

IOE



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation



Evaluation
Committee
116 Session

Evaluation of IFAD Country Strategy and Programme in Eswatini 2000-2021

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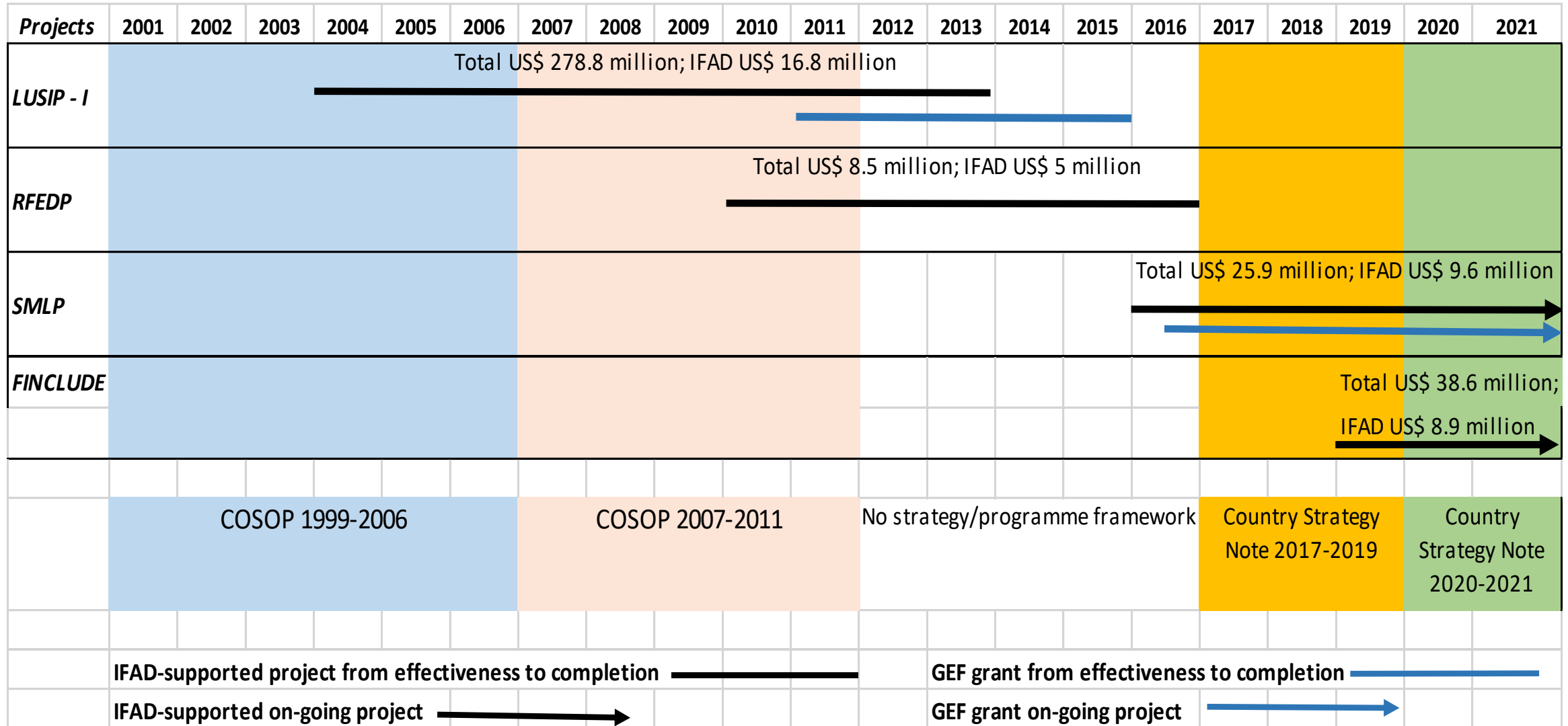
Methodology :

- Desk review: project documents, other secondary sources;
- Semi-structured interviews through videoconference and face-to-face;
- Key informant interviews
- Field visits by a team of national consultants to project infrastructures and communities in several Chiefdoms in Lubombo and Shiselweni regions (early October 2021) followed by phone interviews with participants in project-supported initiatives.

Scope

- The CSPE covered 21 years timeframe, from 2000 – 2021.
- Assessment of COSOP 1999-2006; COSOP 2007-2011; Country Strategy Note 2017-2019; Country Strategy Note 2020-2021.

IFAD operations in Eswatini and CSPE scope



- Portfolio was relevant in line with national and IFAD strategies and policies and to the needs of the rural poor.
- Targeting strategies improved over time, also by including self-targeting measures and clear distinction about the needs of the different groups of producers.
- Overall positive results in contributing to the promotion and development of an inclusive rural finance policy, most successful at the macro level.
- Effective support to the export-oriented sugar cane value chain by developing legal tools enabling access and control of land and water for smallholder producers.

- Chiefdom Development Plans and Community Development Committees promote inclusiveness; with Farmer Companies, all contribute to strengthening social and human capital.
- Highly innovative portfolio: rural finance sector concept and practices; participatory approaches; new crop varieties and new livestock production models; adequate level of scaling-up by Government.
- Engagement with women producers through all interventions, but initially mostly by default; over time, focus has improved.
- Dedicated support to Environment and natural resources management and Adaptation to climate change at programme level.

- Project designs and implementation arrangements highly complex and not always fully cognizant of the national and local context.
- Uneven progress in local value chains development; Innovation Platforms ineffective in ensuring fair distribution of benefits along the value chain; limited net returns to honey and pig producers.
- Weak results in establishing institutions responsible for irrigation scheme and water management.
- Progress in support of small-scale water management infrastructures slow and limited.

- Low level of inclusion of the most vulnerable households and people who have only limited access to means of production such as land and household labour.
- Complexity and lack of clarity in the execution arrangements with Service Providers and other executing partners.
- Risks of increasingly diminishing returns for smallholder farmers engaged in the sugar cane value chain and threats to the sustainability of the sugar-producing Farmer Companies.

Strengths

- Grants: good level of integration and coherence of regional grants with the lending portfolio, resulting in both planned and unplanned synergies.
- Knowledge Management: good results at the strategic level and across the portfolio; Interesting initiatives on rural finance and environmental sustainability and through South South Cooperation.
- Policy engagement: notable achievements in the rural finance sector, but limited in terms of land and water management and nutrition.

Challenges

- Partnerships solid and constructive with the Government but limited in numbers and characterized by contractual features with other categories of partners.

- IFAD's strategies for Eswatini focused on some relevant key challenges, but fundamental constraints that prevent achieving sustainable livelihoods and reducing rural poverty were not explicitly addressed.
- The sustainability of major investments in irrigation infrastructure and in support of smallholder producers engagement in the export-oriented sugar value chain is at risk.
- Complex implementation arrangements have affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the country programmes.
- At the level of project implementation, the CSPE identified M&E and procurement as major weaknesses that affected the performance of the country programme.

- **Recommendation 1.** IFAD should address through its strategy and programme in Eswatini the fundamental constraints that prevent rural smallholder producers, women and youth, from achieving more sustainable livelihoods.
- **Recommendation 2.** IFAD should further engage, at a minimum in an advocacy and advisory role, in addressing the emerging threats to the livelihoods of smallholder producers who have their holdings in the LUSIP I PDA.

- **Recommendation 3.** IFAD and the Government of Eswatini, drawing on the rich lessons learned over time, should define which are the most efficient and effective implementation arrangements for their joint initiatives, that will also allow smallholder producers to benefit the most.
- **Recommendation 4.** Project monitoring and evaluation systems and procurement units should be considered fundamental pillars of project management and be adequately staffed and capacitated to perform in an effective and efficient manner.

Thank you!