access of poor rural people to local knowledge and innovations, technologies and markets. They will also play a catalytic role in disseminating knowledge and lessons learned through local, national and regional networks for possible replication and scaling up and for decisions on policy changes.



8. The general objective of ENRAP II is to help IFAD-funded projects in Asia and the Pacific – primarily through electronic media – to more effectively document and share learning/experiences about good practices in rural development, particularly for the benefit of the poor communities.

9. The specific objectives of ENRAP II are to:

- assess and strengthen, as necessary, current technical networking capacity in IFAD-funded projects;
- build and expand the capacity of CBOs and rural communities in IFAD-funded project areas (including participating NGOs and line agencies) to integrate the use of electronic media into their day-to-day operations, thereby nurturing a culture of learning and knowledge sharing;
- develop the following types of knowledge communities for sharing knowledge (including local and indigenous knowledge), experiences and good practices:
 - within-project networks among project stakeholders;
 - national networks of IFAD-funded projects and of other collaborators;
 - regional network(s) of national networks; and
- design and test innovative technical and institutional models and prepare guidelines for IFAD-funded projects to make effective use of ICTs (pilot testing of village telecentres, and partnership with governments to build on, and demonstrate the effectiveness of, their investments in ICT at the local level).

10. Key activities of ENRAP II include:

- knowledge mapping at all levels of project implementation (where knowledge resides and how knowledge flows) and establishment of project MIS;
- identification and introduction of appropriate media, tools and practices for sharing local information and knowledge in electronic and traditional forms;
- development of guidelines and recommendations for improving access to information on agricultural extension, markets, banking and social services for rural people;
- project, national and regional-level knowledge management and sharing workshops;
- exchange visits among projects financed by the Fund and by other partners;
- development and implementation of ICT training/awareness programmes for IFAD project staff (including website and database design, MIS, software/equipment procurement, system maintenance and operation, skills training);
- establishment and implementation of ‘help desks’ and related communities of practice on ICT tools, knowledge management and selected thematic skills (e.g. participatory monitoring and evaluation, use of media for village-level communication);
- an improved ENRAP website and related tools, including electronic newsletters; and



- development of guidelines and recommendations for IFAD project design processes that include attention to knowledge management and use of ICTs.

IV. EXPECTED OUTPUTS/EXPECTED BENEFITS

11. ENRAP II is expected to contribute to:

- strengthening the knowledge management capacity of project and line agency staff;
- improving project stakeholders' understanding of project goals, objectives and activities;
- increasing the adoption of effective knowledge management practices by IFAD projects;
- strengthening networks of project partners;
- enhancing the capacity of CBOs/NGOs and rural communities to document, utilize and share knowledge, including advocacy and social mobilization activities;
- improving the documentation and dissemination of lessons emerging from IFAD-funded projects for replication, scaling up and policy dialogue with governments and other partners;
- increasing the access of rural communities or individual farmers to agricultural extension and market information;
- ensuring that the staff of IFAD-funded projects use, and effectively contribute to, knowledge-sharing tools such as the website, electronic mail lists, information networks, communities of practice and outreach networks; and
- preparation of guidelines on knowledge management and ICT for IFAD-funded projects.

12. The measurable benefits of ENRAP II are expected to consist of:

- increased effectiveness of project management and monitoring;
- improved Internet access for IFAD-funded projects;
- greater interaction and communication among IFAD projects;
- availability of customized training materials on ICT and knowledge networking for project staff and beneficiaries;
- availability of knowledge repositories and experts relevant to local communities within IFAD projects;
- increased mobilization of rural communities and CBOs to generate and share knowledge through ICT tools; and
- enhanced capacity of project staff and other stakeholders to document and disseminate lessons learned.

V. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

13. ENRAP II will be implemented by IDRC in collaboration with IFAD headquarters and a number of projects financed by the Fund. In recruiting consultants, priority will be given to qualified experts from developing countries. The ENRAP II core team will establish broad collaboration with international, regional and national organizations that are willing to share their knowledge resources and can contribute to building knowledge assets. Such institutions might include the Regional Agricultural Information System for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (India) and the Population and Community Development Association in Thailand, all of which are receiving IDRC support for telecentre projects through its PanAsia Networking Programme. In order to share expertise and training, ENRAP II will also maintain close relationships with other IDRC and IFAD programme initiatives, such as the Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies, and the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme, as well as with FIDAMERICA and FIDAFRIQUE.

14. IDRC will appoint a core implementation team responsible for managing ENRAP II and for implementing the above-mentioned tasks. The team, which will be located in a country where IFAD-funded projects are operational, will be guided and supervised by a five-to-six person steering committee comprising representatives of IFAD-funded projects, IDRC and IFAD headquarters. IDRC will provide IFAD with quarterly reports on financial and implementation progress. An MTR will be undertaken during the second year of implementation.

VI. INDICATIVE PROGRAMME COSTS AND FINANCING

15. An indicative budget for the three-year programme and major cost categories are provided in the table below. Total programme costs amount to USD 1.615 million, of which IFAD will provide USD 1 000 000. IDRC will contribute USD 287 000 to cover training/workshop expenses, TA and professional staff, while the share of various IFAD-funded projects in the region will amount to USD 328 000 to be used mainly for the purchase of equipment and training and workshop participation. Provision will be made for such activities in new IFAD projects.

INDICATIVE COST AND FINANCING PLAN FOR THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME
(USD)

Cost Category	IFAD	IDRC	Projects	Total
Management and administration	120 000	37 000	28 000	185 000
Technical backstopping and external audit ^a	55 000	40 000		95 000
TA and infrastructure	220 000	44 000	160 000	424 000
Training/workshops/research	380 000	150 000	140 000	670 000
Professional staff costs	225 000	16 000		241 000
Total	1 000 000	287 000	328 000	1 615 000

^a External consultants recruited by IDRC, at the request of IFAD.



VII. RECOMMENDATION

16. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed TA grant in terms of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the Programme for Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific (ENRAP) Projects – Phase II – over a period of three years commencing in July 2002, shall make a grant not exceeding one million United States dollars (USD 1 000 000) to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board in this Report and Recommendation of the President.

Lennart Båge
President