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Investing in rural people

IFAD Management Response to the Evaluation Synthesis Report on Building Partnerships for Enhanced Development Effectiveness – A Review of Country-level Experiences and Results

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For: Review

IFAD Management Response to the Evaluation Synthesis Report on Building Partnerships for Enhanced Development Effectiveness – A Review of Country-level Experiences and Results

1. Management welcomes IOE's Evaluation Synthesis Report (ESR) on Building Partnerships for Enhanced Development Effectiveness – A Review of Country-level Experiences and Results. Overall Management is pleased to note that the findings of the ESR confirm Management's own assessment and analysis as elaborated in the paper presented to the third session of the Consultation on the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11) entitled Leveraging Partnerships for Country-level Impact and Global Engagement (IFAD11/3/R.5). Furthermore, overall the recommendations are consistent with ongoing activities and planned reforms to improve performance and development effectiveness as part of the commitments undertaken for IFAD11.
2. Management notes that the number of subrecommendations in this synthesis report remain high despite the fact that follow-up on recommendations made in the evaluation products that this ESR is based on have already been internalized and reported on in various editions of the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA). Management would like to reiterate that given the nature of ESRs as learning products, the recommendations should be strategic and avoid duplicating recommendations contained in reports on which the synthesis was based.
3. Notwithstanding this, Management highly values the learning generated by the ESR and the importance of strengthening partnerships to enhance the impact of IFAD investments, particularly at the country level. Management's commitment is evident in accelerated and strategic decentralization, the Operational Excellence for Results (OpEx) reforms and the undertaking to strengthen partnership-building for IFAD11.

Recommendations

4. Management takes note of the three main recommendations of the ESR, and the subactions within each recommendation, and agrees with them. Management's detailed responses to each are presented below.
 - (a) Recommendation 1. Prepare a revised corporate partnership strategy with a clear focus on country-level partnership outcomes

Agreed.

As part of the IFAD11 commitments, Management has agreed to develop and implement a framework to strategically plan and monitor IFAD's partnerships at country, regional, global and institutional levels, including collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies, international financial institutions, and national and bilateral partners, as well as engagement in multi-stakeholder partnerships. This framework will build on the leveraging partnerships paper mentioned earlier and serve to replace the existing corporate partnership strategy approved in 2012.

This will be further informed by interlinked actions Management is undertaking as part of the IFAD11 commitments. These include: (i) an analysis and action plan for cofinancing; (ii) an update of the private sector strategy to improve our engagement; (iii) a new knowledge management strategy; and (iv) setting up a South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) facility.

Furthermore, in line with the subrecommendation made in the ESR, Management has already committed to update the guidance on results-based country strategic opportunities programmes (RB-COSOPs) to strengthen the selection of strategic

country-level partnerships in low-income countries, lower middle-income countries and middle-income countries, among others, for cofinancing, scaling up, policy engagement, SSTC and private sector initiatives.

Therefore, Management will incorporate the specific suggestions of this recommendation as a critical input for developing the framework to strategically plan and monitor IFAD partnerships at country, regional and global level in line with IFAD11 commitment 3.5, action 27. Such a framework would obviate the need for a revised corporate strategy for country-level partnerships.

- (b) Recommendation 2. Streamline the application of partnership instruments and modalities with a view on partnership results

Agreed.

Management agrees with the recommendation and the subrecommendations.

Cofinancing: For IFAD11, Management has committed to conducting a cofinancing analysis and developing a cofinancing strategy that would include differentiated approaches to mobilizing cofinancing at the domestic and international level. Furthermore, corporate targets will be set for domestic and international cofinancing to cascade down at the regional and country level. Such targets will be analysed, discussed and agreed in the context of the development of RB-COSOPs and will be based on a country's own development strategy and priorities.

Furthermore, building on the IFAD11 business model, Management has committed to develop a transition framework to establish the most adequate package of support that IFAD could offer to accompany borrowers in their development journey, with the aim of ensuring long-lasting impact. To be effective, the interventions that IFAD offers must be tailored to the specific country conditions and challenges, which will be a key consideration in developing the transition framework. The transition framework for each country will be embedded into the RB-COSOP to provide a long-term strategic path for each country.

Grants: Management would like to highlight that the ESR recommendations pertaining to grants were covered in the corporate-level evaluation on grant financing and followed up extensively in the 2015 PRISMA (EB 2015/115/R.5/Add.1).

In adopting a more programmatic approach at the country level, Management will strengthen synergies between the lending and non-lending portfolios and will be able to further leverage instruments such as the grants window to contribute to greater outcomes. Quality assurance (QA) processes will ensure that proposals – both concept notes submitted to the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee and design documents submitted for QA – are aligned to the extent possible with investment project priorities. Moreover, during implementation and as required by the 2015 Policy for Grant Financing implementation procedures, grant status reports are required for all grants, both large and small, to report on, inter alia, linkages to the investment portfolio and other development initiatives.

However, it is important to note that not all grants will, or should, support lending operations. For example, research grants that are particularly innovative should link to IFAD operations only once it is attested that the innovative technology being tested is indeed promising for smallholder farmers. The Policy for Grant Financing states that IFAD grants should "make a significant contribution to a global, regional or national public good related to IFAD's mandate" (para. 7) – which goes beyond merely supporting IFAD operations.

Management agrees to the subrecommendation to provide more grant funds "for longer-term partnership-building with CSOs, FOs, indigenous groups and private sector (SMEs) and strengthening their capacities". Management believes this is an important area of intervention and indeed, considerable IFAD grant support is

provided to strengthen the capacity of such partners. As part of the development of a citizen engagement strategy, one of the commitments for IFAD11, Management will strengthen its approach of engagement with these stakeholders throughout the programming and operational cycles.

Public-private-producer partnerships (PPPPs): As indicated in the ESR, Management has already taken proactive action to address the demand for an increase in PPPPs. The IFAD11 commitment to submit a revised private sector engagement strategy will address the subrecommendation on PPPPs.

- (c) Recommendation 3. Strengthen corporate accountability for partnership results through a coherent approach for monitoring and evaluating partnerships

Agreed.

Management agrees with the need to strengthen accountability and monitoring of results. The basis for decentralization and moving towards a hub model is expected to improve results on the ground. Management anticipates that through decentralization and the evolving role of country teams, partnership-building in particular will be strengthened at the country and regional level. This is also reflected in the IFAD11 commitment referenced above, which commits Management to develop a framework to both strategically plan and monitor IFAD's partnerships and their related outcomes.

As indicated above, revisions are being made to the guidance on monitoring results at the project and country programme levels. In accordance with the anticipated revisions to the RB-COSOP guidelines, RB-COSOP results frameworks will be updated and adjusted at midterm and assessed at completion. Better and more consistent reporting on progress against partnership outcomes will be ensured by supervision and completion reporting at the project level through the Operational Results Management System (ORMS) and at the country level through the results frameworks.

The aggregated results will be reported on in the corporate results management framework through the specific indicators included in the IFAD11 Results Management Framework. Further refinements will be made to guidance and criteria used for assessing partnerships, including revisions to the client survey, to improve the quality of data collected on partnerships and to reflect a stronger focus on the outcomes and results achieved.

Additionally, the Quality Assurance Group performs reviews of recurrent grant recipients. These reviews are considered critical for IFAD to understand how to strengthen and benefit from these partnerships with recurrent recipients.