

Document: EB 2009/97/R.34
Agenda: 12(a)
Date: 11 August 2009
Distribution: Public
Original: English

E



Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

**President's report on a proposed grant
under the global/regional grants
window to a CGIAR-supported
international centre**

Executive Board — Ninety-seventh Session
Rome, 14-15 September 2009

For: **Approval**

Note to Executive Board Directors

This document is submitted for approval by the Executive Board.

To make the best use of time available at Executive Board sessions, Directors are invited to contact the following focal point with any technical questions about this document before the session:

Shantanu Mathur

Grants Coordinator

telephone: +39 06 5459 2515

e-mail: s.mathur@ifad.org

Queries regarding the dispatch of documentation for this session should be addressed to:

Deirdre McGrenra

Governing Bodies Officer

telephone: +39 06 5459 2374

e-mail: d.mcgrenra@ifad.org

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms	ii
Recommendation for approval	iii
Part I – Introduction	1
Part II – Recommendation	2
Annex	
Biodiversity International: Programme for Impact Evaluation Approaches for Agricultural Research for Development	3

Abbreviations and acronyms

CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
ILAC	Institutional Learning and Change Initiative
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation for the grant under the global/regional grants window to a CGIAR-supported international centre as contained in paragraph 7.

President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to a CGIAR-supported international centre

I submit the following report and recommendation on a proposed grant for agricultural research and training to a Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)-supported international centre in the amount of US\$1.0 million.

Part I – Introduction

1. This report recommends the provision of IFAD support to the research and training programme of the following CGIAR-supported international centre: Bioversity International for the Programme for Impact Evaluation Approaches for Agricultural Research for Development.
2. The document of the grant for approval by the Executive Board is contained in the annex to this report.
3. The objectives and content of the applied research programme are in line with the evolving strategic objectives of IFAD and the policy and criteria of IFAD's grant programme.
4. The overarching strategic objectives that drive the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing, which was approved by the Executive Board in December 2003, are:
 - (a) Promoting pro-poor research on innovative approaches and technological options to enhance field-level impact; and/or
 - (b) Building pro-poor capacities of partner institutions, including community-based organizations and NGOs.
5. Deriving from these objectives and those of the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010, the specific aims of IFAD's grant support relate to: (a) the Fund's target groups and their household food-security strategies, with particular reference to groups in remote and marginalized agroecological areas; (b) technologies that build on traditional local/indigenous knowledge systems, are gender-responsive, and enhance and diversify the productive potential of resource-poor farming systems by improving on- and off-farm productivity and by addressing production bottlenecks; (c) access to productive assets (land and water, a broad range of rural financial services, labour and technology); (d) the sustainable and productive management of natural resources, including sustainable utilization and conservation of such resources; (e) a policy framework at both the local and the national level that provides the rural poor with a conducive incentive structure to improve their productivity and reduce their dependence on transfers; (f) access to transparent and competitive input/product markets and making these work for the poor primary producers involved in remunerative small and medium-sized enterprises and value chains; and (g) an institutional framework within which institutions – formal and informal, public- and private-sector, local and national alike – can provide services to the economically vulnerable, according to their comparative advantage. Within this framework, IFAD's grant financing supports commodity-based approaches for self-targeting among the rural poor. Finally, IFAD's grant programme fosters the establishment and strengthening of networks for pro-poor knowledge generation and exchange, which in turn enhances the Fund's own capacity to establish long-term strategic linkages with its development partners and to multiply the effect of its grant-financed research and capacity-building programmes.

6. The grant proposed in this document responds primarily to the overarching strategic objective (b) in paragraph 4 above, in seeking to strengthen the CGIAR reform process through improved evaluation of its programmes and through further learning and knowledge management in support of pro-poor adaptive research for development. It also responds to the foregoing specific aims of IFAD grant support, in particular to (b), (d) and (f). The rationale for the programme is to facilitate change, as part of the CGIAR reform process, so that pro-poor principles and practices are more strongly embedded in future agricultural research. This is central to IFAD strategic objectives, as expressed in the Strategic Framework. The outcomes sought will also contribute to guiding IFAD investment decisions, both directly for agricultural research and indirectly through its lending programme. In this way, the grant also supports IFAD's knowledge management thrust.

Part II – Recommendation

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

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the Programme for Impact Evaluation Approaches for Agricultural Research for Development, shall make a grant not exceeding one million United States dollars (US\$1,000,000) to Bioversity International for a four-year programme upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Kanayo F. Nwanze
President

Bioversity International: Programme for Impact Evaluation Approaches for Agricultural Research for Development

I. Background

1. Since the early 1990s, agricultural research programmes, including those funded by IFAD, have come under pressure to achieve demonstrable impacts on broad development goals such as poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Many agricultural research organizations (including centres of the CGIAR) responded by expanding their objectives from the generation of technologies and expansion of crop yields to include a more explicit focus on reducing poverty, and improving livelihoods and environmental sustainability.
2. International agreements and dialogue, such as the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, have also influenced the way in which agricultural research is conducted. Whereas formerly knowledge and capacity were centralized in advanced research institutes, now research is expected to be a more collaborative and country-led process that develops knowledge through the inputs of diverse development partners.
3. Impact evaluation of agricultural research has not kept pace with these changes. Most impact evaluation studies have assessed genetic improvement of major food crops using traditional methodologies. Few studies have assessed the impacts of other research areas such as livestock, natural resources management, market chain development, policy, capacity development and germplasm conservation, and even fewer have made assessments of outcomes and impact on poverty.
4. In 2008, several CGIAR programmes sponsored an international workshop entitled Rethinking Impact. Workshop participants called for the CGIAR and others to help develop and apply a wider range of impact evaluation approaches needed for assessing the contribution of agricultural research to sustainable poverty alleviation.
5. This proposal is the result of a nine-month scoping study conducted by the Research into Use Programme, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and the CGIAR Institutional Learning and Change Initiative (ILAC) that investigated ways of advancing the practice of impact evaluation in agricultural research for development by looking at the relevant needs and gaps, partners, linkages and approaches.

II. Rationale and relevance to IFAD

6. The proposed programme aims to improve the evaluation of agricultural research for development programmes, and increase the use of evaluation in decision-making and programme improvement by the CGIAR system and its partners. It will provide managers and evaluators of agricultural research for development programmes with field-tested, trans-disciplinary and mixed-method approaches for evaluating the poverty, livelihoods and environmental impacts of their work.
7. The programme will improve on conventional approaches for evaluating impacts in the following ways:
 - A wider range of poverty impacts and outcomes can be assessed by drawing on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data and methods from different disciplines.

- Analysis of the causes and contributing factors of impact on poverty will be improved, including the contributions of various partners and the synergies brought about by partnerships.
 - Findings from evaluations of impact on poverty, and the evaluation process itself, will be more useful in supporting decision-making, learning and change, through better engagement of stakeholders, systematic attention to supporting the use of knowledge and its translation to different contexts.
8. Approaches will be tested mostly within CGIAR-led programmes and then made available widely to other organizations involved in agricultural research for development. The programme will contribute directly to the CGIAR reform and change process and respond to issues raised in the CGIAR external review by developing methods of impact evaluation that are appropriate for use in research for development and poverty alleviation.
 9. The programme will establish links to, and build on, existing work being carried out by others both inside and outside the CGIAR system and the agricultural research community. Such efforts would include but are not limited to the following:
 - CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment and CGIAR Alliance
 - Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program
 - Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries
 - The Cairo group of evaluation experts (International Development Research Centre, Rockefeller Foundation, CIRCLE/RMIT, iScale, Keystone Accountability and Evalnet)
 - Agrinovia, a pilot training course on rural innovation in Africa for professionals engaged in IFAD-financed activities
 10. The programme contributes to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the IFAD grant programme by promoting pro-poor research on innovative approaches and technological options to enhance field-level impact, while the immediate focus would be on capacity-building and strengthening based on lessons learned from evaluations and triggering institutional change to achieve better poverty impact from its research programmes. It will enhance IFAD's role as a financial institution that supports replication to scale up pro-poor research results into use.
 11. The programme contributes directly to IFAD's longstanding strategic partnership with the CGIAR by supporting the CGIAR's reform efforts. IFAD joined the CGIAR in 1979, and is one of the CGIAR's four co-sponsors, represented by its Technical Advisory Division. IFAD was instrumental in extending the CGIAR agenda to explicitly address rural poverty. IFAD served as the co-Chair of the CGIAR Change Steering Team in 2008 and continues to play a leadership role in the ongoing reform.
 12. The outcomes will also contribute to guiding IFAD investment decisions, both directly for agricultural research and indirectly through the loan programmes, thus supporting IFAD's knowledge management thrust. Eligibility under IFAD's competitive large grant window is defined in terms of both research and capacity-building.

III. The proposed programme

13. The goal of the programme is to improve the impact evaluation of agricultural research for development programmes. More relevant evaluations will provide more useful information for decision-making and programme improvement. Consequently, programmes will be better targeted and contribute more effectively to achieving poverty alleviation and other development goals.

14. The programme will help enable agricultural research and development organizations working in developing countries to improve their evaluation practices and to assess a wider range of positive or negative impacts on poverty and their causes. International and regional organizations, national governments and donor organizations will have access to new approaches to impact evaluation.
15. The programme has a particular focus on influencing the evaluation guidelines and practices in the CGIAR, by using CGIAR programmes as the main testing ground for a wider range of impact evaluation approaches, which can then be institutionalized in the CGIAR and its partners.
16. The objectives of the programme are to:
 - Increase knowledge and understanding of how agricultural research contributes to poverty alleviation, improved livelihoods and environmental sustainability in rural agricultural production systems by conducting exemplary new impact evaluations, which in turn provide new insights, particularly on the multistakeholder partnership dimensions of research.
 - Develop capacity amongst researchers and evaluators within agricultural research organizations for evaluating the impact of agricultural research for development and poverty alleviation.
17. Indications that these objectives have been achieved will include:
 - A broader range of poverty impacts assessed through evaluations that employ new methodologies and approaches.
 - Evaluation findings and recommendations incorporated into new research programmes that target poverty alleviation.
18. The proposed programme will carry out the following activities:
 - Compile and synthesize existing evaluations of the impact of agricultural research on poverty alleviation and other development goals.
 - Develop an online resource portal to assist agricultural research evaluation practitioners in assessing impacts on poverty alleviation.
 - Conduct exemplary new evaluations of the impact of agricultural research on poverty alleviation and synthesize the results.
 - Provide training, mentoring and technical support on impact evaluation approaches to evaluators and researchers in agricultural research for development organizations.
 - Advocate for evaluation policies and practices in agricultural research for development organizations that improve assessment of impacts on poverty and stimulate learning and programme improvement.

IV. Expected outputs and benefits

19. Programme outputs will include:
 - Fifteen training programmes, workshops or technical support missions carried out.
 - An evaluation synthesis conducted and results made available.
 - A resource portal made available online.
 - Twelve planning and coordination meetings held.
 - Data from up to nine cases collected, archived and analysed.
 - Up to nine new impact evaluations carried out and documented.

- At least two briefs produced that summarize methodologies and findings.
- Eight policy-level meetings or workshops attended or organized.

The scale and number of impact evaluations will be varied to match the needs of specific case studies and opportunities for leveraging funding.

20. All programme outputs will be freely available as global public goods. All intellectual property produced in association with the programme will be assigned jointly to Bioversity International and programme partners, including research teams, technical experts and donors including IFAD.
21. The programme aims to realize the following benefits:
 - Knowledge about a broader range of impact evaluation approaches is made available and used.
 - Factors related to the contribution of agricultural research to poverty alleviation are better understood.
 - New capacities for impact evaluation are developed and applied.
 - Evaluation policy changes are advocated and implemented.

V. Implementation arrangements

22. The programme will be carried out by the CGIAR system-wide ILAC initiative, hosted by Bioversity International since 2004 and currently funded by the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation. ILAC's purpose is to strengthen the capacity of collaborative programmes to promote pro-poor agricultural innovation, and to ensure that research and development activities are managed more effectively to contribute to poverty reduction.
23. Leadership, supervision and support for the programme will be provided by the larger ILAC Initiative. ILAC has a three-person staff, honorary fellows, a website, publications series, training courses, strong networks and existing partnerships, in addition to its financial resources upon which the programme will build. A regionally based impact evaluation programme coordinator will be hired to manage the programme.
24. Bioversity International will provide the administrative home for the programme. Bioversity provides administrative services for a number of other inter-centre initiatives and the CGIAR Alliance Office, and as the grant recipient, Bioversity will also provide the necessary legal and administrative assistance in managing the grant and channelling it to partner implementing entities within and outside the CGIAR System, and in technical and financial reporting.
25. A steering committee, with the following membership, will be formed to review and advise on the annual workplans and budgets:
 - The Alliance of CGIAR centres
 - The Global Fund for Agricultural Research
 - A member of the CGIAR Science Council
 - Bioversity International senior management

Eminent resource persons such as Dr Robert Chambers, a long standing adviser to the ILAC initiative, will be invited to join the steering committee. As a donor, IFAD will be invited to participate as an observer. The steering committee will meet annually and the secretariat will be provided by the ILAC initiative.

26. The CGIAR consortium will assume leadership of CGIAR monitoring and evaluation functions during the four-year life of the programme and will provide core funding for these activities. The activities supported by the grant, and new approaches and

methodologies developed, will gradually be integrated into the overall CGIAR monitoring and evaluation system. In terms of sustainability, to help facilitate the institutionalization of the approach, methodologies and new activities, the programme budget provides for the CGIAR consortium to begin to assume financial responsibility for these, by covering half of the programme's staffing costs in 2012 and 2013. Since it provides oversight to programme activities and funding, the steering committee will be expected to strategize ways to ensure a smooth transition from programme-funded activities to core activities within the new CGIAR structure.

VI. Indicative programme costs and financing

27. The total cost of the four-year programme is estimated at approximately US\$1.65 million. IFAD's proposed contribution is estimated at US\$1 million. The contribution of the participating research organizations will cover the salaries of scientists, provision of research facilities, vehicles, already-established institutional arrangements with collaborating farmers, etc., and is estimated at US\$0.54 million. Another ILAC grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands will provide cofinancing support for workshops and meetings and supplies and services in the estimated amount of US\$0.11 million. Details are included in the full design document.

Summary of budget and financing plan

(In thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Type of expenditure</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>Cofinancing^a</i>
Personnel	180	490
Staff travel	36	0
Publications and communication	81	6
Workshops and meetings	177	70
Supplies and services	39	40
Consultancies	357	0
Overhead (13%)	130	49
Total	1 000	655

^a Where applicable

Results-based logical framework

	Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal	Improve impact evaluation in CGIAR centres and other agricultural research for development organizations	Policy and practice in agricultural research for development organizations revised to deliver greater impact on poverty	Reviews of programme plans	
Objectives	<p>Increase knowledge and understanding of how agricultural research contributes to poverty alleviation</p> <p>Develop capacity for evaluating agricultural research impacts on poverty alleviation</p>	<p>A broader range of poverty impacts assessed through evaluations that employ new methodologies and approaches</p> <p>Evaluation findings and recommendations incorporated into new research programmes that target poverty alleviation</p>	Comparison of before programme situation (documented in scoping study or documentation review) with after programme situation (documented in end of programme report)	<p>Research evaluation policy environment conducive to and supportive of new approaches for impact evaluation.</p> <p>Organizational cultures open to the use of new methods</p>
Outcomes	<p>Knowledge about impact evaluation approaches made available through the on-line resource portal and used</p> <p>Factors related to the contribution of agricultural research to poverty alleviation better understood</p> <p>New capacities for impact evaluation developed and applied</p> <p>Evaluation policies changed</p>	<p>Evaluators and researchers from CGIAR and other agricultural research organizations visit the on-line resource portal</p> <p>Publications produced by the programme are accessed and cited</p> <p>A new set of evaluations document how agricultural research can best contribute to poverty alleviation</p> <p>Evaluators and researchers who are trained and provided with technical support use new evaluation approaches to a high standard of quality</p> <p>Evaluation policies and guidelines of participating organizations include a wider range of approaches for assessing poverty impacts and for learning and programme improvement</p>	<p>Portal visitor statistics and analysis of users and use patterns</p> <p>Website downloads and bibliometric data</p> <p>Synthesis reports available on the web, as journal articles and other publications</p> <p>Follow-up surveys of trainees</p> <p>Policy review and analysis</p>	<p>Organizations motivated to actively participate and contribute in-kind costs</p> <p>Research environment enables uptake of new knowledge and practices</p> <p>Appropriate expertise identified and mobilized</p>
Key Activities	<p>Compile and synthesize existing impact evaluations</p> <p>Develop an on-line resource portal</p> <p>Conduct new impact evaluations and synthesize the results, methods and approaches used</p> <p>Provide evaluation training, mentoring and technical support</p> <p>Advocate for better evaluation policies and practices</p>	<p>15 training programmes/workshops or technical support missions carried out</p> <p>An evaluation synthesis conducted and results made available</p> <p>A resource portal made available on line</p> <p>12 planning and coordination meetings held</p> <p>Data from up to 9 cases collected, archived and analysed</p> <p>Up to 9 new impact evaluations carried out and documented</p> <p>At least 2 briefs produced on methods and findings</p> <p>8 policy level meetings/workshops attended or organized</p>	<p>Annual programme reports</p> <p>Records of publications production and distribution</p> <p>Impact evaluation research reports</p> <p>Meeting reports</p> <p>Letters of agreement</p> <p>Contracts</p> <p>Training reports</p>	<p>Case studies teams, advanced research institutes and other partners willing to collaborate</p> <p>Donors willing to provide matching funding</p>