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**IFAD POLICY ON SECTOR-WIDE APPROACHES
FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASDP	Agricultural Sector Development Programme
ASIP	agricultural sector investment programme
COSOP	country strategic opportunities paper
GBS	general budget support
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services (Uganda)
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (Uganda)
PROAGRI	Agricultural Sector Public Expenditure Programme
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
SIP	sector investment programme
SWAp	sector-wide approach

A. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Sector-wide approaches

1. **Introduction.** The last decade has witnessed a transformation in international development assistance. This has involved both an unprecedented consensus on development objectives at the international and national levels, and a commitment on the part of a large number of development assistance stakeholders as to how those objectives may be pursued more effectively. It is a transformation that has been driven by a number of factors. Chief among these have been, at the global level, the Millennium Development Goals, to which in September 2000 the world's governments committed themselves; at the national level, poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) or other forms of strategies for poverty reduction, which in most of the world's poorest countries provide a national point of reference for development efforts; and, within the international development community, the harmonization, alignment and results agenda that, following the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of February 2005, seeks to reform the way that the international development community – donors and partners alike – works and to enhance the impact of development assistance through improved alignment at the country level combined with strengthened country ownership of development efforts.

2. Sector-wide approaches (SWAp) generally, and agricultural/rural SWAp in particular, lie squarely within the new international development architecture that has emerged from this transformation. In certain situations, SWAp – nationally-owned and executed sectoral programmes for the achievement of key objectives for broad-based growth and poverty reduction – are held to be the most effective platforms for the pursuit of common sectoral objectives. There is no single universally-accepted definition of what constitutes a SWAp and, indeed, the terms 'sector approach', 'sector support', 'sector-wide programmes', 'sector investment programme' and 'SWAp' are frequently used interchangeably. However the following definition is widely quoted: "... *all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds*¹."

3. While the form that individual SWAp take varies considerably, they do share a number of common characteristics. First, they represent a **partnership** between the government, which is expected to provide leadership; their international development partners, who are themselves expected to adopt common positions and, to the extent possible, harmonize their support; and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. Second, SWAp are explicitly not expected to provide a blueprint for action; rather, the partnerships established are designed to provide a framework for a **process** of dialogue and action relative to a shared sectoral vision and objectives. Third, and in contrast to earlier approaches, SWAp are intended to focus not only on the financing of a comprehensive **investment** programme, but also on **policy** dialogue and change, and on the provision of support to, and reform of, national **institutions**.

4. **Funding arrangements.** As an investment programme, a SWAp aims to embrace **all** public funding for the sector in question. This has two important implications: first, that all funding to the sector should support the policies, strategies and investment activities associated with the SWAp; and, second, that all funding – including that of the development partners – should be considered 'on-budget', that is to say, a part of the national budget and reflected as such in the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)² and annual allocations. Yet a SWAp is not in itself an aid

¹ *The Status of Sector Wide Approaches*, A. Brown, A. Norton, F. Naschold; January 2001. Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Working Paper 142. London: ODI.

² The MTEF is a mechanism for public expenditure management, designed to enhance the ability of the ministry of finance to manage the economy by allocating government expenditures, including those financed through international development assistance, between and within ministries over a rolling three-year period.

instrument: there is no automatic association between a SWAp and a specific type of financing mechanism. Thus there are a number of ways that development partners' funds can be made available to support a SWAp. These include:

- **Budget support.** General budget support consists of untied funds made available in support of the PRSP and the MTEF, and disbursed to the ministry of finance to allocate across sectors according to national priorities. With sector budget support the funds are tied to the specific sector in question.
- **Basket funding, or pooled funding.** An arrangement whereby the development partners deposit their funds into, and disburse from, a single dedicated account, either within the ministry of finance or at the level of the sector ministry itself, established specifically to finance the defined and agreed investment activities of the SWAp or specific elements within the SWAp.
- **Non-pooled funding.** Funding made available either to finance specific activities of the SWAp or to finance discrete projects that fall under the overall SWAp umbrella.

5. **Fiduciary arrangements.** The fiduciary arrangements used in SWAps include systems and procedures for planning and budgeting; disbursement of funds; procurement; and accounting and external audits. The establishment of such arrangements, accepted by all stakeholders in the SWAp, is intended both to reduce the transaction costs to the government by minimizing the use of separate financier requirements and to contribute to strengthening government procurement and financial management capacity.

6. **The status of SWAps to date.** The SWAp model was first developed for the social sectors – principally health and education – and, according to the most recent aggregation (from 2000), the majority (56%) were in these two sectors. They have also been applied widely in the roads/transport sector. Agricultural/rural SWAps represented only a relatively small subset of the total SWAp population at that time (13%) – a proportion which is probably even lower today. Of the total population of 90 SWAps in 2000 (assumed to be considerably higher today) some 85% were in sub-Saharan Africa (with the majority in Eastern and Southern Africa) and a further 9% in Asia³.

Agricultural and rural SWAps

7. Within the limited number of agricultural/rural sector programmes to date, there has been a discernible evolution in the approach followed. The agricultural sector investment programmes (ASIPs) of the early 1990s, characterized by their policy preconditionalities and their focus on investment, gave way to the first SWAps, which sought to establish partnerships between the government and their development partners as a basis for promoting a process of sectoral policy dialogue and investment⁴. These in turn paved the way for the more recent SWAps, which in defining 'the sector' go beyond the mandate of the ministry of agriculture and adopt a broader inter-sectoral approach.

8. Features of these more recent SWAps include the following. First, they are intended to be outcome-focused and driven by the requirements of their clients and other actors within the sector, rather than by the existing configuration of organizations in the sector. Second, they consequently seek to define the agriculture sector broadly, to encompass the range of factors that affect the success of agriculture-based livelihood; and as such they may engage other ministries that can contribute to this agenda. Coordination of these various actors, including an involvement of the private sector, is a key role for an agricultural/rural SWAp (and it is for precisely this reason that such an approach may not be suitable in a country with weak mechanisms for inter-sectoral coordination). Third, their cross-

³ Foster, Brown and Naschold (2000). *What's different about agricultural SWAps?* Paper presented at the Department for International Development (DFID) Natural Resources Advisers' Conference. London: ODI.

⁴ Bazeley (2001). *SIPs, SWAps, and Livelihoods*. Report to DFID-Malawi. Crewkerne: the IDL Group.

sectoral approach means that they may more accurately be considered to be rural livelihood or rural development SWApS, and they are often constructed to be the ‘rural pillars’ of PRSPs. This is important, given the importance of the sector for overall poverty reduction and growth in many countries. This approach is to be found in, for example, Uganda, where the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) is generally considered to be one of the most mature rural SWApS.

9. Overall, less than a dozen countries have had experience with, or are currently planning, agricultural/rural sector programmes of the ASIP/SWAp type. These include Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in Eastern and Southern Africa; Benin and Ghana in West and Central Africa; and Honduras and Nicaragua in Latin America. The majority of these countries are in Eastern and Southern Africa. The reason for this geographical concentration is probably to be found in a combination of the high levels of aid dependency in the countries of the region, the specific nature of government-donor relations there, and the particular relation between agriculture, rural development and poverty reduction. In countries in which agriculture represents a relatively small share of gross domestic product, or in which there are stronger institutions and policies, rural poverty reduction may be more effectively addressed through targeted projects and programmes⁵. Equally, in countries and regions in which external assistance represents a much lower percentage of public expenditure, or where donor perspectives are more varied, the incidence and possibility of comprehensive approaches may be different⁶.

Why an IFAD policy on agricultural and rural SWApS?

10. Agricultural/rural SWApS represent a central strategic choice made by a number of IFAD’s partner governments concerned with rural poverty reduction, and, where well constructed, they offer important prospects for reducing rural poverty. They are also strongly endorsed by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, to which IFAD is a committed signatory⁷. Participation – not only in their implementation but also in their development – provides IFAD with a unique opportunity for promoting national-level policies and investments that respond to the real needs of poor rural people. The question facing IFAD, therefore, is not **whether** it should support SWAp development and implementation, but rather, **how** it should do so. That is the question this paper seeks to answer. It aims to present a policy and associated strategy for IFAD on how to engage in agricultural/rural SWApS in a way that, on the one hand, is wholly consistent with its mandate and the financial and other mechanisms at its disposal; and, on the other, uses its comparative advantage and experience to best effect, so as to contribute to maximizing the impact of the SWApS in terms of rural poverty reduction. This last point is critical: the objective is not to focus on the impact of the IFAD funds alone, but rather to use IFAD’s engagement as a catalyst for making SWApS an effective vehicle for reducing rural poverty at the national level.

11. In recent years, IFAD has participated in a number of agricultural/rural SWApS in Eastern and Southern Africa⁸. It has done so in different ways in different countries: its experience includes supporting the process of developing the sector strategies upon which the SWApS are to be based, contributing to their conceptualization and planning, supporting the development of subsector policies within the SWAp framework, and contributing to their financing and supporting their implementation. An important purpose of this policy paper, therefore, is to synthesize the knowledge gained and

⁵ Thus, in Asia, IFAD targets the poorest rural areas and marginalized populations (frequently ethnic minorities), while in Latin America, a territorial approach is used to link the rural poor of a given region to dynamic markets and to (non-poor) social agents and sectors that are essential to the poor.

⁶ This seems to be the case in West and Central Africa where there is little active support for agricultural SWApS among either governments or most donors.

⁷ Within the Declaration, Indicator of Progress no.9 refers to “Use of common procedures”, and targets the percentage of aid provided as programme-based approaches. In this regard, SWApS are explicitly included in the definition of programme-based approaches.

⁸ Looking to broaden its experience, IFAD is presently planning to participate in a SWAp in Nicaragua.

promote its sharing and institutionalization across the Fund. In this way, it is also expected to provide direction and guidance to all those IFAD staff working on countries where SWAp are under consideration. Not only: clarifying IFAD's position relative to SWAp will ensure common expectations both on the part of IFAD's partner governments and other members of the development community. Overall, the policy paper is expected to provide a platform for IFAD to make more informed investment operations, engage in more substantive policy dialogue, and form more effective partnerships with governments and other development partners.

B. EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

12. Not surprisingly perhaps, given the very limited number of agricultural/rural SWAp that have been implemented to date, there is a lack of systematic analysis of their experiences. Nevertheless, drawing upon on a combination of country reviews, limited IFAD experience and literature on SWAp in other sectors, it is possible to identify a number of key issues and lessons associated with agricultural/rural SWAp as effective vehicles for rural poverty reduction.

The link between PRSPs and SWAp

13. The PRSP or equivalent represents the overall policy framework for the country: it provides the basis for the agricultural/rural sector policy framework for poverty reduction; and this in turn provides the framework for the SWAp. In some countries these linkages have been firmly established, and the rural SWAp has been regarded as one of the 'pillars' of the PRSP. However, some SWAp have not been focused on reducing rural poverty as their key goal and in many PRSPs the agriculture and rural development sections are weak and in need of further analysis and reformulation; this is perhaps the result of the rushed process by which many of the first PRSPs were developed.

14. Today, the linkages between PRSP, sector policy framework and SWAp are better understood, both by governments and their development partners, than was the case even a few years ago. Two specific lessons emerge. The first is the need to ensure both a strong focus on poverty reduction at all levels of policy and strategy, and a coherence and consistency in the goals, objectives and outputs sought, and the approaches adopted, at the different levels. The second is to recognize the iterative nature of policy and strategy development processes, and to use the lessons learned at one level to inform understanding and future priorities at all levels with a view to ensuring constant improvement. Thus future SWAp must be derived from the higher-level elements in the hierarchy of poverty reduction strategies; while the next iteration of poverty reduction strategies should draw more substantively upon the agricultural/rural SWAp and their experience – so as to be better targeted, prioritized and focused, yet more holistic in scope, than the first round.

The special challenges of the agricultural sector

15. Sector-wide programmes are most commonly found in the social sectors – health and education – and it was the model developed for those sectors that provided the basis for the first agricultural SWAp. Yet there are a number of features of the agricultural sector that make it fundamentally different from others, and that make developing and implementing a SWAp in this sector perhaps inherently more difficult⁹.

- The role of the state in agriculture is different to its role in the social sectors. Governments are not directly responsible for bringing about agricultural growth; rather, in an environment characterized by widespread and deep market failure, they are required to create the conditions, through both their investments and their policies, that enable private-sector producers and market intermediaries to expand their economic activities and market relations. Their role is thus indirect: addressing market failure in the rural

⁹ Foster et al (2000). (op. cit.)

economy and assisting their clients to engage effectively in the new market environment – rather than direct: implementing policies for service delivery. This is a difficult role to play and, perhaps, agricultural policies and services may not have adapted easily to the new requirements imposed upon them.

- In each country the agricultural sector comprises millions of producers and market intermediaries operating under extremely varied conditions according to the agro-ecological environment, levels and combinations of assets, production objectives, and access to technical and financial services and markets. Perhaps more than in health or education, agricultural technologies need to be developed locally and in close collaboration with the rural producers who will seek to fit them within their broader economic livelihoods. In addition, because agricultural technologies tend to be target group-specific, if close attention is not given to the targeting issue, the benefits can easily be captured by local rural elites rather than by the rural poor.
- It appears to be more difficult to arrive at broad consensus on the key issues in the agricultural/rural sector than it is in the social sectors. Donors do not always agree with governments, nor indeed among themselves, either as to what constitutes an appropriate role for the state – and, in particular, what should be the limits of its role in the agricultural sector; or to what extent the SWAp should be broadly cross-sectoral (and thus interagency) rather than agricultural (and thus the preserve of that ministry alone). In a number of countries there has been vigorous, and in a few cases unresolved, debate as to the appropriate scope of the agricultural/rural SWAp.

16. These features of the agricultural sector mean that it is inappropriate to uncritically apply an institutional model developed for other sectors. The agricultural/rural SWAp model thus needs to be developed pragmatically on the basis of an understanding of the key issues facing poor agricultural producers in specific environments (rather than from any a priori models), building upon a coherent vision for the development of the sector and its role in rural poverty reduction, and taking into account the policy and institutional constraints faced by the country.

Ownership of agricultural/rural SWAps

17. The initial impetus for sector investment programmes (SIPs) and, more recently, SWAps, came from the international development community rather than from governments; and partly as a consequence, the SIPs and some of the early SWAps suffered from a lack of government ownership of the fundamental ideas. In Mozambique, for example, the design process for the Agricultural Sector Public Expenditure Programme – PROAGRI was heavily donor-influenced and resulted in a set of basic principles that were contended by government for the duration of its implementation. However, the evolution of sector programmes from SIPs to SWAps, with their focus on partnerships, has gradually had the effect of making national ownership of sector policies and strategies a reality. Certainly this is the case in Uganda, where there is high ownership of key arguments and policies, and to a lesser extent in Nicaragua.

18. On the other hand, among some line ministry staff a sense remains that SWAps have been imposed upon them: not only by the donors but also by the ministries of finance, which appreciate the budgetary logic of SWAps. More fundamentally, in a significant number of countries, ministry of agriculture staff – and particularly field staff away from the capital – have only a weak understanding of the SWAp concept and limited commitment to it, and they typically consider the SWAp as ‘business as usual’. Beyond government, most SWAps seek to promote the involvement of private-sector investors and service providers in the sector, and envisage a strong role for civil-society organizations – both organizations of producers and NGOs. Yet the institutional architecture established for SWAps has certainly not always engaged these groups as partners in their development, and not all SWAps have sought to build their capacity to engage in the sector in a

meaningful and effective manner¹⁰. The lesson is evident: ensuring ownership of all of these parties – government staff, private-sector players and civil-society organizations – is a critical task to which both ongoing and future SWAp must address themselves in a more structured manner than in the past¹¹, and as a critical element of the decentralization process.

Agricultural/rural SWAps and decentralization

19. Decentralization is an issue of particular importance to the agricultural sector, which requires locally adapted strategies and approaches to respond to local characteristics; yet it presents a complex political, technical and administrative challenge to governments and demands strong management capacity to guide the process forward. Most countries with agricultural/rural SWAps have engaged in some form of national decentralization process as part of wider public service reform.

20. Whatever the decentralization model adopted, there is need for the SWAp to contribute to strengthening local capacity. Support needs to be given to local-level government staff – on the one hand to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the SWAp process, and, on the other hand, to strengthen their capacity for (participatory) planning, budgeting, financial management and reporting. Experience from a number of countries suggests that efforts to promote non-government provision of agricultural support services are severely constrained by the weak capacity of the private sector and NGOs in rural areas. Building their capacity to respond to farmer requirements should be another element in a SWAp-based strategy for strengthening decentralization processes.

21. Yet decentralization is not an end in itself; it should rather be a means to developing effective, responsive, demand-led services and, in particular, to making government services more locally accountable to poor rural people. Taken in isolation, however, there is no particular reason why decentralization should enhance accountability; on the contrary, it may well entrench the influence and power of local elites. The key issue therefore is one of empowering poor rural people: enabling them to develop the skills, the knowledge, the confidence and the organization that they require to participate in local political processes and to hold government and private service providers accountable to them. Agricultural/rural SWAps have tended to focus on decentralizing from the top down; much of IFAD's engagement to date has been to build the capacity from the bottom up in order to promote real accountability to poor rural people. This must continue to be among its top priorities.

Monitoring the impact of agricultural/rural SWAps

22. In order for agricultural/rural SWAps to contribute effectively to rural poverty reduction, processes and mechanisms must be put in place to identify and respond to the real economic problems of poor rural producers, and to monitor the effect and impact of the investment activities financed. Experience suggests that targeting of SWAps has not been automatic – though it is an issue that IFAD has sought to emphasize – and that more attention has been given to financial management systems and financial reporting than to physical reporting and impact monitoring. Indeed, despite increasing recognition of the need for SWAps to have effective monitoring frames and indicators, to date none of them have monitoring systems that work effectively at all levels. On the one hand, this weakens the capacity of the managers of the SWAps to assess whether the activities being implemented are appropriate and on course; while on the other, it makes it difficult to know to what extent agricultural/rural SWAps have had a positive impact on rural poverty reduction. In the absence of reliable data, it is possible only to assert that neither the original ASIPs nor the first-generation

¹⁰ In both Nicaragua and Honduras, civil-society organizations are not fully satisfied with the SWAps and they have asked for greater consultation and the use of participatory methods; while one reason for the non-emergence of the Senegal ASIP was the strong opposition of civil society.

¹¹ This is a point brought out vividly in the ongoing Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) Process Review, conducted for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in the United Republic of Tanzania.

SWApS have probably had much impact on the poor. By contrast, Uganda's PMA – the most advanced of the next generation of SWApS – underwent its second joint review in 2003. This concluded that although there was a danger of the poor missing out on the benefits of PMA, if certain actions were taken then its chances of success in reducing poverty were high¹².

23. Establishing an effective monitoring and evaluation system for a SWAp is clearly a major challenge and, given the difficulties faced in doing this within projects, the scale of the task required to carry this out at the national scale should not be underestimated. Yet it is an area that needs more consistent attention and support by the donors: indeed, it is critical if SWApS are to have their intended impact as vehicles for rural poverty reduction.

The financing of agricultural/rural SWApS

24. A variety of mechanisms are currently used to finance agricultural/rural sector programmes: general budget support (GBS); basket or pooled funding at the level of the sector; and earmarked or project funding. In practice, none of these options is as distinct as it appears and most agricultural/rural SWApS are actually financed through all three mechanisms. Many donors use more than one of these mechanisms in the same country, and indeed there are cases of donors using all three simultaneously¹³.

25. So, does it matter how SWApS are funded? A key justification for SWApS is the desire to reduce the transaction costs of dealing with numerous donor planning and accountability requirements. The example of the health sector in Mozambique – which, prior to the SWAp there, was supported by more than 20 different donors – certainly provides a compelling argument for harmonized funding arrangements of some kind. Some have further argued that, in the context of efforts to improve national public expenditure management, sector programmes should ideally be financed through GBS. Basket or pooled funding, it is suggested, has the potential to distort financial allocations between sectors, and as such is only a second-best solution. Yet the argument for GBS assumes that intersectoral budgetary allocations are made according to transparent and technocratic procedures linked to the PRSP or similar. In fact, the agricultural sector is poorly represented both within the PRSP and in the political processes associated with budget negotiations; and in many countries the ministry of agriculture is unable to ensure an allocation consistent with its importance for poverty reduction. In addition, when donors switch from pooled funding at the sector level to GBS they may also withdraw from the ongoing process of sector-level policy dialogue, and so potentially weaken the SWAp¹⁴. Thus the issue of financing modality is not a simple one and, ideally, the appropriate mode of support to be provided by an individual development partner is a decision that should be pragmatic, impact-oriented and made in consultation with the government.

26. A different issue related to the financing of SWApS concerns the ministry of agriculture's budgetary allocation (or 'budget ceiling'). Reflecting the weak political leverage of ministries of agriculture in the budget negotiation process, in many instances the ceilings set for them are considered to be too low. This has meant that, in Uganda for example, the only element of its PMA to have effectively taken off is the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) Programme; and even this has had to be scaled down in order for the ministry to remain within its ceiling, despite

¹² The mid-term review of PMA scheduled for April/May 2005 is expected to focus squarely on the issue of impact.

¹³ In Mozambique, for example, the European Union contributes to the pooled fund but also provides GBS to the Treasury and supports individual projects.

¹⁴ In Mozambique, where PROAGRI II is shortly to start up, a number of key development partners are disengaging from basket funding and providing their support instead through projects and GBS. While this is in theory entirely consistent with support for the SWAp, the concern is that they are also withdrawing from the PROAGRI Working Group and Consultative Forum, which provide the main fora for policy dialogue at the sector level.

donor funds being available to finance additional expenditures¹⁵. In essence, there is frequently a mismatch between the poverty reduction objectives for the sector and the resources made available to achieve these objectives. The issue is clear: particularly for those development partners engaged in policy dialogue at the macro level, there is need to emphasize the importance of a budget allocation process that is transparent, pro-rural and pro-poor. IFAD must work with them to pursue this agenda.

Agricultural/rural SWAps and aid effectiveness

27. Part of the aid effectiveness agenda is to promote reliable medium-term funding commitments on the part of international development organizations. In practice, there is a major issue of donor reliability relative to financing: PROAGRI in particular has been badly affected by confirmed financing commitments by the donors not being fully realized: in 2003, as much as 33% of commitments were not made available – a failure which led to a donor apology “... for broken promises and for delays in disbursement”¹⁶. In this particular case, IFAD funds in support of PROAGRI played a critical role in ensuring a continuous flow of funds to the sector at a time when those of other donors were not forthcoming¹⁷.

28. An assumption made is that adopting increasingly harmonized approaches such as sector programmes reduces governments’ transaction costs associated with dealing with multiple funding partners. However, according to one study (in the education sector), governments actually found that transaction costs increase with a SWAp until the new arrangements fully replace the old¹⁸. It has also been observed that the regular ‘policy dialogue’ associated with the SWAp between the donor group and government may actually take up as much time of government staff as project-specific meetings did formerly. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a particular concern expressed is that many development partners “... have a tendency to focus on minor administrative issues. They offer little strategic value added in helping [the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania] to resolve other more fundamental issues ...”¹⁹.

29. There are many examples of productive dialogue leading to policy change on key issues facing the agricultural sector in general and poor rural people in particular. However, it is evident that not all donors’ in-country representatives have a strong technical understanding of the critical issues facing the agricultural sector, or are able to engage as closely as is necessary. Where this is the case, it is not only policy dialogue that suffers; it is also the ability of donors to provide effective implementation support for agricultural/rural SWAps that is weakened. Ultimately, ineffective and unreliable engagement in agricultural/rural SWAps by governments’ development partners must be considered a real concern for the success of the SWAp model. Yet, conversely, it provides a strong argument for full participation by IFAD in the SWAp process, and, in particular, it suggests that there is an important opportunity for it to play an active and substantive role, not only as a reliable financier but also as an informed and experienced player both in policy dialogue relative to poverty reduction issues and in the implementation support processes.

¹⁵ Interestingly, the proliferation of ministries in the United Republic of Tanzania (six dealing with agriculture/rural development in one way or another) appears to ensure that each subsector receives a ring-fenced budget ceiling rather than having to fight for funds within a larger agricultural/rural development pool.

¹⁶ Strategic Partnership with Africa: Sector Programmes Working Group, mission report (December 2003).

¹⁷ IFAD funds have both the advantage to governments of predictability – they do not require annual approval – and the disadvantage of being predominantly loan- rather than grant-based. In the case of Uganda’s NAADS Programme, IFAD funds have been the last to be drawn down by government as it has – understandably – sought to maximize the use of grant, rather than loan, funds.

¹⁸ Brown et al (2001). (op. cit.)

¹⁹ ASDP Process Review. (op. cit.)

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR IFAD'S ENGAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL/RURAL SWAPS

The context

30. IFAD is dedicated to reducing rural poverty. Its goal is to contribute to the long-term development of opportunities for poor rural people and so to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals – and particularly to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. At the country level, its programmes are guided by, and seek to contribute to the development of, the policies, strategies and programmes of its partner governments – in many cases presented within a PRSP framework, but in many others under some other form of national poverty reduction strategy. The Fund is a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, and it is actively committed to the agenda defined therein.

31. The determinants of how IFAD resources are used must be, on the one hand, the available options and their expected impact on poverty reduction and, on the other hand, the position and priorities of its partner governments. In some cases, these may point IFAD towards engagement in an agricultural/rural SWAp. Yet it is evident that while SWAps **generically** may be relatively widespread, the SWAp phenomenon in the agricultural/rural sector is extremely limited. This means that IFAD is unlikely to be overwhelmingly engaged in SWAp processes, except in the limited number of countries where they are embraced by all stakeholders as the way forward. In these countries, however, where the scope exists for IFAD to add value to the process, it will actively support both the emergence of SWAps and their operationalization. Where it does so, engagement will provide a major opportunity for IFAD to have substantial influence on policy and strategy development for rural poverty reduction at the national level.

32. On the other hand, it is important not to over-state the difference between countries with an agricultural/rural SWAp and those without: in **all** countries, IFAD will be looking to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs and in particular seeking to enable the rural poor to overcome their poverty. In many countries, it will be supporting governments as they seek to develop national, sectoral and subsectoral policies and strategies for poverty reduction, and promoting the participation of rural people's organizations in processes associated with their development. In **all** countries its programmes will be supportive of such policies and strategies. In **all** countries, IFAD will aim to work in a way that reduces the transaction costs to the government and contributes to an enhancing of overall aid effectiveness. And in **all** countries, it will not only be bringing to the table loan and grant resources for financing investments within the sector, it will also be seeking to expand its effectiveness everywhere in policy dialogue, knowledge management, management for impact and partnership development.

What IFAD can bring to agricultural/rural SWAps

33. Stakeholders, including IFAD, understand the opportunities and constraints of agricultural/rural SWAps much better today than when they were first launched. It is recognized that SWAps are not blueprints to which stakeholders simply subscribe; rather, they are the product of their collaboration. Stakeholders have to work together to create new and comprehensive solutions, and what 'comes out' can be no better than what is 'put in' the process. The task therefore is one of working together with governments and other development partners to build them and then constantly strengthen them during the course of implementation. Under such circumstances, engaging in SWAps offers IFAD a unique opportunity to have a catalytic impact on rural poverty reduction, adding value to them by promoting the themes and issues that it has learned from a quarter century of experience are critical to the livelihoods of poor rural people. It has a mandate to do so, and it does so armed with a strong conceptual framework for poverty reduction – as expressed in its strategic framework 2002-2006 and its regional strategies – and substantial experience with working in rural poverty reduction.

34. **Strengthening the poverty focus.** While, increasingly, agricultural/rural SWAp have an explicit focus on poverty reduction, by no means all governments or their development partners have strong experience in operationalizing this goal. As a consequence, it is by no means automatic that SWAp either have a strong conceptual approach for poverty reduction or are able to promote the demand-driven agenda that underpins it. IFAD's objective in participating in agricultural/rural SWAp, therefore, will be everywhere the same: **to ensure that they work for the poor**. It has a critical and direct role to play, both in supporting the emergence of policies that respond directly to the requirements of poor rural people and in promoting practical approaches and instruments for implementing those policies. These include building a shared understanding of poor rural people as the target group for the SWAp; assisting the development of an understanding of the target group's livelihoods, and their economic constraints and opportunities; encouraging a client-oriented approach for research and extension; promoting the growth of rural trading networks; supporting the emergence of farmers' enterprise groups; and identifying the specific needs of women and developing approaches for their empowerment.

35. Ultimately, the most secure basis for making SWAp work for the poor is to maximize the input of the poor themselves into their design and implementation. IFAD will work with other stakeholders to include representatives of smallholder producers in key consultation processes – and to strengthen the capacity of the smallholder community and their representatives to collectively analyse and articulate their key requirements for sectoral change²⁰. IFAD will also seek to build their empowerment into the national and local mechanisms of SWAp implementation so as to strengthen their capacity to effectively exercise control relative to the service providers (government and private) with whom they interact, and so make the service providers accountable to them as service choosers and users²¹. Effectively, therefore, IFAD must promote **governance** relative to the SWAp, and to every institution involved in it, the objective being not only good governance but good governance embracing an increased voice of the rural poor in decision-making.

36. **Strengthening the focus on impact.** SWAp require very broad and intensive engagement at the programme development stage, preceded by quite intensive policy and strategy work. Equally, they must be accompanied by close attention to impact and results during implementation – not least because SWAp are considered processes of constant adjustment in which implementation and impact feed-back is essential. As noted above, the current situation with regard to monitoring agricultural/rural SWAp is not satisfactory. On the one hand, they represent the concentrated effort of stakeholders with regard to agricultural development and rural poverty reduction – and usually have quite innovative dimensions. On the other hand, very little effort is being expended on finding out whether they are working – in terms of achievement of anticipated impact on rural poverty. If SWAp are means, rather than ends, this must be considered a major shortcoming. Areas of particular focus for IFAD therefore must be to: (a) ensure that agricultural/rural SWAp have effective output and impact monitoring systems; (b) assist in building an understanding of the value of monitoring and evaluation and a capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities at the national and local levels; and (c) above all, promote both a culture of management for impact, and a **demand** for monitoring and evaluation data, among the managers of the SWAp.

37. **Strengthening government ownership.** The new development agenda in general, and SWAp specifically, explicitly aim to encourage governments to assume a stronger leadership role in the coordination of development assistance and to assist in building their capacity to do so. They seek to ensure that development assistance is delivered in accordance with country priorities and in support of their policies and institutions; and they aim to promote the adoption by all development partners of

²⁰ With the support of IFAD and other partners, the Government of Rwanda is currently experimenting with a system of local-level consultation for the Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation that is both relatively fast and comprehensive in area coverage.

²¹ In this context, IFAD has been able to ensure that, in the Agricultural Support Services Programme in the United Republic of Tanzania, the first programme component related to empowerment of the poor.

the country's key fiduciary procedures. For IFAD, this is familiar ground: as a multilateral financing institution, IFAD has always provided its loans to governments to finance **their** programmes, managed according to their procedures; and the importance of promoting government ownership over the programmes has long been a mantra for the Fund. It is a role that has been recognized and appreciated by many governments. What IFAD has not necessarily done in the past is to address these issues in the multi-stakeholder context of a SWAp rather than a narrower bilateral relationship; future efforts in this area will be pursued explicitly within the broader collaborative framework of the SWAp.

How IFAD will participate in agricultural/rural SWAps

38. **Country strategic opportunities paper (COSOP).** The COSOP is the starting point for defining IFAD's future operational engagement in a country, and the process of developing an in-house understanding of issues relative to an agricultural/rural SWAp must be initiated at this stage. The COSOP should thus explicitly focus on issues such as government leadership relative to, for example, sector policy and strategy formulation and institutional reform, and its willingness to developing a partnership with the development organizations active in the sector. Equally, it should assess the efforts being made by the development organizations to harmonize their practices and operations in the sector and, under its leadership, to align these with government systems and procedures. Prospects for a sectoral SWAp should also be highlighted where this is under discussion. The strategic engagement proposed in the COSOP would then be painted against this background.

39. **Early participation.** One of the key lessons of engagement to date in agricultural/rural SWAps is that the **earlier** IFAD engages in the SWAp development process the better it is able to influence its shape and content²². On the one hand, good agricultural/rural SWAps should certainly contribute to the emergence of enhanced policies and institutions; but on the other, they should be built upon good national agricultural and rural development strategies, and on the institutional capacity to lead and manage the preparation and implementation of a SWAp²³. In the future, IFAD will actively support the emergence of agricultural/rural SWAps by pursuing further its engagement both in upstream national strategy development and in institutional capacity building. To do so, it will use not only loan and grant resources and engagement directly linked to the project/programme cycle, but also stand-alone grants to Member States.

40. **Financing arrangements.** SWAps are explicitly intended to promote the use of government systems for the financial management of programme resources. As a full and active partner in the SWAp, it is appropriate that IFAD seek to channel its resources through the sector-level pooling arrangements established; even if, as an institution dedicated specifically to rural poverty reduction, budget support (either GBS or sector-level) is **not** a suitable financing mechanism for IFAD. Participation in pooled funding arrangements not only enables IFAD to contribute to the agenda of harmonization; it also strengthens the Fund's reputation with both governments and its development partners, and permits it to play a more active role in promoting the issues it considers essential for the SWAp's success.

41. Central to the issue of pooled funding under a SWAp is the fact that while, of course, it is possible to identify the full set of activities to be financed under the SWAp, unlike in a 'traditional' project, IFAD is not able to identify for what specific activity within the agreed workplan of the SWAp its resources are used; nor as a consequence, is it able to attribute impact specifically to its

²² It is significant that in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, where IFAD participated early on in the process, to a large extent the SWAp designs respond to the needs of poor rural producers.

²³ In Madagascar IFAD is currently supporting the emergence of a rural development strategy from the very earliest stages; while in Rwanda, it will strengthen the planning and operational capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture to enable it to develop and operationalize an agricultural SWAp. These activities are being conducted in close collaboration with other in-country development partners.

investment. This means it is essential that IFAD actively engage in the establishment of the priorities, safeguards and evaluation framework for the SWAp **as a whole**. In collaboration with the government and its other partners, therefore, IFAD will, on the one hand, review and approve the objectives, the outputs and the sum of the investment activities to be financed under the SWAp (including IFAD's contribution – through the appraisal of the programme plan and the *ex ante* reviews of the SWAp annual workplans and budgets); while on the other, it will support the development of fiduciary and monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the SWAp. As and when, on the basis of a formal review, the arrangements developed are adjudged to meet the necessary standards for IFAD to participate, then it may channel its resources through the pooled funding mechanism established for the SWAp. Key elements to be reviewed will include the systems and procedures for planning and budgeting, disbursement, procurement, accounting and external auditing (see Annex I); and, although not strictly an element of the fiduciary arrangements, for monitoring and evaluation (Annex II). In the event that they are not all considered satisfactory, IFAD support for the SWAp will follow standard IFAD procurement and financial management procedures until such time as the common arrangements have been satisfactorily developed.

42. **Contributing to policy dialogue.** IFAD can best add value to SWAps primarily through its direct engagement in dialogue relative to the key policy and institutional issues, identified above, in which it has experience and expertise: typically, enhancing the poverty focus; strengthening the accountability of government and other service providers to poor rural people; ensuring an effective focus on impact; and promoting government ownership. Key IFAD strategic documents, as well as the experience and lessons learned from its projects and programmes (in-country and elsewhere), provide the basis for such engagement. IFAD's experience and expertise is primarily at the micro level (a weak area in SWAps), and this is where it would be expected to add most value. However, it will also work with donors providing GBS, on macro-policy issues relevant to the rural sector and public-sector reform.

43. Policy dialogue is an extremely intensive activity and much of the work involved takes place in-country. This has created particular challenges for IFAD, whose current business model focuses upon national programme execution and capacity building – with most staff Rome-based. Part of IFAD's response has been the mobilization of local representatives (equivalent to the national programme officers who are the sectoral advisers in many bilateral and multilateral representations) under the Field Presence Pilot Initiative and similar arrangements. Working in close collaboration with the country programme managers, these staff have enabled IFAD to more effectively engage in SWAp and related processes and, increasingly, to play a substantive role in policy dialogue. It has yet to be determined as to whether this arrangement will enable IFAD to play this role to its maximum potential or whether further IFAD field presence is required. In the meantime, however, in any country in which IFAD is planning to engage in a SWAp, it will ensure that it has some sort of direct field presence.

44. **SWAp review and loan/grant administration.** SWAps are generally subject to two forms of joint review: technical reviews of implementation based on field visits by the government and its development partners; and a more formal annual review by all parties of progress achieved in the previous year and of the annual workplan and budget for the following year. IFAD (both headquarters staff and field presence) and its contracted cooperating institution will play an active role in both sets of activities, bringing to bear their considerable experience in supporting government-owned and -managed projects and programmes, and focusing particularly on the policy issues highlighted above. The specific role to be played by the cooperating institution for IFAD in the context of a SWAp may be slightly different from its usual role in a traditional project, and this would be spelled out in the letter of appointment. This issue is spelled out further in Annex I.

45. **Using projects to strengthen SWAps.** There is broad acceptance by governments and their development partners alike that SWAps do not require the elimination of all projects in favour of one monolithic 'sectoral programme'. While SWAps represent efforts to systematize and support a robust

general framework for rural development, they are also supposed to be processes, and as such they need to be fed with new information and perspectives to drive their own development. That innovation must principally come from outside, and, arguably, project-type organization is the best way of promoting innovation.

46. In a sense therefore SWAp actually **require** projects for their continual renewal – providing those projects meet certain important criteria. These include ensuring that they: (a) are precisely focused on issues or themes not adequately dealt with by the existing system; (b) are supportive of principles broadly consistent with those of the SWAp (e.g. farmer empowerment, capacity building among the poor, and partnership with the private sector); (c) do not depend for their success upon conditions that can not be replicated at the sector level; (d) have adequate internal systems of measurement, analysis and reporting; (e) include pathways for the injection of validated results into broader institutional and policy systems; and (f) are effectively coordinated within the SWAp framework – promoting country leadership, using government systems, fitting within the MTEF and following best practice as defined by the harmonization agenda. IFAD, then, will not forgo projects but, working with its in-country partners, it will ensure that it develops projects of a certain sort – that innovate, add to knowledge and can tangibly influence the process of sectoral policy and institutional change. The projects developed in this context will be increasingly assessed against these criteria.

IFAD policy

47. In those countries where the government has an interest in developing an agricultural/rural SWAp as an approach for reducing rural poverty and where, through its engagement IFAD can influence the future shape and direction of the proposed SWAp, the Fund will actively support the government and other stakeholders to build the strategic and institutional basis for the SWAp. Once that basis for the SWAp has been built, and the government and its development partners are committed to its operationalization, IFAD will participate in the SWAp and, through its participation, it will seek to add value to it and make it a more effective vehicle for rural poverty reduction.

48. IFAD's participation in the SWAp will not be to the exclusion of project-based activities, however; in all countries in which it does participate in a SWAp, it is probable that at the same time it will also be engaging in other loan- and grant-financed activities supportive of national and sectoral policies for rural poverty reduction. And in those countries where there is no SWAp envisaged, and this in reality will be the case in the vast majority of IFAD borrowing countries, then projects, and in some cases subsectoral programmes, will continue to represent the principal *modus operandi* for the Fund.

49. In countries where IFAD does participate in an agricultural/rural SWAp, its greatest scope for adding value will be through its engagement in policy dialogue in areas of critical importance for rural poverty reduction and its involvement in technical and other operational reviews of progress achieved and investment activities planned. However, if it is to participate in the harmonized funding arrangements that represent a critical element of all SWAps, then it must also, on the one hand, review the objectives, the outputs and the sum of the proposed investment activities to be financed under the SWAp, and on the other hand, satisfy itself as to the adequacy of the government-managed fiduciary and monitoring and evaluation arrangements. In those circumstances where the arrangements are considered satisfactory (as defined in Annex II), it may choose to participate in the pooled funding arrangements (though **not** in either general or sector budget support). In those other situations where the fiduciary arrangements are not yet adequate, IFAD will provide its support for the SWAp using its own (disbursement and other) systems and procedures while at the same time supporting the development of the government's fiduciary arrangements. Once IFAD has judged these to be satisfactory, it will be authorized to participate in the pooled arrangements.

50. At this stage, it is uncertain as to how many SWAps IFAD will engage in over the coming few years. However, once it has gained further experience, its engagement will be subject to independent

evaluation in order to assess issues such as: (a) the development effectiveness of IFAD-supported SWAps; (b) the value-addition of IFAD's engagement in them; (c) the impact of participation on IFAD human and other resources; (d) the appropriateness of this policy; and (e) the extent to which IFAD has adhered to the policy in its future engagements in SWAps.²⁴ This evaluation will be conducted in 2008.

D. RECOMMENDATION

51. It is recommended that the Executive Board approve the proposed IFAD Policy on sector-wide approaches for Agriculture and Rural Development, as presented in this document and as defined in particular in paragraphs 47-50 above, and detailed in Annexes I and II.

²⁴ Upon approval of this policy, further work will be undertaken with the Office of Evaluation in order to develop the monitoring frame and indicators that will provide the basis for the evaluation.

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION, AND REVIEW,
OF SWAP IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT**

1. **Monitoring and evaluation.** A well-defined impact and performance monitoring system, with a strong tracking system and interim and outcome indicators to measure against baseline data, is considered essential as a framework for the implementation of the SWAp. At appraisal, the government, IFAD and all participating financiers will agree on: (a) a set of (logframe-derived, and thus measurable) programme impact, output and outcome indicators with time-bound targets and milestones; (b) the baseline data to be gathered and the entity responsible for its collection; and (c) the performance monitoring and reporting system to be used, and the budget to be used for this purpose. To the extent possible, the monitoring and evaluation systems in place at the sectoral agencies will be used²⁵.
2. During implementation, IFAD will, as necessary, assist in building up an understanding of the value of monitoring and evaluation and a capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities at the national and local levels. At all times, its value-added will be to promote a focus on assessing the **impact** of the SWAp on the livelihoods of poor rural producers. It will also play an active role in promoting a culture of management for impact within the SWAp as a whole: encouraging the managers of the SWAp as a whole and its components to **demand** monitoring and evaluation data and to constantly reassess and adjust as necessary the investment activities supported in the light of the information and understanding gained.
3. Progress on the agreed performance indicators will be assessed by all parties as part of the SWAp review process and adjustments will be made to the programme as necessary. At completion, a final evaluation of the SWAp will be undertaken, as established in agreement among all partners.
4. **Joint reviews.** SWAps are generally subject to two forms of review, jointly conducted by the government and its development partners. The first are the technical reviews of implementation, based on field visits by both parties; the second are more formal annual reviews of progress achieved in the past year and the annual workplan and budget for the next year. The former should play a critical role in facilitating a common understanding of key implementation issues on the ground and of programme impact; the latter provides the main forum for discussing and resolving policy and operational issues, for adjusting the programme as needed on the basis of the experiences gained, and for reviewing and approving the annual workplan and budget – including proposed investment activities, the expenditure and financing plans, the procurement plan and the performance indicators to be tracked. In both of these reviews, IFAD and/or its cooperating institution will play an active role, drawing upon their considerable experience in providing implementation support to, and supervising, government-owned and -managed projects and programmes.
5. **The role of IFAD's cooperating institution.** IFAD's cooperating institution has an important role to play within the context of a SWAp even if the tasks that IFAD will expect it to undertake will differ from those it would charge it with in a more traditional project. In particular, both its technical/implementation support and (in those cases where IFAD enters a pooled funding arrangement) its fiduciary roles will be played within the broader framework of the overall partnership between government and its development partners. As such it will be required to work closely with other members of the donor group and to participate in partnership-wide processes. In cases where IFAD funds are disbursed through a pooled funding arrangement, its financial administration role,

²⁵ In this context, specific issues to note are that (a) evidently, it will not be possible to attribute impact to IFAD funds alone; and (b) as such, it may not be possible for IFAD to ensure that the common reporting mechanism developed and approved by all parties is in full conformity with the Results and Impact Management System, as currently configured.

too, will differ from that which it usually plays, with financial management reports for the pooled account as a whole providing the basis for approving disbursement requests from the government.

**POOLED FUNDING:
FIDUCIARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE USE AND REPORTING OF FUNDS**

1. SWApS are explicitly intended to promote the use of government systems for the financial management of programme resources. As a full and active partner in agricultural/rural SWApS, it is appropriate that IFAD seek to channel its resources through the sector-level pooling arrangements established; even if, as a institution dedicated specifically to rural poverty reduction, budget support (either GBS or sector-level) is **not** a suitable financing mechanism for IFAD participation.

2. Prior to IFAD engaging in a pooled funding arrangement for a SWAp, it will need to satisfy itself that all the main elements of the fiduciary arrangements for the effective management of the SWAp are in place. This will normally be done prior to, and during, the appraisal of the SWAp, thereby enabling IFAD to disburse its funds through the pooled funding arrangements from the start of the SWAp. However, in some countries a situation may arise where, in order not to excessively delay the start-up of a SWAp to which all stakeholders are committed, the development partners will start off by disbursing their funds according to their own mechanisms, while at the same time – and during the course of SWAp implementation – assisting the government to establish its fiduciary arrangements. Under these circumstances, IFAD will start to disburse its funds in support of the SWAp using traditional project funding mechanisms (and following its own standard procedures for disbursement, procurement and external audit), and may switch to the use of the pooled funding arrangements during the course of implementation once it has satisfied itself that adequate fiduciary arrangements are in place.

3. In all cases, the fiduciary arrangements associated with pooled funding will be explained in a document presented for the Executive Board's approval. In those cases where it is proposed, at the time of Executive Board approval of the financing, to enter the pooled funding upon effectiveness of the financing agreement, these arrangements will be described in the President's Report and Recommendation; in cases where it is intended to switch from traditional project funding to pooled funding during the course of SWAp implementation, the proposed arrangements will be explained in a President's Memorandum submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

4. The process of reviewing and approving the fiduciary arrangements will be a joint exercise, conducted by all of the development partners interested in engaging in the pooled funding arrangements. From IFAD's side, it will involve not only the regional divisions within the Programme Management Department, but also the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of the Controller, in order to cover all the likely issues involved. In practice, such reviews will usually be led by the World Bank when it is a partner in the pooled financing arrangements; in all cases, World Bank endorsement of the financial management and procurement arrangements will be a requirement for IFAD participation in the pooled arrangement.

5. The review itself is likely to comprise three broad elements. First, it will need to be confirmed that the necessary in-country preconditions for the development of a common funding arrangement exist. Such preconditions will include macroeconomic stability; a strong country commitment and institutional capacity to manage the SWAp; a strong sectoral strategy; and the existence of an effective donor coordination mechanism. Second, the review itself will build, wherever possible, upon other national and external tools and diagnostics that may already have been undertaken. These may include the MTEF and any recent public expenditure review (conducted at either the national or sector level), country procurement assessment report and country financial accountability assessment. Third, each element of the fiduciary arrangements will be reviewed in order to determine that they are satisfactory. These will include the systems and procedures for: (a) planning and budgeting; (b) disbursement of funds; (c) procurement; and (d) accounting and audits:

ANNEX II

- (a) **Planning and budgeting.** The goal, outcomes and outputs in the SWAp implementation plan will provide the starting point for developing the annual workplan and budget for the programme²⁶. IFAD will participate in the (government/development partners) joint review of the annual workplan and budget, looking particularly at (i) the proposed investment activities and expenditures, and their relevance for achieving the proposed outputs and outcomes; and (ii) the process for developing the annual workplan and budget with a view to ensuring that it is decentralized, bottom-up and involves the effective participation of rural community organizations.
- (b) **Disbursement of funds.** At appraisal (or during a specific review conducted during the course of SWAp implementation) IFAD will join the government and its other financing partners to identify investment activities to be financed from the pooled account, and agree on the proportion to be contributed to the pooled account by each financier participating in the arrangement. IFAD will disburse funds in advance into the pooled account as per the agreed proportion and, after the second disbursement, will release funds on the basis of consolidated (quarterly or semesterly) financial monitoring reports (FMR) prepared by the government and provided to all financiers in the pool. The FMR presents the activities and resulting expenditures incurred in the previous period, as well as a workplan and budget for the following period.

Supporting documentation for individual transactions financed from the pool would not be submitted to IFAD (or its CI) or other financiers, although the government would be required to maintain adequate records of the transactions, which could be reviewed if deemed necessary (along with the FMRs and audit reports) in order to determine whether disbursements made actually conformed to the financing framework agreed upon.

- (c) **Procurement.** The procurement procedures proposed by the government will be reviewed by IFAD and all other financing partners at appraisal (or during a specific review), and only if deemed satisfactory will they be used for expenditures financed from the pooled account. Each annual workplan and budget for the SWAp would include a procurement plan identifying the goods and services to be procured, the method of procurement and source of funding (pooled account or otherwise); this would be subject to the prior approval of IFAD and all other participating financiers. The procurements then financed by the pooled funds would be subject to ex post review. The government, IFAD and all partners participating in the pool would agree on a plan specifying the frequency of the reviews, the procedure to be used and the responsibility for undertaking the reviews. IFAD and all other partners would receive copies of the reviews and, should these reveal that any procurement failed to adhere to the agreed procedures, IFAD would reserve the right to cancel from its loan (or grant), or request reimbursement of, the amount in question.

Given the fungibility of donor resources and the need both to avoid raising the transaction costs to the government and to act in a way contrary to the harmonization agenda, IFAD financing of eligible expenditures will **not** be restricted to the procurement of goods, works and consulting services by member countries of IFAD.

- (d) **Accounting and audits.** At appraisal, the government, IFAD and all other financing partners participating in the pooled arrangements will need to come to an agreement on the adequacy of the government's accounting procedures and practices at all levels, and on the frequency,

²⁶ This, in turn, provides the basis for the bilateral donors to pledge their level of financial support for the coming year.

form and content of the consolidated financial monitoring reports. The accounts will be subject to external audits, conducted by either the government's auditor-general or a private firm of auditors contracted by the government. Agreement will need to be reached regarding the auditing arrangements, including the frequency, format and content of audit reports, eligibility criteria for auditor selection, and follow up of audit recommendations. The cost of external audits may be covered by the pooled funds.

6. Agreements on all of the above elements, as well as the monitoring and evaluation framework, will be reflected in the SWAp's memorandum of understanding, a formal document that sets out the framework through which the government and those of its development parties which have entered the pooled funding arrangement will cooperate²⁷. The memorandum of understanding will be signed by all parties.

²⁷ The memorandum of understanding may also define expected standards and procedures relative to environmental impact assessment. Wherever possible, IFAD and other partners would rely on government systems. These, too, would be reviewed prior to, or at, appraisal; where necessary, support would be provided for the strengthening of the government's procedures for environmental impact assessment prior to their adoption by all parties.

EXECUTIVE BOARD CLARIFICATION AND APPROVAL

1. The Executive Board approved the IFAD Policy on Sector-wide Approaches for Agriculture and Rural Development. Clarifications were provided by IFAD staff on a number of key issues; and following agreement that the points made would be annexed to the final version of the policy paper, all Executive Board members were able to support the policy.
2. In presenting the policy paper, it was confirmed that IFAD resources would be provided in support of sector-wide *programmes* (rather than approaches): concrete initiatives aimed at promoting a change agenda, built on both investment and policy dialogue, financing an aggregation of project-type activities, and focusing on the reduction of rural poverty. Such programmes are considered wholly consistent with IFAD's mandate and do not represent a substantive departure from IFAD's traditional way of doing business. They have goals, objectives, outcomes, activities with an associated expenditure plan and budget, and a clear monitoring frame, indicators, targets and milestones. In supporting sector-wide programmes, IFAD will know precisely what its funding will be contributing to; and in doing so, the investment activities it will finance will be exactly the same ones as those it supports under traditional projects, in pursuit of similar goals and objectives.
3. The policy does *not* permit IFAD to provide general or sector budget support to its Member States. IFAD has no wish to make its resources available in this manner: it has no comparative advantage in doing so. IFAD resources will be provided either within a pooled funding arrangement – at the level either of the programme as a whole or of a subsectoral project making up a part of the programme – or using traditional joint, or stand-alone, financing arrangements. This is all the more important given IFAD's commitment to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which has been supported by all Members of IFAD's Executive Board. However, IFAD will enter a pooled funding arrangement only where it receives the endorsement of the World Bank relative to the fiduciary arrangements established for the programme; in practical terms, this is taken to mean that the World Bank will either be a participant in the pooled funding arrangements or will be providing budget support to the government, outside the sector-wide programme.
4. The pooled account for the sector-wide programme to which IFAD will contribute (with its defined and agreed activities, budget and monitoring frames) will be made up of resources provided both by the government and its development partners, some coming from the finance ministry (including funds provided by some development partners as budget support) and some disbursed by the development partners directly into the account. Once disbursed into the pooled account, the IFAD and other resources will be used solely and exclusively to support the approved activities and expenditures of the sector-wide programme, as described above and excluding budget support of any kind.
5. On other issues, it was explained to the Executive Board members that work is ongoing in terms of modifying the RIMS to accommodate IFAD funding in support of sector-wide programmes and it was confirmed that it is planned for the independent Office of Evaluation to undertake an evaluation of the policy in 2008.