



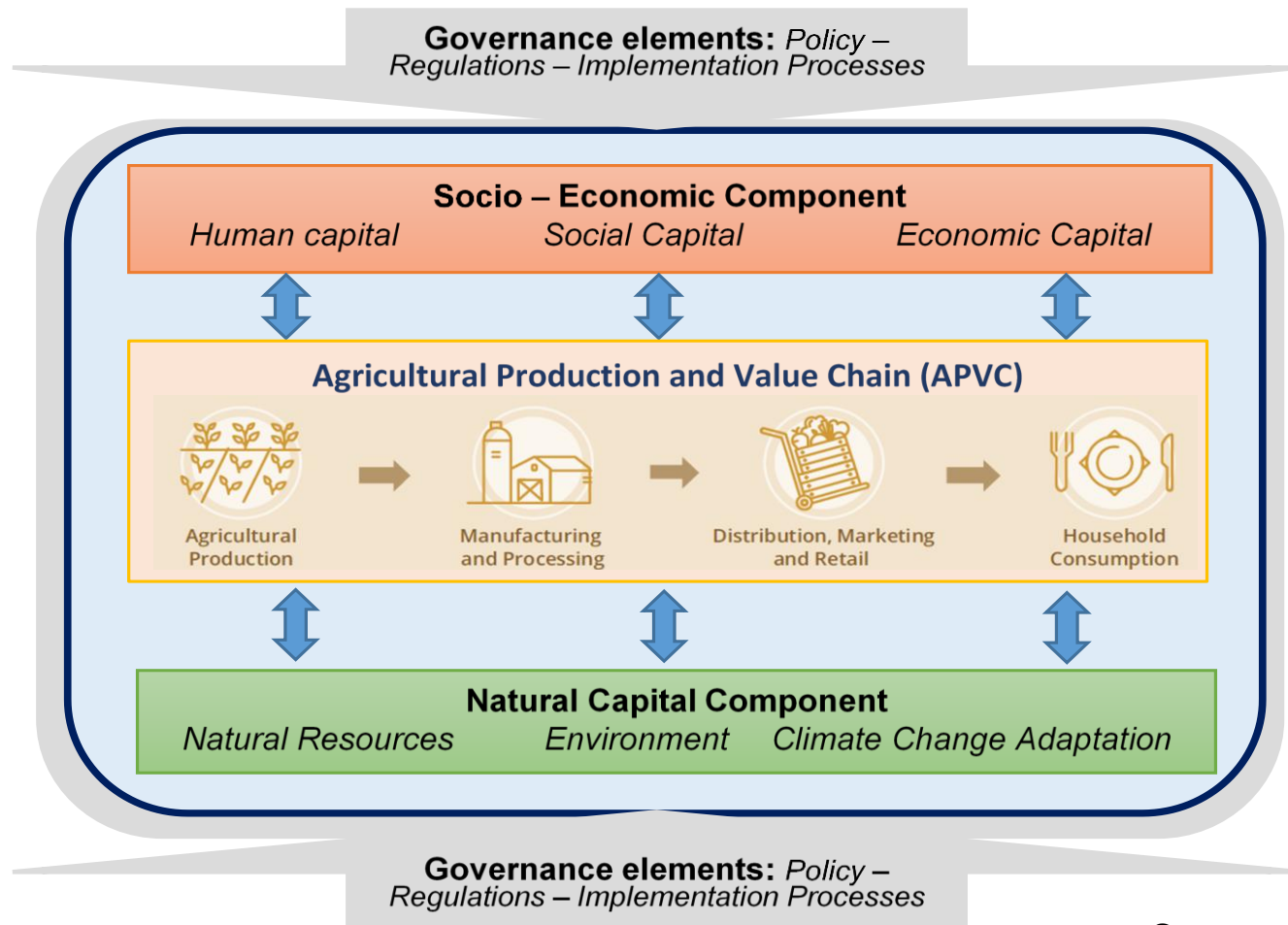
# CLE on IFAD's support to innovations for inclusive and sustainable smallholder agriculture

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Independent Office  
of Evaluation

 **IFAD**  
Investing in rural people

# Innovation and the agri-food system



# Trend of IFAD supported innovations

- Innovations supported (2009–2019): are mostly **socio-economic, socio-institutional and technological: about 60%**.
- Innovations relating to **value chains and natural components** are fewer (about 30%), but are on the rise.
- **Loan investment projects** support the promotion of innovations at the dissemination stage (71%); mostly, these innovations have already been tested and proven elsewhere.
- The **grant programme** supports innovations at the development stage (79%), showcasing their importance.

# Corporate processes



## 2007 Innovation

**Strategy:** A key milestone of IFAD's agenda, but did not include strategic objectives or operational framework.



**Innovation and scaling up** have been among IFAD's engagement principles since 2007.

- Innovation became a key word in **all corporate documents**.
- **Specific funding** for innovation has been allocated only since 2019, after the 2004 innovation mainstreaming initiative.
- **Recent corporate initiatives** show a positive shift towards embracing innovation, e.g. the 2019 Innovation challenge.

# IFAD-supported innovation processes

**Planning and design:** innovation processes are not consistent, in terms of approaches / methods.

**Implementation:** the process is effective, because it is adaptive to identify innovations to address new smallholder challenges

**Completion:** the process is incomplete, as not well assessed and evaluated.

- Numerous individual initiatives, but lack of overarching guidance.
- Tension arose when genuine innovations are to be applied in loan-supported projects.
- Partnerships supporting innovation processes are less effective at the national level.

# Innovation effectiveness and impact



**Very effective:**  
innovations pertaining to  
social capital,  
agricultural technologies  
& natural resources  
management



**Less effective:**  
innovations in the  
economic capital and  
value chain domains

**Governance innovations**  
complement others and  
lead to greater  
effectiveness & impact

**Effectiveness and impact**  
increase when several  
innovations, addressing  
multiple challenges, are  
bundled together for  
implementation. This  
gives a transformative  
feature to the package

# Inclusiveness and scaling up

## Inclusiveness

- Few women specific innovations;
- Socioeconomic innovations with governance ones are more impactful on women empowerment;
- For youths, human capital innovations were successful

## Scaling up

Most scaled up:

- Successful innovations related to economic capital, production and governance
- Those bundled together for transformative change



# Natural resources management and climate change adaptation

- Several agricultural production innovations contributed to the sustainable management of natural resources (NRM);
- Specific NRM innovations are few, but successful; e.g. for the management of marine and inland waters, as well as terrestrial ecosystem;



- Some production related innovations also contribute to reduce the risk of crop failure, corollary to climate change (CC).
- Most specific CC innovations are recent and effective; e.g.: information system and protective measures.



# Key findings

- In summary, the IFAD business model supporting innovation promotion is overall satisfactory.
- However: there is a lack of corporate / strategic objectives and supporting operational frameworks;
- Minimum guidance is also lacking;
- There is an insufficient allocation of specific resources;
- Innovation processes are weak at the national level (in terms of support, synergy and partnership); and
- There is little focus on promoting innovation bundles for transformation.

# Recommendations

1. Set clear corporate goals for the IFAD innovation agenda; develop and implement operational frameworks.
2. Improve the operating model supporting innovation.
3. Dedicate greater attention to bundles of innovations that have transformative features.
4. Enhance the innovation culture through greater allocation of specific resources.
5. Increase funding and operational partnerships for innovation support.
6. Streamline knowledge management tools for accessing and sharing better, innovations-related information.

# Thank you