



**IFAD**  
**INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**Executive Board – Seventy-Sixth Session**  
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**SUMMARY DELIVERED BY**  
**MR VÍCTOR HUGO MORALES MELÉNDEZ,**  
**CHAIRMAN OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE,**  
**OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE**  
**EVALUATION OF IFAD'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS PROGRAMME FOR**  
**AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**

Thank you Mr President,

As you noted, I am carrying out the decision of the Evaluation Committee at its Thirty-First Session to present to this Executive Board the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the Evaluation of IFAD's Technical Assistance Grants Programme for Agricultural Research. Naturally, further details and complete information can be found in the full report and in the executive summary that, as you just mentioned, was distributed yesterday to all members of the Executive Board.

This programme was created in 1979 to provide grants to international scientific research centres and thus contribute to reducing rural poverty. Since then IFAD has awarded 199 grants for a total of USD 171.5 million to 35 such international centres.

The evaluation took place in the context of the formulation of an IFAD policy on the use of grant funds. It sought to assess the achievements of the programme, analyse financing trends and make recommendations on the future orientation of the programme itself. To this end, the evaluation team reviewed the documentation of 67 grants, conducted a formal survey of recipient centres and made field visits to nine grantees.

The evaluation report indicates that grants have made it possible to support research on established crops, 'neglected' crops, integrated pest management, livestock, commercial insects, natural resource management and, to a lesser extent, fisheries.



Evaluation results suggest that there is a positive trend in the thematic evolution of the research approach of the programme, with a growing emphasis on poverty, environmental sustainability, and production in arid and semi-arid regions. But the results also show that a clear policy and strategic framework has not yet been established for the setting of priorities. Similarly, the results indicate that the majority of the proposals are well designed in terms of their rationale, objectives and components, but most appear too ambitious and lack reference to relevant earlier grants. Many of the technology outputs can be considered appropriate to the rural poor. Finally, based on the results, there are few examples of linkages between grant-financed research and IFAD loan projects.

It is known that agricultural research can have considerable impact in poverty reduction; nevertheless, the measurement of such impact is complex. Given this, the evaluation adopted a methodology for assessing the potential for impact. Although it was able to identify successful cases, such as the biological control of the cassava mealybug, in general grants did not fulfil the conditions established for determining significant impact in poverty reduction. They did, however, have a positive impact on institutional capacity. Similarly, the evaluation showed that almost all the grants had generated lessons worth disseminating, and therefore dissemination also needed to be strengthened. Further, the evaluation pointed out that programme management had improved considerably in recent years.

The evaluation team reached the following conclusions: the grant programme remains relevant to IFAD's mandate; the Fund has played a strong advocacy role in redirecting the focus of the CGIAR system towards more poverty-focused research; and lastly, the programme needs a strategy and a niche focus in innovative research for poverty reduction.

Based on the study and conclusions, the evaluation arrived at six specific recommendations to: (i) develop a policy and strategy for IFAD's support to agricultural research; (ii) strengthen the linkages between grant-financed research and the Fund's loan programme; (iii) enhance the poverty impact of the programme; (iv) improve internal processes and procedures; (v) reassess the resources required and provide for adequate allocations; (vi) give immediate attention to knowledge generation and dissemination.

The members of the Evaluation Committee were in agreement in stating that the report presented to them is excellent; the same sentiments were expressed regarding the presentation by the Office of Evaluation and Studies. I have already mentioned that yesterday the Secretariat distributed the executive summary of the evaluation, and you will of course have the opportunity to read and analyse it in greater detail. The members of the committee would like to emphasize the fact that this is the first evaluation of the programme since it was created 23 years ago and they fully endorse the recommendations.

Further to the different ideas and views regarding the results of the evaluation that were expressed during the session by the participants – including naturally the observers and IFAD staff – committee members have added other recommendations. The most important are the following: the programme should give farmers the opportunity to select the agricultural research needed, i.e. it should be demand-driven. This was very clearly stated yesterday by our colleague from Nigeria in treating this same theme. Another recommendation is to establish clear priorities regarding the financing IFAD provides through this programme. Yet another is to strengthen the linkage between



IFAD and the national agricultural research systems, so that these can improve their capacity for pro-poor research. One further recommendation of the committee was to ensure that grants serve as a useful instrument for agricultural innovation – which was also expressed yesterday in this forum by the representative of Switzerland. And, very important, the committee requested that the Secretariat of IFAD present a complete overview of the current situation of the grants that the Fund is implementing.

The committee members further requested that the Secretariat implement all of the recommendations, i.e. those derived both from the evaluation itself and from the committee's analysis and discussion. In addition, they requested that the Secretariat keep members of the committee informed of follow-up to the recommendations. Committee members are confident that the results of the evaluation and the debates will contribute to the formulation of a grants policy for the Fund. Thank you.