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IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
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PROGRESS REPORT ON IFAD’S FIELD PRESENCE PILOT PROGRAMME

A. Origin

1. The Field Presence Pilot Programme (FPPP) originated as part of the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources, which – apart from implementation support – called for action to enhance project impact by undertaking policy dialogue, the promotion of knowledge management and partnership-building. IFAD’s lack of representation in the borrowing countries was identified as a growing constraint on implementing these recommendations.¹ In this light, the Consultation recommended that IFAD further analyse the issue of enhancing its field presence and in-country capacity and submit a proposal on the process to the Executive Board.²

2. Consequently, the secretariat undertook a detailed study and submitted to the seventy-seventh session of the Executive Board in December 2002 a proposal for enhancing IFAD’s field presence by strengthening its in-country capacity.³ After due deliberation, the Board decided to “proceed with the rapid country analysis of 15 countries with pertinent activities in the different regions”.⁴ It also suggested establishing an ad hoc working group of the Executive Board, with representatives of the three Lists to accompany the process.

3. Subsequent to this decision, a study team was formed, which examined 15 cases of “field presence”. These case studies confirmed the progressive trend towards decentralization of donor activities and the growing expectations of governments and other stakeholders that IFAD play a role in national policy dialogue related to rural poverty reduction. The team identified a clear need at the level of governments and other in-country partners, including the donor community, for closer and more continuous involvement of IFAD. The results also supported earlier findings that while the ongoing proxy field-presence instruments permitted IFAD to facilitate project implementation, they were generally not suited to catalytic action related to policy dialogue and partnership-building.⁵

¹ When IFAD was established, a deliberate choice was made in favour of entrusting the administration of loans and the supervision of the implementation of a project or programme concerned to competent international organizations (Agreement Establishing IFAD, Article 7, Section 2(g)).

² REPL.VI/5/R.2, page 22.

³ EB 2002/77/R.9/Rev.1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ EB 2003/79/R.3/Rev.1.

4. In line with the study team's findings and the proposal submitted by IFAD, the Executive Board authorized the Fund to elaborate guidelines and criteria for country selection and instruments to enhance its in-country presence, and to submit an implementation programme for each of the 15 proposals. In December 2003, the Executive Board authorized the FPPP, with an implementation period of three years and a budget of USD 3 million.⁶

B. Objectives and Scope

5. The FPPP aims at supporting IFAD's vision and strategic framework by strengthening the impact of its activities on the socio-economic situation of its target group and building local capacities. In doing so, it proposes to integrate the four interrelated dimensions: project implementation, effective participation in policy dialogue, partnership-building, and knowledge management. It also aims to increase the effectiveness of existing measures such as supervision, policy workshops and support to NGOs, and to leverage them more successfully in favour of the rural poor. The FPPP is designed in a way that allows a variety of arrangements.

6. Following approval of the FPPP by the Executive Board at its eightieth session in December 2003, IFAD management submitted for the information of the Executive Board eight FPPP initiative briefs covering the following countries or country groupings: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia; the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Honduras and Nicaragua; India; Senegal and the Gambia; the Sudan; the United Republic of Tanzania and Malawi; and Yemen.⁷ This was followed by the submission of FPPP initiative briefs for Bolivia and Uganda in April 2004,⁸ for Nigeria and Viet Nam in September 2004,⁹ and for Egypt, Ethiopia and Haiti in December 2004.¹⁰

7. Each of IFAD's five regional divisions has three field presence pilots. The following table shows the countries covered, the city where the office is located and the number of projects/programmes covered.

Field Presence Pilots by Region

	Number of Projects ^a		Number of Projects ^a
Western and Central Africa		Latin America and the Caribbean	
Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa) and Congo	3	Bolivia (La Paz)	2
Senegal and the Gambia (Dakar)	7	Haiti (Port-au-Prince)	2
Nigeria (Abuja)	3	Honduras and Nicaragua (Tegucigalpa)	4
Eastern and Southern Africa		Near East and North Africa	
Ethiopia (Addis Ababa)	4	Egypt (Cairo)	3
United Republic of Tanzania and Malawi (Dar-es-Salaam)	5	Sudan (Khartoum)	4
Uganda (Kampala)	5	Yemen (Sana'a)	5
Asia and the Pacific			
China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia (Beijing)	7	Total: 15 offices	64
India (New Delhi)	8		
Viet Nam (Hanoi)	2		

^a Projects refer to the current portfolio, i.e. projects approved by the Executive Board but not completed. FPPP projects represent 28% of IFAD's total current portfolio of 232 loan projects.

⁶ EB 2003/80/R.4.

⁷ EB 2003/80/INF.7.

⁸ EB 2004/81/INF.4.

⁹ EB 2004/82/INF.8.

¹⁰ EB 2004/83/INF.8.

8. As the FPPP emphasizes cost-effectiveness, the unit costs per field pilot are low at about USD 80 000 per initiative. As a result, initiatives are small, usually with one professional staff only, occasionally assisted by a single support staff. Logistics support is provided mostly by the host institution.

9. In contrast, the country programmes supported are large, with an average of four to five projects, a number of ongoing grants, some policy initiatives and one or two projects under development.

10. Almost all field presence initiatives have as main thrusts implementation support, policy dialogue, partnership-building and knowledge management (see annex). The emphasis that each initiative places on individual elements, however, differs widely. For example, the initiative in the Congo prioritizes post-conflict reconstruction emphasizing portfolio reactivation and policy dialogue. The initiative in the Sudan prioritizes building government capacity for negotiating reforms. Policy dialogue is a recurring theme of the initiatives in Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen. Partnership-building, harmonization and donor coordination are also thrust areas. Emphasis on knowledge management and on effective linkages with existing networks, such as the regional hubs and communications networks, is high. For many other initiatives, notably Bolivia, China, Haiti, Honduras and India, implementation support is a priority.

C. Implementation Arrangements and Progress

11. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is housing seven initiatives: the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Yemen. Other partners are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in the United Republic of Tanzania; the World Food Programme (WFP), in China and India;¹¹ the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), in Bolivia; and government or other arrangements, in Haiti, Honduras, the Sudan and Viet Nam.

12. The FPPP was designed as a three-year process and, given its pilot nature, was based on a set of strategic criteria. It is needs-oriented and adapts to new requirements as they arise.¹² Design work for all initiatives was completed by the end of 2004.

13. Fourteen initiatives have now been launched, and the remaining initiative (Yemen) will become operational soon. Six initiatives had become operational by the end of 2004, two more by June 2005, and the remaining six by December 2005. Initiatives that were built around existing informal arrangements were the first to be launched.

14. Given the experimental and flexible nature of the FPPP, no specific schedules were fixed for each initiative. An “effectiveness” clause, however, was built into the original plan, requiring each region to launch at least one initiative by the end of 2004. This minimum target was met, but launching of the remaining initiatives was staggered over a longer period. If the pilot is declared over by the end of 2007, as originally scheduled, certain initiatives will necessarily have a shorter implementation period.

15. A number of factors delayed the originally anticipated launching of some initiatives:

- (i) Given the limited unit budget and scope, all initiatives had to seek host arrangements. Identifying an appropriate host institution, finalizing negotiations, signing memorandums of understanding and then proceeding to staff selection and recruitment have often taken more time than expected;
- (ii) IFAD’s relative inexperience not only in negotiating in-country arrangements, but also in finalizing appropriate in-house procedures for field staff and developing appropriate memorandums of understanding also caused some delay;

¹¹ The field presence initiative for China is currently being implemented in partnership with WFP, Beijing.

¹² EB 2003/80/R.4, paragraph 28.

- (iii) Negotiation with a preferred partner institution sometimes ended with a realization that the approved unit costs were inadequate to meet the requirements of these institutions.

16. By December 2007, six initiatives will have over three years of experience and eight will have at least two and half years. In cumulative terms, there will be adequate experience for the Executive Board to decide at its September 2007 session “whether to continue, expand, end or otherwise modify the Field Presence Programme.”¹³

17. On the above basis, the Executive Board working group on field presence and the Evaluation Committee have decided to proceed with the independent evaluation of the FPPP as per the original schedule.¹⁴

D. Operational Lessons Learned

18. In terms of operational results, the FPPP has proved to be an invaluable vehicle for strengthening efforts to support project implementation and for enabling IFAD to engage more actively in relevant multi-stakeholder dialogue. It has contributed significantly to facilitating communications between IFAD headquarters and Member State governments, projects and programmes, and cooperating institutions. Other areas where preliminary results are encouraging are knowledge management and partnership-building, including improved donor coordination. In addition, some of the pilots have contributed towards improved support to project design, appraisal and supervision by creating a local network of resource persons and institutions, and arranging cost-effective outsourcing of the required services through local providers.

19. Given the large size of the ongoing programme (paragraph 9), the demand on the time of field staff is high. This is particularly so in countries where the need for donor coordination and harmonization is great. This requires staff to prioritize their activities, for example by limiting participation in meetings and workshops. As more experience is gained, IFAD will be able to identify activities with higher value added and then use this information to redefine the programme scope. In addition, further guidance needs to be provided in terms of linking field staff with various other processes such as arrangements for supervision or direct supervision of projects. Similarly, more efforts will be required to develop a closer working relationship with host agencies so that the needs of IFAD’s field units receive adequate priority in terms of servicing. Likewise, while innovation and diversity in terms of the field presence arrangements are being accorded high priority, some consistency with respect to the service terms, status and other similar issues will be necessary

¹³ EB 2003/80/R.4, paragraphs 1 and 29.

¹⁴ The FPPP evaluation is to be started by the Office of Evaluation in the fourth quarter of 2006. Consultations between the Office and the Programme Management Department have already begun.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE UNDER THE FIELD PRESENCE PILOT PROGRAMME
(as of 15 February 2006)

Countries Covered	Office Location	Partner Institution ^a	Main Thrusts	Current Status
Western and Central Africa				
Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo	Kinshasa	UNDP	Post-conflict reconstruction, portfolio reactivation, policy dialogue, representation, debt monitoring.	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since January 2006.
Nigeria	Abuja	UNDP	Policy dialogue and improved policy performance (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy); regional research and development policies (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture); knowledge management; implementation support for supervision and monitoring.	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since January 2006.
Senegal and the Gambia	Dakar	UNDP	Partnership-building, representation, implementation support: direct supervision (Gambia). Policy influence: decentralization, rural finance and microenterprises. Policy hub and FIDAFRIQUE, knowledge management; farmer organizations (civil society).	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since December 2005.
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	UNDP	Improve coordination to ensure a common approach for poverty reduction strategies; knowledge-sharing; implementation support; partnership-building. Focus themes: rural finance, marketing, small-scale irrigation.	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since September 2005.
United Republic of Tanzania and Malawi	Dar-es-Salaam	FAO	Rural poverty strategies, promotion of link between IFAD and national programmes.	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since February 2004.
Uganda	Kampala	Ministry of Local Government/ UNDP	Partnership-building, policy dialogue favouring the poor; aligning IFAD's programme with national programmes including sector-wide approaches.	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place prior to start-up of FPPP.
Asia and the Pacific				
China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia	Beijing	WFP	Implementation support, partnership-building, policy influence, knowledge management.	A new memorandum of understanding with WFP will be signed soon.
India	New Delhi	WFP	Implementation support, knowledge management, partnership-building, policy influence.	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since beginning prior to start-up of FPPP.
Viet Nam	Hanoi	Consulting arrangement	Policy influence, learning, partnership-building.	Staff in place since April 2005.

ANNEX

Countries Covered	Office Location	Partner Institution ^a	Main Thrusts	Current Status
Latin America and the Caribbean				
Bolivia	La Paz	GTZ	Implementation, supervision, partnership-building, knowledge management	Staff in place since October 2004.
Haiti	Port-au-Prince	Social Investment Fund (FAES)	Implementation and supervision support, policy dialogue, partnership-building, knowledge management.	Staff in place since January 2005.
Honduras and Nicaragua	Tegucigalpa	CABEI	Mainly implementation support – supervision. Poverty reduction strategy paper.	Staff in place since February 2004.
Near East and North Africa				
Egypt	Cairo	UNDP	Policy dialogue – pro-poor orientation of institutions and policies; implementation support; partnership-building, harmonization; knowledge management	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since December 2005.
Sudan	Khartoum	Government (UNDP administering salary and procurement)	Capacity-building – reforms negotiated with multiple stakeholders; knowledge management; donor coordination – participation in central coordination unit for all IFAD projects	Memorandum of understanding signed and staff in place since December 2005.
Yemen	Sana'a	UNDP	Policy dialogue favouring the poor; knowledge management.	Consultation in process. Staff to be in place soon.

^a CABEI: Central American Bank for Economic Integration
 FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 GTZ: German Agency for Technical Cooperation
 UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
 WFP: World Food Programme

