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Investing in rural people

## Government Performance in IFAD-supported Operations Evaluation Synthesis

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## Executive summary

### I. Introduction

1. **Rationale.** IFAD was established to mobilize resources for agricultural development in developing Member States.<sup>1</sup> IFAD-supported programmes are owned, managed, and executed by governments and their agencies in collaboration with other stakeholders. Government, as a borrower or recipient of an IFAD loan or grant, assumes responsibility for providing the required financial and staff resources as well as the supporting policies and procedures. It should also make diligent use of management processes to ensure their effective deployment in delivering project outputs.
2. Both the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (prepared by Management) and the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (prepared by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD) have consistently noted government performance as an area where IFAD's operations underperform. Relatively weak and worsening government performance ratings have raised concerns about the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and ultimately the impact of IFAD projects. The issue of government performance, and how it relates to other performance dimensions, therefore requires heightened attention. However, IFAD corporate data and analysis are not yet sufficient to identify performance bottlenecks, which would enable IFAD to prioritize and focus its support to government partners.
3. **Objectives.** The objectives of this synthesis were to:
  - (i) Develop a conceptual framework for evaluating government performance, with particular focus on institutional efficiency;
  - (ii) Synthesize pertinent evidence on government performance, identifying the dynamics and factors contributing to good or poor performance; and
  - (iii) Identify critical areas for IFAD to focus on to support enhanced government performance.
4. **Scope.** The synthesis focussed on the performance of government in IFAD-supported operations. It covered the period 2010–2020 period, when government performance deteriorated. For this decade, performance data were available from 421 evaluations, including 57 country strategy and programme evaluations (CSPEs) and 364 project-level evaluations. The synthesis selected 15 case study countries. These drew evidence from 38 CSPEs and project performance evaluations, together with 46 project completion report validations and three impact evaluations covering 71 IOE-evaluated programmes or projects since 2010. The case studies also reviewed the project supervision ratings on selected indicators closely linked to government performance. In addition, the synthesis conducted a series of focus group discussions and an e-survey targeting government partners, IFAD staff and consultants.
5. **Government performance as an evaluation criterion.** IFAD assesses government performance through a stand-alone performance criterion, which confronts government, and for that matter IFAD, with its respective responsibilities as a partner in project design and execution. The advantage is that it assigns accountability for project performance to government partners. In practice, government performance affects a broader range of issues that require a more explicit framework to be properly assessed. Government has a critical function in project performance which also reflects on broader project effectiveness and sustainability aspects. Furthermore, government and IFAD have mutual

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<sup>1</sup> [Agreement Establishing the International Fund for Agricultural Development.](#)

responsibilities, for example during design and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and successful performance also depends on both sides playing their part.

6. **Synthesis approach.** This synthesis takes a broad approach to review government performance in the context of IFAD projects. It looks at government actions in terms of its institutional efficiency, prevailing enabling conditions, and the structures, capacities and processes that should be in place to successfully transform financial and non-financial resources into operational results. The conceptual framework for this synthesis identifies the variables of government performance, and the links between those variables, together with the dynamics and contextual factors driving performance. The focus is on the inner workings of government performance, together with the underlying dynamics and drivers. To assess government performance, the synthesis applied standard evaluation criteria such as relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. This framework offered a useful avenue for delimiting government performance by distinguishing the factual (what government actually did) from the assumed or motivating factors (what may be behind it).

## II. Findings

### A. The broader picture

7. **Deteriorating government performance.** Government performance deteriorated over the review period. The share of moderately satisfactory or better ratings dropped from a high of 75 per cent (2012–2014) to a low of 58 per cent (2016–2018), after which it slightly improved (2021 ARRI). The decline in ratings cannot be explained by performance in either low-income countries or countries with fragile situations, which has been stable.
8. **Performance of lead agencies.** Deteriorating government performance can be linked to the increasing share of projects led by ministries of agriculture, which reflects IFAD's closer focus on agricultural and value chain projects. The share of satisfactory government performance in Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)-led projects has fallen steeply and continuously, from a high 67 percent of ratings deemed satisfactory in 2011–2013 to a low of 45 per cent in 2016–2018, after which it slightly improved. At the same time, the performance of local governments, the "traditional" IFAD partners for local development projects, remained consistent, but their share in the overall portfolio decreased.
9. **The great majority of poorly performing projects led by MoA were in West and Central Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean countries characterized by fragility or political change.** They displayed low government ownership, scarce interest in projects, political instability and insufficient engagement and presence. The case studies noted common institutional weaknesses for MoAs, such as limited flexibility, insufficient sector funding, weak capacities at decentralized level and weak stakeholder coordination.
10. **IFAD country presence.** While country presence can be a contributing factor, it cannot alone explain good or weak government performance. Its influence on government performance also depends on the technical qualifications and seniority of IFAD staff as well as other "soft" factors shaping the relationship with government partners. The out-posting of a senior IFAD staffer as country director has enhanced oversight and contributed to improved implementation in countries such as Ghana, Nepal and Sudan. But there are also countries that perform well with limited or no IFAD presence (e.g. Republic of Moldova and Niger). Furthermore, IFAD presence was usually insufficient in programmes stretching into remote locations and with weak decentralized capacities. In such cases, posting a country director in the capital was not sufficient.

## B. Relevance. Ownership, leadership and accountability

11. Government ownership, leadership and accountability are closely connected and together they are key drivers of government performance. Ownership is what – together with knowledge and information – drives project decisions and activities. It derives from societal norms and structures (including accountability structures) and project-specific – typically contract-based – organizational arrangements.
12. Government ownership, according to the Paris Declaration (2005), is a combination of government commitments: to exercise leadership, to achieve development results and to coordinate development partners. Ownership provides an incentive for government to perform. Government ownership is needed at all levels, but may be lower at the decentralized level, where government is often constrained by lack of resources and weak communication, which influence the quality and level of engagement.
13. Varying degrees of government ownership were observed in case study countries. Strong ownership was identified as a driver of government performance in five case (Burundi, India, Republic of Moldova, Niger and Turkey). Government involvement was rather low in three countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador and Mexico).
14. IFAD has supported government ownership through long-standing partnerships with preferred ministries and agencies, for example, or through responsive programme design and integration of government staff into management units. Reliable support and partnerships were particularly important in fragile situations. For example, in Burundi, Niger and Sudan, national authorities' trust and engagement with IFAD country teams facilitated information transfer, strong alignment of portfolios with national strategies and priorities, and Government's active participation in oversight and implementation support.
15. Leadership. Government assuming leadership in IFAD-supported operations is usually seen as an expression of ownership and responsibility for project interventions (Burundi, Republic of Moldova). When high-level government representatives engage in, and are committed to, a project, this builds broader ownership (systemic ownership) within government at different institutional levels. It can range from high-level government commitment in facilitating coordination among agencies and development partners, to the presence of government officials in oversight structures.
16. In half of the case studies, governments set up steering committees and other oversight structures for project and programme implementation. While oversight functions existed in most programmes, their precise role was not always clear. Their ability to work effectively was often hampered by the insufficient participation of key stakeholders and weak leadership capacities (e.g. Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan).
17. Accountability. The presence of a well-defined institutional structure and a functional accountability system is the most important perceived enabler of government ownership. A robust accountability system includes transparent responsibility allocation and a culture of administrative answerability. Accountability systems included fiduciary oversight at decentralized levels and the operational efficiency of programme management units (PMUs). Fiduciary oversight was strong, for example, in Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Peru and Sudan. Countries with efficient fiduciary management and control systems were able to accelerate disbursement.
18. Effective provision and use of knowledge required supportive policies and planning as well technology and capacity. Weak M&E systems and a limited use of information for decision-making have been identified as key hindrances to using knowledge as a driver of government performance. Conversely, good knowledge

systems and M&E, complemented by reliable data, have been positive drivers, e.g. in Madagascar, Republic of Moldova, Niger and Peru.

19. Institutional arrangements. The institutional arrangements for project implementation, agreed during project design, include the choice of lead agency and implementing partners as well as the set-up for project management. Integration of IFAD projects in country structures has enhanced ownership; it enables national government and decentralized authorities to provide oversight, coordination and other types of support to ongoing projects and programmes, e.g. in Madagascar and Niger.
20. Programme management units. PMU structure, roles and responsibilities vary depending on the country and the project/programme. PMUs are often a way for IFAD to mitigate fiduciary risks and ensure that staff capacities are fully committed. But this often comes at the cost of undermining capacity development and ownership in government institutions. Setting up PMUs within government is a compromise that maintains some ownership and helps build government staff capacities. In fragile situations, with limited government presence and capacity to build on, IFAD often resorted to setting up autonomous PMUs outside the administration. Such PMUs were particularly affected by delays in recruitment, and higher-than-expected operating costs. They scored lower on efficiency.

### C. Efficiency. Resources, delivery and adaptation

21. Governments and IFAD agree on the organizational arrangements for project management during design. The capacities and resources mobilized by government are key variables determining the performance of project management. Government staff capacities still are the main bottleneck to sound management, according to the case studies and e-surveys. Staff capacities are often better where IFAD relies on a wider range of implementing partners.
22. Poor government staff capacity was often the reason for implementation delays and weak results. Insufficient technical capacity was usually the result of late recruitment, high staff turnover or, in the case of government staff, part-time availability. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff were common. Implementation was commonly weak in remote areas where IFAD typically works, regardless of income or fragility status, (e.g. in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, India, Mexico and Pakistan). Provision of staff training and capacity-building did not resolve these constraints as long as incentives to performance were missing.
23. Counterpart funding. Availability of counterpart funding was closely linked with the economic situation and government priorities. Positive examples were India, Kenya, Republic of Moldova and Peru, where government gave all necessary support to programme redesigns, including reallocation of funds. In countries with weak economic situations, IFAD was flexible in accepting non-monetary forms of counterpart funding to ensure implementation continuity, although this did not resolve the broader budgetary constraints. Providing financial resources was sometimes challenging for governments in fragile situations (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar).
24. Adaptive management. Governments have demonstrated their ability to respond to crises and unexpected events in cooperation with IFAD. Situations of political instability, crisis or change required flexibility to adapt, which IFAD was generally noted for. Positive cases were found in fragile situations, where IFAD had nurtured long-standing partnerships, earning the government's trust. IFAD is noted for its ability to continue operating in fragile contexts, even when other organizations leave or suspended their portfolios. Examples of IFAD's flexibility were reported for Burundi, Ecuador, Ghana, India and Republic of Moldova where funds from slow-disbursing projects were allocated to better-performing initiatives.

#### D. Effectiveness, sustainability and scaling up

25. Programme effectiveness, sustainability and scaling up strongly correlate with the choice of the lead agency. Many lead agencies have exhibited exemplary ownership and commitment, often nourished through long-term partnership with IFAD. Others, however, have demonstrated persistent weaknesses such as lack of technical assistance, limited capacities at decentralized level and high staff turnover. The performance of the lead agency, with the mandate and capacity to coordinate relevant stakeholders, is pivotal to ensuring effective service delivery and outreach to IFAD's target groups, and for putting in place the required resources and institutional mechanisms for sustainability and scaling up.
26. Effectiveness. Results were better where there was strong evidence of oversight guidance. The case studies indicated a positive correlation between oversight and delivery of goods and services, a finding also confirmed by IFAD respondents to the survey. Low efficiency and implementation delays have hampered the achievement of results in a number of cases. Common issues include problems in personnel recruitment and retention, inadequate planning and management leading to uncompleted activities, and delayed approvals during start-up and implementation. Projects had modest achievements in strengthening decentralized structures, a finding confirmed by government respondents to the e-survey, who also noted that governance at the local level continues to be an issue hampering project implementation and outcomes.
27. The performance of the lead agency was critical to programme effectiveness. Outreach to IFAD's target groups was better where government and IFAD priorities were well aligned. Some countries (Kenya, Madagascar and Sudan) achieved beneficiary targets but had limited outreach to vulnerable groups. In countries with fragile situations, outreach was rather uneven between projects. Outreach to women was strong in countries such as Kenya, India and Niger.
28. Sustainability. Government ownership contributed to sustainability and scaling up in some countries (India, Kenya and Republic of Moldova), but not in others (Niger and Burundi). However, in many cases government ownership was narrowly focussed on design and implementation; there was less commitment to post-project issues of sustainability and scaling up, which are more broadly influenced by institutional, political and budgetary factors.
29. Institutional weaknesses of lead agencies often translated into insufficient stakeholder coordination and resources to ensure institutional and financial sustainability. Exit strategies were often weak or missing, and institutional responsibilities for follow-up and funding were unclear (Ecuador, Mexico, Nepal and Niger). Other issues reported were missing institutional support and ownership by local authorities (Nepal), limited resources of local administrations (Burundi, Madagascar), the need for additional capacity-building (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal) and issues related to the geographical isolation of some structures (Madagascar).
30. Scaling up. Government commitment to scaling up was uneven. The case studies confirmed that the level of ownership also influenced government's commitment to scaling up. In a number of cases, government had made little or no effort to scale up across the country's portfolio. Government's limited capacity for engagement and coordination with other actors was a common factor limiting scaling up in the case studies. Insufficient resources from government also undermined scaling-up initiatives.
31. Government's multiplier functions. IFAD's development effectiveness hinges on a government fulfilling its multiplier function: to enlarge or multiply the project's outreach and results. Sustainability and scaling up rely on the enabling environment (e.g. institutional and policy frameworks) provided by government. The choice of the lead agency plays a critical role in effectiveness; however this



choice has often been led by assumptions about the potential role that a lead agency could play, based on its mandate in the sector, without sufficient consideration of the broader institutional and policy context that would determine institutional efficiency and effectiveness of key government partners.

### III. Conclusions

32. Government is the key player in IFAD's development effectiveness. IFAD-supported programmes are owned, managed and executed by governments and their agencies in collaboration with other stakeholders. Government has a critical function in project performance: more narrowly its responsibility is to provide the resources required to achieve intended results; more broadly, it is expected to ensure that key stakeholders are involved, that IFAD's target groups are reached and that results are sustainable and can be scaled up. Since government performance is crucial to IFAD's development effectiveness, the Fund has a dedicated criterion to monitor it. The data show, however, that government performance has been lagging for many years now and that there are not signs of improvement.
33. The reasons for lagging government performance are not well documented and understood, and there are significant knowledge gaps with regard to the factors driving government performance. The rather static criterion for measuring government performance does not reveal how the various elements involved are interconnected and how they influence other dimensions of programme performance. Corporate M&E systems do not report on important criteria influencing government performance (e.g. oversight, non-financial government resources). Concepts such as adaptive management, are recognized as important but are not yet well operationalized. Finally, the dynamics and drivers of government performance – or underperformance – are not well understood either. Indicators derived from global governance dashboards have proved unsuitable to explain why and how government performs in the context of IFAD-supported interventions. Poor analysis and data have led to common assumptions on government performance that are not supported by this synthesis.
34. Situations of political instability, crisis and fragility, together with the often slow progress on governance reforms, have contributed to the heterogeneity of situations, which were challenging for IFAD to track, respond and adapt to. The synthesis was not able to detect an overall pattern of government performance. In most countries, there were positive performance drivers such as ownership, leadership and resources committed, but they were often offset by instability, weak capacities and unfavourable policies and institutional processes. The synthesis identified a smaller number of countries<sup>2</sup> that have shown consistently good performance, driven by strong government ownership and leadership. For these countries the institutional and policy contexts are very different: nevertheless IFAD has responded well, handing over responsibilities in situations where institutional capacities and systems were strong, and providing "handholding" and support to governments in situations of fragility. But IFAD's ability to respond and adapt has not been as strong everywhere.
35. On IFAD's side there were also positive and negative factors affecting government performance. On the positive side, there was good alignment with government priorities. Long-term partnerships and continuous support – together with increasing country presence – have built sustained government trust and ownership over many years. Institutional efficiency is likely to be improved through recent reforms and developments, such as decentralization of technical support and senior IFAD staff, and enhanced procurement and financial systems. However, a number of factors on IFAD's side also had a negative effect on government

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<sup>2</sup> Burundi, Kenya, Republic of Moldova, Niger and Peru.

performance. They included insufficient consideration of government capacities and institutional and policy frameworks, and lack of suitable incentives to keep government staff engaged. The last 10 years have seen projects grow more complex (with the transition to value chain approaches) and increasing reliance on ministries of agriculture, which often did not have the capacities and resources to act as an implementing agency. In some countries the transition from decentralized implementation to national PMUs/programme coordination units (PCUs) has overstretched existing government capacities and systems. And finally, frequent turnover of staff and disbursement caps have negatively affected government engagement and trust.

36. On balance the simultaneous presence of positive and negative drivers has led to an overall flattened trend in government performance, as noted in recent editions of the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations and the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness. There is no panacea to reverse the trend at corporate level. IFAD has to build on its strength, identifying and addressing drivers of government performance after careful analysis of institutional and policy frameworks at country level. The organization has to become an enabling environment for country management, providing critical support for effective engagement with government, such as technical advice, predictable resources and incentives for durable relationships. Country managers have a pivotal role to play, nurturing ownership and trust, enhancing institutional performance and supporting learning from experience. For IFAD to better understand why and how government performs in certain situations it has to close important gaps in M&E, like those highlighted by this synthesis.

#### IV. Lessons from the synthesis

37. Myths on government performance. The analysis helped to deconstruct some commonly held beliefs, such as:
- (i) "Financing terms are an incentive for government to perform." The synthesis did not find a correlation between financing terms and government performance. The case studies also did not see changes in government performance after financing terms changed.
  - (ii) "Governments in fragile situations perform worse." The synthesis saw several cases where governments performed well in fragile situations. A strong driver of performance was IFAD's presence and engagement throughout situations of crisis, for this builds government's trust and ownership. IFAD's flexibility and follow-up has also helped to overcome critical bottlenecks, e.g. with regard to resources or targets.
  - (iii) "Autonomous PMUs perform better." Autonomous PMUs often face long delays during start-up. They may also undermine government ownership. There are situations, however, where autonomous PMUs can help, e.g. in navigating political crises or in maintaining stability and institutional knowledge during times of frequent change. The quality of the staff recruited is critical to improved implementation.
  - (iv) "National PMUs/PCUs can improve government performance." National PMU coordinating decentralized PMUs/PCUs are effective in situations where central government has the mandate and capacity to coordinate stakeholders at different levels. In decentralized contexts with weak capacities at central level, local PMUs are more effective for implementation. However, they still require engagement and oversight by central government partners for sustainability and scaling up.
  - (v) "For IFAD, MoA is the best partner for effective delivery of services and scaling up." MoA was often judged a relevant lead agency because of

its role in the sector; but MoAs have performed below average in contexts characterized by fragility, political change and/or ongoing decentralization.

- (vi) “Counterpart funding is a reflection of government ownership.” Counterpart funding is a common proxy for the presence or absence of ownership. However, while it may be a reflection of ownership in some cases, its presence or absence also depend on other factors such as availability of resources and procedural bottlenecks.
  - (vii) “Country presence is required to enhance government ownership.” Government ownership is systemic and requires leadership and the capacity to remain in place. IFAD can enhance government ownership of programmes through continuous engagement, provision of incentives and close alignment with the existing institutional and policy framework.
  - (viii) “Changes in policies or procedures at headquarters will result in improved government performance.” Government performance is intrinsically linked to government systemic capacity and influenced by a number of contextual factors that are beyond IFAD’s control.
38. Lessons learned. The following lessons were validated through review of similar studies by other international financial institutions.
- (i) Programmes working in decentralized contexts can be effective if IFAD provides adequate capacity, resources, and support at local level. Weaknesses in decentralized institutions undermine government ownership, coordination and ultimately the sustainability of investments. They can be compensated to some extent through complementary support mechanism (e.g. service providers).
  - (ii) Governments perform better if they have ownership of the programme. Ownership is an incentive to perform. IFAD can contribute to government ownership, trust and commitment through long-term partnership and engagement, aspects where IFAD has proved itself a reliable partner.
  - (iii) Programmes are more effective if they are led by a relevant ministry or agency. Relevance of the lead agency has to be carefully assessed. Lead agencies can play their oversight and coordinating role only if this is supported by their mandate, resources and capacities. Effective oversight will ensure alignment with policy and institutional frameworks and improvements in performance over time.
  - (iv) Project designs are feasible if they match government capacities and resources. Overly complex programme designs will cause delays and frustration, ultimately undermining government ownership. IFAD’s country presence can ensure continuous review of institutional structures, functions, capacities, and the relevant policies, and coordination processes.
  - (v) Weak systemic capacities can be addressed if incentives are provided from the top (leadership). Incentives are required to attract and retain programme staff (PMUs). Incentives for management and staff performance will enhance the efficiency of programme implementation. This requires appropriate processes for recruiting programme staff.
  - (vi) Institutional arrangements and processes are more efficient if they are aligned with relevant country policies and frameworks. Alignment with government’s operational policies (e.g. on procurement or disbursement procedures) improves implementation efficiency.
  - (vii) Government performance improves over time if continuous learning and adaptation are adequately supported. Adaptive management and

learning require effective oversight and feedback; they also need functioning knowledge and information systems, including M&E.

- (viii) Governments can play their role even in situations of political change and/or crisis if there is continuous engagement and flexibility to build trust and ownership. Working in fragile situations requires good contextual analysis and continued engagement with government on issues of strategy and planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback.

# Main Report

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
APEX	Achieving Project Excellence in Financial Management
APR	Asia and the Pacific Division of IFAD
ARRI	Annual report on results and impact
AVANTI	Advancing Knowledge for Agricultural Impact
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BFFS	The Belgian Fund for Food Security
CD	IFAD country Director
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CLE	Corporate-level evaluation
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CPM	Country programme manager
CSN	Country Strategy Notice
CSPE	Country strategy and programme evaluation
CSPEs	Country strategy and programme evaluations
DELIVER	The Driving Delivery of Results in the Agriculture Sector
DSF	Debt sustainability framework
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
ESA	East and Southern Africa Division of IFAD
ESR	Evaluation synthesis report
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus group discussion
FMD	The Financial Management Services Division
IFAD	International fund for Agricultural Development
IFAD 12	Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources
IFI	International financial institution
IOE	The Independent Office of Evaluation
LIC	Low-income country
LMIC	Lower-middle-income countries
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoA	Ministry of agriculture
MTR	Mid-term review
NEN	Near East, North Africa and Europe Division of IFAD
NOTUS	No Objection Tracking Utility System
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORMS	Operational Results Management System
PBAS	IFAD's Performance-based Allocation System
PCO	Project coordination office
PCR	Project completion report
PCRV	Project completion report validation
PCUs	Project coordination units
PDR	Project design report
PMD	IFAD's Programme Management Department
PMI	Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division of IFAD
PMU	Project management unit
PPE	Project performance evaluation
PPILDA	Project to promote local initiative for development in Agriculture
PRiME	Program in Rural Monitoring & Evaluation
PSCs	Programme steering committees
PSR	Project supervision ratings
PTL	Project Technical Lead
RESOLVE	Results-based Management for Rural Transformation
RIA	Research and Impact Assessment Division of IFAD
RIDE	Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness

SAGARPA	The Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMR	Supervision mission ratings
ToC	Theory of Change
UMIC	Upper-middle-income countries
WCA	West and Central Africa Division of IFAD
WFP	World Food Programme

# Government performance in IFAD-supported operations

## Evaluation Synthesis

### I. Introduction

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) produces evaluation syntheses on selected topics every year, in compliance with the Evaluation Policy of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Synthesis is a knowledge generation and learning product, reflecting a collation of insights from independent evaluations. It consolidates and presents key evaluation findings and lessons around a selected learning theme with the aim to identify underlying causal mechanisms and how they work under what conditions. Because its scope is also defined by the availability of evaluative evidence, it differs from other forms of research which draw evidence from a wider range of sources and data collection methods.
2. The objectives of this synthesis are to conduct a systematic review of IFAD's support to Government Performance, the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, based on the available evidence from independent evaluations.
3. Government performance has been consistently noted as an area where IFAD's operations underperform. Relatively weak and worsening government performance ratings, as reported in the 2020 ARRI, are raising concerns about the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and ultimately the impact of IFAD projects. Evaluation reports show that satisfactory ratings for government performance has witnessed a significant drop over the past ten years. The area of government performance, also as it relates to other performance dimensions, requires therefore heightened attention.
4. The synthesis intends to contribute to a better understanding of the patterns and drivers of government performance, as well as the bottlenecks that IFAD should address to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of its operations.
5. The synthesis focusses on the performance of government in the context of IFAD-supported operations. It goes beyond the static aspects of governments obligations and responsibilities within the IFAD-Government partnerships; instead it reviews government performance in terms of its institutional efficiency, the enabling conditions, structures, capacities and processes that need to be in place to successfully transform financial and non-financial resources into operational results.

#### A. Evaluation of government performance

6. The treatment of government performance in IOE evaluations follows largely the guidance set out in the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2015). The focus is on government responsibilities and roles in the project cycle, that is: project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> These are detailed in the project loan agreement, including the General Conditions for Agricultural Development Financing.



## Box 1

**Borrower performance as evaluation criterion**

Borrower performance is used as an evaluation criterion by some International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the Asian Development Bank, defined in the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) good practices standards for public sector evaluations as follows: "The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government, implementing agency, and project company performance in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders." The World Bank used to rate government performance as part of the "borrower performance" until 2017; since then it has discontinued the rating of this criterion.

Source: ECG Terms and definitions <https://www.ecgnet.org/content/terms-and-definitions>; Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2016. *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Public Sector Operations*. World Bank. 2017. *Guidelines for Reviewing World Bank Implementation Completion and Results Reports*.

7. IFAD assesses government performance through a standalone performance criterion, which addresses government and IFAD respective responsibilities as a partner in project execution. As such it confronts government, and for that matter IFAD, with its respective responsibilities as a partner in project design and execution. The advantage is that it assigns accountability for project performance to government partners.
8. In practice, the way government performs affects a broader range of issues that would require a more explicit framework to be properly assessed. First, Government has a critical function in project performance which also reflects on broader project effectiveness and sustainability aspects. Second, Government and IFAD also have mutual responsibilities, for example during design and M&E, and successful performance also depends on both sides playing their part.
9. In fact IFAD's true interest is in the dynamics underpinning government performance: what drives government performance? Evaluation of government performance that focusses on the inner working of government performance would help to identify the variables of its performance and the link between those variables.
10. The purpose of this synthesis is to shed light on the links between different elements of government performance, and on the dynamics and contextual factors that are driving the performance. The following sections present the methodology and analytical framework for this synthesis. This includes an analytical framework clarifying the elements that are more closely links; it also presents the drivers of government performance that were identified through case studies and feedback IFAD and government staff. The analysis will enable IFAD to unpack aspects of underperformance, broadly and within the specific country contexts, and address them through better targeted strategies.

## B. Synthesis objectives and scope

11. Objectives. The ESR objectives were to:
  - (iv) Develop a conceptual framework for evaluating government performance, with particular focus on institutional efficiency;
  - (v) Synthesize evaluative evidence on government performance, identifying the dynamics and factors contributing to good or poor performance; and
  - (vi) Identify critical areas for IFAD to focus in support of enhanced government performance.
12. Scope. The synthesis covered the period from 2010 to 2020, which coincides with the dip in government performance noted by ARRI and RIDE (since 2010). For this period, performance data were available from 421 evaluations, which include 57

country strategy and programme evaluations (CSPEs) and 364 project-level evaluations.<sup>4</sup>

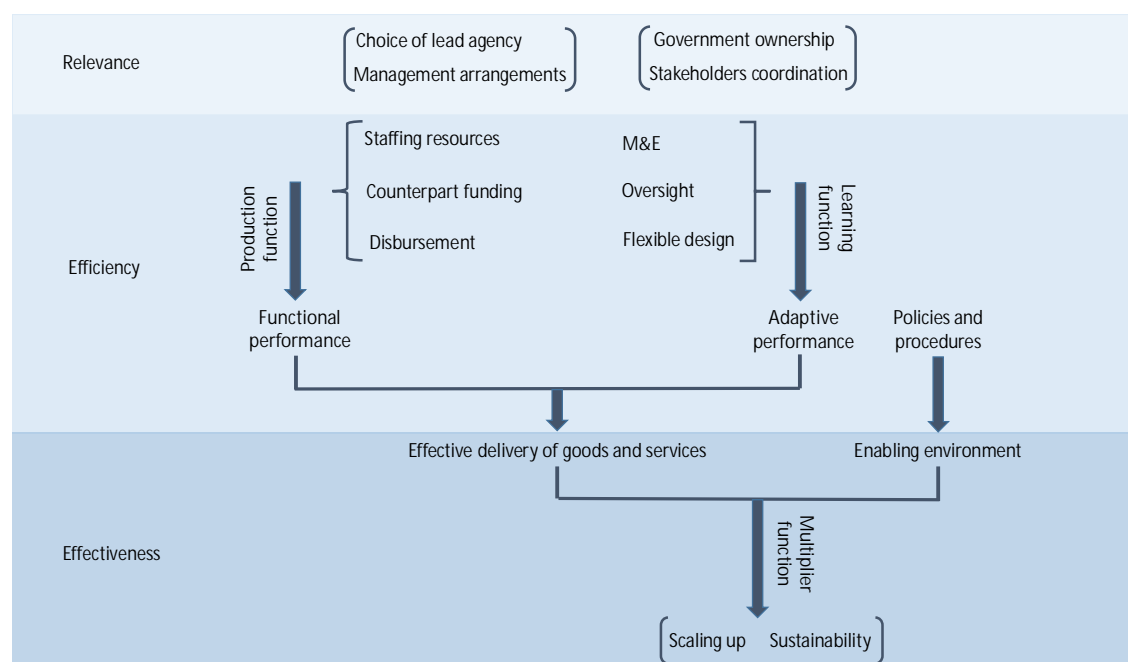
### C. Analytical framework for this synthesis

#### Theory of change on government performance

13. The original Theory of Change (ToC) on government performance, prepared for the approach paper (Annex I), helped to identify the key elements of government performance. The standard evaluation criteria such as relevance and efficiency offered a useful avenue for delimiting government performance by distinguishing the factual (what government actually did) from the assumed underlying institutional motivating factors (what may be behind it). The ToC also helped to connect the institutional aspects with the substantive achievement of project objectives. The ToC was adjusted as part of the final analysis, to show more clearly the key variables of government performance and the linkages between them (see below Figure 1).

Figure 1

#### Analytical framework for this synthesis (theory of change)



Source: ESR.

14. Government functions shown in the ToC. As part of the IFAD partnership, government is expected to perform the following functions:
- (i) Production functions. Government, as borrower and recipient of IFAD funds, will take responsibility for the conversion of inputs into project results. This includes the provision of the required resources (financial, human), systems (M&E) and processes (disbursements, procurement).
  - (ii) Learning functions. Government is also expected to ensure that implementation experience is translated into institutional learning and adaptation. Continuous review of implementation processes and resulting adjustments are required to improve performance and delivery of results.
  - (iii) Multiplier functions. IFAD's development effectiveness hinges on governments fulfilling their multiplier functions, to enlarge or multiply the project's outreach and results. Sustainability and scaling up relies on the

<sup>4</sup> Independent (IOE) ratings of government performance at project and country programme levels are captured in the ARRI database.

enabling environment (e.g. institutional and policy frameworks) provided by Government.

### Evaluation criteria used to assess government performance

15. The synthesis used the standard evaluation criteria to assess the government performance, as shown in Figure 2 (above).
16. Relevance. During the design stage, Government and IFAD would review and decide on the institutional arrangement for implementation, which should ensure proper performance of the above mentioned functions. At the same time, the institutional arrangements agreed during design should ensure that government takes full ownership of the implementation process.
17. Efficiency. Efficiency is commonly used to assess government's production and learning functions. Efficiency evaluation is concerned about the transformation of inputs into outputs and the effective use of institutional functions. The transformation process relies on: (i) the availability of inputs necessary to implement project activities, and (ii) the functioning of decision-making processes. Shortfalls in government performance are regularly due to either problems in the provision of inputs or deficiencies in the management of the processes for allocating those resources (planning, ongoing operational & financial management, and control). Effective oversight and use of information will help to adapt during implementation and ensure that project objectives are met.
18. Effectiveness, sustainability and scaling up. Overall project effectiveness, measured through the achievements of results and outreach to IFAD's target groups, depends on the quality of project implementation and the extent to which outputs were delivered. Furthermore, coordination among relevant agencies and stakeholders are important preconditions for outreach, sustainability and scaling up.
19. Scaling up is at the heart of IFAD's mandate (1976). It means the extension of successful policies, programmes and knowledge with the aim to leverage additional resources and partners, thereby extending the benefits of a programme to a larger number of the rural poor and also sustaining the results.

### Performance drivers

20. Successful project design would consider the drivers of government performance, to ensure that they are well addressed during the implementation process.
21. Ownership as central driver of government performance. Government ownership (or buy-in) is an important pre-condition for successful execution. To some extent IFAD can enhance government ownership, for example by providing incentives (e.g. loan conditions; grants), strengthening participation (e.g. in design, supervision) and building the capacities of government staff to manage, coordinate and oversee implementation.

#### Box 2

#### **Government ownership in the Paris Declaration (2005)**

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) defines government ownership as a combination of commitments taken by partner countries and donors. In particular, partner countries commit to (1) exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies; (2) translate these national development strategies into prioritised results-oriented operational programmes; (3) take the lead in co-ordinating aid at all levels. Donors on commit to respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it.

Source: "[The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005]" .

22. Ownership is what drives project decisions and activities. Government ownership involves properly structured incentives at multiple levels starting with

accountability of the government towards its people and a culture of answerability within government administration, the responsibility of project management toward lead ministry and oversight structure, incentives tied to the project-financing covenant, incentive-compatible contracts for the delivery of project outputs or services. Incentives can vary and may be low at the decentralised level, where government is often constrained by the lack of resources and weak communications, influencing the quality and level of engagement.<sup>5</sup>

#### Box 3

##### **Measuring ownership**

Ownership (incentives) is a central driver of project performance (along with knowledge/information and resources). It is also the most difficult to assess as it cannot be directly observed. Instead we take symptoms or proxies for ownership to derive statements on and/or assess the latter. They are likely to include: timely and adequate availability of resources (financial and other), on-time and pertinent decisions, evidence of government actors taking the lead and/or instilling momentum, etc. At times, intermediate indicators such as the presence of high-ranking government officials represented in project decision structures, positions filled with highly competent people or a project reliably adhering to the rule book may be taken to signal ownership.

Source: ESR.

23. Government capacities and resources. According to the CLE on efficiency (2013; see box 3 below) weak government capacity is at the origin of weak government performance, which weighs on the efficiency of IFAD-supported projects and programmes. Institutional factors such as decentralization can affect the institutional capacities and the flow of resources. Government capacities and resources for project implementation would be a key factors to be assessed design.

#### Box 4

##### **Government capacity as efficiency driver**

*Corporate-level evaluation on "IFAD's institutional efficiency and efficiency of IFAD-funded operations" (July 2013)*

"Weaknesses in client capacity for project preparation and a culture of dependence on IFAD for project preparation is by far the most important client process affecting IFAD efficiency. Besides significant additional costs to IFAD for programme delivery, it also means dilution in project quality due to underprepared projects that are slow to take off after approval.[.] IFAD needs to pay more attention to ensuring that project objectives and design are realistic, since client processes for doing so are weak or non-existent. [.] Lack of readiness at approval and weaknesses in implementation and fiduciary capacity on the client side mean slippages in project implementation schedules, increase in overhead costs and significant cancellations of loan amounts. The use of PMUs is helping overcome immediate capacity constraints, but in many cases at the cost of programme efficiency and longer-term sustainability." (p.113)

Source: IOE CLE. 2013.

24. During design Government and IFAD would then agree on the institutional arrangements for programme management and implementation. The goal of project arrangements is for (resource) decisions to be made based on the best information and in the best interest of the project's ultimate beneficiaries.

<sup>5</sup> The survey identified the lack of incentives as one of the critical factors limiting government ownership. Incentives can vary and may be low at the decentralised level, where government is often constrained by the lack of resources and weak communications, influencing the quality and level of engagement.

## Box 5

**Government performance and PMUs**

The structure and composition of PMUs has a direct influence on government performance. Management roles and responsibilities are defined in the implementation manual, jointly elaborated by government and IFAD and usually cannot be attributed to one or the other. The extent to which management arrangements are suitable to address the project's needs and conditions is a factor influencing government performance.

IFAD projects' reliance on PMUs can be linked to the fact that "they are normally located in remote rural areas –where institutions, services, and infrastructure are weak - and have a very distinct mandate and development approach with significant attention to grassroots institutional development, smallholder agriculture development, participatory processes and promoting of gender equality and women's empowerment." (ARRI 2014, p.4)

Project management units set up outside of government have a high degree of autonomy. In those cases government tends to be less involved and may show less ownership in the projects.

Source: ESR.

25. Accountability and access to information. Ownership is supported by effective accountability systems and access to knowledge and information. In IFAD-supported operations, oversight and supervision functions are expected to enhance accountability for results. This should be supported by effective use of M&E systems. Mechanisms for stakeholder participation and beneficiary feedback further support downward accountability, if effectively done. Sharing information and provides incentives for enhanced performance.<sup>6</sup>
26. Chapter III provides a further discussion the drivers of government performance identified in the context of this synthesis.

#### D. Synthesis methodology

27. The methodology for this synthesis included the following steps:
28. Analytical framework: the analytical framework was presented in the approach paper for this synthesis. The ToC helped identifying the key performance elements, which were then systematically assessed through the case studies. The framework was later transformed into a "dynamic model", to reflect the interlinkages and drivers identified through the analysis (see Chapter III).
29. IOE performance ratings, obtained from the ARRI database, provided an initial analysis of the broader trends of government performance over the review period (See Chapter II B). Analysis of supervision ratings provided an indication of specific aspects of project management over the same period.
30. Case studies were the main source of evidence. The synthesis selected 15 case study countries, based on the available number of evaluations for the review period (2010 – 2020). Three case studies were selected from each regional division. The case study sample aimed to achieve a representative mix of Middle- to Low-income countries and representation of fragile situations. The 15 country case studies drew evidence from 38 evaluations (CSPEs and PPEs), 46 PCRVs and 3 IEs, covering 71 IOE evaluated programmes or projects since 2010. They also reviewed the supervision ratings (PSRs) ratings for the selected projects, covering aspects such as financial management, AWB, M&E, counterpart funding, disbursement that are closely linked to government performance.
31. Hypotheses. The study developed a list of working hypothesis for the case studies, to systematically test the causal linkages and dynamics indicated in the ToC (Annex V). Testing of linkages involved confirmation or rejection of hypotheses

<sup>6</sup> WB 2018 improving public sector performance.

- elaborated at the beginning of the review; it also involved analysis of correlations between the scores for the performance criteria defined for the synthesis.
32. Validation. The use of hypotheses was a way to validate findings across case studies, as was the analysis of quantitative performance scores. In addition the study used feedback from focus group discussion and e-surveys to validate emerging findings. Review of IFI evaluations for case study countries enabled validation of broader lessons on government performance (Chapter VIII).
  33. Focus group discussions with IFAD's Programme Management Department (PMD), Operational Policy and Results Management Division (OPR) and the Financial Management Services Division (FMD) helped to deepen the analysis and validate emerging findings. The five focused group discussions (FGDs) covered a range of topics and included 81 participants from different divisions (see below).

Table 1

**Focus group discussions held during the ESR process**

<i>Time</i>	<i>FGD No</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Participants</i>
31 May	FGD1	Government performance: trends and patterns from PMD, FMD and IOE indicators	Regional economists, Portfolio Advisors, Procurement Specialists, interested FMD staff
17 June	FGD2	Government "ownership": what it means and how it can be evaluated	OPR, IOE, interested PMD staff
25 June	FGD3	Government performance in fragile situations	Selected PMD staff
30 June	FGD4	Project management arrangements in case study countries	CDs and CPOs from case study countries
14 July	FGD5	Discussion of draft findings	OPR, Directors, CDs

34. E-surveys: The ESR team used e-surveys to obtain feedback from a larger group of stakeholders. The synthesis employed two e-surveys, the first targeting IFAD staff and consultants and the second aimed at the government partners. The survey included a mix of statements, where respondents could indicate their agreement or disagreement, and open questions.<sup>7</sup> (see Annex IV)
35. Lessons learned from this synthesis were validated after review of lessons from relevant studies and evaluations from other IFIs for the same case study countries. Lessons that were validated over a number of countries and studies were then included in the report (Chapter VII).
36. Limitations. The relative succinctness of treatment of government performance in evaluation reports was a limitation. The majority of evaluation reports did not provide a comprehensive assessment of all the dimensions government performance. Project completion or supervision reports often provided the additional source of information required for the review.
37. Table 1 in Annex I presents the dimensions of government performance assessed in the report. They also identify important gaps, for example with regard to ownership, oversight structure, non-financial government resources, government operational procedures, adaptive management and improvements overtime, which are not sufficiently covered by self-evaluation or independent evaluation. In those cases the synthesis had to rely on other sources of information, for example supervision reports, focus groups or interviews.

<sup>7</sup> The survey among IFAD staff and consultants had 165 responses (response rate 26 per cent). Respondents were mainly consultants and IFAD staff based in Hubs Rome. A second survey targeted government staff. The survey received 140 responses (response rate 17 per cent). Almost half of them (45 per cent) were government staff working at senior level. About a similar were project staff supporting IFAD operations. The largest share of government respondents (56%) works with the Ministry of Agriculture.

### Key points

- The purpose of this synthesis is to shed some light on the links between different elements of government performance, and on the dynamics and contextual factors that are driving the performance.
- Government performance relates to a broad range of issues that require a more explicit framework to compare and to consolidate the experiences and to generate lessons for future projects.
- The synthesis developed an analytical framework, which details the variables of government performance and the link between those variables.
- The synthesis also identifies ownership is seen as the central driver for government performance.
- The analysis will enable IFAD to unpack aspects of underperformance, broadly and within the specific country contexts, and address them through better targeted strategies.
- The synthesis prepared 15 country case studies drawing evidence from 38 evaluations (CSPEs and PPEs)
- The study developed a list of working hypothesis for the case studies, to systematically test the causal linkages and dynamics indicated in the ToC.



## II. Government performance in IFAD supported operations

### A. Government responsibilities in IFAD-supported operations

38. IFAD has been established to mobilize resources for agricultural development in developing Member States (IFAD 1976). IFAD-supported programmes are owned, managed, and executed by governments and their agencies in collaboration with other stakeholders (Strategic Framework 2016-2025).
39. In the IFAD context government partners covers a wide range of entities including ministries and agencies at federal provision and state levels. Government's signing an agreement with IFAD need to be in control of the country or region they are representing.<sup>8</sup>
40. Government, as a borrower or recipient of an IFAD loan or grant, assumes responsibility for: (i) the provision of project inputs (counterpart funds, other resources, staff, policy and procedures) and (ii) the diligent use of management processes (planning – operational & financial management – monitoring & evaluation) to ensure their effective deployment in the production of project outputs.
41. Lead agencies. Governments in receipt of IFAD's loans would assign a lead agency with overall responsibility for project oversight and implementation. This includes setting up appropriate project management structures and providing the resources required for implementation. The lead agency is also responsible for overall programme coordination, which includes collaborating with other implementing partners, such as specialised ministries or agencies, non-government partners and service providers. As such the lead agency is accountable for overall programme performance and for achieving the agreed programme goals and development objectives.<sup>9</sup>
42. IFAD and Government responsibilities. IFAD and Government have mutual responsibilities in programme design and implementation, as presented in the table below. Even though the financing programme's performance is dependent on both parties, the government's role in maintaining efficiency in management structures is vital to the programmes' long-term viability.

Table1

**IFAD and Government responsibilities in the programme cycle (status 2020)**

	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>Government</i>
<b>Programme concept</b>	The borrower (upon request) and IFAD to agree on the overall project definition to ensure that IFAD's individual programme activities are consistent with the borrowing country's own strategies and plans, IFAD's corporate strategy and commitments, and policies, and the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme or Country Strategy Notice	
<b>Programme design</b>	The Country Director (CD) and the Project Technical Lead are "co-leads" of programme or project design.	The Government provides a lead Ministry or Country focal point for programme design to ensure guidance, scrutiny, transparency, validation, buy-in and ownership.
<b>Programme implementation</b>	IFAD supervises programmes in accordance with the Policy on Supervision and Implementation Support established by the Executive Board.	Project implementation is the responsibility of borrowers/recipients. The Government puts in place the necessary provisions to allow smooth implementation of the programme by the e.g. Lead Ministries, project implementation unit

<sup>8</sup> According to the Cambridge Dictionary: The people or system that officially manage and control a country or region, creating laws, collecting taxes, providing public services etc. IFAD guidelines (2010) also clarify the principles that would apply to de facto governments.

<sup>9</sup> Borrowers commit to adhere to IFAD's policies and procedures, notably the guidelines on Project Procurement (2010) and Project Audits (2011). Manuals and handbooks, such as the Loan Disbursement Handbook (2009), assist project implementation agencies in discharging their responsibilities by conforming to IFAD policies and procedures.



		(PMU), or PCO, Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB), and the stakeholders.
<b>Fiduciary management</b>	IFAD provides “no objection” as required.	Government is responsible for budgeting, procurement, accounting including setting out of accounts, cost monitoring and provision of audits.
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	IFAD provides technical advice and reporting requirements.	Setting up (and implementing) effective M&E systems is Government responsibility.
<b>Programme completion</b>	IFAD mounts completion mission for final review of results and compliances;  IFAD assesses project performance as part of the self-evaluation.  [In the future IFAD will take over responsibility for the preparation of the completion report]	Government prepares completion report, which:  (a) assesses the extent to which the project achieved its objectives and assesses the overall performance of both the Recipient and IFAD; and  (b) draws lessons from this experience to improve the future design of projects, country programmes, strategies, and policies.

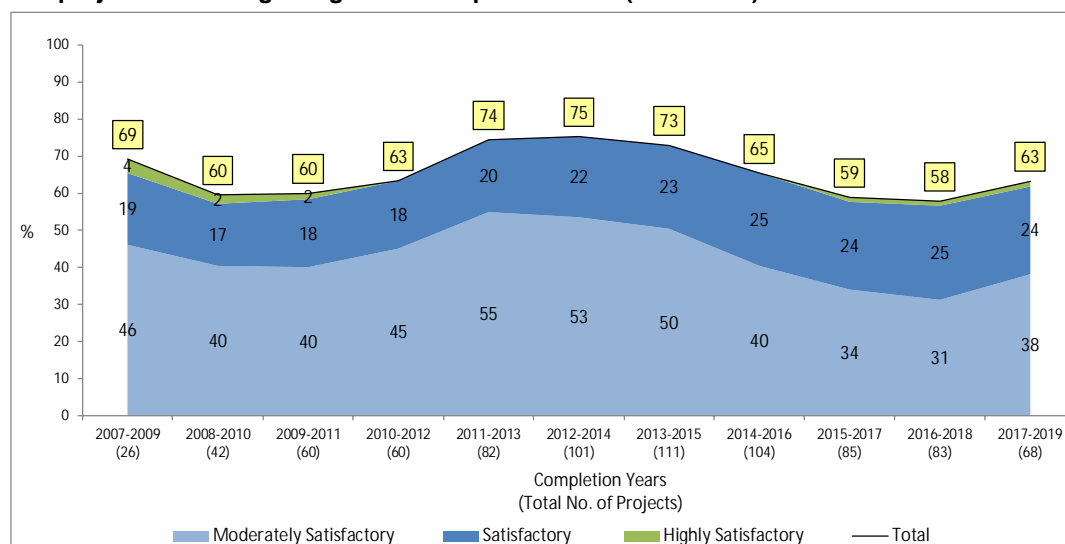
Source: IFAD Project Design Guideline 2020, President’s Bulletin and EB 2018125R.37Rev.1 -14 December 2018.

- 43. Government ownership is an essential part of IFAD’s business model. IFAD’s approach hinges on government taking responsibility for development results. A paper prepared as part of the discussions under the Consultation on the Eighth Replenishment outlines IFAD’s approach to country ownership (2008) within the context of IFAD operations. The paper shows that IFAD’s approach also goes beyond national governments by recognising the role played by country stakeholders, such as civil society organisations and private sector.

**B. Trends on government performance**

- 44. Ratings from independent evaluation (included in the 2021 Annual report on results and impact [ARRI]) show a declining trend in government performance over the review period. The share of moderately satisfactory or better ratings dropped from a high 75 per cent (2012-2014) to a low 58 per cent (2016-2018). The most recent cohort of project ratings (2017 – 2019) shows a higher share of moderately satisfactory ratings (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2  
**IOE project-level ratings on government performance (2021 ARRI)**



Source: ARRI 2021.

- 45. Correlation with project efficiency. IOE's ratings of government performance correlate with those for project efficiency over the review period (correlation 0.72 between 2010 – 2019). The correlation was somewhat weaker for the 2015/2017

- cohort, which saw a slight improvement for efficiency while government performance continued to decline. (see figure 2, Annex II)
46. Regional variations in government performance. Government performance ratings vary by region, with APR projects receiving the highest ratings (4.3 on average), followed by NEN (3.9) and both LAC and ESA (3.8) between 2010 and 2019. WCA had the lowest rating of all regions, with an average rating of 3.5.
  47. The share of satisfactory government performance rating declined in all regions gradually from 2013 to 2015. APR had a consistent performance from 2015 to 2019, whereas NEN, ESA, and WCA have seen some improvement in satisfactory performance from 2015-2017 onwards. For LAC the share of satisfactory projects has steadily fallen since 2012, from 86 to 50 per cent. (see figure 12, Annex II)
  48. For fragile situations government performance was rated lower than for other countries on average over the period (2010-2019). However, average ratings (3.6) did not change significantly over the same period, while government performance for other countries deteriorated after 2015.
  49. Government performance according to income status. Lower-middle-income countries were the strongest performers from 2008-2010 until 2012-2014 when they began to decrease and then stabilised between 2015-2017 cohort of programmes. On the other hand, lower-income countries historically performed worse, but the share of satisfactory government performance has increased between 2016-2018. Between 2016 to 2019, upper-middle-income countries have been the worst performers across all income groups. (see figure 5, Annex II).<sup>10</sup>
  50. Government performance according to loan conditions. Overall, government performance under INTER, ORDINARY and HIGH CON loan conditions has been consistent in 2010-2014 and 2014-2019. DSF<sup>11</sup> and DSF-HC<sup>12</sup> fared better from 2010 to 2014 than in later years (2015-2019). However, when compared to other loan conditions, governments borrowing explicitly under DSF are the worst performers (2015-2019).
  51. For sample countries as part of this synthesis, there was no link between government performance and financing conditions. A change in loan conditions did not lead to a change in government performance in sample countries. In the case of Ecuador, the change from highly-concessional to ordinary in 2009 did not result in a change in government performance between 2010 and 2019. In the case of India, while there was a change from a blended lending to ordinary in 2018, the country's average rating on government performance decreased between 2010 and 2019. (see figure 7, Annex II).
  52. Government performance according to lead agencies. The share of projects led by ministries of agriculture increased from 41 to 64 per cent in 2008-2010 and 2017-2019 period respectively. The percentage of MoA-led projects is lowest in APR (29 per cent), followed by 41 percent in ESA and 58 per cent in LAC. The share of MoA-led projects is highest in WCA (74 per cent) and NEN (76 per cent). (see figure 11, Annex II).
  53. While the share of MoA led projects has grown, their average performance has deteriorated over the same period: The share of satisfactory government performance in MoA-led projects has seen a steep and continuing fall, from a high 67 per cent in 2011-2013 to a low 45 per cent satisfactory ratings in 2016-2018. Among the different lead agencies MoA had the lowest share of projects with

<sup>10</sup> The ESR on MICs (2014) explains the low performance with weak institutional capacity in the areas where IFAD was working; greater difficulties in targeting the poor (e.g. Ecuador and Mexico); and weak government ownership (e.g. Mexico). Subnational governments can also be weak in the poorer regions of MICs, as in the north-east of Brazil.

<sup>11</sup> *debt sustainability framework*

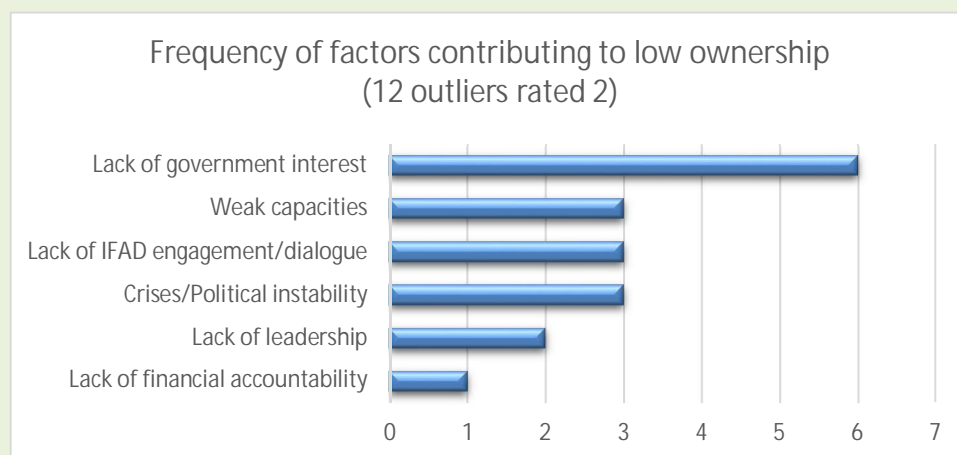
<sup>12</sup> *debt sustainability framework with highly concessional terms with grant component*

moderately satisfactory or better ratings (285 completed projects from 2010 to 2019). (see figure 3 and figure 9, Annex II).

#### Box 6

#### Positive and negative outliers led by MoA

Analysis of MoA-led performance outliers showed that in the 30 projects rated 5 or above, MoA successfully acted as the centrepiece, coordinating other agencies and partners, and setting up the steering and managing structures. In all cases, there was strong government ownership, fostering clear assignments and responsiveness. Among the negative outliers, rated 2, the great majority (11 out of 14) were in WCA and LAC countries characterised situations of fragility or political change. The common factor in all negative outliers was low government ownership, as a result of low interest in projects, crises or political instability and insufficient engagement and presence by IFAD.



Source: ESR analysis of performance outliers.

54. Over the same period, performance of local governments has been consistent; the highest share of satisfactory ratings (95 per cent) was noted the cohort of 2012 – 2015 projects. Yet the share of projects led by local governments went down, from 22 per cent in 2008-2010 to 15 percent in 2017-2019 respectively.<sup>13</sup> (see figure 4, Annex II)
55. To sum up, the downward trend in government performance, observed in the 2020 ARRI, coincides the increasing share of MoA-led projects as a result of IFAD's increased focus on agricultural sector and value chain programmes. MoAs performance has been worse than that of most other lead agencies; it further deteriorated over the review period. At the same time, the performance of local governments, the "traditional" IFAD partners for local development projects, remained consistent, but their share in the overall portfolio decreased. Important to note that performance in LICs did not deteriorate, it even improved recently. Performance of countries with fragile situations remained stable over the same period.

### C. IFAD initiatives to enhance government performance

56. Weak government performance has also been consistently noted as an area of concern in the annual reports of IFAD's development effectiveness (RIDE) over the last 10 years. The 2014 RIDE noted issues on the government side that affected programme performance such as delays or slow project staff recruitment; releasing counterpart funds; and weakness in crucial or underperforming project management, in particular vis-à-vis weak monitoring and evaluation and financial management.<sup>14</sup> When the 2016 results are compared to the 2010 findings, the

<sup>13</sup> The lowest share of projects (13 per cent) led by the local government noted for the 2015-2017 cohort.

<sup>14</sup> RIDE 2014

government performance is observed to have significantly improved, and the 2016 outcomes exceeded the 2015 target.<sup>15</sup>

57. Government performance continues to be lagging behind in corporate performance indicators. The 2020 RIDE highlighted the need for IFAD to strengthen government ownership and management. However the report did not suggest concrete measures to enhance government ownership. The 2021 RIDE rated government performance in at project completion as low, with 77 per cent of projects receiving a rating of moderately satisfactory or higher. The report highlighted the correlation with performance on sustainability and efficiency.
58. Focus on government capacities. Following 2014 RIDE and IOE's CLE on efficiency IFAD took action building the capacities of government partners, including i) expediting selection of project staff; ii) streamlining of results measurement tools to enhance results management and reporting; iii) training on the project and financial management, including on procurement through targeted regional and country workshops; iv) revised project completion guidelines and processes to ensure that key lessons are systematically fed into future project designs; v) revised guidelines for country strategies to promote increased synergies between lending and non-lending activities. Another past measure was IFAD reviewing its approach to programme design and implementation support in member countries, including fragile states.<sup>16</sup>
59. Fiduciary control. Furthermore, IFAD has continued to tweak its control and support measures to better assist government discharge its responsibilities. It has reinforced incentive-compatibility of management processes (through risk-based disbursement and withdrawal), refined fiduciary risk assessment processes, supervision and fine-tuned implementation support to particular project situations and country contexts. Furthermore IFAD's fund allocation processes reward government performance.
60. Procurement. Recent measures have focused on procurement. IFAD has launched an obligatory Project Procurement Certification Course for Country Directors, which is expected to be completed by December 31, 2021. In addition, the Executive Board approved new or amended IFAD Project Procurement Guidelines in December 2019. Furthermore, IFAD established a corporate procurement dashboard derived from No Objection Tracking Utility System (NOTUS) to assist IFAD in highlighting three key performance indicators (KPIs): process time, management and alerts, and workload distribution.

Table 2

**Selected documents related to IFAD's operational efficiency since 2010**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Document title</i>
2013	IFAD Consolidated Action Plan to Enhance Operational and Institutional Efficiency
2014	Oversight of Project Procurement (audit report)
2017	PBAS formula enhancements
2019	Control Framework for IFAD Investments
2019	Audit of the Risk-based disbursement process
2020	Corporate Risk Dashboard (draft)
2020	Borrowed Resource Access Mechanism: Framework for Eligibility and Access to Resources

Source: ESR.

<sup>15</sup> RIDE 2016

<sup>16</sup> RIDE 2015

61. The report of the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12, year 2021) states that, in order to address recurrent challenges in project-level efficiency, IFAD will build on evidence and experience to develop an efficiency action plan. It emphasizes the need for IFAD to adopt an adaptive approach, which implies a more pro-active approach to project restructuring to improve project performance and inform future design. Learning and accountability during programme implementation and at completion will continue to be strengthened in IFAD12, with an emphasis on project-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).
62. Corporate M&E of government performance. The review of corporate indicators on government performance shows that important dimensions are not sufficiently captured and assessed in the different parts of the organisation.<sup>17</sup> Specific indicators are missing in particular with regard to the institutional and policy framework (see Table1 in Annex I). For example government ownership and oversight functions are not captured in the updated core indicators framework (2021). Important drivers of government's institutional efficiency, such as operational policies, non-financial resources and data and information systems to support adaptive programme management are not even captured.
63. To conclude, IFAD's initiatives to improve institutional efficiency have focused on operational processes. The analysis of corporate-level data shows that so far these initiatives have not been able to reverse the trend on government performance. The available data and analysis were insufficient to support identification of performance bottlenecks. The review calls for a better understanding of the factors driving government performance, to enable IFAD to prioritize and focus its support.

#### Key points

- The synthesis covered the period from 2010 to 2020, which coincides with the dip in government performance.
- Analysis of IOE ratings (ARRI 2020) shows that government performance deteriorated since 2010. The downward trend was stronger in middle income countries.
- The downward trend in government performance coincides with IFAD's transition to agriculture value chain projects together with the increased role of Ministries of Agriculture as lead agencies.
- Government performance continues to be lagging behind in corporate performance indicators.
- IFAD's efforts to enhance operational efficiency have not yet reverses the trend on government performance.
- Government ownership, as important driver of performance, is not yet included in the updated core indicators framework (2021).

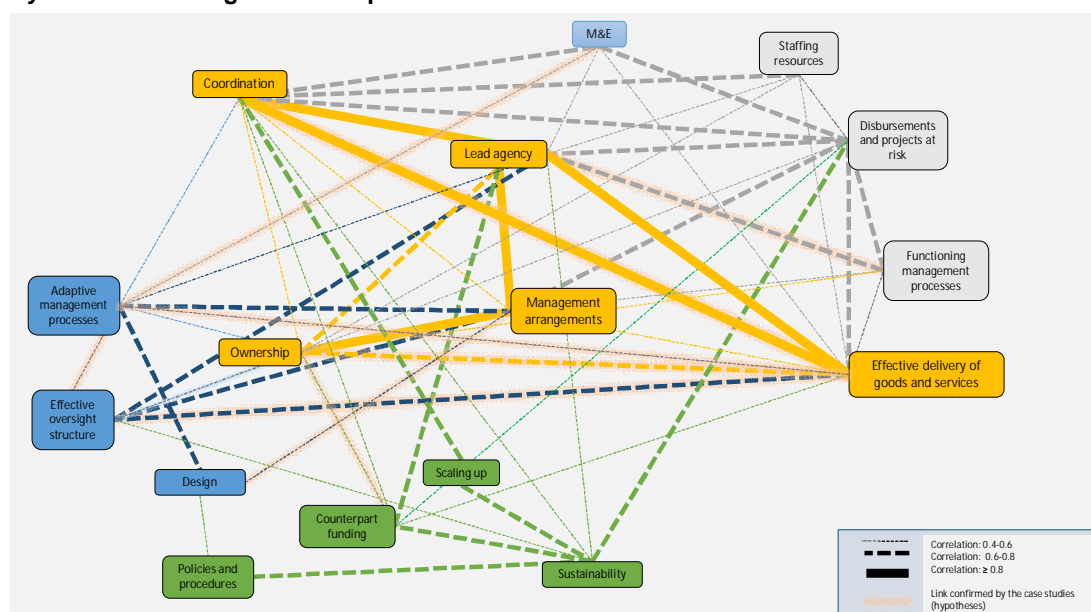
<sup>17</sup> This was a topic for discussion in veracious FDGs, which also involved FMD, PMD, OPR and IOE.

### III. The dynamics of government performance

#### A. Dynamic model of government performance

64. Hypotheses and case study ratings informing the dynamic model. The synthesis developed an extensive list of hypothesis for testing causal relationships and interlinkages. The hypotheses followed the structure of the ToC and covered the same elements of government performance. The potential linkages between these elements were captured through a total of 119 hypotheses, which were then systematically tested through the case studies (see Annex V).
65. In addition, the assessment of government performance through 15 case studies provided detailed ratings for all elements (see Annex III).<sup>18</sup> In a final step the synthesis analysed the correlations between the different elements of government performance.
66. This analysis helped to transform the more static ToC into a dynamic model of government performance, indicating correlations between ratings and causal linkages confirmed through hypotheses) between the different elements of government performance. (see Chapter III)
67. The following diagram (figure 3) illustrates the dynamic linkages between the variables of government performance, showing the strength of the correlations (represented by the size of the lines) as well as by highlighting the relationships strongly confirmed by the case studies.

Figure 3  
Dynamic model of government performance



68. Clusters of performance variables. The analysis identified the following clusters of performance variables that are closely interrelated:
69. Choice of lead agency and institutional arrangement (in yellow) are at the heart of the dynamic model. They are closely correlated with ownership, and together they are driving other variable of government performance, in particular those related to project management (efficiency) and delivery (effectiveness). The quality and relevance of the programme design therefore hinges on these choices.

<sup>18</sup> Each of these indicators was rated on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest), using a set of pre-defined indicators (rubric). Case study ratings were validated by two different reviewers. (See Annex III for overview of case study ratings).

70. Relevant choices of lead agencies and management arrangements are closely linked; their correlation is higher than any other element in the dynamic model. The choice of management arrangement also directly influences government ownership, and vice versa. The case studies further highlight the pivotal role of government ownership and stakeholder coordination for project effectiveness.
71. The choice of a lead agency with the mandate and capacity to effectively coordinate project stakeholders is an important pre-condition for the effective delivery of goods and services to beneficiaries; they are closely interlinked.
72. The institutional set up also includes the oversight mechanisms, to guide steer programme performance and make the required adjustments where and when needed, an important precondition for adaptive management.
73. The functional performance cluster (in grey) shows that management functions and disbursements are closely correlated with the choice of lead agencies and management arrangements. The hypotheses also show that the choice of lead agencies is closely related with functional management performance. The link between choice of the lead agencies and available staff capacities appears weak. Instead the majority of case studies found that staff capacities would often be better where IFAD relied on a greater range of implementing partners (hypothesis #22).
74. The adaptive performance cluster (in blue) shows that project designs have a direct influence on adaptive performance; they will have to build in some flexibility and space to enable learning and adaptation during implementation.
75. Effective oversight is a key element of adaptive management. The case studies showed that effective oversight is strong linked to government ownership. Effective oversight has enhanced the achievement of project results in the case studies.
76. Oversight requires effective feedback mechanisms, to monitor progress and reinforce accountability for results. The case studies stress the importance of a functioning M&E as enabler of adaptive management. M&E contributes to the knowledge and learning that will enable improvements during implementation.
77. The sustainability and scaling up cluster (in green). The case studies found that sustainability depends on the supporting policies and procedures and it is closely linked with the provision of counterpart funding. The link between government ownership and scaling up was confirmed for half of the case studies.
78. To conclude, the case studies showed that government ownership, as the central driver of government performance, is strongly interlinked with the institutional arrangements for project implementation. Government ownership is driving adaptive performance and sustainability. In the case studies the link between government ownership and functional performance has been less obvious. Government performance was also less evident in scaling up, for reasons that will be further explored in the following chapter.

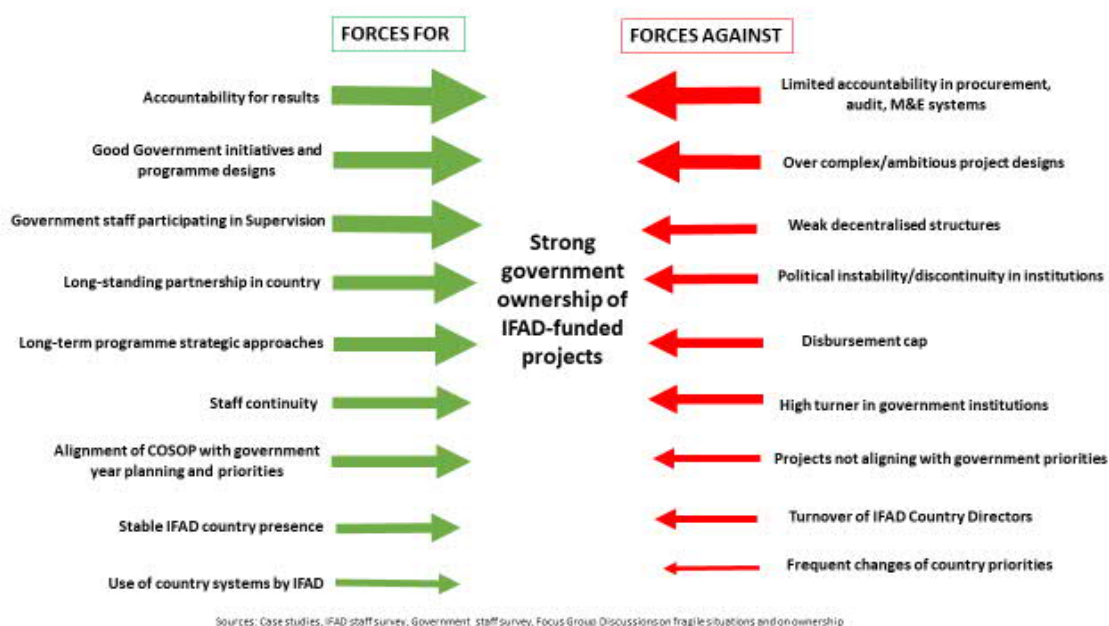


## B. Drivers and enablers of government performance

79. Drivers of government performance were identified through case studies and validated through FGDs and survey responses. In addition there were also “hindering” factors in the context that affected government performance. While performance drivers can be influenced by IFAD, for example through provision of certain incentives, the contextual factors are difficult control; they require proper assessment and mitigation measures for IFAD to adapt.
80. Ownership. Ownership is what drives – together with knowledge or information - project decisions and activities. It derives from societal norms and structures and project-specific - typically contract-based - organizational arrangements. In the context of IFAD-supported operations, government ownership was the result of trusted partnerships based on mutual trust. Ownership has been present in varying degrees in most case study countries. Strong government ownership has been identified as a driver of government performance in five case studies. For example, in Burundi, India and Niger, programme alignment to government priorities and policies, involvement of government authorities in different processes and sometimes, donors responding to the call of government for certain specific intentions (Niger PUSADER) have yielded positive government ownership results. In Burundi the ability to involve local service providers and authorities (through a participatory approach), resulted in successfully building the ownership of local actors and some projects contributing to the elaboration of new laws, setting up the regulatory frameworks for the veterinary profession and for food fortification.
81. Figure 4 below depicts the multiple forces affecting government ownership in the context of IFAD’s operations.

Figure 4

### Forces for and against government ownership in IFAD-funded projects



82. Leadership. Government taking leadership in IFAD-supported operations has been closely linked with ownership; it was a sign that the government assumed responsibility for project intervention, with the aim to achieve the mutually agreed results. In the case studies, government leadership manifested itself through the concrete actions of government officials and their ability to guide and oversee the implementation of programme activities. Even though leadership was seen in all the case studies, it varied between countries. Strong leadership, driving government performance, was reported for Moldova, Ghana, and Burundi.



83. **Accountability.** Accountability is closely linked with ownership. Where government took responsibility for a project, it also became accountable for financial management (transparent accountable system for expenditure control and cash management, and an audit system). Accountability systems included fiduciary oversight at decentralised levels and the operational efficiency of PMUs. This involves the establishment of appropriate technological systems, having the right capacities, oversight and being transparent. Weak financial management/reporting and turnover of specialist staff were identified as common challenges in the case studies. Fiduciary oversight has been strong in Ghana, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Kenya, and Sudan.
84. **Knowledge.** Access to timely information was important for the programme to remain efficient and effective over time. Effective provision and use of knowledge required supportive policies and planning, as well technology and capacity. The effective use of technology enabled governments to be more transparent in their dealings with beneficiaries and partner organisations. Weak M&E systems and the limited use of information for decision-making have been identified as key hindrances to knowledge as a driver of government performance. Whereas, good knowledge systems and M&E complemented by good and reliable data have been a positive driver. Some countries were able to generate and use knowledge from good M&E systems, for example Moldova, Madagascar, Peru, and Niger. For example, CAPFIDA in Madagascar sits within the government (MAEP); it capitalises on experiences at portfolio-level and ensures their dissemination.
85. **Capacities:** Capacities of government staff has been seen as a key driver in the e-survey (see Annex IV). The case studies confirmed that government capacities were a key driver in most cases. Lack of capacity within government structures was a common reason for implementation delays and weak results. Addressing gaps in government capacities relied heavily on the available resources (e.g. human, financial) and management decisions (e.g. leadership) at different levels. In the case studies, insufficient technical capacities were often related to late recruitments, high staff turnover or, in the case of government staff, part time availability. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff were common challenges. Strong capacities were a driver in four countries only, namely, Kenya, Moldova, Peru<sup>19</sup> and Niger. In other countries, implementation capacities were insufficient in those remote areas where IFAD typically works (DRC, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Pakistan).
86. **Resources.** Availability of financial resources (counterpart funding) has been a driver of government performance in five case studies. Positive examples were noticed India, Kenya, Moldova and Peru. This review noticed that the government adhered and gave all necessary support to programme redesigns, including reallocation of funds. Availability of counterpart funding was closely linked with the economic situation and government priorities in case study countries. Provisions of financial resources was sometimes challenging in fragile situations (Burundi, DRC, and Madagascar).
87. **Inhibiting factors in the country context.** The synthesis identified some important inhibiting factors in the country context that undermined government performance in the larger number of case studies, such as imperfections within the institutional or policy framework (for uncompleted decentralisation), political

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<sup>19</sup> For example, in Peru CSPE, IFAD's projects were characterized by high continuity of human capital. The execution of PDSS II incorporated a good part of the staff that worked under PDSS I, and this contributed to the optimization of human resources and an efficient project implementation. The CSPE reports that the local offices experienced staff rotation, but that were always supported by specialists and consultants. An aspect that affected PDSS I management was indeed high staff rotation, which led to delays in the execution of the project. Whereas, PDSS II experienced a greater stability.

instability, conflicts and situations of fragility. Some or all of these factors were present in the majority of countries, with very few exceptions (Moldova, Peru).

Table 3

**Presence of drivers, enablers and inhibiting factors in case study countries**

Sample Countries	Drivers and enablers						Inhibiting factors		
	Leadership	Ownership (incentives)	Accountability (Audit)	Knowledge (including M&E)	Capacities	(Financial) Resources	Institutional (incl. decentralisation)	Policy framework (incl. procurement systems)	Fragility, crisis or conflict
Burundi	+	+				○			✓
DRC		○		○	○	○	✓	✓	✓
Ecuador		○	+	○	○	○		✓	
Ghana	+		+	○			✓		
India		+	+		○	○		✓	
Kenya			+		+	+	✓		
Madagascar				+		○	✓	✓	✓
Mexico		○	+	○	○	○		✓	
Moldova	+	+		+	+	+			
Nepal				○			✓	✓	✓
Niger		+		+	+	+			✓
Pakistan			+	○	○		✓		✓
Peru			+	+	+	+			
Sudan			+	○			✓	✓	✓
Turkey		+		○			✓	✓	

(ESR analysis)

**Key points**

- The dynamic model shows the linkages between variables of government performance, based on the correlations and causal linkages confirmed through the case studies.
- Government ownership, as the central driver of government performance, is strongly interlinked with the institutional arrangements for project implementation. Government ownership is driving adaptive performance and sustainability.
- The synthesis also identified other drivers of government performance, including leadership, accountability; knowledge and information; capacities, and resources.
- The strengths of these drivers is influenced by the country context, notably the institutional framework, the policy framework and the presence of conflict, fragility or conflict.

## IV. Relevance: Context, design and ownership

88. Relevance is about whether and to what extent the institutional set up has been aligned and adapted to the particular context of the country and the requirements of the project, and whether the institutional strategy has been responsive to eventual changes in the environment. It questions whether the assumptions underlying the institutional approach were valid so as to ensure proper oversight, management, coordination, and implementation.
89. The following chapter will look at how certain contextual factors, such as decentralisation reforms, political instability and fragility, have influenced government capacities and resources to implement IFAD's supported operations; how these factors were taken into consideration for the programme design and institutional set up; and how this has contributed to government ownership in the context of IFAD supported programmes.

### A. Overall relevance of project design

90. Only 5 out of 15 case study countries were scored satisfactory. For example, programme designs in Ghana were found to be aligned with the external circumstances and the country's development agenda, besides performing well. In the DRC, Ecuador, Mexico, and Nepal, the relevance of programme designs were rated low.
91. Policy alignment. Most case studies show that countries have national strategies that define the government's strategic priorities for agricultural and rural development. IFAD COSOPs and projects were consistently linked to national strategies. The quality and detail of national strategies varies from country to country, and so does the degree of alignment of projects.
92. During the FGDs participants pointed out that IFAD's alignment is at times limited to some very high-level principles, while the alignment to detailed implementation of the strategy can be less stringent. The presence of a country strategy does not always imply that the government itself will adhere to it and adequately implement it. For example, in Kenya the implementation of the five-year County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), was limited, and the government was unable to achieve its targets.<sup>20</sup> In Mexico, frequent changes in public policy led to the termination of the majority of projects funded by the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SAGARPA) in 2008.
93. Insufficient assessment of institutional risks. Insufficient understanding of the country context or government capabilities, as well as specific constraints of project areas at the design stage, have serious consequences for the entire project cycle (hypothesis #39). The case studies reveal a failure to address risks in Mexico (risk of policy changes), Ecuador (fiduciary and security issues), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (risk of weak government performance in a fragile state context). In these cases, objectives of programme designs are frequently set too high and are aligned with government capacities. More generally, issues noted included insufficient assessment of the government's implementation capacity, overambitious targets, insufficient resource allocation, and inadequate assessment of the fragility of institutions and the related absence of systemic capacities.
94. A typical shortcoming of the design was a lack of consideration for the implications of policy changes. For example in Ecuador risks have not been well addressed, and design complexity has been relatively well matched to government capabilities. Enhance dialogue with government dialogue would have help to address recurrent

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<sup>20</sup> this was due to low budget allocations to the sector in general; poor coordination between the national government and the counties and between the counties themselves; slow legislation of county laws; human resource constraints; and reduced support services and early warning systems for farmers. (source: Africa Research Institute 2017; Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development 2016; World Bank 2015).

implementation issues in Ecuador, according to the CSPE (2020). In Mexico programme design reports did not always reflect the reality of the national administration, particularly in regulatory areas.

95. Over complex projects negatively affected management arrangements, staffing, and achievement of results in eight countries. Peru's case study also mentions that design flaws and overestimation of the goals and objectives - with respect to the available resources and the high geographic coverage - partly limited the interventions' effectiveness and efficiency, for instance, in the Market Strengthening and Livelihood Diversification in the Southern Highlands Project (PDSS). While in Kenya, some recent projects appeared over-ambitious engaging with multiple partners, and value chain diagnoses were insufficiently performed at design (e.g. rural finance).
96. Government involvement in design is a way to ensure demand-orientation and feasibility of the design. The case studies reveal a mixed picture on government's contribution to project design (Hypothesis #44). One third of the case studies found that governments have in some instances requested specific interventions, which have led to the design of new IFAD projects, or to the extension of existing ones.<sup>21</sup> Over two thirds of the case studies show that, beyond requesting specific projects or their expansion, government partners have actively contributed to the design of country strategies, projects and programmes. One notable example is Madagascar, where the Government contributed to the development of the COSOP, and actively participated in the design and development of projects, taking "as much responsibility as IFAD for the formulation of shortcomings identified in some projects" (source Madagascar CSPE 2019).

## B. Decentralised government contexts

97. Decentralisation reforms, recent and ongoing, are one of the main factors relating to country context that can affect government performance. The recent or ongoing nature of the reform often translates in young decentralised structures that are not fully able to take on their responsibilities for project implementation. The lack of maturity of decentralised structures can also affect the level of ownership of decentralised institutions, which have not yet fully taken control of their role. Another issue concerns the relationship with central government: the risk of overlapping functions and the inadequate allocation of resources to decentralised structures have the potential to affect government performance. All of these challenges can affect both implementation of project activities and the sustainability of interventions after project closure.
98. Decentralisation has affected government performance in 11 out of 15 case studies (Hypothesis#4). In Sudan, DRC and Madagascar, weaknesses are mostly experienced in the decentralized structures of lead agencies. In DRC, the low level of public financing for agriculture limited the resources of relevant provincial ministries, affecting their ability to contribute to the country portfolio. In other instances, like Burundi<sup>22</sup> or Nepal, the contribution of decentralized structures is limited due to weak capacity or lack of motivation.
99. Resulting issues of slow implementation and insufficient staffing and budget allocations were found, for example, in Madagascar, Ghana and DRC. In Madagascar, despite a decentralization strategy developed in 2005 and the Law on Decentralized Local Authorities from 2014, 95 per cent of the budget was still

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<sup>21</sup> In Niger, PUSADER was designed as a response to the Government's call to support its Emergency Plan after the 2010 food crises. In Ecuador, PBVTR resulted from a request from the MoA to target specific areas with high poverty rates. In India and Madagascar, the scope of ongoing operations (NERCORMP in India and DEFIS in Madagascar) was extended upon government request.

<sup>22</sup> In TPPCR, despite the supportive attitude of government staff at provincial level and communal levels, the capacities of decentralised structures were insufficient for project implementation.

managed at the national level in 2019. This translates into a weak capacity for action by local authorities to support development in their regions. In DRC, in 2006 the 'egalitarian decentralization' was enshrined in the Constitution, triggering a process of decentralisation, but the transfer of competencies to decentralised branches of government has been slow. In Ghana, a decentralisation policy review identified the challenges and limitations of the decentralisation process which started in 2003 with an action plan and became law in 2013. The biggest challenges were the central government's right to appoint 30 per cent of district assembly members and the existence of a non-transparent and discordant intergovernmental fiscal transfer system.

100. Almost all case study countries have decentralised policies and procedures in place, but in many cases, implementation of decentralisation policies has met constraints. In some countries, execution of decentralised functions was hindered by limited budgets and incentives, armed conflict and political volatility (e.g. Nepal), weak or incomplete transfer of control from central agencies to local offices (e.g. DRC), and the lack of a clear delineation of authorities among the tiers of the government, and staff shortages – which all weaken government ownership and cause delays in effectively implementing programmes, including limiting their sustainability after completion. For example, a programme in Niger (PPILDA) made efforts to ensure the maintenance of the outcomes beyond programme completion, including the transfer of responsibilities regarding the management of infrastructures to the municipalities and local communities and the agreement with each municipality to provide them with some initial resources to ensure the monitoring of the grain banks. At project completion, it was not clear which administrative level was responsible for the provision of this type of assistance.<sup>23</sup>

#### Box 7

#### Decentralised implementation

Decentralized bodies, ministries, administrations are closer to the beneficiaries. The more they get involved, the more they can reach beneficiaries. Elite capture can be better mitigated at local levels where people feel more involved and free to give feedback.

In India, the projects are state-driven, and IFAD follows the decentralized set-up. Most programmes cover livelihood development which are part of the rural development agenda at state level.

In South Sudan the solution was that government would contract third parties to work on public goods, but this has cleared higher overhead costs and need for good government oversight. Whenever a project provides public goods, government needs to be engaged.

Source: FGDs.

101. Support of decentralised structures. In Nepal, for example, HVAP is considered to have done exceptionally successfully, in addition to implementing a poverty inclusion fund to assist resource-poor households (strong pro-poor and gender focus). The programme collaborated with municipalities to carry out a variety of activities (e.g. construction of market sites). In Niger PASADEM, Communal Development Plans (PDC) were effectively considered and implemented by the programme. Furthermore, according to IOE field visits, the local authorities contributed to interventions that resulted in positive outcomes. Specifically, the municipalities, supported by the decentralised technical services, have been able to implement or have executed by community management committees in the areas of basic social services, income generation and food security, as well as in the management of natural resources, which is satisfactory in relation to the target set.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup>CSPE 2020 Niger

<sup>24</sup> CSPE 2019, Nepal

102. Additionally, decentralised procedures for project execution were effective in Peru, Ecuador, India, and Turkey (Hypothesis #17). In India for example, having a central-level partner with workers drawn from many intervention states fostered expertise with administrative procedures and implementation processes, as well as a positive relationship with government institutions. In Ecuador, the innovative decentralised mechanism for project implementation, based on Territorial Liaison Offices (TLOs/Unidades de Enlace Territorial) and local committees that involve beneficiaries in local decision-making with GADs (Decentralised Autonomous Governments), was critical to the programme's effective development.

### C. Situations of political instability, crisis and fragility

#### Political changes and instability

103. Changes in the institutional and policy framework affected the relationship with IFAD. For example in Peru, the change in agricultural policy approach led to a change in leading implementing agencies. In Ecuador, important changes in public policies have influenced the relationship with IFAD due to constant changes in the composition and characteristics of the national executing power and of nearly all government agencies with which IFAD interacts.<sup>25</sup>
104. One – if not the most frequently repeated - aspect affecting the whole Mexican loan portfolio are the frequent policy changes that modified the institutional arrangements agreed upon for project management. Poor project results thus often derive from the discrepancy between the legal and institutional environment at the time of project design and implementation.<sup>26</sup> An important weakness of several project designs is the little concern for risks of policy changes (the main changes occurred at the beginning of the first COSOP (2007-2012).)<sup>27</sup> Several projects in the Mexican portfolio flagged shortcomings in IFAD's supervision<sup>28</sup> and the absence of a continuous dialogue between IFAD and the government (e.g. new CPM on average every 2 years)
105. The frequent reorganisation of government ministries negatively affected programme performance and contributed to high staff turnover (Hypothesis # 56) in Turkey, Nepal, and Mexico. Frequent changes of senior or high political parties sometimes affected the programmes; for example, in Nepal where high turnover in ministerial positions would also lead to changes in the PCUs. Similar cases were found in Mexico, Kenya and Turkey.
106. Political instability (understood as an “instability in policies rather than an instability in regimes”<sup>29</sup>). In Ecuador, important structural problems (inefficient public sector, macroeconomic imbalances, absence of stabilisation mechanisms, low private investments) were revealed with the decrease in oil prices in 2014, leading to a deterioration of the macroeconomic situation.<sup>30</sup> President Lenín Moreno's<sup>31</sup> aim of reducing the fiscal deficit has resulted in important changes in public policies, which affected IFAD programmes as well as the government departments with which IFAD engages. The 2019 CSPE directly attributes the decrease in government performance (since 2014) to these changes in government agencies.
107. In Mexico, government ownership eroded after the change in government in 2006. The new government no longer allocated resources to the ongoing projects, which caused the reduction of activities and the early close of projects (PDRRH, PNM).

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<sup>25</sup> CSPE 2020 Ecuador

<sup>26</sup> CSPE 2019 Mexico

<sup>27</sup> CSPE 2019 Mexico

<sup>28</sup> (e.g. PDRRH's mid-term review realised in 2008 instead of 2005 due to late implementation, gap in supervision missions for PRODESNOs between 2007 and 2011...)

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/political-instability-indices>

<sup>30</sup> CSPE 2020 Ecuador

<sup>31</sup> In office since 2017

108. The political instability in Madagascar has contributed to a high turnover rate among management posts. This considerably delayed programme or project implementations (particularly in the first few years after 2009) and extended contracting timeframes.<sup>32</sup> The delayed inception and implementation of Niger's PPILDA were primarily due to staff instability, with four administrative officials and four accountants changing.<sup>33</sup>

### Fragile situations

109. Framework for operating in fragile situations. IFAD has adopted a strategy for engagement with countries with fragile situations, defined as "situation of weak institutions and vulnerability to man-made and natural shocks" (IFAD 2019). The strategy emphasises the need for simple programme or project activities and objectives.<sup>34</sup> The strategy provides an important framework for operating in fragile environments. The FGDs in addition highlighted the importance of additional measures to support country teams working within these situations. The complexities of engaging with fragile situations necessitate the deployment of specific resources, both human and financial, as well as policy-related resources, which are not always available.<sup>35</sup>

#### Box 8

#### **Fragility in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

DRC has been plagued by conflict since 1998. While the war officially ended in 2003, hostilities began again following the 2006 elections, resulting in a situation of constant political instability and humanitarian emergency. Fragility is manifested in the country in several ways: weak capacity of the administration and public services; destruction and disarticulation of basic social and economic structures; weak dynamism of the private sector; weak capacity of civil society; low Government budget and low share allocated to the agricultural sector; State's weak performance in terms of governance, including the fight against corruption and respect for human rights; and finally, State's inability to cope autonomously and rapidly with the above failures.

Source: ESR FGD.

110. Complexity of designs. The CSPEs (DRC, Burundi, and Madagascar) found that IFAD projects have insufficiently taken into account the context of fragility of the country. Fragility has not been adequately integrated both at conception, in terms of strategy and implementation approach. Cases of overly complex and ambitious designs were noted in both Burundi and DRC, where the combination of PRAPE's three ambitious components in a single project increased the programme's complexity to a level that went beyond the management capabilities of national programme employees. According to the CSPE<sup>36</sup>, the fragile setting was insufficiently appraised, to the point where another project, PPAKIN, was developed "in an environment of absolute ignorance of the country's fragility context." In Burundi, an example of overly-ambitious design is LSRSP, which included activities relating to the setting-up of partnership with research institutions, processing and market access. These three areas could not be addressed because of the limited time span of the project, lack of effective know-how and lack of adequate financial resources.<sup>37 38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> CSPE 2019 Madagascar

<sup>33</sup> PPILDA PCRV

<sup>34</sup> IFAD's Strategy suggests the following for fragile (1) strengthening fragility analysis, ensuring an adequate assessment is included in the COSOPs; (2) ensure the simplicity of programmes and projects activities and objectives at design; (3) supervision and implementation support to manage risks and guide the application of flexible approaches.

<sup>35</sup> One specific problem identified at the FGDs was the lack of IFAD instructions on how to deal with de-facto governments during project implementation.

<sup>36</sup> CSPE, 2017, DRC

<sup>37</sup> LSRSP PCRV

<sup>38</sup> The complex design and weak assessment of the country's fragile context affected the design of RRDP. Project design relied heavily for its implementation on public services, which proved to be difficult to implement in a context where public services are weakened. The need to strengthen their capacity through training and equipment, meant that they could

111. Limited government capacities. The case of Sudan (see box below) illustrates the challenges for supporting viable institutional structures. Several programmes in Sudan chose to invest in project support teams and systems rather than creating institutional capacity inside line ministries, which would have better secured the projects' long-term viability.
112. In countries classified as 'fragile', institutional capacities also varied, depending on the duration of the fragile situation. The FGDs emphasised the difference between countries that have been fragile for a very long time, and countries that have just recently fallen into fragility. In the latter type, there are institutions and structures, developed before the fragile situation emerged, that offer a solid ground for governments and IFAD to build on (for example in Burundi).
113. Resources. A common challenge for countries in fragile situations were the significant shortfalls in government funding. In some situations, problems with counterpart funding resulted in delayed or cancelled cofinancing, as well as the suspension of the IFAD portfolio (Hypothesis # 48). In Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there was a shift from cash contributions to counterpart support via tax breaks and customs duties. Socio-political crises and conflicts have also impacted the flow of international aid in Burundi (including the four-month suspension of IFAD operations) and necessitated the suspension of IFAD operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between 1993 and 2003. In Burundi, problems such as outstanding arrears and political instability, inadequate staffing of management structure and delays in recruitment have been common in the portfolio, slowing down the implementation process.

#### Box 9

#### Adapting to fragile contexts: Sudan

Sudan had many difficulties with its debt management especially after the secession of South Sudan (lost their major oil revenue) and this explains their difficult economic conditions which have lowered their performance. Performance on counterpart funding has been pretty uneven, however, in recent times things are looking much better. There is though a tension between state and federal administrations. IFAD supported the decentralized programmes to a certain point, however, it is now shifting programmes back to more national programmes. When you have a national project operating far away from key capital, you do not have the same ownership. If IFAD wants to go with government managed projects, IFAD procedure needs to change and adopt national procedures. In Sudan there is a situation of under equipment, understaffed and it means to go for much simpler projects than what has been advocated so far.

Source: ESR FGD.

#### Adapting to instability, crisis and change

114. Situations of fragility, crisis or fundamental changes in the political and governance context required timely adaptation. In this respect, cases like Mexico and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) showcased poor government performance in adaptive management. In Mexico for instance, most of the projects failed to adapt to changing governmental priorities; besides, the lack of flexibility of IFAD is a contributing factor for poor performance.<sup>39</sup> In DRC, the low rating results focus on lowering targets and limiting the scope of over-ambitious projects and the lack of a change in management approach to correct implementation underperformance.

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only start to be effective in their planned roles by the time of the MTR. An additional challenge fr involved the inadequate preparation and lack of formal commitments taken by cofinanciers (OFID and WFP). The late release of their funds led to the serious delays in implementation of the cofinanced activities and the weaker achievement of the specific objectives.<sup>39</sup> In Mexico, despite the recommendations from the supervision mission and MTR about PDRRH, possibly due to lack of communication channels, insufficient flexibility on IFAD's side and little interest by government to follow up and renegotiate the institutional arrangements. PCRV 2010 PDRRH Mexico



## Box 10

**Adapting to changing political situations: Mexico**

The FGDs noted Mexico's normative framework as a challenge affecting international cooperation. In order to adapt, IFAD would need a close and continuing dialogue with the authorities that authorise and manage the annual budget. This would necessitate a stronger country presence for IFAD maintain a permanent dialogue. The country's programme was affected by the frequent changes in the government's agenda. Changes in government after elections frequently resulted in the new government abandoning the programme and disengaging. The frequent changes would require constant adjustment and realignment on the part of IFAD.

Source: FGD.

115. Government was overall responsive to emerging challenges or unexpected events (including emergencies or disaster). Some programme adjustments were highly responsive to the emerging needs – the oversight bodies, including lead agencies and PMUs, were often quick to adapt and support programmes to adjust accordingly. In Pakistan, government was swift to agree to amend the CDP programme loan agreement after the earthquake in Kashmir (2005) by reallocating part of the funds for civil works and recovery efforts. Similarly, in India, post-disaster rehabilitation activities were redesigned to include a multitude of interventions (e.g. coastal area management, rural finance, employment generation, sea safety).
116. Government adapting and responding to programme needs, especially in times of conflict, had a positive influence on the outcomes. For instance, the conflict in Sudan (2010) interrupted the activities and caused a loss of project assets (Gum Arabic Project)<sup>40</sup> in the Blue Nile and the South Kordofan States, but activities were later restarted irrespective of the challenges the programme faced afterwards. In Madagascar the programme (AROPA) significantly reduced its number of indicators for achievement; introduced new tools for outreach, strengthened and restructured the project coordination unit (PMU); and mobilised additional financial resources. These adjustments improved implementation capacity of staff within the PMU, introduced more realistic indicators for monitoring and is able to guide the programme towards putting interventions in place to mobilize additional resources.<sup>41</sup>
117. IFAD's flexibility. The CSPEs reported that governments have shown their appreciation for IFAD's flexibility to respond to challenges encountered during implementation despite the challenging needs (e.g. changing of WELP programme in India's implementing agency and shifting its funds to PTSLP).<sup>42</sup> Similar examples of IFAD's flexibility were reported for not only India, but countries such as Burundi, Moldova, Ecuador and Ghana, where funds from slowly disbursing projects were allocated to better performing initiatives.
118. IFAD has often taken a pro-active role, connecting programmes and projects with government priorities and ensuring that programmes are tailored to the rural poor or smallholder farmers. Something which stood out in the FGDs, was IFAD's ability to continue operating in fragile situations, even while other organisation may have left or suspended their portfolios. IFAD also successfully provided technical assistance during implementation, including strengthening the capacities of programme coordinating units.
119. In other cases IFAD was slow to adapt, for example to the increasingly decentralized government system in the case of Kenya since 2013.<sup>43</sup> Similarly in

<sup>40</sup> CSPE 2020, Sudan

<sup>41</sup> CSPE 2012 Madagascar

<sup>42</sup> CSPE 2015 India, PCRVR 2016 WELP India

<sup>43</sup> COSOP 2013

Moldova, IFAD COSOPs (2002 and 2007)<sup>44</sup> contained objectives and indicators that were insufficiently aligned with the actual IFAD's lending programme.

#### D. Institutional arrangements

120. Government and IFAD agree on the management arrangements, which should enable the project to take the right decisions (based on the right capacities and incentives) and ensure the best possible implementation of the project.<sup>45</sup> As necessary, they include capacity development, supervision and implementation support by IFAD to mitigate systemic weaknesses of government. If those accompanying measures are not enough or not effective, institutional risks associated with systemic government weakness weigh on project results.
121. Alignment with institutional structures. Integration of IFAD projects in country structures enables national government and decentralised public authorities to provide oversight, coordination and other types of implementation support to ongoing projects and programmes. In Madagascar and Niger, for example, the establishment of a centralised unit for project management facilitated regional coordination, financial management, M&E and coordination. In Mexico on the other hand, the limited integration of IFAD projects in the country's public structure appears to be directly linked to the rather low level of government ownership. A clear delineation of authorities among tiers of government was missing in DRC and Nepal, while in Ecuador implementation was hindered by the lack of government protocols for designing and implementing IFAD projects.

#### Lead agencies

122. Choice of lead agencies was generally relevant in sample countries, because of their mandate and focus on the rural poor. When the choice of lead agency was not relevant, they shared some notable weaknesses, such as lack of technical assistance, limited capacities at decentralized levels and a high staff turnover that affected government performance.
123. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has been the default partner for IFAD and has become more dominant as lead agency in IFAD's portfolio. Following the strategic shift towards value chains, the share of projects led by MoA has increased since 2010, from 41 percent to 64 percent. (see annex II) There are some regional variations though in IFAD's portfolio, with the large majority of projects led by MoA in WCA and NEN. MoA is also more present as partner in countries with fragile situations.<sup>46</sup> The largest share of projects led by MoA was in NEN (76 percent) followed by WCA (74 percent).<sup>47</sup>
124. The performance of MoA as a lead agency was debated in the FGD. Participants highlighted some of the weaknesses of MoA as partner. Ministries of Agriculture are often under-resourced and have limited capacity to effectively provide the essential services and inputs. Working exclusively with the MoA on multi-sectoral livelihoods projects has been challenging; hence, some divisions (e.g. APR) deliberately worked with a broader range of partners.

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<sup>44</sup> CSPE 2013, Moldova

<sup>45</sup> See "Institutional arrangements for effective project management and implementation – A Guide for Practitioners" (IFAD 2017)

<sup>46</sup> Among the 309 completed programme with IOE ratings (ARRI database), the MoA was the lead agency for 56 per cent (2008-2019). MoA led programmes are even more frequent in NEN (76%), followed by WCA (74%), LAC (56%), and ESA (41%), correspondingly, while APR has the lowest (31%). In countries with fragile situations, 71 percent of the projects were led by MoA since 2010.

<sup>47</sup> APR shows the greatest diversity in terms of lead agencies (see Annex II)

## Box 11

**Choice of lead agency – feedback from focus groups**

The choice of the lead agency follows the programme content, substance, and area of intervention. A diversity of lead agencies in the country can support the sharing of experiences and learning.

The Ministry of Agriculture is mainly interested in agriculture's competitiveness. It is very export-oriented and favours large-scale production. Other partners may be better equipped to undertake rural development programmes tackling broader poverty challenges.

India was the only country to first borrow for women's empowerment projects, which explains the low share of agriculture projects. Agricultural departments are not usually present in the field. The rural development programmes are more present on the ground and allow working on transversal topics.

Source: Various FGDs.

125. MoA was the lead agency in the majority of projects covered by the case study sample. While the choice of MoA was generally relevant, because of its mandate and convening power within the agricultural sector, there were some common weaknesses in the, such as the limited flexibility of procedures, insufficient sector funding, weak capacities at decentralised levels, and weak coordination. While MoA has led the largest number of projects in case study countries, it also had a larger share of underperforming projects than most other implementing partners. MoA also performed below average on effectiveness, sustainability and scaling up in the IOE evaluated portfolio (see Annex II).

#### Programme oversight

126. Oversight functions were rated high for six countries included in the sample: Moldova, Ecuador, Niger, Madagascar, Burundi and India. Some of these countries outline the importance of central oversight mechanisms (e.g. IFAD Programme Steering Committee in Moldova, National Programme Unit in Ecuador, CAPFIDA in Madagascar, tripartite review meetings in India) as well as government involvement (role) in supervision. On the other hand, oversight was found weak in four countries: Mexico, DRC, Pakistan and Nepal. The cases studies found a lack of involvement of the government in oversight functions and insufficient corrective measures taken following supervisions.
127. In half of the case studies, governments set up steering committees and other oversight structures, which ensured government oversight of projects and programmes' implementation. Programme steering committees (PSCs) often comprised of senior government officials such as Heads of the government executing agency (or their designated representatives), and different stakeholders including beneficiaries and IFAD representatives. The oversight structures were rated relevant in the majority of cases reviewed.
128. While oversight functions exist in most programmes, their precise role was not always clear.<sup>48</sup> Their ability to work effectively is often hampered by insufficient participation of key stakeholders and weak leadership capacities (e.g. Pakistan, DRC). This included for example the insufficient follow up to supervision recommendations or failure to conduct the required Mid Term Reviews (MTRs) (e.g. Turkey). These and other factors didn't allow challenges to be identified and addressed in a timely manner.
129. In Moldova, the government's constructive presence in the steering committee and tight supervision of the programmes are critical to the implementation's progress. In Pakistan, the case study found inadequate capacities of programme leadership and government steering agencies, which provided weak guidance, negatively

<sup>48</sup> According to 2014 ARRI, programme documents rarely mentions steering committees.

affecting the implementation of at least two projects.<sup>49</sup> In Mexico, oversight was limited after a change in Government, due to a lack of resources.

### Programme management units

130. The institutional set up for programme management varies and for each project, the lead implementing agency has the responsibility of establishing an implementation unit (with IFAD's approval) for the duration of the project cycle. As a result, the government is responsible for ensuring that the PMU's day-to-day operations are managed efficiently in order to achieve sustainable results.
131. There is no standard PMU structure for IFAD projects.<sup>50</sup> Hence establishing PMU structure, roles and responsibilities vary depending on the country context<sup>51</sup> and the project/programme type.<sup>52</sup> The types of Programme Management Units (PMU) found in the sample countries the following:
- (i) Single PMU,
  - (ii) National PMU coordinating decentralised PMUs,
  - (iii) Decentralised set-up with multiple parallel PMU,
  - (iv) The Super PMU.
132. Out of the 63 programmes analysed as part of the case studies, single PMUs present the highest number of completed programmes (40), followed by national PMUs coordinating decentralised PMUs (15), and 4 each for decentralised set up with multiple parallel PMUs and super PMUs managing several IFAD-supported projects. Super PMUs received the highest average rating (IOE) for efficiency and government performance. Decentralized PMUs have the second-best average rating for efficiency, effectiveness, and government performance. Single PMUs were rated as the most relevant but less efficient than the other PMUs. (See also efficiency for PMU performance.)

### E. Government Ownership

133. For the case studies, the review rated government ownership rather high on average, with 11 out of 15 countries receiving satisfactory scores. Moldova, Niger, Burundi and India performed exceptionally well. All four case studies show the government's participation in project design and supervision, the portfolio's satisfactory degree of alignment to national goals, and its willingness to participate at the policy level (Niger, Sudan, and Burundi). The robust, long-standing partnership with IFAD is also viewed as a significant factor leading to government ownership in Burundi and India.
134. On the other hand, DRC was rated low, followed by Mexico, Ecuador and Kenya. In DRC, the government seemed disengaged from the agricultural sector despite its stated interest. Similarly, the Mexican government is not strongly involved in project design and hardly addresses the issues in project execution resulting from its strategy changes. In both contexts, corruption, lack of transparency and challenges caused weak financial management performance and compromised the relationship between the government and IFAD.<sup>53</sup> The participation of the

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<sup>49</sup> GLLSP PCR, p 150

<sup>50</sup> A guide for practitioners (2017), p30

<sup>51</sup> The factors which influences the country context includes economic status, rural development status (infrastructure, socio-economic dynamics), public administration system (organizational structures, government policies and regulations, processes and procedures, status of private-sector and non-state actors), population density, culture and attitudes.

<sup>52</sup> In terms of thematic coverage, nature of goods and services to be delivered, complexity of the project, target location and intended beneficiaries.

<sup>53</sup> PCRV 2012 PNM Mexico

Ecuadorian government in project design also does not enable genuinely efficient implementation.

135. Building trust and ownership. Government ownership has not always been low in fragile situations. In fact there were cases where government performed well, even within a fragile context. One reason, highlighted by the FGD and the CSPes, was the high level of trust and ownership by national government as a result of the partnership with IFAD. This was the case in Burundi, Sudan, and Niger, where national authorities' trust and engagement with IFAD country teams facilitated information transfer, strong alignment between the portfolio and the governments' strategies and priorities, and active participation in oversight and implementation support. The FGDs emphasised the importance of a shared sense of commitment to reduce rural poverty as making the difference in a fragile context such as Burundi.

Box 12

**IFAD supports government ownership – feedback from government respondents to e-survey**

The majority of government respondents to the e-survey confirmed that IFAD's programme responded to government request (53 percent strongly agreed). They also agreed that IFAD's long standing partnerships and use of country systems (for disbursement and procurement) has strengthened government ownership (strongly agreed by 43 percent and 39 per cent). At the same time, a smaller share of respondents agreed that IFAD needs to have a presence in the country for a good partnership with government (21 per cent).

Source: ESR e-survey.

136. IFAD supports ownership through long-standing partnerships, broad-based participation and "hand-holding" during times of crisis and fragility (see box 11 below). Some of the tools that have proven to strengthen government ownership are institutional support provided to projects in Sudan, and the participatory approaches implemented at the local level in Burundi. IFAD staff is well aware of central role of ownership for government performance. In the IFAD respondents identified ownership as the second most important driver of government performance, with 45 per cent of the respondents considering it as 'extremely important'.

Box 13

**Building trust and ownership in fragile situations**

Madagascar is also fragile, according to the OECD list, but there are three reasons for good performance: IFAD country program is very big, and therefore IFAD is an important partner in the country. When the country has been in crisis, most partners left, but IFAD stayed. IFAD relies on national system and national capacity, and therefore partnership with IFAD is valued. People learn from programmes how to do M&E and procurement. Finally, projects had long cycles (on average – 10 years) and the expertise of PMU has grown over time.

Mozambique. Fragility is localised, with conflict in the north. Development partners mainly focus their resources in the North. IFAD is the only agency still working in the South. After development partners reduced budget support IFAD remained and converted the bulk of its loans to almost DSF.

Source: FGDs.

137. Consequences of low ownership. The case studies provide evidence of the link between ownership and good programme performance on efficiency and effectiveness. In Nepal, WUPAP is an example of ownership that had a negative impact on efficiency and effectiveness. The project saw stronger variations – compared to the other projects - between more satisfactory and less satisfactory performance in counterpart funding; a high rate of vacant positions and staff turnover; weak financial management. The project suffered from lack of commitment on the part of the Government and IFAD and achieved the (reduced) targets after an extension of three years. The sustainability of benefits of

cooperatives was undermined by lack of institutional support and ownership by local authorities and stronger scaling up opportunities did not materialise.

**Box 14**

**Ownership makes the difference: Mexico**

“In Mexico government ownership makes a full difference. Budget can be increased if the govt. feels that the project is relevant for their policies. The key issue is to put responsibility for implementation in the hands of government or ensure that PIU-based implementation arrangements can be mainstreamed as much as possible within the ministry structures. While it can be agreed that PMUs have usually failed to create sustainable institutional capacity in countries, or just do so quite modestly, we also need to recognize that portfolio monitoring incentives in IFAD (PBAS lending cycles that emphasize fast delivery, fiduciary requirements and focus on disbursements speed in portfolio monitoring) are still biased in favour of PMUs as a way of getting project implemented on time.”

Source: FGD.

138. Accountability and incentives. The presence of a well-defined institutional structure and a functional accountability system is seen as the most important perceived enabler of government ownership, with 42 per cent of the IFAD respondents ranking it as extremely important (IFAD survey). The FGDs confirmed this point, describing a clear link between the presence of a robust accountability system, with transparent responsibility allocation, and government ownership. Government ownership is needed at all levels (including decentralized areas) of government that can influence, affect or contribute positively to programmes or projects.
139. DRC exemplifies the issue of low ownership and incentives. Government’s lack of engagement in agriculture, signalled by the low public investment in the sector (three per cent) and in the related ministries, by the lack of operationalisation of relevant laws, and harassment and heavy taxation of small farmers. Government seemed disengaged from the agricultural sector. Counterpart funding is made available with delay and in smaller quantities than agreed.

**Box 15**

**DRC: a case of government disengagement and low ownership**

Governance in the DRC is weak, and the government has shown disengagement over time. This has limited many projects already suffering from the limited resources and capacities resulting from the absence of commitment on the government’s side. In fact, the larger part of policy implementation and plans for agricultural and rural development is carried out almost exclusively by external partners.

Central authorities (e.g., the relevant ministries) are deprived of both power (ineffective PA system) and resources (insufficient deployment of financial resources); on the other hand, the decentralization process is still far from completed and local agencies see projects as temporary gigs to survive. On top of that, there is a general climate of corruption and lack of transparency and accountability.

Source: DRC case study.

140. High-level government commitment ensures ownership (Hypothesis #12). When high-level government representatives engage in and are committed to a project, this builds broader ownership (systemic ownership) within government at different institutional levels. The focus groups emphasised the value of high-level government commitment in facilitating coordination among agencies and development partners as well as cost-effective decision-making. This is also confirmed and validated by eight case studies. Cases such as Moldova, Ghana, and Nepal, highlighted the positive presence of government officials in oversight structures. Specifically, in Ghana, the Deputy-Minister took the responsibility of chairing the PSC, hence, demonstrating how important the Ministry regarded the programme.

## Box 16

**Systemic ownership**

"Systemic ownership also known as the "all hands on deck approach," is most visible when everyone, including high-ranking officials in an institution, strives for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The commitments are higher at all levels; additionally, it creates space for business continuity. "Non-systemic ownership" can be seen when single or few individuals promote the cause of an intervention. As a result, interventions tend to be either static or fraught with several difficulties in the absence of such individuals.

Source: ESR.

141. The importance of a shared attitude of commitment to decreasing rural poverty was highlighted throughout the FGDs, making a difference in a vulnerable situation. Burundi is mentioned as an example of a scenario in which government engagement and focus on rural development issues, both at the central and decentralised levels, contributed to the efficacy of extension services. Burundi's example is all the more notable when considering the challenging country's context. government's

## F. IFAD's country-level engagement and presence

142. IFAD respondents to the e-survey see supervision and implementation alongside participation in project designs as the most important drivers of good performance (rated extremely important by 46 per cent and 41 per cent of the respondents, respectively). IFAD country presence is also driver of government performance (26 per cent extremely important). The presence of country programme management within countries is expected to help government resolve implementation issues and reduce the time required for IFAD's internal clearance processes.

## Box 17

**IFAD capacity and presence as important factors for government performance**

IFAD respondents to the e-survey identified as most effective IFAD measures to enhance government performance the placement of procurement and financial management specialists in IFAD hubs (41 per cent strong agreed), followed by enhancement of procurement oversight (31 per cent strongly agreed) and decentralisation of programme staff (26 per cent strongly agreed).

Source: ESR e-survey.

143. Policy engagement was highlighted as important driver of government performance at country level. Strengthening policy engagement with government beyond the lead agency was cited as an important tool to engage technical institutions that could positively contribute to project implementation.
144. Staff continuity and qualification were cited as a critical factors contributing to government performance in the e-survey. The FGD also highlighted the personality of the country director and the "chemistry" in the relationship with government as important contributor to government engagement and ownership. In addition to presence, staff qualifications and continuity also matter. In the past frequent rotations of country programme managers have disrupted engagement with national authorities and development partners<sup>54</sup> (e.g. Nepal). These "soft" factors seem often more important than the physical presence of IFAD in the country. A relatively large share of government respondents therefore disagreed IFAD's country presence is required for a successful cooperation with the government (34 per cent of the survey respondents strongly to somewhat disagrees).
145. Country presence. IFAD country presence can contribute to government performance, for example through continuous engagement with implementing

<sup>54</sup> CSPE2019, Nepal



agencies to address institutional fragility and under-performing issues. With its presence in the country IFAD has increased the frequency of supervision missions, (Ghana and India) and enabled a more proactive engagement with government (Burundi).<sup>55</sup> In Peru, IFAD's country presence enabled a continuous dialogue with the ministries in charge of execution and operations, thus contributing to innovation and scaling up.<sup>56</sup>

146. While country presence can be a contributing factor, it is not sufficient to explain good or weak government performance. Furthermore, there have been frequent changes in the previous years, in terms of location and representation of IFAD staff. At the time of this review, 12 out of 15 countries have established IFAD offices with different levels of staff representation.<sup>57</sup> For seven countries, the director was not posted within the country (Ecuador and Mexico, Burundi, Madagascar, Niger, and Pakistan).<sup>58</sup> The posting of a senior IFAD staff as country director in the country has enhanced oversight and contributed to improvements in implementation in the past, for example in Sudan, Ghana and Nepal. At the same time, there were also countries that performed well with weak or no IFAD presence (e.g. Moldova or Niger). On the other hand, a country such as Kenya had a well-established country presence (regional office), but capacities were inadequate to cover the rather large lending and non-lending programme. Furthermore, country presence was usually insufficient in several country programmes working in remote and hard-to-reach locations, where capacities at decentralised levels are weak. In cases like posting a country director in the capital was not sufficient.
147. Table 4 (below) illustrates IFAD's country presence in case study countries. Only four countries have adequate country presence, meaning that IFAD is sufficiently present to engage with government and other stakeholders. Five countries have no IFAD staff in the country. For the remaining six countries IFAD's presence was judged weak or insufficient to engage with government and other stakeholders.

Table 4:  
**IFAD country presence and government performance**

IFAD country presence Levels of performance*	Adequate country presence	Weak or insufficient country presence	No country presence
Weak government performance		DRC Nepal	Ecuador Mexico Turkey
Ordinary government performance	Ghana Sudan	Madagascar India	Pakistan
Strong government performance	Burundi Peru	Kenya Niger	Moldova

Source: ESR; For further details refer to annex II, table 6\* refer to synopsis (Chapter VII) for levels of performance.

<sup>55</sup> CSPE 2021, Burundi.

<sup>56</sup> CSPE 2017, Peru

<sup>57</sup> Out of the 12 country offices, four are considered hubs and host some country directors for other countries, two country director vacancies are unfilled.

<sup>58</sup> For example, the country director for Pakistan is stationed in Beijing, China; Nepal is based in New Delhi, India; Sierra Leone is based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; Ecuador is based in Rome, Italy; Madagascar is based in Nairobi, Kenya; and the Pacific countries are based in Jakarta.



## G. Conclusions on relevance

148. The synthesis looked at relevance issues that are driving government performance. This includes country- and institutional-levels risks which Government and IFAD would address and mitigate through appropriate design and implementation support measures.
149. Our analysis confirms the conclusion from the 2021 portfolio stocktake that “the drivers of IFAD’s performance on government effectiveness are not linked to macro features”.<sup>59</sup> Common indicators rating government effectiveness<sup>60</sup> do not correlate with government performance. This can be explained by the fact that IFAD, with his specific focus on rural areas and long standing partnerships, has been able to mitigate some of the shortcomings and risks.<sup>61</sup> These observations highlight the need for a deeper look at the drivers of government performance in the context of IFAD-supported operations.
150. The synthesis identified the main contextual factors that have affected government performance. Government decentralisation was a major issue in 11 out of 15 case studies. Progress on decentralisation reforms was often slow; this has led to unclear responsibilities, implementation delays and insufficient allocations of staffing and budget in a number of cases. This had a major influence on IFAD supported operations, which are primarily working at a local level. The case studies show that IFAD was better placed to respond where it had established partnerships working at local level.
151. Situations of political instability required flexibility to adapt, something that IFAD was generally noted for. However, there were several cases where IFAD did not have sufficient presence and engagement in the country to respond. Positive cases were found in fragile situations, where IFAD had nurtured long-standing partnerships, earning government’s trust.
152. Ownership provides an incentive for government to perform, and it was present – to varying degrees – in the majority of case studies. IFAD has often played its part, supporting government ownership, for example through long-standing partnerships with preferred ministries and agencies, responsive programme designs and integration of government staff into management units.
153. Yet some major gaps were noted, in particular with regard to the understanding of and alignment with countries’ institutional and policy frameworks, overly complex programme designs overstressing government’s capacities and unclear oversight functions. These were gaps that led to frustrations and undermined government performance.
154. The question if IFAD’s presence in the country is sufficient to enhance government performance is not straightforward to answer. While generally speaking IFAD country presence is seen as a positive factor, its traction for government performance also depends on the technical qualification and seniority of IFAD staff as well as other “soft” factors shaping the relationship with government partners.
155. Contextual changes and emerging crises will require IFAD to remain flexible and adaptive. Most recently, the COVID crisis, and its impact on national economies and poverty levels, has put an additional strain on government performance. Country teams engaged with government counterparts to provide assistance and respond to COVID-19 issues.

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<sup>59</sup> IFAD PMD. 2021 Corporate Portfolio Stocktake (ppt)

<sup>60</sup> E.g. the World Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). For IFAD, Rural Sector Policy Assessment (RSPA) seemed more relevant, but it did not reveal any correlation with government performance.

<sup>61</sup> The disconnect between IFAD’s financial risk assessment and government performance, seen in several case study countries, was discussed during FGD 1.

As of July 2020, IFAD approved \$66m in repurposing across 40 projects in 28 countries.<sup>62</sup> In addition, IFAD has taken measures, including making available grant<sup>63</sup> commitments to support, and strengthen the sustainability, efficiency, and expand the opportunities for scaling up and ensuring a good M&E during IFAD12.

#### Key points on relevance

- Decentralisation has affected government performance in 11 out of 15 case studies. In several cases this has contributed to slow implementation, staffing and budget allocation.
- Changes in the institutional and policy framework affected the relationship with IFAD and led to turnover of project staff in several cases. In Mexico, the new government no longer allocated resources to the ongoing projects.
- Fragile situations. Project designs were not adapted to the complexities of fragile situations in several cases. Where IFAD has built a robust and long-standing relationship with government this has enhanced ownership and performance. Shortfalls in resources (and counterpart funding) was a common issue in fragile situations.
- IFAD can positively influence government performance through alignment with institutional structures, flexibility and consistent engagement, including country presence.
- The relevance of design scored low in the case studies. Risks were insufficiently assessed and programme objectives were often too ambitious and complex, given the existing capacities of government. The case studies showed that government was insufficiently involved in design.
- The choice of lead agencies was generally relevant, given their mandate and focus on the poor. Ministries of Agriculture, leading half of the 63 reviewed programmes revealed some common weaknesses in case study countries, such as the limited flexibility in their procedures, insufficient sector funding, weak capacities at decentralised levels, and weak coordination.
- Oversight functions exist in most programmes, but their precise role was not always clear. Their ability to work effectively is often hampered by insufficient participation of key stakeholders and weak leadership capacities. Their role in taking corrective action during implementation may have been limited.
- Ownership scored rather high in the case studies. The presence of a well-defined institutional structure and a functional accountability system is the most important perceived enabler of government ownership. The engagement of high-level government representatives builds broader ownership (systemic ownership) within government at different institutional levels.

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<sup>62</sup> IFAD's COVID-19 response has been structured around three main pillars: repurposing of project funds; providing policy and analytical support; and establishing the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility

<sup>63</sup> Program in Rural Monitoring & Evaluation (PRiME), currently benefiting 85 per cent of the ongoing portfolio. The Driving Delivery of Results in the Agriculture Sector (DELIVER), Advancing Knowledge for Agricultural Impact (AVANTI), Achieving Project Excellence in Financial Management (APEX) and Results-based Management for Rural Transformation (RESOLVE) initiatives

## V. Efficiency: Resources, delivery and adaptation

156. Institutional efficiency is concerned with the transformation of inputs into outputs and the effective use of institutional management arrangements. The transformation process relies on: (i) the availability of (financial and human) resources necessary to implement project activities, (ii) the functioning of management and decision-making processes, and (iii) the ability to make adjustments in situations of poor performance. Disbursements delays (divergence between AWPB targets and actual disbursements), cost overruns, necessitating project extension, or cut backs are typically shortcomings in government performance.
157. The following chapter looks at government performance in the provision of resources, policies and procedures required for programme management to perform its critical functions. It will also reviewed government's ability to adapt and address issues of underperformance.

### A. Government resources

158. Government partners have the responsibility to provide the inputs required for the functioning of the management structures, including PMUs, PSCs and related government project structures.<sup>64</sup> This also include provision of the requisite regulatory and institutional framework, supplying essential staff and expertise, and the actual use of the structures for planning, management and control.

#### Counterpart Funding<sup>65</sup>

159. Counterpart funding has a substantial influence on programme performance; disruption will adversely affect implementation and invariably undermine the programme's results and sustainability. For the case studies, performance on counterpart funding scored very low, with 7 out of 15 countries receiving unsatisfactory ratings. Moldova and Peru were the highest performers. Ghana, Sudan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Kenya and Turkey, also performed reasonably well. Counterpart funding was more problematic in Burundi<sup>66</sup>, Madagascar, Niger, Ecuador, and Mexico. The worst performer on counterpart funding was DRC.
160. Ownership and counterpart funding. Good performance on counterpart funding is often seen as a proxy for high ownership; however the case studies confirmed this link (hypothesis #45) for five case-studies (Moldova, Peru, Kenya, Pakistan, and India) only. Low ownership coincided with low counterpart funding in countries such as DRC, Ecuador and Mexico. Some countries demonstrated ownership, but still did not deliver the required counterpart funding. In Ghana, the Government failed to provide its share of counterpart funding (NORPREP). In Madagascar and Turkey, government repeatedly failed to meet its commitment to IFAD in terms of counterpart funding, due to low annual budget allocation.
161. Counterpart funding was usually adequate and timely in countries with a sound economic situation and strong government ownership (hypothesis #45), e.g. India, Pakistan, Kenya, and Moldova. In India, for example, good ratings from missions are attributed to the fact that the vast majority of the programmes benefitted from

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<sup>64</sup> During implementation, the active participation of the borrowing entity is important in administering the provisions of loan agreements and facilitating the flow of resources to the project. The borrowing entity also ensures that the government's own funding commitments to the project are mobilized and made available in a timely manner. (IFAD 2017: Institutional arrangements for effective project management and implementation - A Guide for Practitioners", p.8)

<sup>65</sup> Counterpart funding is also referred to as expenditure financed by the borrower.

<sup>66</sup> The Government's outstanding arrears had a negative impact on IFAD portfolio, as reported by RRDP's PPE. The issue led to a suspension of four months of the IFAD portfolio and its financing, and to the delayed release of OFID funds, which took place in 2007, eight years after project effectiveness. The political crisis of 2015 could be linked to the low ratings on counterpart funding for that year, while overall the PSR ratings are satisfactory across the projects, and improving over time for 3 out of the 5 projects.

- a timely and high level of government co-funding, with willingness to allocate additional funding when necessary (e.g. India, Kenya and Sudan).<sup>67</sup>
162. Counterpart funding methods. Government usually contribute their counterpart funding in both monetary and non-monetary form ("in-kind" such as government officer salaries, office space, shared-utility costs, or exemption of taxes and duty). Difficulties in meeting monetary pledges can be due to various reasons, such as slow government procedures (Niger)<sup>68</sup> or budget cuts (Ecuador).<sup>69</sup> Governments facing resource constraints, e.g. those with weak economic or fragile situations, therefore prefer provision of counterpart funding in a non-monetary forms, e.g. tax exemptions and in-kind contributions. For example, in DRC the agreement to provide counterpart funds in the form of tax exemptions became the general practice in recent IFAD-funded projects.<sup>70</sup> There are also instances where a programme significantly under-estimated in kind contribution (AROPA in Madagascar).<sup>71</sup>
  163. Delays and limitations in counterpart funding negatively affected several programme implementation (hypothesis #48). Nine case studies report that insufficient or delayed counterpart funding hindered programme performance. This is the case for example in Madagascar.<sup>72</sup> In DRC, the PRAPE project faced important payment delays and shortages in counterpart funding, which caused cash flow problems to the project, delaying activities. The delays combined with implementation delays and poor performance, led to external partners, and particularly the BFFS to decrease its agreed amount of co-financing.
  164. Arrears in counterpart funding and suspension programme activities. Within the ESR sample, three countries (Burundi, Sudan and Mexico) had cases of outstanding arrears, which led to a suspension of project activities. In Burundi, the Government's outstanding arrears in the RRDP programme led to a suspension of four months of the IFAD portfolio and its financing, besides delaying the release of OFID funds, eight years after project effectiveness (in 2007).<sup>73</sup> In Sudan projects were using IFAD funding to pre-finance the Government's contributions, which were delayed. In Mexico, there have been arrears in counterpart funds after the change of government reduced the resource allocations for ongoing projects.<sup>74</sup>

### Staffing Resources

Staffing resources<sup>75</sup> received the lowest scores among all criteria reviewed; only 5 out of 15 countries (Moldova, Madagascar, Peru, Niger and Sudan) showed satisfactory performance. Issues in relation to staff recruitment and retention were noted in Turkey, Mexico, Ecuador, Kenya, Pakistan and India. Problems in relation to staff resources were high staff turnovers, low technical capacities, delays in staff recruitment, and lack of staff incentives. In several cases the assessment of capacities, and the requirements for additional staff resources, were insufficient assessed at design (hypothesis #52), for example in Turkey, Ghana, DRC, Kenya, Burundi, and Nepal).

<sup>67</sup> For example, India's OTELP Kenya's SHoMaP, SNDCP and PROFIT, Sudan's GASH irrigation infrastructure.

<sup>68</sup> In Niger weak mobilisation of counterpart funds in programmes (PASADEM, PPILDA and PRODAF) was attributed to slow and cumbersome procedures to obtain exemptions, difficulties to adapt to procurement rules and institutional weakness of deconcentrated technical services.

<sup>69</sup> In Ecuador's PBVTR, the delays encountered were partly due to budget cuts and lack of prioritization (for political reasons or due to external factors such as natural disasters (CSPE 2020 Ecuador).

<sup>70</sup> CSPE, 2017, DRC

<sup>71</sup> CSPE 2019, Madagascar

<sup>72</sup> In Madagascar's AROPA, the actual government's contributions reached 51% of the planned amount, due to delays in VAT recovery for project items and no inclusion of a dedicated project allocation in the national budget

<sup>73</sup> RRDP PPE

<sup>74</sup> CSPE 2019 México

<sup>75</sup> Staffing resources evaluated in this synthesis process are mainly professionals in government, particularly in lead ministries, PMUs, and IFAD staffing in each country.

165. Delays in recruitment had a negative effect on programme efficiency; they were mainly a result of government bureaucratic procedures and insufficient incentives. India experienced major delays in recruiting project staff due to lengthy procurement for getting staff on deputation from other public services and agencies, and due to cumbersome procedures at administrative levels, which in the case of LIPH delayed implementation by years.<sup>76</sup> In Burundi issues of weak local capacity, delays or slow recruitment or the need for additional personnel were attributed to political changes (e.g. PAIVA-B, TPPCR and RRDP).<sup>77</sup> Remoteness of the programme areas negatively made it difficult to find suitable staff in countries such in Turkey, India, and Nepal.
166. Insufficient incentives were also the main reason for staff turnover. Nine case studies confirmed that absence of competitive salaries and poor working conditions affected staff resources (hypothesis #53). Inconsistencies in staff remuneration levels are reported for some countries, especially in Sudan and DRC. In Ecuador (PBVTR) salaries were reduced as part of the austerity measures. In Kenya's PROFIT's lack of top-up allowances led to turnover and thereby affecting the programme implementation. In Mexico project employment was not attractive "since it does not offer job stability guarantees to the personnel in charge of its implementation" (PRODESNOS).

#### Policies and procedures

167. Policies and procedures are rated rather low on average. Only 3 case study countries showed good performance (Moldova, Kenya and Pakistan). In seven case study countries red tape and lengthy procedures affected the achievement of results (Hypothesis #60). In DRC poorly understood and unnecessarily cumbersome procedures, involving several layers of decision-making, were among the issues causing delays at the start of implementation. Cumbersome procedures also caused delays in India, Kenya, Madagascar, Burundi and Pakistan. Even though, Pakistan was noted as a positive examples of the government providing several policies to support programme implementation, most of which have become bigger programmes or platforms for other programmes.<sup>78</sup>
168. Country policies and procedures were often noted as "bureaucratic" or "cumbersome", leading to delays in implementation (Mexico, India, Peru, Ecuador, Burundi, and Nepal). Madagascar performed worse than other countries due to the complexity of its procedures for managing funds, delaying project activities' implementation.

In Mexico slow processes were noted for both government and IFAD.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, the country saw a discrepancy between the legal and institutional environment at the time of project design and implementation, causing enormous lags between approval-effectiveness and effectiveness-first disbursement (17.4 months).<sup>80</sup>

#### B. Functional performance

169. Planning, operational management and the control of processes and instruments are necessary to ensure their efficient use towards achieving the desired project results. Government commitment to a set of management tools, including AWPB, procurement procedures, financial reporting, progress reports, audits, M&E system, etc. in addition to suitable management structure is an integral part of the loan

<sup>76</sup> CSPE 2015 India, PPE 2015 LIPH India

<sup>77</sup> RRDP PPE

<sup>78</sup> For example the Ehsaas strategy (major government's anti-poverty initiative), Climate Change Policy, National Water Policy, the National Food Security Policy, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), rural support programmes (RSPs) and the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

<sup>79</sup> Delay in signing the financing agreements of PROINPRO, non-allocation of budgetary resources by the national implementing organization FIRCO to PNM Mexico (PROINPRO PCR 2020). (Mexico CSPE 2019)

<sup>80</sup> CSPE 2019, México

covenant. Inadequate use of such mechanisms, and hence non-compliance with the loan terms, can cause all sorts of project disruptions, i.a., procurement or recruitment delays.

170. Functional performance was moderately satisfactory, with three countries achieving the maximum score (4): Moldova, Madagascar and Pakistan. For DRC and Nepal the case studies found poor financial management practices, such as delays in the approval of the AWPBs, a poor understanding of procurement procedures and repeated claims of non-eligible expenses, also confirmed by the low PSR ratings.

#### Performance on procurement

171. The sample showed a mix of procurement processes and uneven performance.<sup>81</sup> Poor performance in procurement includes practices such as ineligible expenditures and disagreements over payment claims, a shortage of qualified personnel in the procurement area, sluggish procurement and contracting processes primarily due to bureaucratic constraints and weak procurement policies, including disbursements caps (FGD).
172. In Burundi, procurement was often completed on time and in a transparent manner; but, according to the CSPE, the implementation of the procurement plan has not been adequately documented, and lengthy tendering processes were among the factors delaying procurement. In Peru, the CSPE reports an initial slowness in the procurement and contracting processes, due to problems mainly related to bureaucratic restrictions.<sup>82</sup> In India's the CAIM programme, there were problems with the agreements with implementing agencies, which eventually led to ineligible expenditures and disputes over payment claims.<sup>83</sup>
173. Procurement systems used.<sup>84</sup> Sample countries used different forms of procurement processes. The country procurement regulations systems should normally be in line with IFAD procurement standards, and if anything negatively contradicts, the IFAD guidelines take precedence. In instances where country systems were weak, the country greatly relied on IFAD procurement guidelines in addition to the country measures for clearing and procuring (e.g. Moldova and DRC).
174. Having national systems in place increases the possibility of increasing disbursement, when done properly. For example, international and local tenders were used in countries such as Sudan,<sup>85</sup> Kenya,<sup>86</sup> and Turkey.<sup>87</sup>
175. Improvements in national procurement systems were noted for Ghana, where government has taken measures to automate procurement implementation processes and approvals, and link the procurement processes planning and implementation to budget planning, to reduce human errors and influences as well

<sup>81</sup> Twelve of the fifteen countries had satisfactory PSR scores on average (ratings of 80 per cent and above. DRC had the lowest (54 per cent unsatisfactory). Kenya and Sudan, scored 30% and 24% unsatisfactory, respectively.

<sup>82</sup> The project evaluation did not report any relevant problem and that procurement and contracting were carried out in line with national and IFAD's standards. (Peru CSPE 2017)

<sup>83</sup> PCRV 2020 CAIM India, PSR Database (IOE, 2020)

<sup>84</sup> According to the IFAD procurement guidelines. The borrower/recipient has the primary responsibility for procurement and its management, whereas IFAD has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that its proceeds and the funds it administers are used solely for the intended purposes stated in the applicable financing agreement(s), as well as to ensure that its own financing or the financing it administers is not used to finance illegal acts connected with money-laundering and terrorist financing.

<sup>85</sup> The establishment of the Central Coordination Unit (CCU) in the late 1990s and the relatively early introduction of the country presence with committed staff when the country was going through significant changes (Comprehensive Peace Agreement, secession of South Sudan) played a vital role in fostering partnerships and effective handling of the portfolio and non-portfolio activities. The CCU serves as an important conduit between IFAD, the government agencies and the projects, given that all PMUs are located far from the capital (except GAPM and ICSP). The CCU included the execution of procurement of goods and works under international or national competitive bidding methods and consultancy services on behalf of the projects.

<sup>86</sup> The ABDP (recent), procurement control is with the PCU.

<sup>87</sup> Procurement processes followed UNDP and IFAD procurement guidelines (AKADP, DBSDP, and SEDP) or national procurement guidelines (for MRWRP). This includes the procurement of all type of goods, works and services.

as to improve the transparency and fairness of the process, while ensuring value for money and increasing private sector confidence in the public procurement process.<sup>88</sup>

176. IFAD's alignment with national procurement system was slow in Mexico. According to the SHCP (Ministry of Finance), IFAD has not joined the agreements established with the Ministry of Public Administration regarding the standardization of procurement and contracting processes and auditing, unlike the World Bank or the IDB.<sup>89</sup>

#### Financial management performance

177. Financial management showed a mixed performance.<sup>90</sup> Poor practices in financial management performance included a lack of appropriate monitoring tools, lack of designated staff, non-eligible expenses or unjustified high advances, the absence of separate accounts for recurrent and capital expenditures, insufficient quality record-keeping and inaccurate and delayed reporting, and failure to deliver audit reporting on time. Unsatisfactory practices were noted for example in DRC, where in addition to the frequent claims of non-eligible expenses, all projects faced fiduciary issues, mostly due to the poor implementation of procedure for administrative, financial and accounting management.<sup>91</sup>
178. Governments that managed to put into place systems for fiduciary oversight improved their financial management performance. For example, in Nepal, the 2012 CSPE still described financial management as 'substandard' and recommended that the government engage in external technical support from specialised service providers.<sup>92</sup> The 2019 CSPE then found that financial management has improved after central government adopted a single treasury system, and all payments were made from the Treasury and Controller Office. In addition, the introduction of an accounting software and hiring of a financial management specialist has helped to improve performance.<sup>93</sup>
179. Positive examples were also noted for several countries with fragile situations, for example for Burundi,<sup>94</sup> where most of the terms of the funding agreements have been met.<sup>95</sup> In Madagascar, the risks were addressed through a results-based management approach and internal control systems of the projects (2019 CSPE). The country saw a positive trend in Quality of financial management ratings since 2015.<sup>96</sup> In Niger, the Ministry of Agriculture supported project staff in conducting procurement at the national level (PASADEM); fiduciary oversight was assisted by a financial information system that allowed to generate comprehensive and reliable data (PPILDA).<sup>97 98</sup>
180. IFAD supervisions rated the quality and timeliness of Audit satisfactory for ten out of the fifteen countries included in the sample.<sup>99</sup> In the same vein, the 2017 ARRI report noted that national financial management systems are making progress; the

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<sup>88</sup> COSOP 2019-2024, Ghana

<sup>89</sup> CSPE 2019 Mexico

<sup>90</sup> Eight of the fifteen countries had satisfactory PSR scores on average (ratings of 80 per cent and above). DRC had the lowest (83 per cent unsatisfactory). Ecuador, India and Nepal also had high shares of unsatisfactory scores (50, 40 and 39 per cent). Ghana, Pakistan, and Kenya scored 70 percent satisfactory or a little higher.

<sup>91</sup> Non-eligible expenses reported by supervisions of PRAPE, PRAPO, PIRAM and {APAKIM (CSPE 2017)

<sup>92</sup> CSPE 2012, Nepal

<sup>93</sup> CSPE 2019, Nepal

<sup>94</sup> PRDMR, PTRPC, PARSE and PAIVA-B

<sup>95</sup> For example in LSRSP, where Government provided appropriate financial and technical support, and counterpart funds were adequate and timely (LSRSP PCRV)

<sup>96</sup> PSR Database (IOE, 2020)

<sup>97</sup> PPILDA PCRV

<sup>98</sup> The CSPE (2020) noted some shortcomings in fiduciary management though and weaknesses in the accountability and control systems.

<sup>99</sup> The PSRs rated ten of the fifteen countries studied scored satisfactorily on average (ratings of 80 per cent and above). Kenya and Peru scored 74 percent and 75 per cent satisfactory. Nepal had 45 per cent unsatisfactory ratings. India, and DRC had 32, and 38 per cent unsatisfactory ratings.

supreme audit institutions audited IFAD-funded projects in Ghana for the first time. Also Burundi, audit reports generally meet IFAD standards. Since 2015, the programme has had an audit unit which produces very useful annual reports. In Madagascar, the quality and timeliness of audits improved between 2010-2016, but showed a lower performance in 2018.<sup>100</sup>

### Project management performance

181. Project management units. The delays experienced during start up are also related to the type of PMU. Within the case study countries, the PMUs with the shortest effectiveness lag were those made up of ONLY government staff (10 months); the longest effectiveness gaps were experienced by the "autonomous" PMU established outside government settings (13 months), mainly due to the delays in recruiting suitable staff. Multi-layers PMUs, with national PMU coordinating decentralised PMUs, also had prolonged average effectiveness lag (16 months).
182. Projects implemented by PMUs with ONLY government staff were rated higher in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and government performance by IOE (ARRI), while PMUs that consist of a mixture of external plus government staff had lower ratings (see Annex VI). This was mainly due to the shorter delays (efficiency), the positive outreach (effectiveness) and stronger ownership (government performance). Interestingly, the perceptions of IFAD staff differ from this assessment (see Box 17 below). IFAD respondents seem to rate the technical skills and performance of externally recruited staff higher.

#### Box 18

#### **PMU performance rated by e-survey respondents**

IFAD respondents rated the limited capacities within government structures as the main reason for the continued use of PMUs or PCUs (61 percent strongly agreed), followed by need to coordinate implementing partners (50 percent strongly agreed) and the need to be close to beneficiaries (50 percent strongly agreed). IFAD and government respondents rated highest the performance of PMUs set up within lead ministries, but using a combination of government and external staff. PMUs using only government staff were rated lowest. However, 47 percent of IFAD respondents rated the performance of this type as very low, as opposed to 8 percent of government respondents.

Source: ESR E-survey.

183. Project management processes. Adherence to annual work plans and budgets is an indicator monitored by supervision. According to the PSR ratings, only six of the fifteen countries were found satisfactory on average (ratings of 80 per cent and above). Moldova performed well because the IFAD Programme Steering Committee (IPSC) have been responsible for approving annual budgets and work plans, among other responsibilities. The DRC had the lowest score, due to late project start up (PRAPE); government required one year to meet the loan effectiveness conditions. Countries such as India, Turkey, Sudan and Mexico also performed poorly.
184. A large number of projects suffered from delays from the beginning. Within the review sample, 13 projects reported to have experienced start-up problems that affected disbursement. Reported delays included 24 months for the TPPCR in Burundi, 26 months for the NORPEP in Ghana (PCR) and 29 months for the PPILDA in Niger. This usually led to low disbursements at closing, for example 79 per cent for AROPA in Madagascar. India has some of the most problematic cases, such as, PTSLP that entered into force two years after and WELP also required three years between approval and entry into force (with a total disbursement of 23 percent of the loan at closure). In Turkey all the programmes (AKADP, SEDP and DBSDP) reviewed by the evaluation team suffered from start-up delays, low disbursement and other challenges.

<sup>100</sup> PSR Database (IOE, 2020)



185. Project management cost varied in case study countries. Operating costs in general were generally lower in Madagascar,<sup>101</sup> Ecuador,<sup>102</sup> and Pakistan.<sup>103</sup> In Moldova, the proportion of loan funds and of total project costs spent on project management and operating/recurrent costs was very low; the actual proportion ended up being lower than initially budgeted for most projects.<sup>104</sup> A variety of reasons have led to the relatively low project management cost: i) the CPIU arrangements, with all projects under one umbrella; ii) small geographical area of the country; iii) higher contribution by borrowers and participating financial institutions than projected at appraisal, leveraging of IFAD's loan funds and therefore lowering the share of project management cost in total financing; and iv) efficient processing among others. What has also been clear is the Government's high interest in maximizing the project funds going to investments (i.e., credit funds) rather than recurrent costs or technical assistance.
186. Five countries, including three fragile states, experienced higher programme management costs than anticipated at appraisal. For example, in the DRC, low scores for efficiency are linked to high project costs caused by the overlapping functions in the liaison office between the PMUs, the PMU's extension offices, and service providers, plus the need to take over entirely the management of public services and the dispersed intervention areas.<sup>105</sup> In Sudan, IFAD financing by category shows that the proportion of operating costs for IFAD financing is higher and varies for different projects (mostly between 20 and 30 per cent). This may be due to the large number of seconded government staff (especially at the state level) involved as well as the extensive geographical areas covered.<sup>106</sup> Management costs in Burundi exceeded the initial estimation.<sup>107 108</sup>
187. In Kenya, efficiency was affected by changes in institutional roles and responsibilities and the resulting challenges.<sup>109</sup> In Niger, the 2020 CSPE describes the management costs as generally being higher than what was planned at design, but they remain acceptable for the majority of closed projects.<sup>110</sup> PUSADER management costs reached 156 per cent increase, compared to the appraisal allocation, mainly due to the additional staff recruited.<sup>111</sup>

### C. Adaptive management performance

188. Over and above compliance, performance is strongly influenced by learning and adaptation, which strongly influence its performance. Adaptive management hinges on the ability to flexibly adapt, to identify performance gaps and deficiencies, learn from mistakes, and adequately respond to new information in a timely manner. Such adaptive performance is driven in part by incentives embedded in the management arrangements.<sup>112</sup> Dynamic aspects of government performance in projects can be seen in government follow-up to progress report findings, the active use of management information (M&E), audit recommendations, project

<sup>101</sup> With the exception of FORMAPROD and AROPA, which experienced delays (CSPE 2019 Madagascar).

<sup>102</sup> Merging of PISL and PBVTR and the decentralized implementation contributed to lowering operating costs (CSPE 2020 Ecuador).

<sup>103</sup> Actual proportion of project management cost has been notably low in the projects implemented through PPAF (e.g. 2 per cent in PRISM) or below the standard benchmark (i.e. between 10-15 per cent) in others.

<sup>104</sup> In IFAD 3, the allocation of IFAD funds for the "Operating Costs" category was reduced from SDR 220,000 to less than half after 2.5 to 3 years through amendment.

<sup>105</sup> CSPE 2017, DRC

<sup>106</sup> CSPE 2020, Sudan

<sup>107</sup> LSRSP and TPPCR management costs doubled, from 12.5 per cent of total cost to 25 per cent (TPPCR PCR, LSRSP PCR)

<sup>108</sup> PAIVA-B's project management costs raised from 12 to 18 per cent PAIVA-B

<sup>109</sup> E.g., PMU staff capacity, high management costs, duplication coordination structures, uneven government allowances, poor AWPBs, and budgets activities and programme or project extensions.

<sup>110</sup> High management costs seen in PPIR, PUSADER and PPILDA. In PPIR project management costs increased from 12 per cent at design to 29 per cent. This increase was justified with project offices built in the two.

<sup>111</sup> In addition, PUSADER assumed part of the expenses of the PPIR formulation. (PUSARD PCR)

<sup>112</sup> According *Richard et al, (2017)* strategic adaptive management includes governance, planning, implementation of decisions, and monitoring and evaluation of subsequent outcomes.

review and supervision missions guidance.<sup>113</sup> It will lead to the reduction of project delays, diminishing gaps between actual and planned disbursements, and the achievement of project results.

189. Adaptive management usually starts by enhancing ongoing programmes or adapting different IFAD programmes to tailored actions for better results. However, any adaptation that entails altering plans or objectives most likely requires engagement of senior management, within government and IFAD. Therefore, adaptive management is a shared duty between the governments and IFAD as well as the management unit and also includes stakeholder participation.
190. Adaptive management scored in the satisfactory range for the majority of case study countries. Good practices on adaptive management included timely design reviews to adjust overestimated goals or match government priorities (Peru, Kenya, Burundi, Ghana), follow-up on supervision recommendations (Peru, Niger, Kenya) and evidence of learning from implementation (Burundi). Adaptive management was unsatisfactory in countries such as DRC, Sudan, India, Turkey and Mexico.
191. Information and feedback. Functioning M&E systems supported adaptive management performance (hypothesis # 79, for example in Moldova, Madagascar, Burundi and Nepal. For instance, both Moldova and Madagascar governments are noticed to capitalize on the lessons from an efficient M&E to provide adjustments, and face flaws. However, M&E systems often underperformed. Weaknesses were largely due to significant data gaps or unreliable data (including lack of gender disaggregated data), gaps in M&E personnel, late or no baseline studies, - and late or no MTR. Feedback provided through supervision missions and oversight meetings was broadly used to improve project performance (Hypothesis # 80) in 9 out of 15 case studies. Government's follow up on recommendations resulted in actions correcting and improving the course of implementation.
192. Case studies showed that functioning oversight structures contributed to programme improvements over time (hypothesis #27). More frequent were reports of high government officials who were closely involved in supervision and follow-up which then helped to ensure good performance, for example in Moldova, Burundi and Ghana. A case of weak government follow up to supervision was the PPRR programme (Madagascar).
193. Addressing lagging performance. During implementation, IFAD's role and supervision has often focussed on improvements in project management. The review of PSR scores for the sample projects shows that the biggest improvements were with regard to the quality and timeliness of audits. Limited improvements were noted for the remaining indicators. Management processes were rated low (M&E System, Coherence between AWPB and implementation); the number of projects which noted improvement is only marginally larger than those were performance deteriorated over the lifetime of the projects. Quality of financial management and procurement remained the lowest performing indicators. The challenges of project management performance raises questions with regard to IFAD's ability to address the drivers of efficiency

#### D. Conclusions on efficiency

194. Availability of government resources was a major driver of efficiency. Counterpart funding was better in countries with a well-performing economy. In other countries, in particular those with fragile situations, IFAD was flexible to accept non-monetary forms of counterpart funding in these situations that would ensure continuity of

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<sup>113</sup> Rogers, P. and Macfarlan, A. (2020). What is adaptive management and how does it work? Monitoring and Evaluation for Adaptive Management Working Paper Series, Number 2, September. Retrieved from: [www.betterevaluation.org](http://www.betterevaluation.org)

implementation, but this did not resolve the broader budgetary constraints that governments were facing, of course.

195. Problems of slow disbursements and implementation delays were exacerbated in situations where parallel processes for procurement and disbursements approvals had to be applied. Countries with accepted fiduciary management and control systems in place were able to accelerate disbursement processes.
196. Weak fiduciary systems present a dilemma for IFAD, who then had to put into place parallel systems. The use of PMUs is a way to mitigate fiduciary risks, but they often come at the cost of undermining capacity development and ownership in government institutions. Setting up PMUs within government maintains some ownership and helps building government staff capacities.
197. In fragile situations, with limited government presence and capacity to build on, IFAD usually retreated to setting up autonomous PMU established outside the government. Those PMUs were particularly affected by delays in recruitment; and high operating cost than expected.
198. Staffing resources were a major bottleneck and unsatisfactory for the majority of countries. Insufficient staff capacity together with slow and bureaucratic procedures were the main drivers of poor functional performance, leading to implementation delays. Provision of staff training and capacity building did not resolve these constraints as long as incentives for performance were missing.
199. Adaptive management was overall more positive. Governments have demonstrated their ability to respond to situations of crisis and unexpected events, in cooperation with IFAD. However, information and knowledge systems, including M&E, were generally insufficient to support adaptive decision making. This is an area where IFAD's technical support and guidance could have been stronger.

### Key points

- Counterpart funding. Nine case studies reported insufficient or delayed counterpart funding; three countries had cases of outstanding arrears. Governments facing resource constraints, e.g. those with weak economic or fragile situations, often prefer non-monetary forms of counterpart funding, e.g. tax exemptions and in-kind contributions.
- Staffing resources received the lowest scores among all criteria reviewed. Problems included high staff turnovers, low technical capacities, delays in staff recruitment, and lack of staff incentives. In several cases the assessment of capacities, and the requirements for additional staff resources, were insufficient assessed at design.
  - Delays in recruitment were mainly a result of government bureaucratic procedures and insufficient incentives. Insufficient incentives were also the main reason for staff turnover.
  - Policies and procedures Red tape, cumber, some lengthy procedures, affected the achievement of results and particularly the delivery of goods and services in seven case studies.
  - Low performance in procurement includes poor procurement practices but also slow procurement processes, often caused by the parallel application of IFAD and country systems. Improvements over time were noted in very few cases only.
- Low performance in financial management included poor practices and systems. Improvements over time were noted where governments put into place systems for fiduciary oversight. Positive examples were also noted for countries with fragile situations.
  - Operating cost varied; for most projects, the actual proportion ended up being lower than initially budgeted. Five countries had high or exceeded management cost; this includes three countries with fragile situations.
  - Delays during implementation and start up were commonly reported; only six countries performed satisfactory on average. The delays were mostly caused by government's slowness in fulfilling the conditions for project effectiveness. Delays were also related to the type of PMU set up; PMUs with government staff only saw the shortest effectiveness lag and were rated higher by IOE in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. PMUs with external staff often saw delays in the recruitment processes.
- Adaptive management performance. Good practices on adaptive management included timely design reviews to adjust overestimated goals or match government priorities, follow-up on supervision recommendations and evidence of learning from implementation.
  - Situations of fragility and crisis of changes in the political and governance context required timely adaptation. Government was overall responsive to emerging challenges or unexpected events. Oversight bodies, lead agencies and PMUs were often quick to adapt and supported the programmes in achieving their outcomes under changing conditions.
  - Information and feedback. Functioning monitoring and evaluation systems supported adaptive management performance in some countries, but underperformed in the majority of them. Feedback (e.g. through recommended actions) provided through supervision missions and oversight meetings was broadly used to improve project performance.
  - Leadership became visible mainly in the context of project supervision, when high-level government officials ensured follow up on recommendations.

## VI. Effectiveness, sustainability and scaling up

200. Effectiveness. Completion of project activities and producing the expected outputs are the touchstone of government performance. Effectiveness of government partners is measured according to (i) their delivering of goods and services to IFAD's target groups; (ii) their ability to ensure the sustainability of benefits through provision of services and supporting institutions and policies; and (iii) initiatives for scaling up project practices and results.

### A. Effectiveness: Delivery of goods and services

201. Delivery of goods and services was in the satisfactory range for the majority of case studies. The two best performing countries were Moldova and Madagascar. Moldova performed well across the four pillars of the country programme: rural finance, rural infrastructure, value chain development and natural resource management. This included programmes delivering on time or ahead of schedule and the goods and services achieving the expected benefits for the beneficiaries. In Madagascar, targets have been well achieved, contributing to increased production, productivity and income. Weak performers included Mexico and DRC, where the portfolios suffered from major delays in project implementation, and limited impact was achieved on the expected outputs.
202. Achievement of results. Low efficiency and implementation delays have hampered the achievement of results in a number of cases. Several of the case studies draw a direct line between efficiency issues affecting the implementation of projects and programmes, and the results achieved. Common issues include problems in personnel recruitment and retention, inadequate planning and management processes leading to uncompleted activities, delayed approvals during start up and implementation (Hypothesis #60). The results were better where there was strong evidence of oversight guidance (Hypothesis # 96). With the exception of Pakistan,<sup>114</sup> all case studies indicated a positive correlation between the rating for oversight and the rating for goods and services, a finding also confirmed by the IFAD respondents to the survey.
203. While government performance influences programme effectiveness, there were also a number of external factors and unforeseen events, outside the control of implementing partners, that have undermined the achievement of results. For example in Turkey and Ecuador the country programmes were delayed at some point due to internal conflicts.<sup>115</sup> To some extent these were successfully mitigated by the flexibility to adapt over the course of project implementation. In most instances, the challenges faced resulted in the lowering of targets and limited results achieved. For example, in DRC the professionalization of farmers' organisations was insufficient; impact on strengthening the capacity of decentralised agricultural services was limited; and social infrastructures did not meet the set targets.
204. Effective outreach to target groups. Outreach to IFAD's target groups was better where Government's and IFAD's priorities were well aligned. Some countries had an overall satisfactory beneficiary outreach, achieving or exceeding the set targets. Projects in Nepal and Peru achieved or exceeded beneficiary outreach goals. Some countries (Sudan, Madagascar, and Kenya) achieved beneficiary targets, but had limited outreach to vulnerable groups.<sup>116</sup> In countries with fragile

<sup>114</sup> Rather high goods and services vs rather low oversight

<sup>115</sup> The country programme in Turkey was delayed until 2013 particularly in the areas affected by the security situation in connection with the conflict between Turkish Government and armed Kurdish opposition. In Ecuador, conflicts related to land ownership, access to natural resources, policy differences, rights in the provinces of Bolivar, Chimborazo and Imbabura.

<sup>116</sup> This was the case for Sudan (GASH and SUSTAIN), Madagascar (AROPA). For AROPA in Madagascar, the completion report claimed that the most vulnerable categories represented 57 per cent of the outreach. However, the CSPE (2019) concluded that impact for the most vulnerable categories was less significant. In Kenya, the evaluations expressed concern for the limited outreach of IFAD's target group.

situations outreach was rather uneven and varied between projects.<sup>117</sup> Outreach to women was strong in Kenya, Niger and India. In Mexico, women's participation is important and gender equality is included in all projects, but insufficient attention was paid to the additional workload resulting from the more active role of women in projects. It was mixed in Peru, Ecuador and Burundi. Insufficient data quality and the lack dedicated gender strategies have limited the availability of gender disaggregated data in many projects.

#### Box 19

#### Limited alignment and outreach: the case of Turkey

The Turkish government has been a reliable and diligent partner when it comes to fulfilling obligations. It has shown engagement and ownership in terms national interests. Policy dialogue with the Turkish government has been continuous but coherence with IFAD's priority themes such as gender and youth has been challenging. There are geographic areas that are too remote to be reached with the current level of capacities in Government, and there have been persistent staffing and sustainability issues. Some hard-to-reach areas that are constantly subject to immigration shocks and conflict. Since IFAD's programme relies on the partnership with government, and there are few national NGOs with the required capacities, outreach to IFAD's target groups has been a challenge.

Source: Turkey case study, ESR Partnerships (2018).

205. Institutional capacities strengthened. IFAD projects had modest achievements in strengthening the capacities of decentralised structures, for the benefit both current and future interventions. This point was also highlighted in the Government responses to the E-survey, where it was noted that weak governance at the local level continues to be an issue hampering project implementation and outcomes. In Madagascar, the projects have strengthened institutions for training, agricultural services, and policy advocacy (DRAEP). However, the capacity of all these institutions to play their roles is still weak, mainly because of inadequate statutes, unclear institutional anchoring (CNFAR) and or operating resources still dependent on project support.<sup>118</sup>

### B. Sustainability of benefits

206. Sustainability was rated rather low, with 8 out of 15 countries having satisfactory ratings. Government's commitments to sustainability were strong in some countries (Moldova and Kenya). In many other cases exit strategies were weak or missing, and the institutional responsibilities for follow up and funding were unclear (Ecuador, Nepal, Niger, and Mexico). Other issues reported were the missing institutional support and ownership by local authorities (Nepal), the limited resources of local administrations (Burundi, Madagascar), the need for additional capacity building (Nepal, Burundi, DRC) and issues related to the geographic isolation of some structures (Madagascar).
207. Challenges such as fragility, natural calamities and remoteness had a negative impact on sustainability (Hypothesis #4): The review noticed that several countries confirmed that weak decentralised structure (due to recent decentralisation reform or country's fragile context) affect ownership, coordination and sustainability.

<sup>117</sup> In Burundi, a higher-than-planned number of beneficiaries was reached with PAIVA-B, while LSRSP achieved a slightly lower number than planned. In DRC there was a remarkable difference between the number of beneficiaries achieved by PRAPE and PRAPO in their respective agriculture and fisheries rehabilitation components

<sup>118</sup> AD2M invested in the development of the national land reform, but neither of its phases reached its objectives of strengthening the land offices for the issuance of land certificates. It did still have a certain impact on the efficiency of regional and communal structures on territory management (transfer of authority to the communal level regarding land management). The CNFAR was designed for a joint steering and oversight of the rural and agricultural training including the public and private sectors various technical ministry in charge of youth, agriculture and vocational training as well as trade union and representatives of vocational training institutions. Initially the anchoring of the CNFAR was supposed to be the Office of the Prime Minister, later alternatives such as the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Agriculture have been proposed.

208. Local capacities for sustainability. Sustainability relied to a large extent on the capacities of community organisations and local governments, as the critical structures to ensure continuity of activities and the O&M of assets (Hypothesis #104). However, key challenges were the availability of resources, the lack of maturity due to recent or incomplete decentralisation processes, the lack of clarity on the distribution of responsibilities and the lack of involvement in and ownership of projects interventions. Only in a few cases, governments (e.g. Pakistan, India) arranged for funding O&M and other activities to strengthen the sustainability of interventions.
209. Ownership and sustainability. Government ownership contributed to good sustainability and scaling up (Hypothesis #11) in some countries (Moldova, India and Kenya), but not in others (Niger and Burundi). This rather inconsistent picture indicates that in many cases government's ownership was narrowly focussed on design and implementation; there was less commitment to post-project issues of sustainability and scaling up, which are more broadly influenced by institutional, political and budgetary factors.
210. Enabling policies for sustainability. Adoption of relevant policies contributed to the institutionalisation of interventions. Half of the case studies include examples of national governments implementing regulations or institutionalising measures to help ensure the long-term viability of some of the project's accomplishments. However, some of the case studies equally highlighted the sustainability challenges due to the lack of supporting policy or the inadequate level of institutionalisation of approaches (e.g. in Mexico PROINPRO, Pakistan MIOP).

### C. Scaling up

211. Scaling up was rated low, with 5 out of 15 countries having satisfactory ratings. Well-performing portfolios reveal several instances of activities being scaled up by the government or by other partners. In Moldova, programmes were integrated into the national development agency while in India, the government (both at central and state-level) leveraged its own resources to scale up the projects and close to all projects display (at least a component) that will be (or has already been) scaled up. The case studies of Turkey and Ecuador found no evidence of scaling up of successful innovations or working methods by the government. It is noteworthy that no clear scaling up strategy was included in the design of the projects reviewed by the Ecuadorian case study.
212. In addition, Government engagement in scaling up was uneven, with some instances of scaling up and others where attempts fell short, while, in certain cases, the government made little or no effort to scale up across the country's portfolio. For example, for Niger there was no evidence of scaling up for projects, with the exception of one (PPIR), where considerable attention was given to scaling up by government, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies. The lack of consistency in scaling up approaches is also highlighted in Burundi and Kenya.
213. Capacities for scaling up. Government limited capacity for engagement and coordination with other actors was a factor limiting scaling up in some countries. In DRC, the lack of government coordination has clearly limited the opportunities for synergies between partners and scaling up. Also in Burundi, there was insufficient capacity to use opportunities for scaling up results from partnerships with development research and training centres.
214. Stakeholder coordination was rated rather low in case studies. The Moldovan government demonstrated openness to work with stakeholders, organising workshops and chairing the Programme Steering Committee. In Mexico lack of cooperation mechanisms and commitments between institutions undermined project effectiveness. In Ecuador, the government did not establish synergies with

other programs and projects in the same areas of intervention (e.g. FAOGEF or IDB, which promote agroecology in the Chimborazo province).

215. Policy uptake. Government policies that build on IFAD projects are a sign of government's interest to take forward the lessons and approaches within the broader rural and agricultural development sector. There are cases where IFAD operations have contributed to a country's policy framework. In Peru, Niger, Ecuador, Madagascar and Mexico, IFAD projects and programmes inspired and were integrated into several broader agriculture and rural development strategies and policy tools. In Nepal HVAP gave visibility to value chains at the policy level. In Ghana REP-II contributed to the institutionalisation of microenterprises. In Madagascar the producer organizations-buyers mechanism was integrated in the National policy for the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sector; experiences from the AROPA also informed the new Agriculture Development Fund.<sup>119</sup>
216. Ownership and scaling up. The link between ownership and scaling up was confirmed for half of the case studies. In Burundi Government has demonstrated great ownership and interest in scaling up project results. The systematic application of community development methodologies contributed significantly to the elaboration of national guidelines on community planning and played an important role in advancing this process. Another innovation introduced by the project was replacing goats with cattle as part of the community chain; this innovation has been taken up on a larger scale and reinforced by other projects (IFAD, World Bank, EU).<sup>120</sup> Government had also been active scaling up practices from OPEC Fund for International Development, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program and WFP and the National Programme for Food Security and Rural Development in Imbo and Moso.<sup>121</sup>
217. On the other hand, Mexico or Ecuador government have shown little ownership and were not interested in scaling up IFAD-supported initiatives. In the case of Niger, despite high ownership demonstrated by the government, the majority of projects' scaling up opportunities are limited by the lack of engagement of the Government to incorporate the tools and activities at a broader scale, beyond IFAD projects. Furthermore lack of, or limited resources mobilised by the government were a factor limiting scaling up initiatives, as it was the case in Mexico, DRC and Turkey.

#### D. Conclusions on effectiveness

218. Effectiveness was generally good, with the exception of some negative outliers (DRC, Mexico and Ecuador). In these countries shortcomings with regard to (institutional and political) relevance and ownership have undermined government performance; IFAD did not have the engagement and presence to address those gaps.
219. Relevance of the lead agency and its alignment with IFAD's priorities usually helps to achieve good outreach to IFAD's target group. However there were clear shortcomings noted under efficiency, which then translated into weaknesses in stakeholder coordination and the ability to ensure institutional and financial sustainability. The implementation-oriented nature of government ownership also meant that it often did not pay sufficient attention to post-project sustainability and scaling up.
220. The choice of the lead agency plays a critical role in effectiveness; it has often been led by assumptions on the potential role that a lead agency could play, based on their mandate in the sector, without sufficient consideration of the broader

<sup>119</sup> PCRV 2020 AROPA Madagascar, CSPE 2019 Madagascar

<sup>120</sup> RRDP PPE Burundi

<sup>121</sup> PAIVA-B PCRV Burundi



institutional and policy context that would determine institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

221. The poor performance of MoA raises questions with regard of how their suitability is assessed in the context of many country programmes. The choice of the lead agency needs to consider the drivers of government performance within the systemic (institutional and policy) context of the country. Questions to ask about the relevance of a lead agency would include those below:

Box 20

**Drivers of performance to consider in the choice of lead agency**

**Relevance:** Are mandate and function of the lead agency supported by a robust policy and institutional framework? Is there evidence (e.g. from previous operations) that the lead agency has the (technical and managerial) capacity to coordinate, lead and guide implementation? Is there evidence of strong leadership and ownership in the sector? Are accountability and oversight functions in place?

**Efficiency:** Are sectoral budget allocations sufficient for the lead agency to execute its mandate? Does it have qualified staff and are there sufficient incentives to allow government staff to perform? Does it have the mechanisms for knowledge and information in place?

**Effectiveness:** Are policy and institutional objectives aligned with the objectives of the programme? Does it have a commitment to serve IFAD's targets groups? Does it have the resources and policies to ensure sustainability of benefits? Does it have mechanisms for scaling up?

Source: ESR.

222. There were cases however where initial constraints in terms of leadership and capacities were overcome through long-standing engagement and partnerships with partner ministries and agencies. The opportunities and costs for such and engagement would have to be carefully assessed within the country situation, and IFAD would need to be able to commit sufficient capacities and resources within a longer-term perspective.

### Key points

- Delivery of goods and services. Low efficiency and implementation delays have hampered the achievement of results. The case studies see a direct link between efficiency issues and the results achieved. Case studies indicated a positive correlation between the rating for oversight and the rating for goods and services.
- While government performance influences programme effectiveness, there were also a number of external factors and unforeseen events, outside the control of implementing partners, that have undermined the achievement of results.
- Outreach to beneficiaries shows some variation between projects and countries, but was overall positive. In countries with fragile situations, outreach was rather uneven and varied between projects. Focus on women varied between countries. Insufficient data quality and the lack dedicated gender strategies have limited the availability of gender disaggregated data in many projects.
- Institutional capacities. IFAD projects had modest achievements in strengthening the capacities of decentralised structures; weak governance at the local level continues to be an issue hampering project implementation and outcomes.
- Sustainability was rated rather low. In many other cases exit strategies were weak or missing, and the institutional responsibilities for follow up funding and funding were unclear. Half of the case studies include examples of national governments implementing regulations or institutionalising measures to help ensure the long-term viability of some of the project's accomplishments. Local capacities were often insufficient to ensure longer-term sustainability.
- Government ownership was often insufficient to ensure sustainability. In most cases it was confined to project design and implementation; post-project sustainability would also require engagement with wider institutional, policy and budget issues.
- Scaling up. Scaling up is a sign of government effectiveness. Government limited capacities and resources for engagement and coordination with other actors was a factor limiting scaling up in several countries. The link between government ownership and scaling up was confirmed for half of the case studies.

## VII. Synopsis of country case studies

223. The best performing governments (“Top Five”) were rated satisfactory for all dimensions of government performance, and they were rated high on adaptive management. For these countries the case studies found strong drivers of government performance (Leadership, ownership, knowledge, capacities and resources). Ownership has been driving government performance even in situations of fragility (Burundi, Niger). Effectiveness was mixed though, and satisfactory for Moldova and Kenya only, where positive cases of scaling up have been noted.
224. The Middle Five case study countries showed good performance on relevance and functional management, but their performance on government resources and adaptive management was mixed. There were only few drivers of government performance. Weak capacities were a bottleneck, also related to contextual challenges (decentralisation, fragility or political crises). Nevertheless, there were positive cases of effectiveness due to the focus on decentralised implementation (Sudan, India).
225. The Bottom Five were unsatisfactory on government resources; they showed a mixed performance on all other criteria. Only the DRC case was unsatisfactory for all criteria assessed. Weak ownership and leadership, often as a result of insufficient alignment with government’s agenda and the countries institutional and policy frameworks (Turkey, Mexico, Ecuador). Capacities were insufficient for implementation in remote locations (Nepal, DRC, and Turkey). Effectiveness was unsatisfactory for all cases.

Table 5

### Overview of government performance and drivers in case study countries

	Country case studies	Overall performance	Drivers of performance
Top Five case study countries <i>ESR score &gt;3 (average)</i>	Moldova, Peru, Kenya, Niger and Burundi	Satisfactory for all dimensions of Government performance  High ratings on adaptive management	Strong drivers: Leadership, ownership, knowledge, and capacities;  Resources depend on economic situation
Middle Five case study countries <i>ESR score &gt;2.5 and &lt;3 (average)</i>	Ghana, Pakistan, Madagascar, Sudan and India	Overall good performance on relevance and functional management  Mixed performance on government resources and adaptive management	Few drivers of performance  Weak capacities  Contextual challenges (decentralisation, fragility and or crises)
Bottom Five case study countries <i>ESR Score &lt; 2.5 (average)</i>	Turkey, Mexico, Ecuador, Nepal and DRC	Unsatisfactory on government resources  Mixed performance on all other criteria  Only DRC unsatisfactory for all criteria	Weak ownership for IFAD-supported programmes;  Leadership and capacities insufficient  Weak policy frameworks  Political crises or conflict

226. Table 6 (below) presents a typology of countries, considering the key drivers and contextual factors. It illustrates that for each type tailored strategies are required to address the bottlenecks of government performance. For example, countries for which a lack of ownership and leadership has been identified as bottleneck would require strategies to enhance the same, for example through better alignment with institutional structures (avoiding parallel structures) and policy frameworks. Countries with fragile situations or political instability would require deep contextual analysis and strategies to address shortfalls of resources together with strong presence on the ground, to be able to respond to changes and crises. For

countries that have demonstrated strong ownership and systemic capacities IFAD could focus more on oversight and partnership building.

Table 6

**Types of countries, bottlenecks and suggested IFAD strategies to enhance government performance**

<i>Type of country</i>	<i>Case study examples</i>	<i>Performance bottlenecks</i>	<i>How to address bottlenecks</i>
Countries with strong ownership and systemic capacities	Moldova, Niger	Specific aspects of functional management (e.g. accountability systems counterpart funds or technical capacities)	Enhance use of country systems Enhance fiduciary oversight Partnerships for scaling up
Countries with good ownership, but weak systemic capacities	Burundi India Madagascar	Oversight and coordination Capacities for decentralised implementation Adaptive performance	Use country systems Build systemic capacities Avoid parallel structures Partnerships for scaling up
Countries with strong accountability systems, but weak ownership	Ecuador, Ghana, Peru	Ownership and leadership	Enhance country dialogue and partnerships Support stakeholder coordination Avoid parallel structures
Countries in situations of fragility or political instability	México, Madagascar, Burundi, DRC	Government resources Ownership and leadership Crises and frequent changes in the institutional and policy framework	Enhance country-level engagement and presence Work closely with implementing partners and be responsive to emerging situations and demands Enable flexibility in financing
Countries with weak ownership and capacities	DRC	Government resources and capacities Ownership and leadership	Use decentralised PMUs and service providers Engage central-level stakeholders through continued dialogue

## VIII. General conclusions and lessons

### A. General conclusions

227. Government is the key player in IFAD's development effectiveness. IFAD-supported programmes are owned, managed and executed by governments and their agencies in collaboration with other stakeholders. Government has a critical function in project performance: more narrowly its responsibility is to provide the resources required to achieve the intended results; more broadly it is expected to ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved, IFAD's target groups are reached and that the results are sustainable and can be scaled up. Since government performance is key to IFAD's development effectiveness, the Fund has a dedicated criterion to monitor it. The data show that government performance has been lagging for many years now and there are not signs that the trend will improve yet.
228. The reasons for lagging government performance are not well understood, and there are significant knowledge gaps with regard to the factors driving government performance. The rather static criterion for measuring government performance does not reveal how elements of government performance are interconnected and how they influence other dimensions of programme performance. Corporate M&E systems do not report on important criteria that matter for government performance (e.g. oversight or other, non-financial government resources); other concepts such as adaptive management, are recognised as important, but not yet well operationalised in the context of government-led interventions. Finally, the dynamics and drivers of government performance – or underperformance - are not well understood. Indicators derived from global governance dashboards have proved unsuitable to explain why and how government performs in the context of IFAD-supported interventions. Poor analysis and data have led to common assumptions on government performance that were not supported by the analysis in this synthesis.
229. Situations of political instability, crisis and fragility have, together with the often slow progress on governance reforms, contributed to the heterogeneity of situations, which were challenging for IFAD to track, respond and adapt to. The synthesis was not able to detect an overall trajectory of government performance. In most case study countries there were positive performance drivers, such as ownership, leadership and resources committed to IFAD-supported programmes, but they were often offset by issues of instability, weak capacities and unfavourable policies and institutional processes. The synthesis identified a smaller number of countries<sup>122</sup> that have shown consistently good performance, driven by strong government ownership and leadership. For these countries the institutional and policy contexts are very different; nevertheless IFAD has responded well, handing over responsibilities in situations where institutional capacities and systems were strong, and providing "handholding" and support to governments in situations of fragility. IFAD's ability to respond and adapt has not been as strong everywhere and in every situation.
230. On IFAD's side there were also positive and negative factors affecting government performance. On the positive side there were good alignment with government priorities, long-term partnerships and continuous support, which – together with increasing country presence – has built government trust and ownership over many years. Institutional efficiency is likely to be improved through recent reforms and developments, such as decentralisation of technical support and senior IFAD staff and enhanced procurement and financial systems. However, there were also a number of factors on IFAD's side that had a negative effect on government performance. This includes the insufficient consideration of government capacities, institutional and policy frameworks, and suitable incentives

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<sup>122</sup> Moldova, Peru, Kenya, Niger and Burundi

to keep government staff engaged. The last ten years have seen a growing complexity of project (with the transition to value chain approaches) and an increasing reliance on the Ministries of Agriculture, which often did not have the capacities and resources to fulfil the required functions as implementing agency. In some countries the transition from decentralised implementation to national PMUs/PCUs has overstretched existing government capacities and systems. And finally frequent turnover of staff and disbursement caps have negatively affected government engagement and trust.

231. On balance the simultaneous presence of positive and negative drivers has led to an overall flattened trend in government performance, as noted in recent ARRIs and RIDEs. There is no panacea to reverse the trend at corporate level. IFAD has to build on its strength identifying and addressing drivers of government performance within the country context, based on careful analysis of institutional and policy frameworks. The wider organisation has to become an "enabling environment" for country management, providing them with the critical support for effective engagement with government, such as technical advisory, predictable resources and incentives for durable relationships. Country managers have a pivotal role to play, nurturing ownership and trust, enhancing institutional performance and supporting learning from experiences. For IFAD to better understand why and how government performs in certain situations it has to close important gaps in the M&E of government performance, like those highlighted by this synthesis.

## B. Lessons learned

### Overall lessons from synthesis

232. The following lessons came out of the analysis; they were confirmed through similar lessons from other IFIs (see Annex VIII).

- (i) Programmes working in decentralised contexts can be effective, if IFAD provides adequate capacity, resources, and support at local level. Weaknesses in decentralized institutions undermine government ownership, coordination and ultimately the sustainability of investments. They can be compensated to some extent through complementary support mechanism (e.g. service providers).
- (ii) Governments perform better if they have ownership for the programme. Ownership is an incentive to perform. IFAD can contribute to government ownership, trust and commitment through long-term partnerships and engagement, through which IFAD has proved itself as reliable partner.
- (iii) Programmes are more effective if they are led by a relevant ministry or agency. Relevance of the lead agency has to be carefully assessed. Lead agencies can play their oversight and coordinating role only if this is supported by their mandate, resources and capacities. Effective oversight will ensure alignment with policy and institutional frameworks and improvements in performance over time.
- (iv) Project designs are feasible if they match government capacities and resources. Overly complex programme designs will cause delays and frustrations ultimately undermining government ownership. IFAD's country presence can ensure continuous review of institutional structures, functions, capacities, and the relevant policies, and coordination processes.
- (v) Weak systemic capacities can be addressed if incentives provided are provided from the top (leadership). Incentives are required to attract and retain programme staff (PMU). Incentives for management and staff performance will enhance the efficiency of programme implementation. This requires appropriate processes for recruiting programme staff.
- (vi) Institutional arrangements and processes are more efficient if they are aligned with relevant country policies and framework. Alignment with government's operational policies (e.g. on procurement or disbursement procedures) improves implementation efficiency.
- (vii) Government performance improves over time, if continuous learning and adaptation are adequately supported. Adaptive management and learning requires effective oversight and feedback; it also requires functioning knowledge and information systems, including M&E.
- (viii) Governments can play their role even in situations of political change and or crisis if there is continuous engagement and flexibility to build trust and ownership. Working in fragile situations requires good contextual analysis and continued engagement with government on issues of strategy and planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback.

## Myths on government performance deconstructed

233. The synthesis discovered that a number of “commonly held beliefs” on government performance could not be confirmed by the analysis:
- (i) “Financing terms are an incentive for government to perform.” The synthesis did not find a correlation between financing terms and government performance in the portfolio analysis. The case studies also did not reveal changes in government performance after financing terms changed.
  - (ii) “Governments in fragile situations perform worse.” There were clearly cases where governments performed well in fragile situations. A strong driver of performance in these cases was IFAD’s presence and engagement throughout situations of crisis. This has built government’s trust and ownership. IFAD’s flexibility and follow up has also helped to overcome critical bottlenecks, e.g. with regard to resources or targets.
  - (iii) “Autonomous PMUs perform better.” Autonomous PMUs often face long delays during start up. They may also undermine government ownership. There are situations however, where autonomous PMUs can help, e.g. navigating through phases of political crisis to political challenges or maintaining stability and institutional knowledge during times of frequent changes. The quality of the staff recruited is critical to improve implementation processes.
  - (iv) “National PMUs/PCUs can improve government performance”. National PMU coordinating decentralised PMUs/PCUs are effective in situations where central government has the mandate and capacity to coordinate stakeholders at different levels. In decentralised context with weak capacities at central level, local PMUs are more effective for implementation; they still require engagement and oversight by central government partners for sustainability and scaling up.
  - (v) “For IFAD MoA is the best partner for effective delivery of services and scaling up.” MoA was often judged a relevant lead agency, because of its mandate and role in the sector; but MoA performed below average in contexts characterised by fragility, political change and/or ongoing decentralisation.
  - (vi) “Counterpart funding is a reflection of government ownership”. Counterpart funding is a common proxy to indicate presence or absence of ownership. However, while it may be a reflection of ownership in some cases, their presence it also depend on other factors, such as availability of resources and procedural bottlenecks.
  - (vii) “Country presence is required to enhance government ownership.” Government ownership is systemic and requires leadership and capacities to be in place. IFAD can enhance government ownership within the programme context through continuous engagement, provision of incentives and good alignment with existing institutional and policy framework.
  - (viii) “Changes in HQ policies or procedures will result in improved government performance”. Government performance is intrinsically linked to government systemic capacity and influenced by a number of contextual factors that are beyond IFAD’s control.



## Specific lessons for country types

234. The following Table 7 (below) includes the specific lessons that would apply for different country situations.

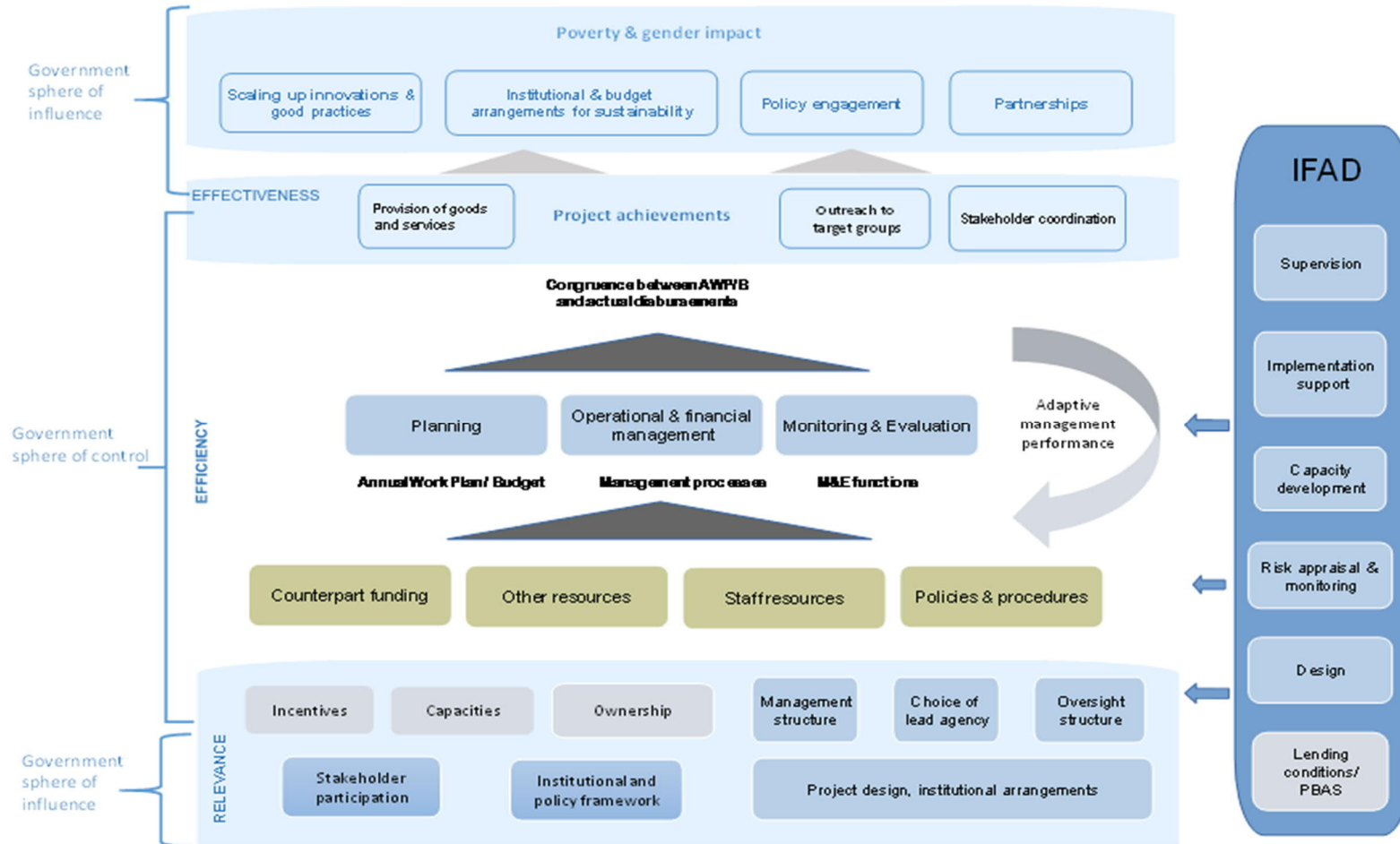
Table 7

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Applicable Lessons</i>
Enhancing government ownership  <i>(Examples: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico)</i>	Continued engagement with a fragile country through periods of crisis contributes to government performance by building trust and ownership.
	Continuous country presence and a portfolio evolving alongside the country situation can spread ownership across government. Effective involvement of local service providers and authorities helps spreading ownership further to local government levels.
	<b>Using existing procedures and institutions wherever they are functional will be an investment</b> into institution building and ownership.
Enhancing programme effectiveness in a situation of weak government engagement  <i>(Examples: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Mexico, Turkey)</i>	<b>Government disengagement can be met through enhanced synergies and collaboration with other partners in the short term.</b> Partnerships will improve the effectiveness of wide-spread interventions in remote locations, but will not resolve issues of sustainability in a situation of a disengaged government with weak capacities.
	In countries where government is disengaged and does not provide the required (resources, scalability, and policy) the following lessons apply: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Decentralized and complementary implementation mechanisms can enhance coordination, mutual learning, and scaling up.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Flexible implementation mechanisms</b> and goals can address government's reluctance: allowing for swift modifications of designs and agreements can help projects survive the complications of an unstable and disengaged political environment.</li> </ol>
	<b>In a context of inadequate commitment, limited cooperation, and political instability, flexibility and simplicity of design is a priority, regardless of the country's income level and resources.</b> Whenever government disengagement and lack of support constrain actual capacities, it is important to recognize these limitations and rescale the design and objectives of programs accordingly.
	In a context of limited government commitment on specific but valuable goals (e.g., gender, youth), direct targeting is necessary to strengthen the focus on neglected areas of implementation.
Compensating weak government capacities  <i>(Examples: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Pakistan, Sudan)</i>	In a fragile country with weak capacities, simplicity of both objectives and design is a priority.
	In a fragmented environment deprived of resources, avoid combining multiple interventions over multiple areas into one bigger programme. <b>Smaller and more synergetic interventions care easier to manage at the local level and avoid overstretching weak government capacity.</b>
	Private-public partnership or partnerships with local organizations can compensate for the lack of coordination and capacities at the central level in a situation where local-level cooperation is better than central-level coordination. Such an approach may provide short-term efficiency while other projects focus on institution building in the long term.
	In a country with limited government capacities scaling up will be more successful if done in partnership with other international agencies.
	<b>In a context of weak institutions and ineffective procedures, targeting strategies need to be explicit to enable inclusion of the most vulnerable.</b> Reliance on self-targeting will risk elite capturing or self-exclusion.

<p>Enhancing scaling in a situation of weak government commitment</p> <p><i>(Examples: Ecuador, Ghana, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Sudan)</i></p> <p><i>(*) applicable to middle-income countries only.</i></p>	<p>Partnerships with other actors operating in the same area can establish synergies between reinforcing projects to achieve scaling despite the lack of follow-up and support.</p> <p>In a middle-income countries with developed private sector, <b>projects can exploit and enhance existing market mechanisms.</b> Linking communities with private sector partners will support scaling up. (*)</p> <p>In countries with an established aid architecture can provide the basis for scalability of successful projects.</p> <p>Scalability in a fragile country can happen in spite of limited resources and capabilities if there is a continuity of new projects building on previous ones.</p>
<p>Operating in a context of fragility or political instability</p> <p><i>(Examples: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Sudan)</i></p>	<p>Continued engagement with government through periods of crisis helps building trust and ownership.</p> <p><b>In a context of fragility and political instability, building institutions, together with decentralized channels and services, is an end rather than a mean.</b> It is essential to prioritize institution building at the government level and capacity building at the local level.</p> <p><b>In a context of political instability, continued engagement with the same partner ministries/agencies can improve efficiency.</b> Consistency in the engagement fosters learning and experience despite the high turnover; partner ministries/agencies may struggle less in launching and implementing new projects.</p> <p>In a fragile situation, flexible, community-driven approaches will compensate for the lack of capacities and resources at decentralized levels; mobilizing communities and involving local NGOs will mobilize resources, deepen knowledge of local circumstances and facilitate implementation.</p>
<p>Operating in a context of decentralization/evolving institutions</p> <p><i>(Examples: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal, Sudan)</i></p>	<p><b>In a context of ongoing decentralization, it is important to review progress and assess decentralized capacities on an ongoing base.</b> Depending on the situation, an appropriate strategy may be either to prioritize institution building of newly created structures or to resort to alternative means of coordination and management.</p> <p>Working within a context of evolving institutions requires flexible designs, permissive of adaptation and redirection of institution building efforts.</p>

# Analytical Framework

Figure 1:  
Analytical framework for this synthesis (theory of change)



Source: ESR.

Table 1:  
Mapping of government performance indicators with available data

Criteria	ub-criteria	Data coverage	PSR rating	IRPM (risk categories)	IOE rated
Relevance	Ownership	insufficient	Institutions and Policy engagement	Political commitment (sub-category)	Not mandatory: Under IFAD performance; Government performance
	Lead agency (mandate, capacities)	good	Institutions and Policy engagement	Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	Government performance
	Oversight structure	insufficient	Institutions and Policy engagement	Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	Not assessed
	Management arrangements	good	Institutions and Policy engagement	Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	Government performance
Efficiency	Counterpart funding	good	Counterparts Funds	Project Funds Flow/Disbursement Arrangements (sub-categories)	Government performance
	Staff resources	Covered, but not well described	Quality of project management	Project Organization and Staffing (sub-category)	Government performance
	Other (Government) resources	No data	Not assessed		Not assessed
	Policies and procedures	insufficient	Not assessed	Sector Strategies and Policies	Government performance
	Functioning management processes	good	Procurement, Quality of financial management, Quality and timeliness of audit, Coherence between AWPB/Implementation	Project Financial Management	Management costs (under efficiency);
	Disbursements and projects at risks	good	Disbursements	Project Funds Flow/Disbursement Arrangements (sub-category)	Commonly assessed under efficiency
	Adaptive management processes	No data	Not assessed	n/a	Not assessed
	M&E	good	Performance of M&E systems	Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements (sub-category)	Government performance
	Improvements in performance over time	No data	Not assessed	n/a	Not assessed
Effectiveness	(Timely) provision of goods and services	good	Procurement, Achievements of objectives	Capability in Public Procurement (sub-category) Accountability and Transparency (sub-category)	Effectiveness
	Coordination (stakeholders)	Good	Stakeholder participation	Stakeholder Engagement/Coordination (sub-category)	Government performance
Sustainability	Sustainability	Good	Exit strategy		Sustainability
Scaling up	Scaling up	Good	Potential for scaling up		Scaling up

Source: ESR Case study review 2021, IRPM website.

Table 2:  
ESR Review Framework

IFAD		Issue (from ToC) Guiding question	Review questions
Country context	Country Context	Income status. Does the income status of countries matter as well when it comes to government performance? Financing terms: Do financing terms affect government incentives and performance? IFAD's country presence: What was IFAD's engagement with Government? Has there been country presence? Has there been any substantial policy engagement? Fragility. Does the low performance of government imply that IFAD would have to take a different approach to government performance for countries in situation of fragility, which are characterized by systemic government weakness?	Portfolio review Case studies
	Relevance		
Relevance	Ownership	Did government demonstrate sufficient ownership in the reviewed operations? If not, why? How did government ownership affect project performance? What did IFAD do to support ownership? Did government scale up or expand any of IFAD projects? If yes, why and if no, why?	Case studies
	Lead agency	Are certain types of projects or executing arrangements, including IFAD's institutional attachment, more likely to be associated with weakness of government performance? How relevant was the choice of lead agencies in case study countries? Were all relevant agencies involved?	Portfolio review (IOE ratings) Case studies
	Oversight structure	How relevant/appropriate was the oversight structure in case study countries? Was it appropriate to steer project implementation? Were the relevant actors involved? IFAD country presence: How did it help to facilitate administrative issues/delays? Were IFAD supervision missions, mid-term review (MTR) support provided on time	Case studies
	Management arrangements	How relevant/appropriate were the management arrangements in case study countries? Have project management arrangements been properly matched to country conditions and institutional environment? Were capacity constraints correctly identified and corrective measures implemented? Does the set-up of PMUs have a direct bearing on how well government performs?	Case studies Survey or focus-group discussions (FGDs) to identify good (and bad) practices

	Efficiency (inputs)		
Efficiency	Counterpart funding	What were (broader) reasons behind weak counterpart funding? Where there improvements over time, and if yes, why?	Case studies Portfolio analysis (financial data, PSR ratings)
	Staff resources	What were common reasons for insufficient staff resources? Were there any improvements over time?	Case studies
	Other resources	What other resources did Government provide (or not)?	Case studies
	Policies and procedures	Were the required policies and procedures in place and effective to support? What were common gaps?	Case studies
	Efficiency: Functional performance		
Efficiency	Functioning management processes	What were common areas of underperformance found by IOE and/or supervision: Procurement Financial management Audits AWPB What were the reasons for poor performance? Budget use and cost effectiveness	Case studies Portfolio analysis (PSR ratings)
	Disbursements and projects at risks	Projects at Risk: What were the main reasons for slow disbursements? What were the patterns/characteristics of those risks? What did Government and IFAD do to manage those risks? What did IFAD do to accelerate disbursements in risk-classified projects?	Case studies Portfolio analysis (PSR ratings)
	Efficiency: Adaptive management performance		

Efficiency	Adaptive management processes	How did government respond to emerging challenges or changes in the context (including emergencies or disaster)? How did this affect project implementation positively or negatively?	Case studies
	M&E	How well did M&E systems perform? To what extent were M&E used to support (adaptive) project management? Did IFAD provide M&E capacity building exercise? What were the links with Government M&E systems?	Case studies
	Improvements in performance over time	Trends (changes over time) in government performance: What were the trends in government performance over time? Why did performance improve (or not) What did IFAD do to improve performance? What was the role of other (co-financing or implementing) partners)? PSR ratings: which indicators were consistently “unsatisfactory” (PSR) in the country? How were those indicators assessed by IOE evaluations?	
	Effectiveness: Achievement of results		
Effectiveness	Goods and services	What mechanisms did Government put into place to ensure achievements of results? Does the government have their own internal control checks for portfolio results? How did Government achieve outreach to IFAD’s target groups?	Case studies
	Coordination	Were coordination mechanisms sufficiently strong to support achievement of results? Does the country organise periodic stakeholders’ consultation meetings?	Case studies
	Sustainability	What has government done to ensure the sustainability of benefits? Does government provide the required funding to ensure O&M of assets provided? Does the government provide the required conditions/frameworks to ensure institutional/technical/ financial sustainability?	Case studies IOE sustainability ratings
	Scaling up	Has government been scaling up any of the IFAD supported initiatives in the country?	IOE scaling up ratings
	Effectiveness		
	Effectiveness	Outcomes achieved	IOE effectiveness rating
	Impact	Poverty and gender impact	IOE impact rating

Source: ESR.

Project types (sample of 87 qualitative of IOE products of projects reviewed and 15 country case studies)

Table 3:

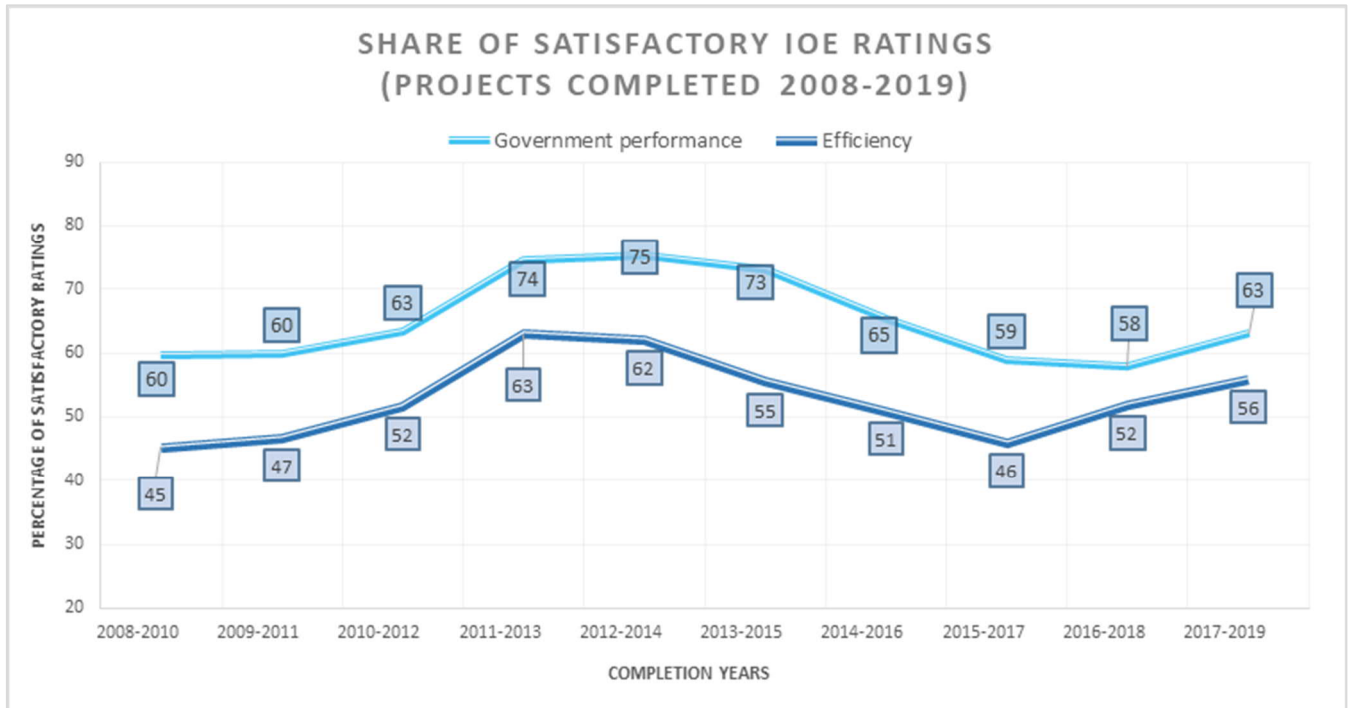
**ESR case studies and number of IOE evaluations**

Countries included in the sample	Region	No of projects completed 2010-2020	Projects completed (# - %)		No of CSPEs since 2010	Year of evaluation of the CSPE	No. of project evaluations since 2010	No. of PCRVs since 2010	No. of IEs since 2010
Sudan	NEN	8	11%	15 Projects, 21%	2	2020	1	7	-
Turkey	NEN	3	4%		1	2015	2	1	-
Moldova	NEN	4	6%		1	2013	2	1	-
Mexico	LAC	5	7%	9 Projects, 14%	1	2019	1	4	-
Peru	LAC	3	4%		1	2017	1	-	-
Ecuador	LAC	2	3%		2	2014, 2020	-	1	-
Ghana	WCA	5	7%	12 Projects, 18%	1	2010	3	4	-
Niger	WCA	5	7%		1	2020	-	4	1
DRC	WCA	3	4%		1	2017	1	1	-
Madagascar	ESA	3	4%	14 Projects, 19%	2	2012, 2019	1	2	-
Kenya	ESA	6	8%		2	2010, 2018	-	5	1
Burundi	ESA	5	7%		1	2020	1	4	-
Pakistan	APR	5	7%	19 Projects, 27%	1	2020	1	4	-
India	APR	9	13%		1	2015	3	5	1
Nepal	APR	5	7%		2	2012, 2019	1	3	-
total		71	100%		20		18	46	3

Source: ESR.

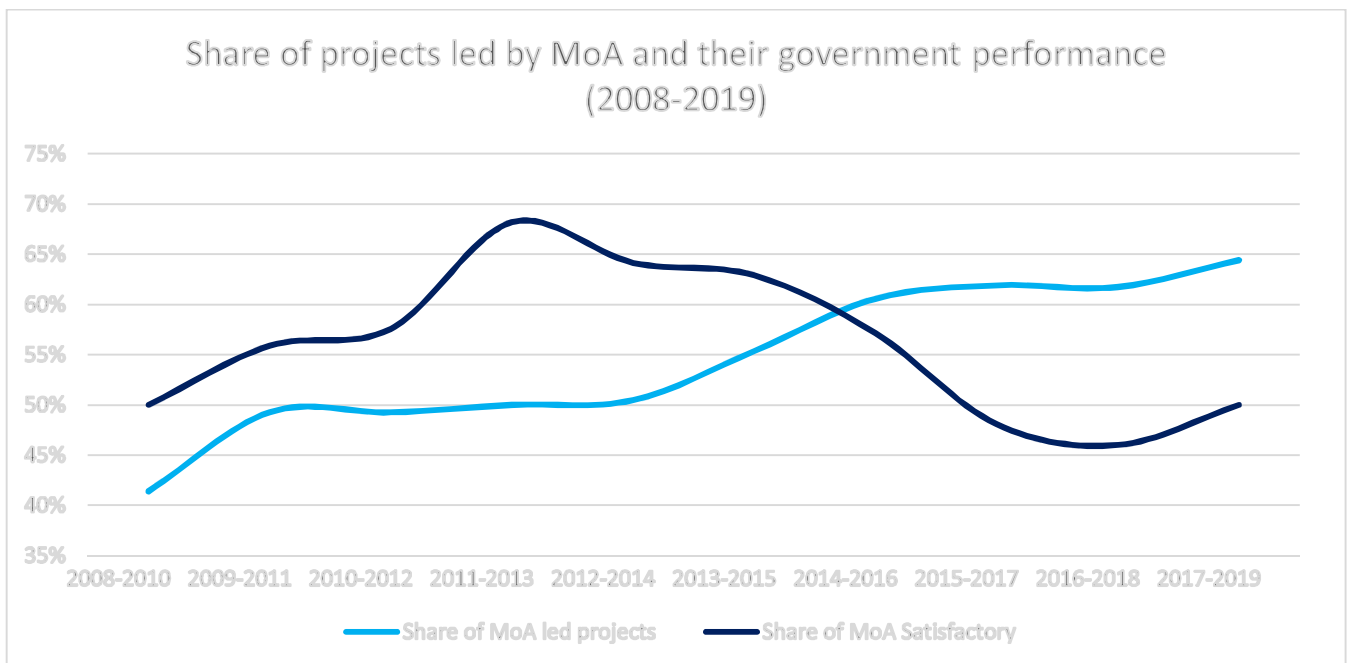


Figure 2:  
Share of satisfactory IOE ratings (projects completed 2008-2019)



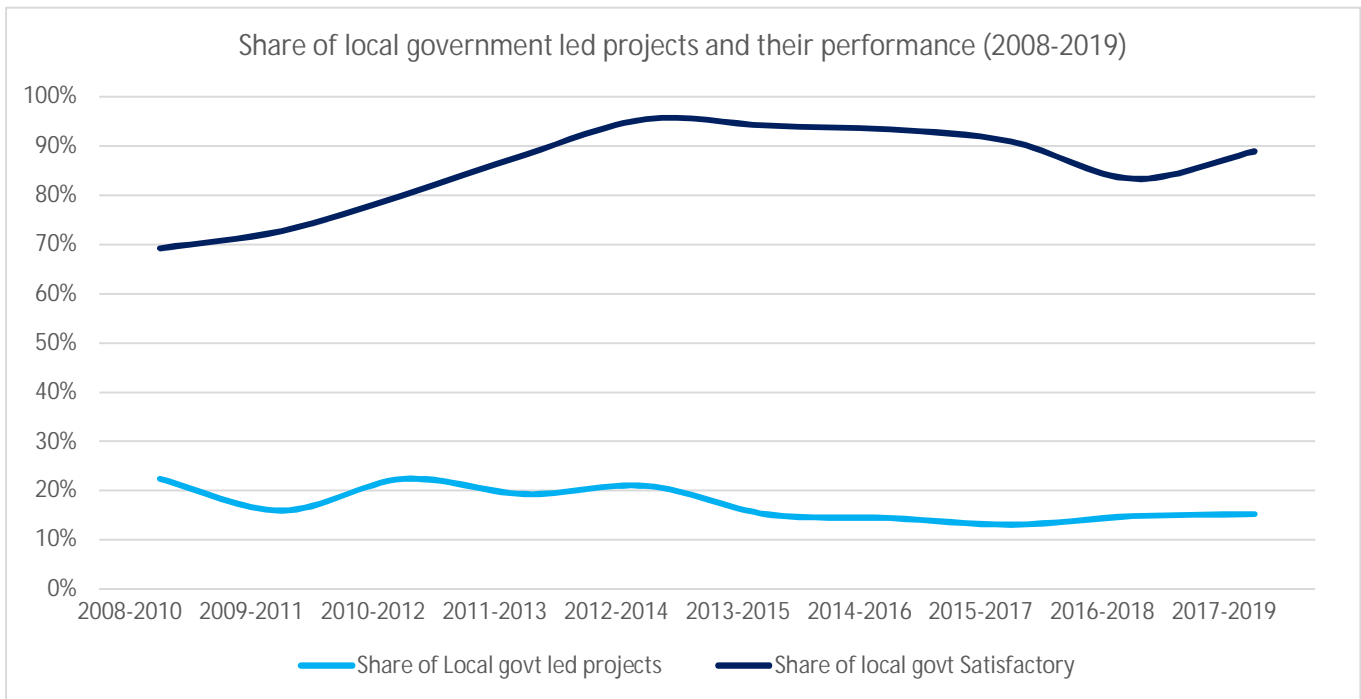
Source: ORMS 2020.

Figure 3:  
Share of Projects Completed by MoA and Average Government Performance



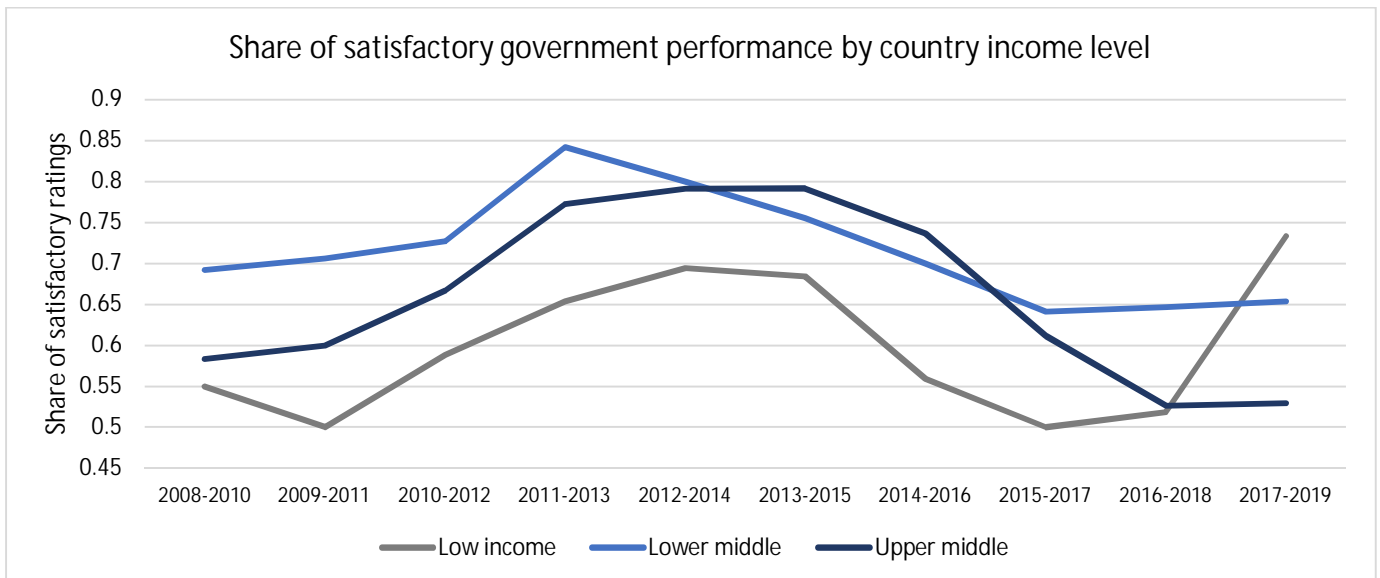
Source: ORMS 2020.

**Figure 4:**  
**Share of local government led projects and their performance (2008-2019)**



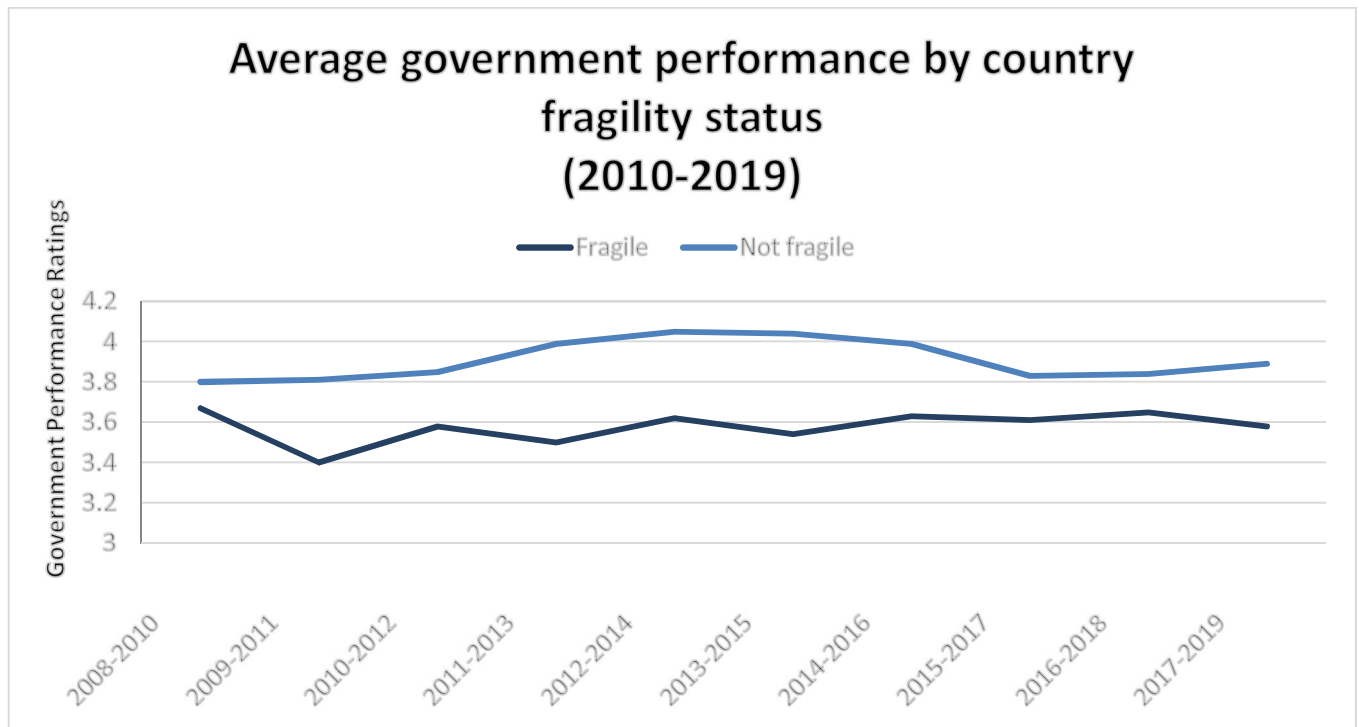
Source: ORMS 2020.

**Figure 5:**  
**Share of satisfactory government performance by country income level (2008-2019)**



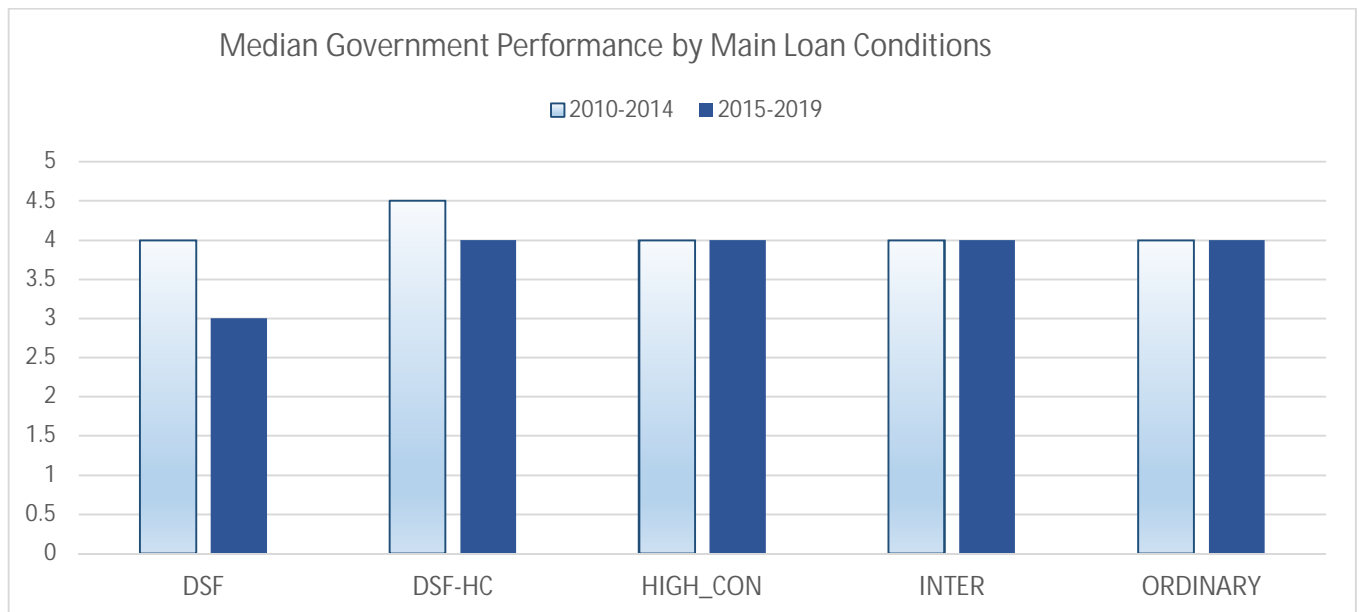
Source: ORMS 2020.

Figure 6:  
Average government performance by country fragility status (2008-2019)



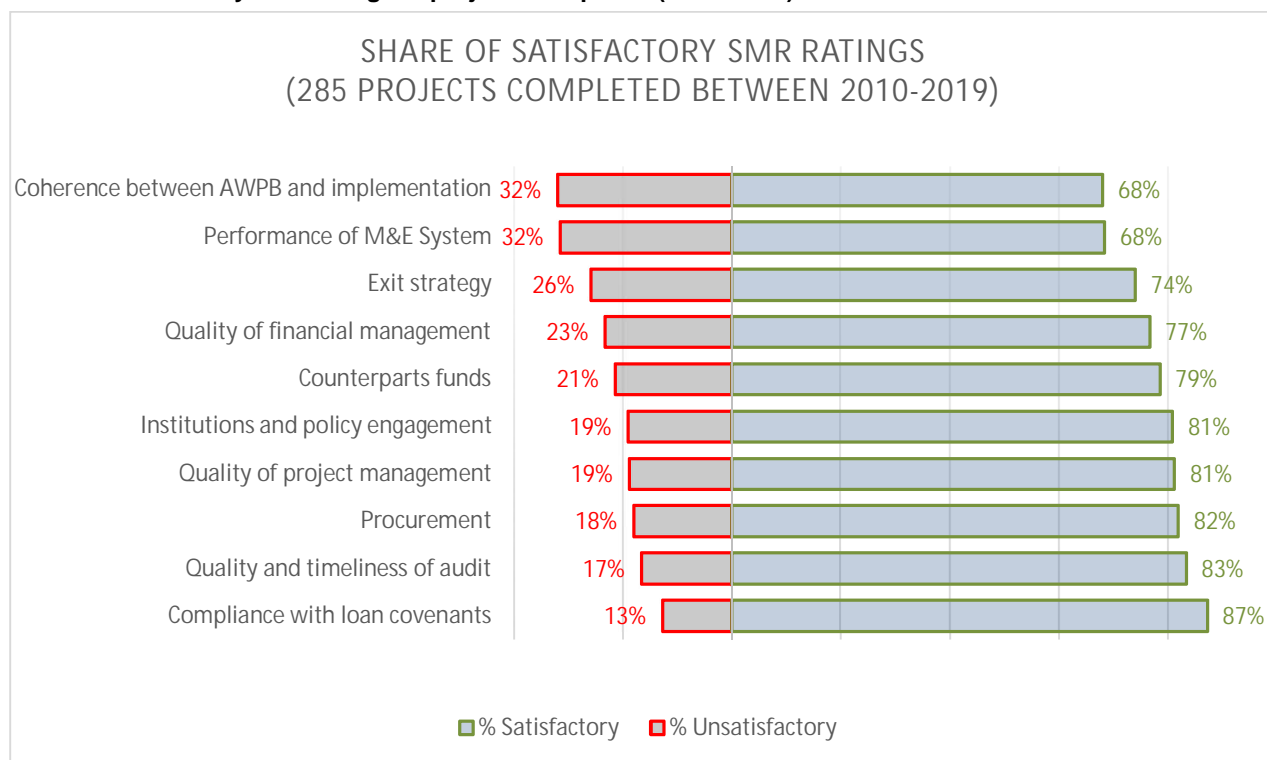
Source: ARRI database 2020.

Figure 7:  
Median government performance by main loan conditions (2010-2019)



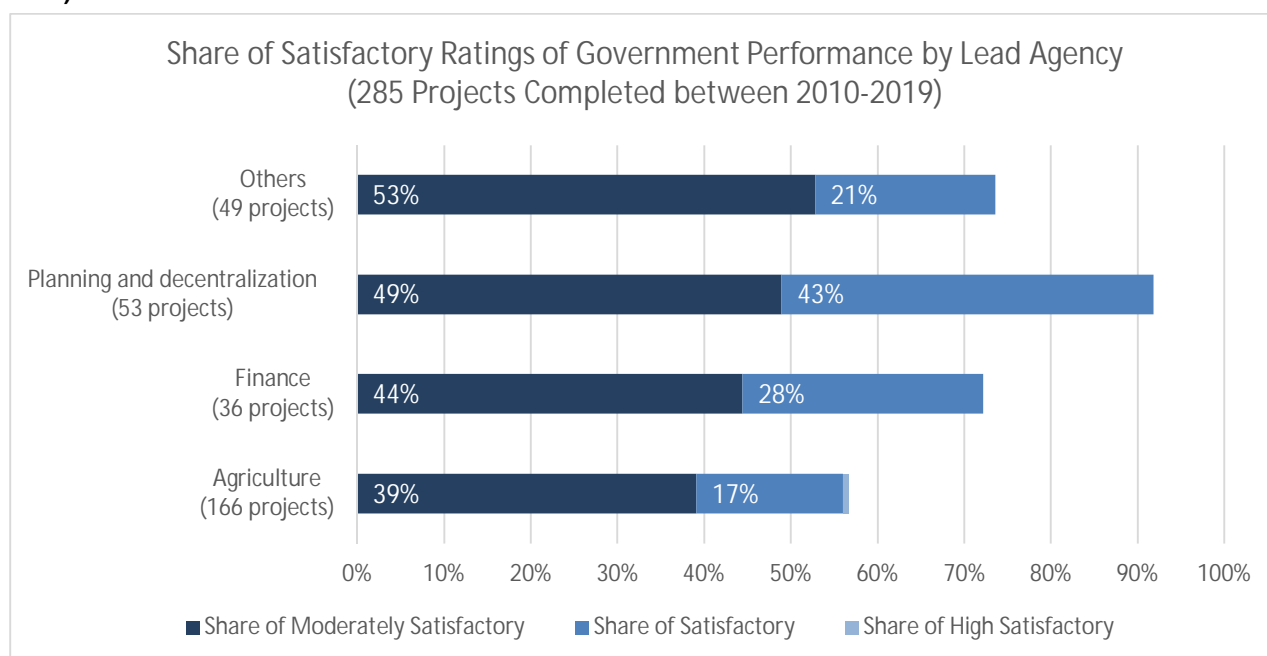
Source: ARRI database 2020.

Figure 8:  
Share of satisfactory SMR ratings of projects completed (2010 -2019)



Source: ARRI database 2020.

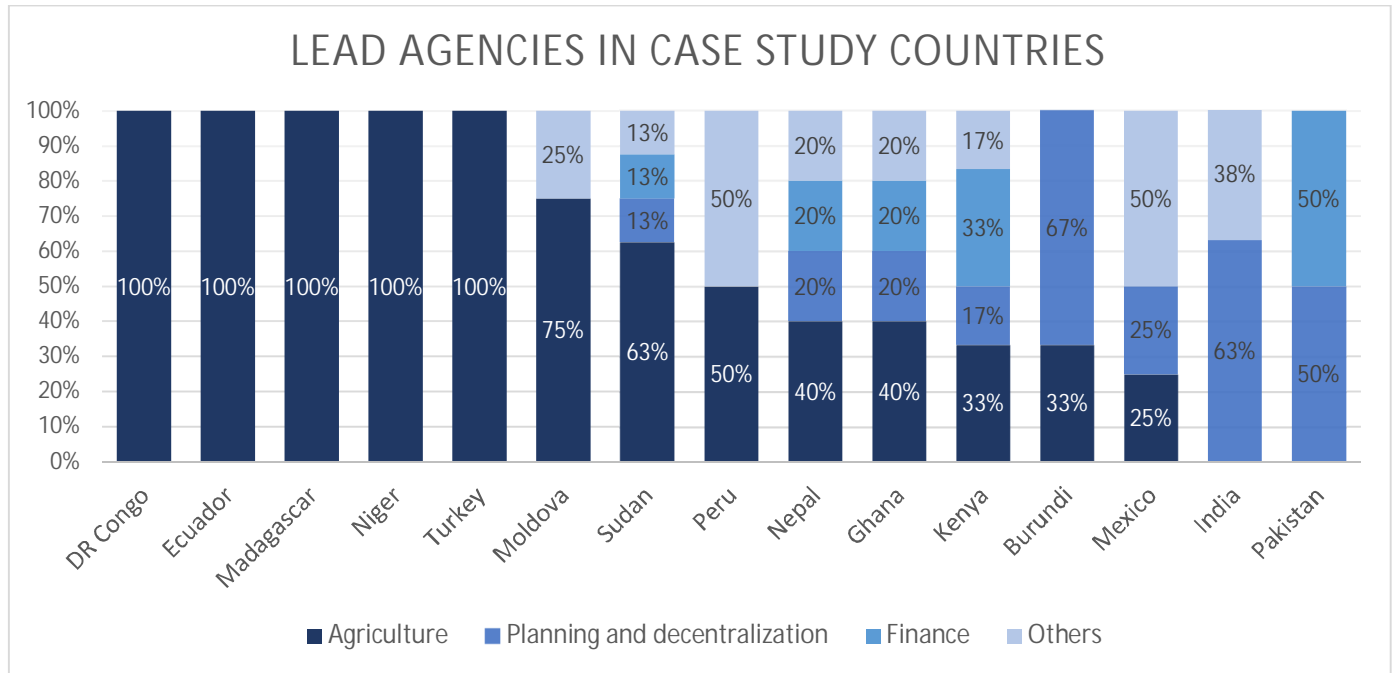
Figure 9:  
Share of satisfactory ratings of Government Performance of Lead Agencies of the entire portfolio (2010 - 2019)



Source: IOE database 2020.

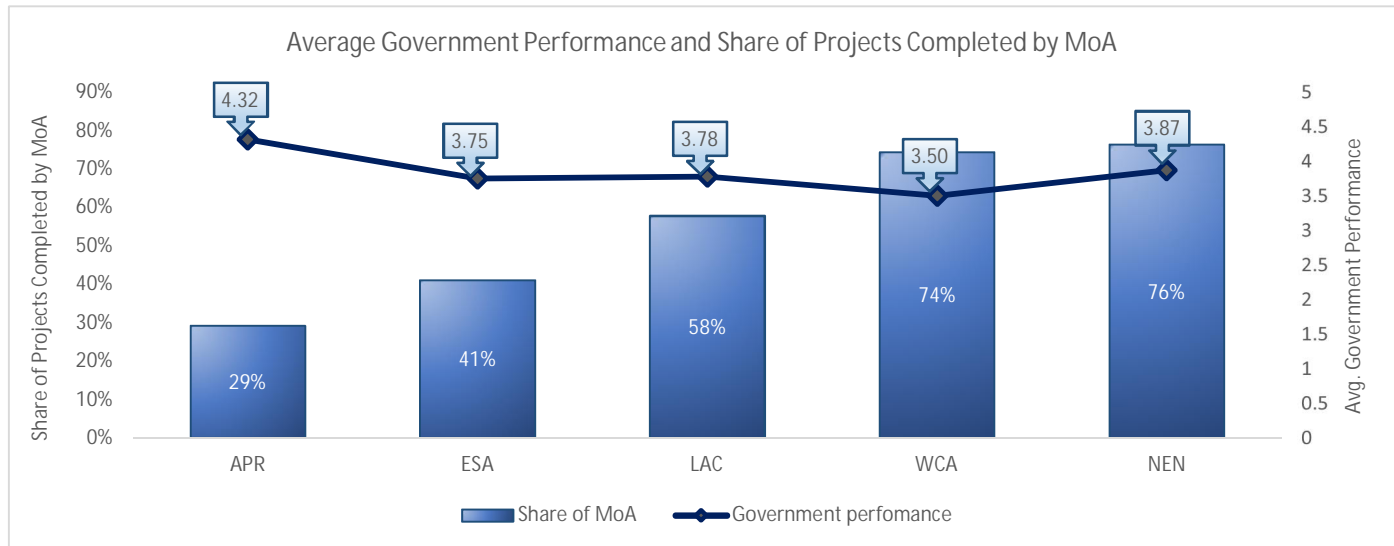
Case Studies Ratings

Figure 10:  
Lead agencies in case study countries (2010-2019)



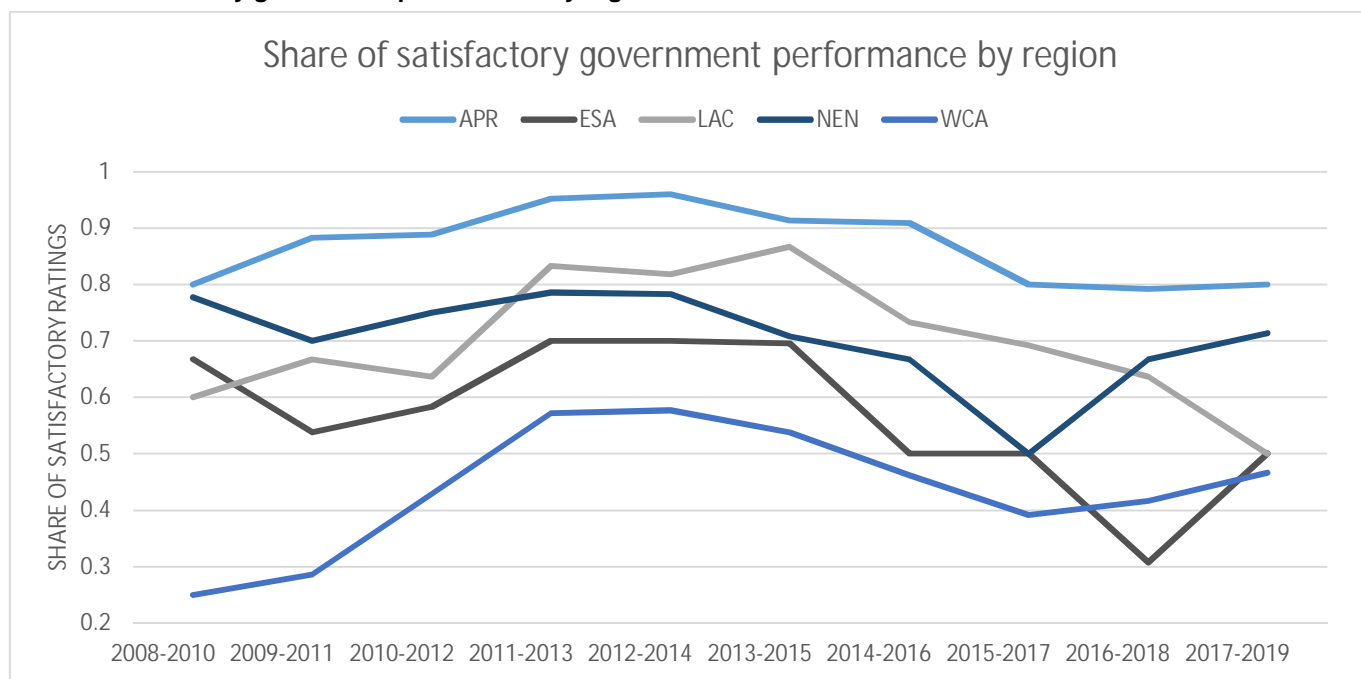
Source: ESR.

Figure 11:  
Average Government Performance and Share of Projects Completed by MoA



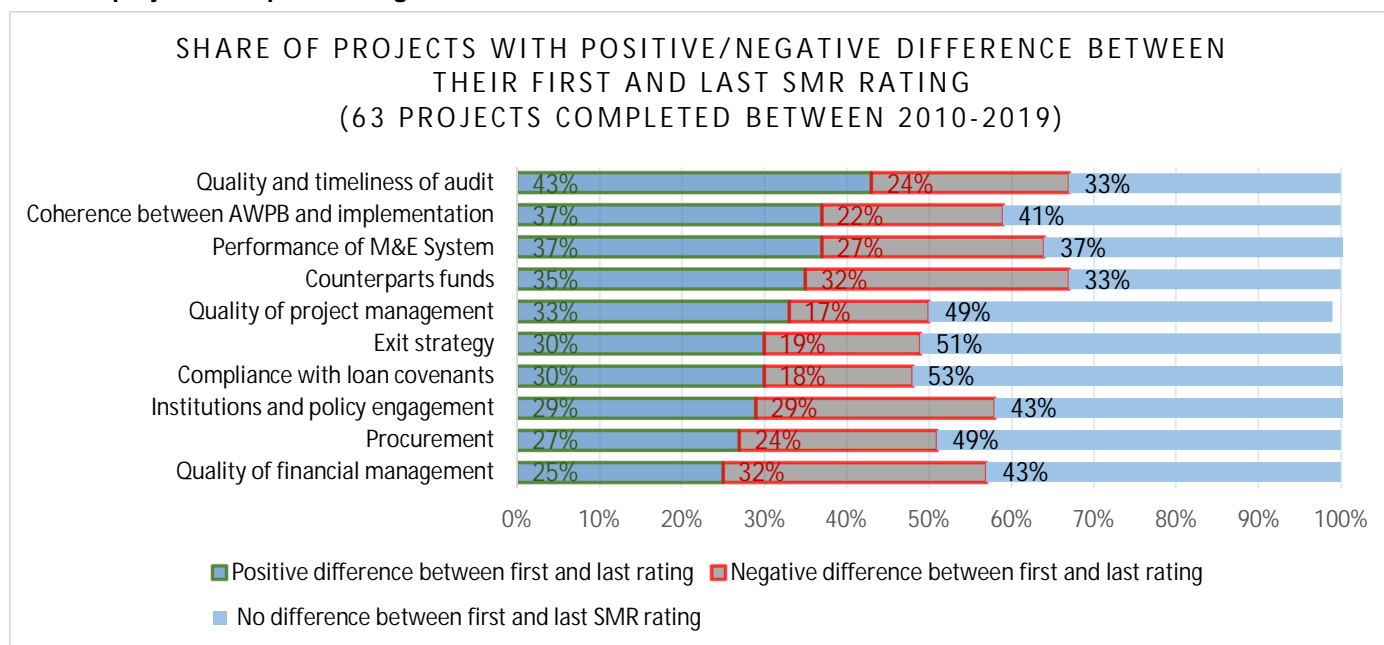
Source: ARRI database 2020.

Figure 12:  
Share of satisfactory government performance by region 2008 - 2019



Source: ARRI 2020.

Figure 13:  
Share of projects with positive/negative difference between their first and last SMR RATING 2010 -2019



Source: ARRI database 2020.

Table 4:  
Case Study ratings

		NEN			LAC			WCA			ESA			APR		
		Sudan	Turkey	Moldova	Mexico	Peru	Ecuador	Ghana	Niger	DRC	Madagascar	Kenya	Burundi	Pakistan	India	Nepal
Relevance	Lead agency	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Oversight structure	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2
	Management arrangements	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	4	3	3	2
	Design	3	3	2	1	2	1	4	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	1
	Ownership	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	4	1	3	3	4	3	4	3
Efficiency (inputs)	Counterpart funding	3	3	4	2	4	2	3	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	3
	Staffing resources	3	1	4	1	3	1	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	1	2
	Other resources	/	/	/	2		1	/	/	/	2		/	/	/	/
	Policies and procedures	3	3	4	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	4	2	4	2	2
Efficiency: Functional performance	Functioning management processes	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	1	4	3	3	4	3	2
	Disbursements and projects at risks	2	2	4	2	3	1	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	2
Efficiency: Adaptive management performance	Adaptive management processes	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	3	3	3
	M&E	1	1	4	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	3	2
	Improvements in performance over time	2	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	4
Effectiveness: Achievement of results	Goods and services	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	3	3
	Coordination	3	2	4	1	3	2	3	2	/	3	3	3	2	3	3
	Sustainability	3	3	4	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	3	2
	Scaling up	4	1	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	3

Source: ESR.

Table 5:  
Correlation Table for case studies indicators

Correlation	Lead agency	Oversight structure	Management arrangements	Design	Ownership	Counterpart funding	Staffing resources	Policies and procedures	Functioning management processes	Disbursements and projects at risks	Adaptive management processes	M&E	Improvements in performance over time	Goods and services	Coordination	Sustainability
Oversight structure	0.59															
Management arrangements	0.77	0.60														
Design	0.36	0.26	0.44													
Ownership	0.69	0.59	0.71	0.36												
Counterpart funding	0.68		0.53	0.26	0.55											
Staffing resources	0.47	0.34	0.18	0.16	0.40	0.35										
Policies and procedures	0.29		0.31	0.40		0.19										
Functioning management processes	0.40	0.31	0.48	0.18	0.41	0.37										
Disbursements and projects at risks	0.64	0.24	0.56	0.22	0.53	0.53	0.44	0.26	0.62							
Adaptive management processes	0.51	0.46	0.63	0.65	0.50	0.28	0.21	0.12	0.11	0.39						
M&E	0.54	0.54	0.39		0.36	0.12	0.36	0.16	0.15	0.62	0.51					
Improvements in performance over time	0.17		0.20			0.28			0.19	0.19	0.11					
Goods and services	0.88	0.64	0.52	0.29	0.60	0.48	0.53		0.50	0.65	0.40	0.54				
Coordination	0.79	0.40	0.44	0.24	0.47	0.51	0.60	0.14		0.57	0.41	0.62	0.73			
Sustainability	0.49		0.42	0.55	0.25	0.58	0.17	0.67	0.26	0.63	0.28	0.39	0.32	0.52		
Scaling up	0.38	0.10	0.21		0.36	0.39	0.36	0.24		0.36		0.34	0.27	0.62	0.56	

Source: ESR.



Table 6:  
Country Presence and Government Performance

Country	Presence	Office type and timeline	Impact/Bottlenecks on government performance	Government Performance Score (Out of 4)
<b>Strong presence and good government performance</b>				
Burundi	Well established	Country office opened in 2012. Until 2018 Country Directors based in country office, now in Nairobi regional hub.	Positive impact on oversight, project implementation, and country-level engagement.	2.93
Ghana	Well established	No presence before 2010. CD-led office with country director in country.	Positive impact on: IFAD's ability to resolve conditionality issues, funding gaps, partnerships gaps, and operational delays; policy dialogue; collaboration with other international organizations.	2.84
Peru	Well established	Liaison Office in Lima established in 2007. Sub regional Office in 2015 (Andean and Southern Cone Hub).	Positive impact on programme management and institutional relationships.	3.12
<b>Weak presence and bad government performance</b>				
Ecuador	Weak	Part-time consultant present in Quito (2009-2013). Since 2013, CPM started operating from Lima, Peru, while also being in charge of Bolivia, Venezuela and Haiti.	Relevant actors are involved in programme oversight, but programs could benefit from continuous country presence.	2.28
Mexico	Weak	Direct supervision since 2011. No country office or permanent staff; local consultant de facto country representative. Sub-regional office of Guatemala in charge of Mexico since 2017.	Lack of country presence blamed for delays inadequate supervision and, consequently, for failure to learn from mistakes and adapt projects.	2.22
Nepal	Weak and high turnover	Country office since 2008 with CPO as sole staff member. CPM based in New Delhi (with concurrent responsibility for Sri Lanka).	Country Office performs well but is severely limited in terms of policy engagement due to the lack of resources. CPM is subject to constant turnover.	2.38
<b>Strong presence and bad government performance</b>				
DRC	Well established	CPM based in Kinshasa since 2012. Country-based support officer based in Kinshasa since 2005.	Positive impact on oversight. Issues of weak financial accountability persist..	1.6
<b>Weak presence and good government performance</b>				
Kenya	High turnover	CO in Nairobi and direct supervision since 2008. Country director in Nairobi since 2011. Eastern African and Indian Ocean Regional hub in Nairobi.	Staff capacities are insufficient due to high levels of turnover. This prevents better coordination with government and numerous other IFIs and donors active in the country.	3.08
Moldova	None	No country office, but the country's Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU) performs relevant functions on IFAD's behalf.	Arrangements in place between IFAD and the government works perfectly in the Moldova context. The regional hub established in Turkey will facilitate IFAD's engagement with other stakeholders.	3.82
Niger	Weak	Country office since 2014. Since 2018, the CPM based in Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire).	Small size of country office compensated by delegating the engagement in policy dialogue to the National Unit for Representation and Technical Assistance (CENRAT).	2.93
<b>Country presence and Average government performance</b>				

India	Weak	Country office and permanent staff since 2001. CPM in India since 2016, previously based in Rome. South Asia Hub since 2013.	Country office is under-resourced. Staff is insufficient to cover the complex and geographically dispersed portfolio. Resources for non-lending functions are “almost non-existent”. Staff possesses limited specific expertise for technical discussions.	2.51
Madagascar	Well established	Country office since 2011. CPM in Nairobi.	Nothing relevant mentioned in the case study.	2.74
Pakistan	Weak	CPO present since 2005. CD in Rome until 2018, now operating from a sub-regional hub in Beijing, China.	CD participation and leadership in design, oversight, and other missions has increased noticeably. Nothing relevant on impact though.	2.86
Sudan	Well established	CD-led office since 2005.	Early introduction of country presence with committed staff when the country was going through significant changes played a vital role in fostering partnerships and effective handling of the portfolio and non-portfolio activities.	2.63
Turkey	Recently established Hub	Host Country Agreement for IFAD Regional Hub (The Central Asia and Eastern European Hub – 8 countries) signed in Ankara in November 2018.	The lack of an IFAD country presence in Turkey in the past made the Fund less accessible to donors and limits prospects for IFAD’s policy involvement.	2.54

Source: ESR.

Table 7:  
Outliers on government performance (rated 2)

Project Name	Country	Factors of weak ownership					
		Lack of IFAD engagement/dialogue	Lack of interest	Crises/Political instability	Lack of leadership	Weak financial accountability	Weak capacities
Roots And Tubers Market-Driven Development Programme	Cameroon	✓					
Kanem Rural Development Project	Chad	✓	✓				
Batha Rural Development Project	Chad		✓	✓			
Development Project In The Plateaux, Cuvette And Western Cuvette Departments	DR Congo				✓	✓	
Agricultural Marketing Improvement Programme	Ethiopia		✓				✓
Rural Development Programme For Mountainous And Highland	Georgia		✓				
National Rural Development Programme Phase I: The Western Region	Guatemala			✓			
National Rural Development Programme: Central And Eastern Regions	Guatemala	✓					
National Programme To Support Agricultural Value Chain Actors	Guinea		✓				✓
Marine And Agricultural Resources Support Programme	Mauritius		✓				✓
Rural Development Project For Rubber-Producing Regions	Mexico				✓		
Participative Development And Rural Modernization Project	Panama			✓			

Table 8:  
Assessment Metrics (Rubrics)

RELEVANCE	Low (1)	Rather low (2)	Rather high (3)	High (4)
Relevance of lead executing agency	<p>No capacity identified at community level to provide support to implementation</p> <p>Lack of necessary capacity to coordinate project stakeholders</p> <p>The lead agency does not have the capacity to support project implementation</p> <p>No pro-poor and gender focus,</p> <p>The lead agency does not participate in project appraisal and design</p> <p>No capacity to devolve project responsibilities to decentralised institutions</p> <p>Extremely challenging to establish communication with the agency</p>	<p>Insufficient capacity identified at community level to support project implementation</p> <p>Inadequate technical capacity to support appraisal and designing of the project</p> <p>Weak transitioning methods adopted</p> <p>The Programme's mandate is somewhat in line with the agencies' goal/objective</p> <p>The agency has at least some capacity to coordinate and technical backstop</p> <p>Limited ability to mobilise IFAD's target groups</p>	<p>The agency has the capacity to coordinate and provide technical backstop</p> <p>The agency participates in the joint monitoring and review processes</p> <p>Some guidance is provided in targeting of viable but vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Mandate (or policies) support with programme objectives and directions for Implementing, coordinating and ensuring coordination with other relevant agencies and supervision of the PCO</p> <p>Sufficient (technical) capacities to guide programme implementation</p> <p>Sufficient (coordination) capacity to coordinate project stakeholders.</p> <p>Pro-poor and gender focus and ability to mobilise IFAD's target groups (directly or through partners)</p> <p>The lead agency takes overall fiduciary responsibility of all matters pertaining to the programme.</p> <p>Decentralised capacities [for implementation of nation-wide programme]</p> <p>Focal points for specific communication exchanges</p> <p>Provision of guidance in targeting of viable but vulnerable groups</p> <p>The lead agency ensures that, recommended actions are adequately addressed.</p> <p>Ensures the AWPB is prepared on time.</p> <p>IFAD supervision missions, MTR support provided on time</p>
Relevance of oversight structure	<p>No coordination function and working as a team at all levels (national, provincial and district)</p> <p>No capacity to support missions, and MTR on time</p>	<p>Limited capacity provided by the oversight structure at the national and provincial level</p> <p>Insufficient technical capacity in oversight structure</p> <p>Limited time dedicated to oversight duties</p>		<p>High level of government representation in established steering committees.</p> <p>Relevant (government and non-government) actors involved in programme oversight.</p> <p>Oversight mechanism align with the country's administrative system in adequately involving central government level and local structures</p>

	<p>Inability to mobilise stakeholders (both government and non-government actors)</p> <p>No oversight and strategic guidance</p> <p>No facilitation of inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration</p>	<p>Draft oversight and strategic guidance available</p> <p>Delays in approving the Programme's Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPBs) and implementation progress reports</p>		<p>Existence of a national programme coordination unit supervising IFAD projects</p> <p>Oversight and strategic guidance made available and fully functional</p> <p>Oversight mechanism (existing institutional structure or parallel project-specific mechanism) useful in keeping the project implementation relevant to the outcomes and objectives</p> <p>The Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPBs) and implementation progress reports provided on time</p> <p>Provisions for coordination and technical backstopping provided on time</p> <p>Oversight structure able to prompt changes in project management</p> <p>Provision of strategic guidance on allocation of Programme resources</p> <p>Oversight structure able to provide policy and strategic guidance</p> <p>Oversight mechanism sufficiently inclusive to provide guidance responsive to the complexity of the project</p> <p>IFAD supervision missions, MTR support provided on time</p>
Relevance of project management arrangements	<p>No private sector involvement</p> <p>Conditions identified do not reflect the needs on ground</p> <p>Capacity constraints to fully implement the programme</p> <p>No clear communication guidelines</p>			<p>Project management arrangements properly matched to country conditions and institutional environment</p> <p>Adequate to manage the scope, diversity, complexity of the project</p> <p>Capacity constraints correctly identified and corrective measures implemented</p> <p>Project adapted arrangements to changing circumstances and priorities</p> <p>Adequate and proper participation of the private sector</p> <p>Structures adequate for decentralised implementation</p>

				Change over time so as to respond to identified weaknesses and an evolving project environment
Relevance of project Design				<p>PDRs in line with government priorities and national strategies</p> <p>Design identified risk and mitigation methods and in line with government capacity</p> <p>Innovations used to deliver programmes (the use of technology and delivering mechanisms).</p> <p>Projects taking into consideration Government existing structures.</p>
Ownership	<p>Programme goals insufficiently aligned with government priorities/policies</p> <p>Project appraisal and design lacked government involvement</p> <p>Government is taking a hands-off stand during implementation</p> <p>Government does not provide coordinating or steering structure</p>	<p>Several indicators (1) apply: Government support is partially identified and limited interest is shown by focal point</p> <p>Government providing a partial coordination and steering structure but no records are kept or limited interest shown</p> <p>Low placement of project in Government priorities leaves the project hanging without enough resources</p> <p>Weak alignment with the country's development strategy and objectives</p>	<p>Several indicators (4) apply: Programme goals moderately aligned with Government national priorities</p>	<p>Programme goals well aligned with Government priorities</p> <p>Government initiated discussions for new project</p> <p>Government participated in project design</p> <p>Government participated in supervision and wrap-up meetings</p> <p>Government followed up on supervision recommendations</p> <p>Government provided (steering and/or coordination) structure to support project performance</p> <p>Government provided platform for stakeholder dialogue</p> <p>Government compliance to co-financing conditions of other implementation partners.</p>

EFFICIENCY / INPUTS	Low (1)	Rather low (2)	Rather high (3)	High (4)
Counterpart funding	No provision of counterpart funding	Issues of counterpart funding common in the portfolio	Innovative measures to introduce additional resources into the programme	Counterpart fund provision adequate and timely Government provided additional funding during implementation, where needed Willingness to reallocate funding
Staff resources	No staff resources made available on time  Not all staff assumed their positions  Issues resulting from re-structuring of ministries/government organisations?	Issues of staff resources common in portfolio  Staff shortages or rotation slowed down project activities		Staff capacities sufficient (in numbers and qualification) for implementation Management structure properly staffed Gender and/or social inclusion specialists in place Project staff is recruited timely Familiarity of staff with government procedures
Other resources	No logistics support from Government in the context of implementation  Requirements from implementation start up is not met  High administrative costs	Provisions for logistics, and incentives in place but not functional  Government partially met the conditions for start-up implementation		Government provided logistics (facilities, infrastructure, tax incentives, decentralised focal points) in support of implementation  Government met conditions for project to start implementation Communication structure and/or strategy
Policies and procedures	The programme does not align with any existing policy or national procedures	The programme partially aligns with existing policies but with no clear procedures		Policies and procedures in place to support project implementation Fund flows and procurement procedures ensure timely implementation Government call on project to provide policy advise, or inputs to policy related documents

EFFICIENCY / FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE	Low (1)	Rather low (2)	Rather high (3)	High (4)
Functioning management processes	<p>Frequent changes in management</p> <p>Delayed feedback or approval from IFAD</p> <p>No clear procedures for procurement</p> <p>Poor financial management practices</p> <p>Delays or no approval of the Programme's Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPBs) and implementation progress reports</p> <p>Delayed feedback from government</p>	<p>Shortage of key or relevant staff for technical tasks at the PCO level</p> <p>Delayed procurement due to procedures</p>		<p>Stable management</p> <p>Satisfactory PSR ratings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement satisfactory</li> <li>• Financial management performance satisfactory</li> <li>• Audits as required</li> <li>• AWP implemented/ achieved</li> </ul> <p>Provision of working space or workshop centers</p> <p>Timely feedback or approval from IFAD</p> <p>Provision of a procurement system at the PCO level</p> <p>Alignment of procurement procedures to international and national procurement requirements</p>
Disbursements	<p>Projects at risk</p>	<p>Insufficient information generated from the financial software on disbursement</p>	<p>Financial software used for disbursement in place and fully functional</p>	<p>PSR ratings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disbursement</li> </ul> <p>The lead executing agency ensures the overall oversight for the implementation of Programme at National, Provincial and District level through its structures.</p>



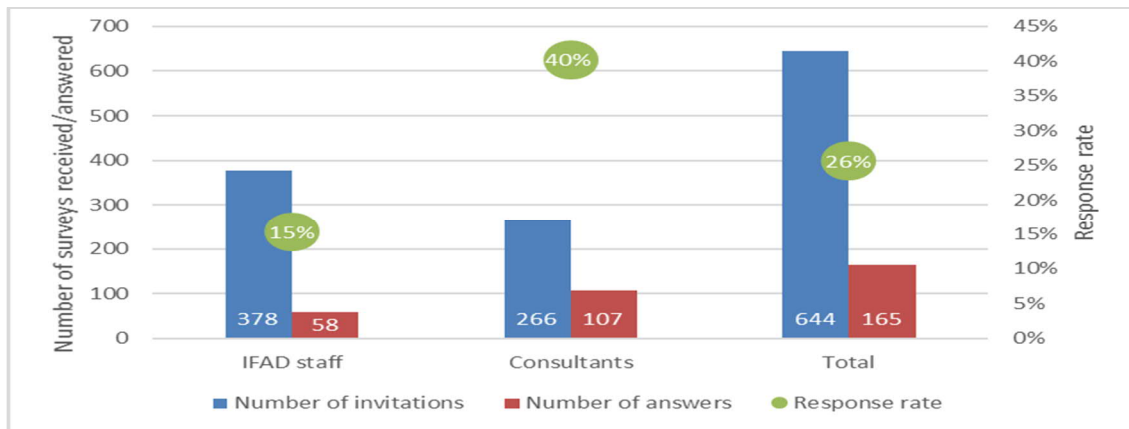
EFFICIENCY / ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE	Low (1)	Rather low (2)	Rather high (3)	High (4)
Adaptive management processes	<p>No grievances mechanisms put in place</p> <p>Oversight bodies do not assume and fulfil their duties as determined</p> <p>Management not responsive to issues raised through oversight and supervision</p> <p>No flexibility to adjust based on government evolving priorities</p>	<p>Draft grievances mechanisms</p> <p>Slow response to management issues</p>		<p>Management responded to issues raised by oversight bodies and supervision</p> <p>Management adjusted in response to Government's evolving priorities</p> <p>Grievance processes in place and used/responded</p> <p>Management responded to challenges or changes in the context (e.g. emergencies)</p>
Use of M&E	<p>No M&amp;E system</p> <p>No M&amp;E officer in place</p> <p>No alignment with national M&amp;E systems</p> <p>No capacity to support from the lead agency</p> <p>No provisions for decentralized reporting</p> <p>No logframe and no AWPBs</p> <p>No reporting templates or mechanisms put in place</p> <p>No baseline study has been conducted</p>	<p>Partial provisions made available to capture data</p> <p>Insufficient capacity available at both national and community level</p> <p>To some degree information gathered but not gender disintegrated</p> <p>Data inaccuracies in reporting and insufficient templates available</p>	<p>M&amp;E systems in place but does not generate reporting on indicators/milestone</p> <p>Reporting is not sufficiently generated</p>	<p>M&amp;E system in place and fully functional</p> <p>M&amp;E officer available with the full capacity to deliver</p> <p>Gender-disaggregated data collected and used</p> <p>Government has (innovative or sophisticated) tools to collate data</p> <p>M&amp;E reporting provided on time with accurate and quality data.</p> <p>M&amp;E information on performance and impact used to improve performance</p> <p>M&amp;E information is linked with national and agency reporting</p>
Improvements over time	<p>Low rating for x% of supervision missions</p> <p>PSR ratings remained low or decreased</p>			<p>PSR ratings improved over time</p> <p>IOE evaluations indicate positive trend</p>

EFFECTIVENESS	Low (1)	Rather low (2)	Rather high (3)	High (4)
Delivery of goods and services	Low outreach Cost overruns Disbursement delays			Expected outputs and targets achieved or exceeded Beneficiary outreach achieved or exceeded Outreach to women achieved or exceeded No major delays
Coordination	No coordination efforts in place No capacity to coordinate stakeholders			Design takes into account the needs of a variety of government stakeholders? Functioning coordination system is in place
Sustainability	No provision of exit strategy			Clear indication of government commitment through provision of funds, human resources availability, continuity of policies and participatory development approaches  An approved exit strategy in place before project completion
Scaling up	No provision of exit strategy			Government leverages its own financial resources to scale up the project

Source: ESR.

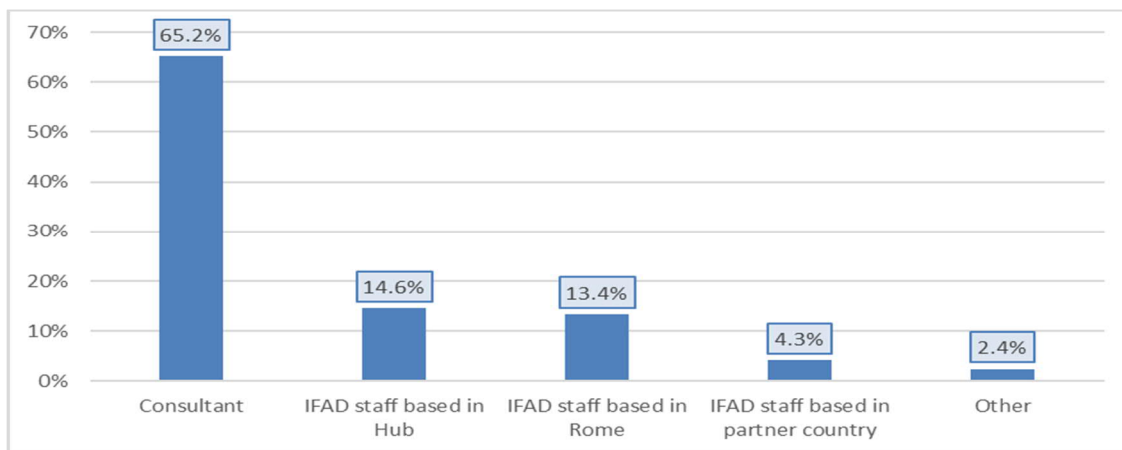
### Key results of IFAD staff and consultant e-survey

Figure AA 1.  
Response rate of survey destined to IFAD staff and consultants



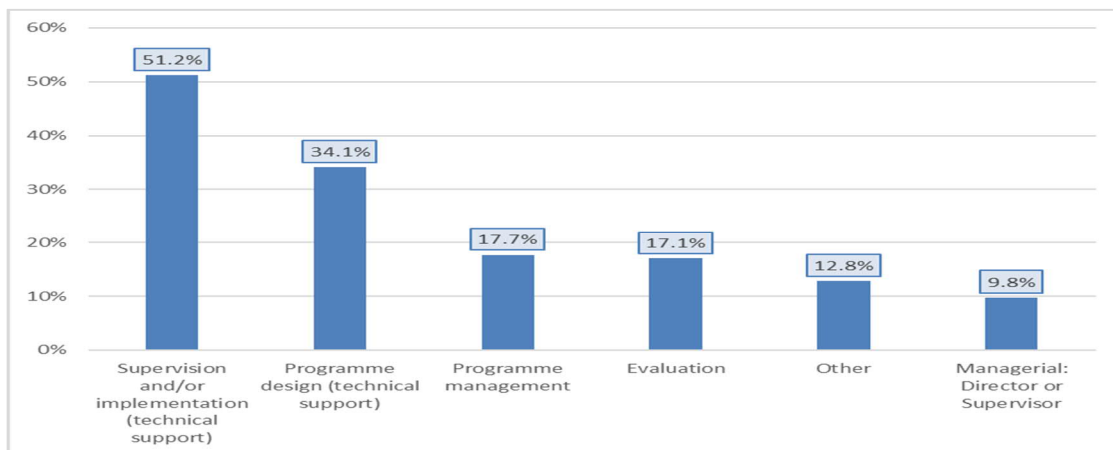
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 164).

Figure AA 2.  
What is your position within IFAD?



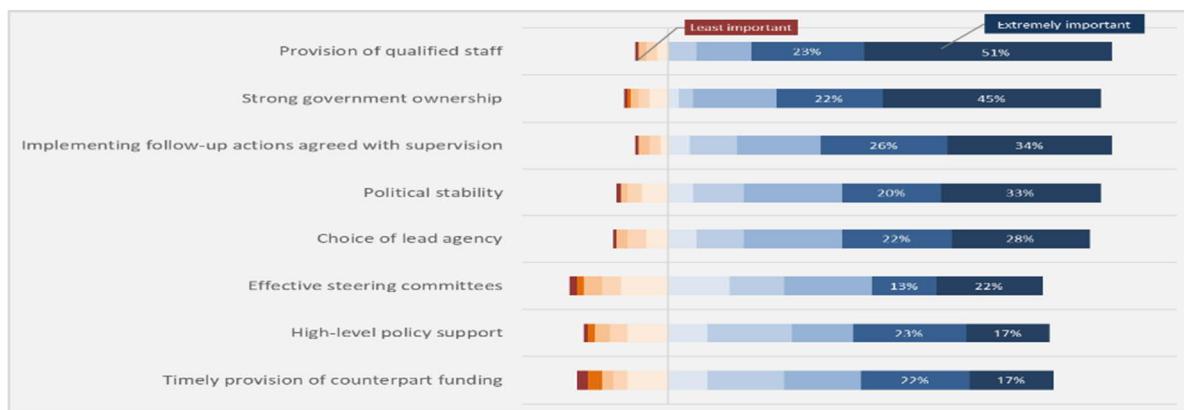
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 164).

Figure AA 3.  
What is your role within IFAD operations?



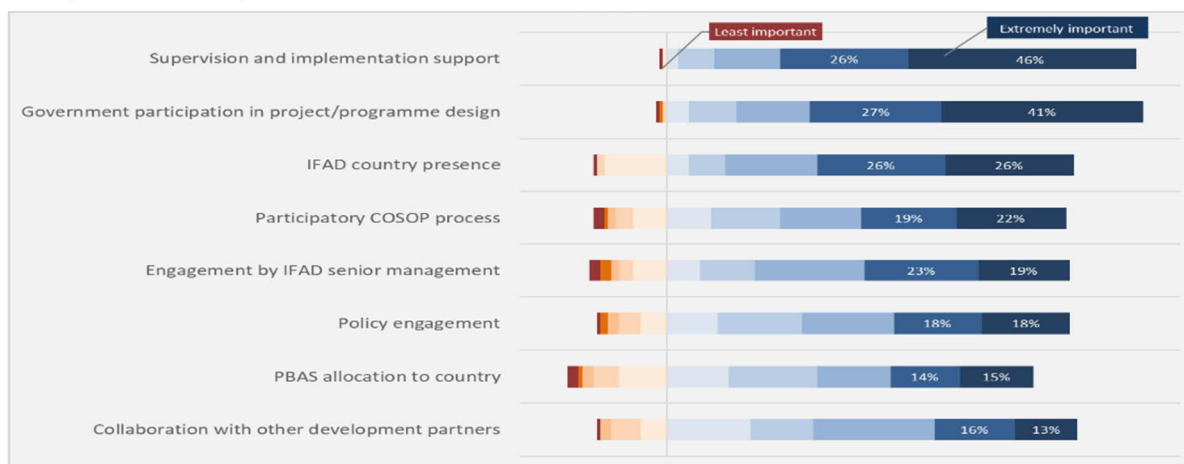
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 164).

Figure AA 4.  
**Among those listed below, what are the most important drivers of government performance at country level (on Government's side)?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 134).

Figure AA 5.  
**Among those listed below, what are the most important drivers of government performance at country level (on IFAD's side)?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 134).

Figure AA 6.  
**Do you recognise any further important drivers of government performance?**



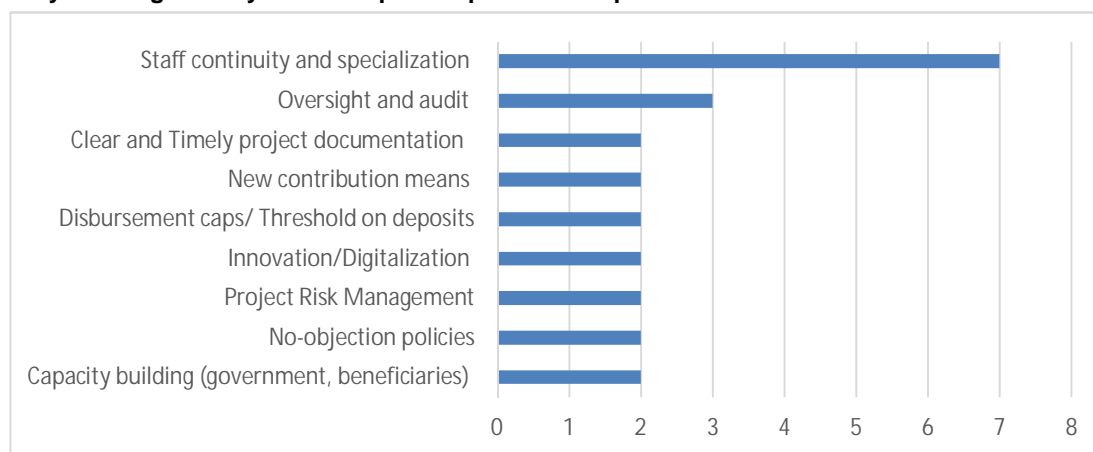
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 57).

Figure AA 7.  
**In your view, how effective have been the following IFAD policies and reforms for strengthening government performance?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 134).

Figure AA 8.  
**Do you recognise any further important policies and processes?**



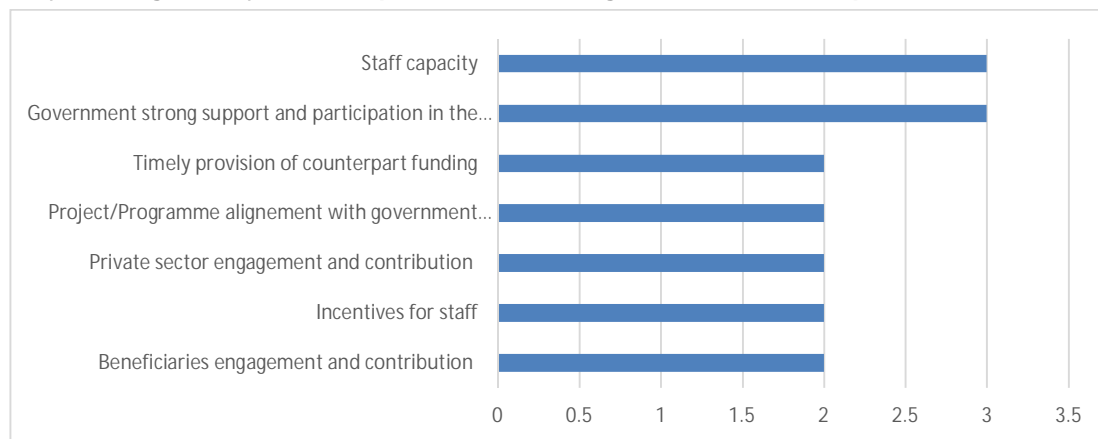
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 23).

Figure AA 9.  
**Based on your experience, how important are the following enablers of government ownership?**



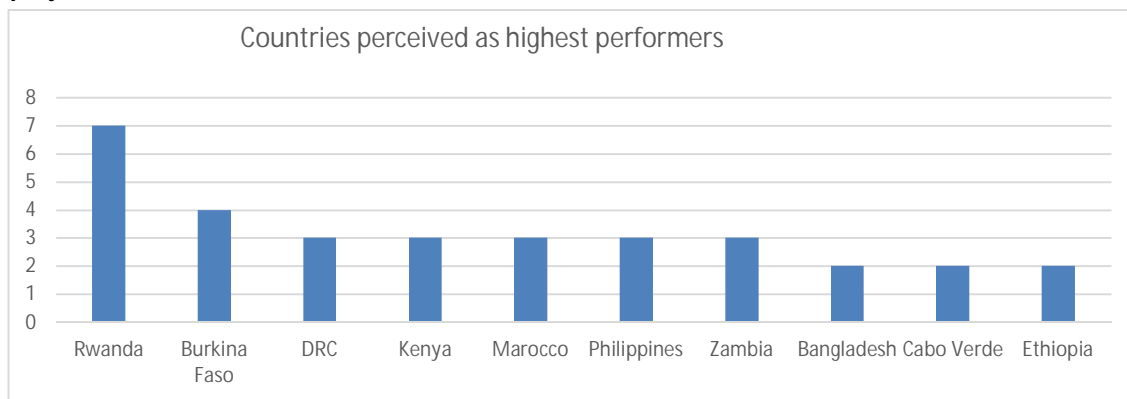
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 130).

Figure AA 10.  
**Do you recognise any further important enablers of government ownership?**



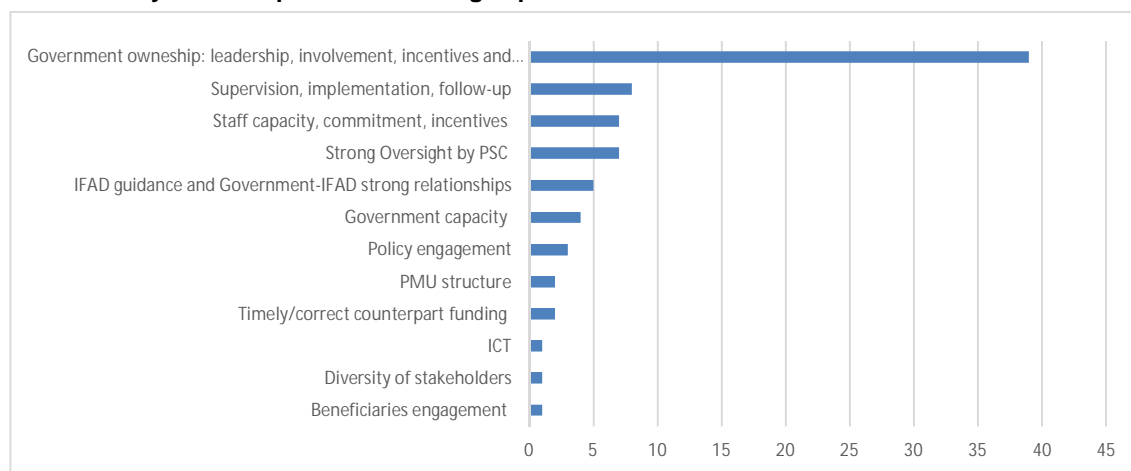
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 21).

Figure AA 11.  
**Can you provide a case of a country where government has shown strong ownership of IFAD-supported projects?**



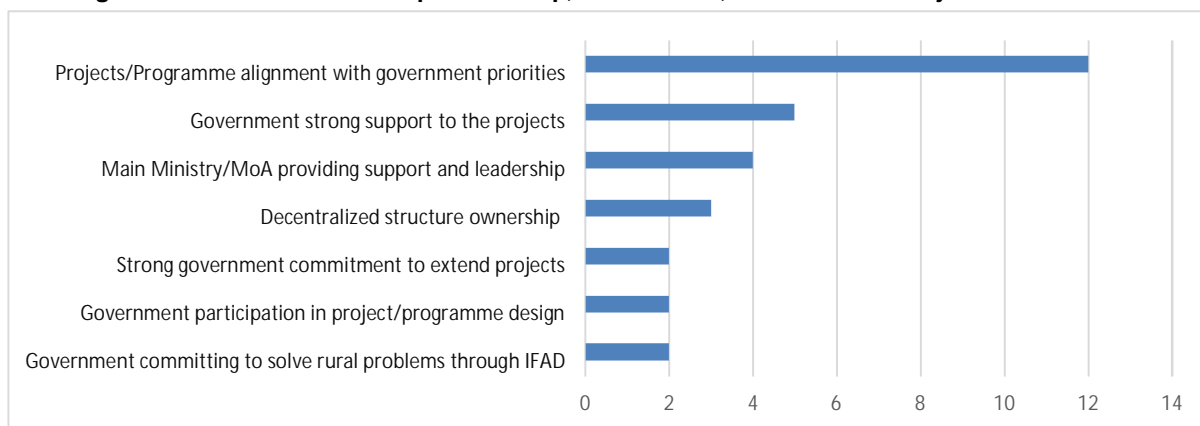
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 47).

Figure AA 12.  
**Reasons why ownership has been strong in particular cases**



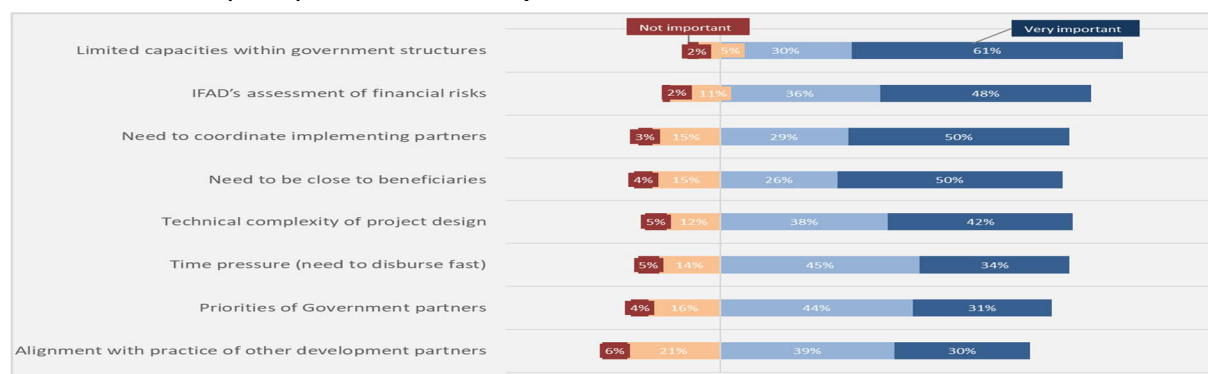
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 47).

Figure AA 13.  
**Zooming on "Government ownership: leadership, involvement, incentives and objectives"**



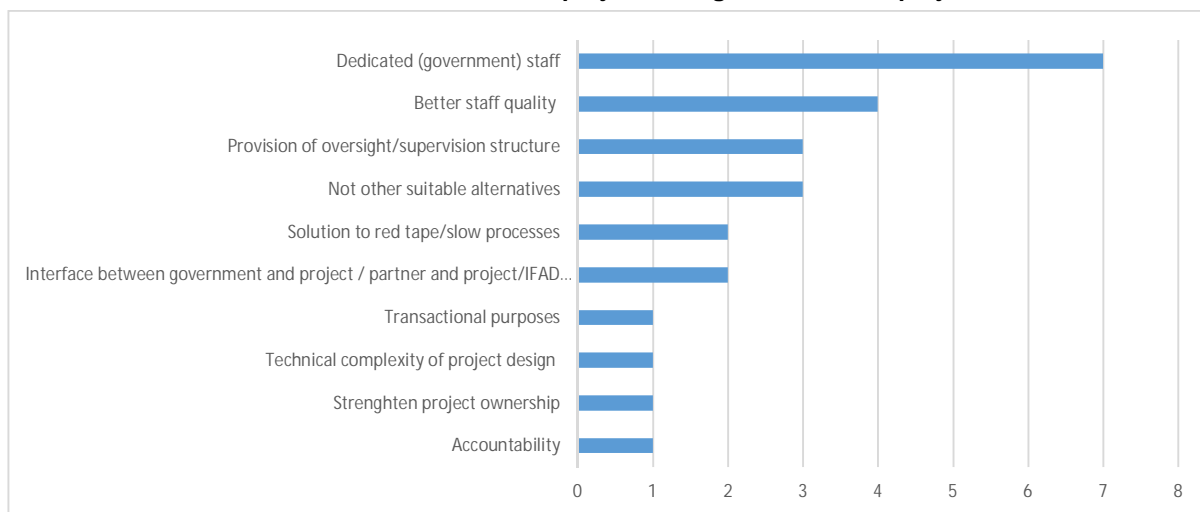
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 47).

Figure AA 14.  
**In your opinion, are the reasons for the continued use of project management units (PMUs) or project coordination units (PCUs) in IFAD-financed operations?**



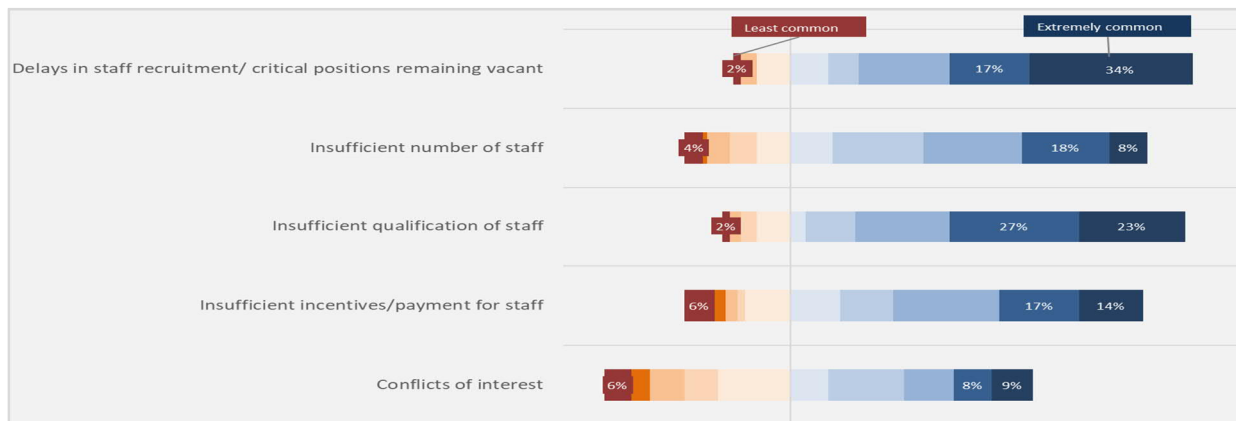
Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 125).

Figure AA 15.  
**What are other reasons for the continued use of project management units or project coordination units?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 27).

Figure AA 16.  
**Insufficient partner capacities are often cited as a main reason for poor performance. In your experience, what are common capacity gaps?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 125).

Figure AA 17.  
**What are other common capacity gaps?**

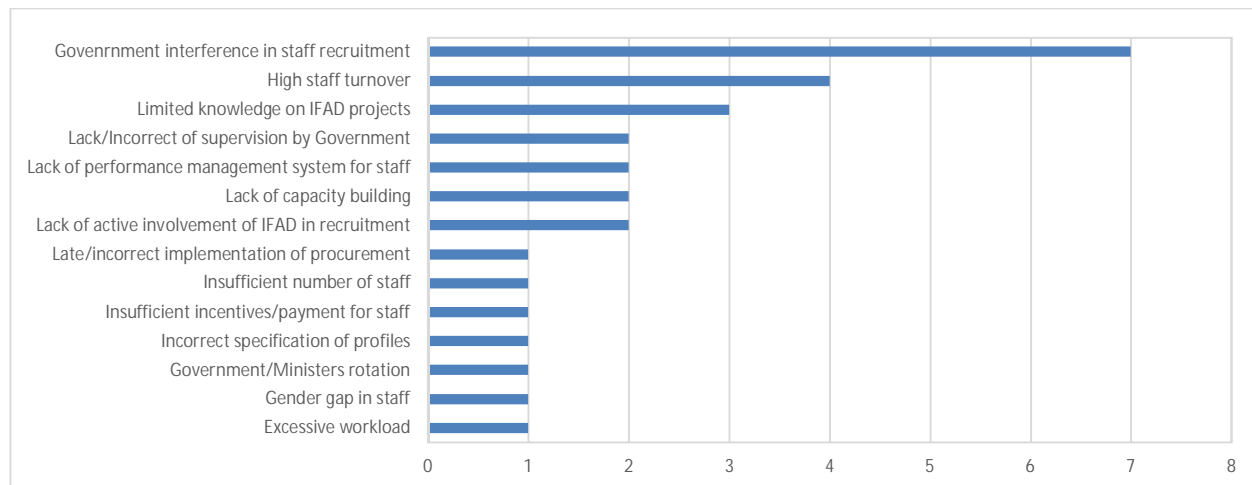


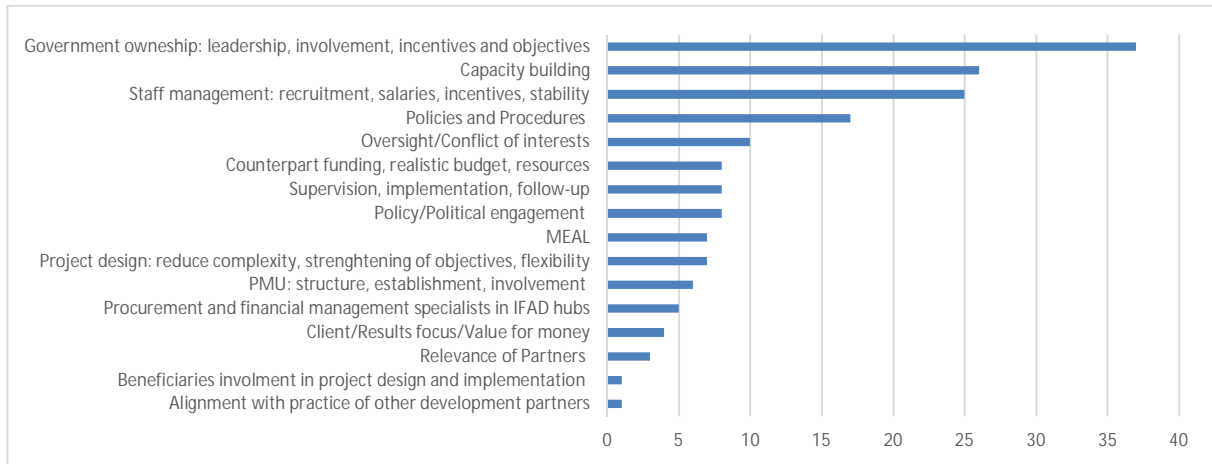
Figure AA 18.  
**How would you rate the performance of the following management structures used in IFAD programmes?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 124).



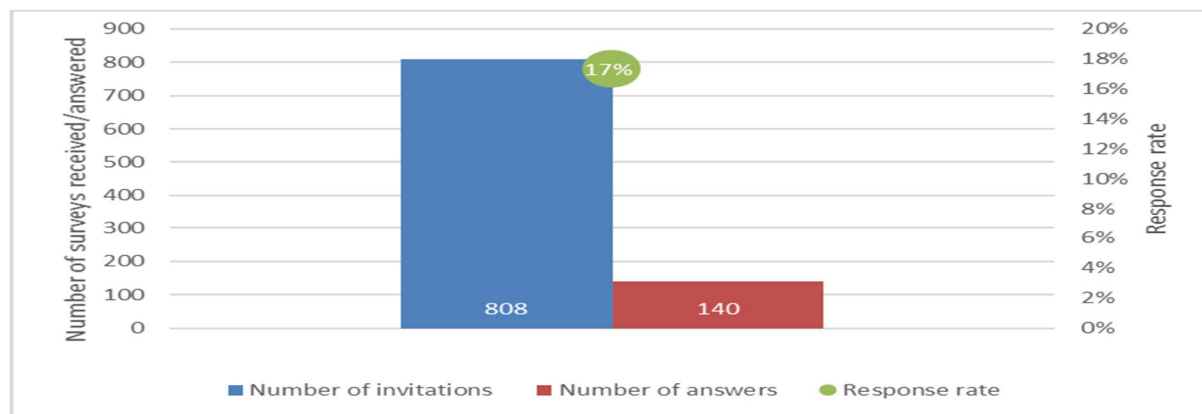
Figure AA 19.  
**What do you believe to be the priority issues that IFAD should address to enhance government performance?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for IFAD staff and consultants (n= 77).

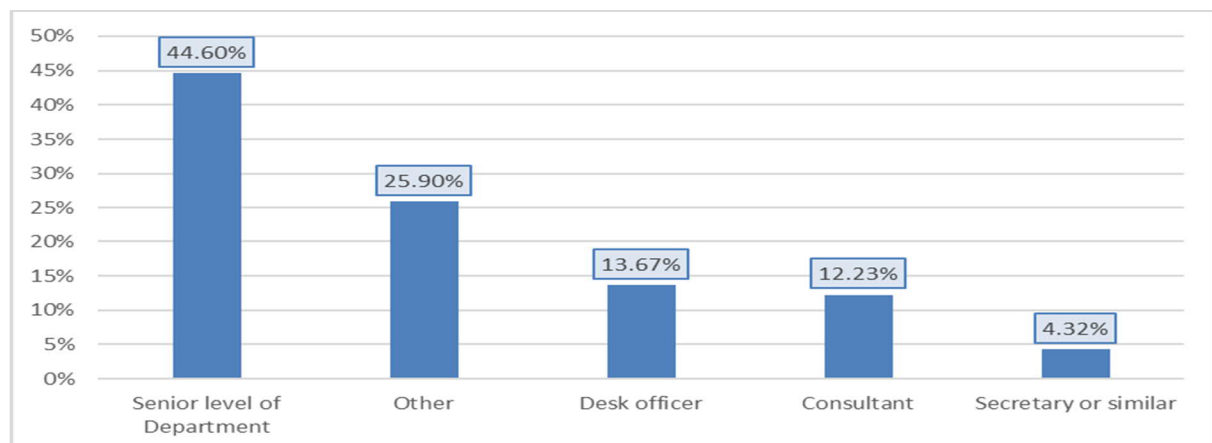
### Key results of Government e-survey

Figure AB 1.  
**Response rate**



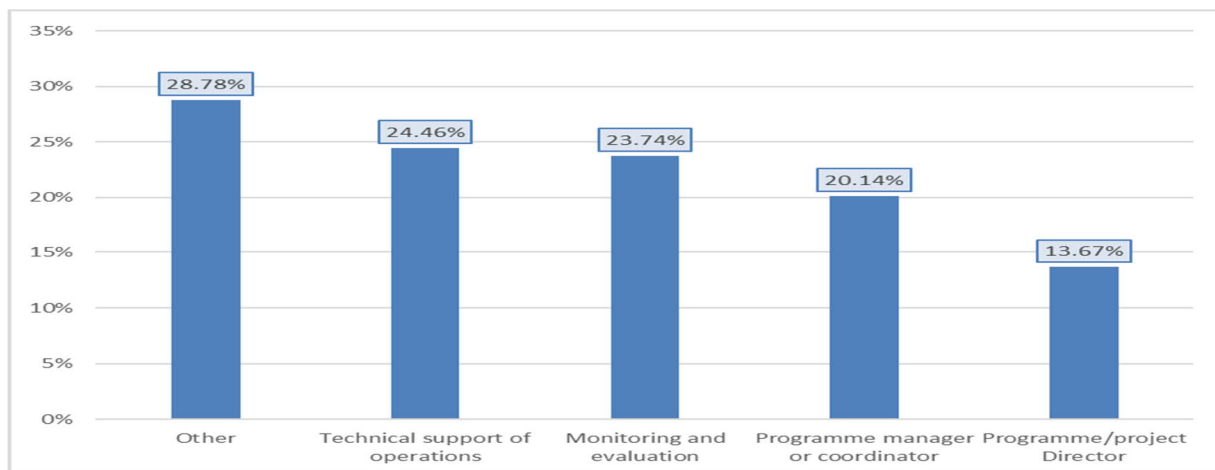
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 139).

Figure AB 2.  
**What is your position within the Government?**



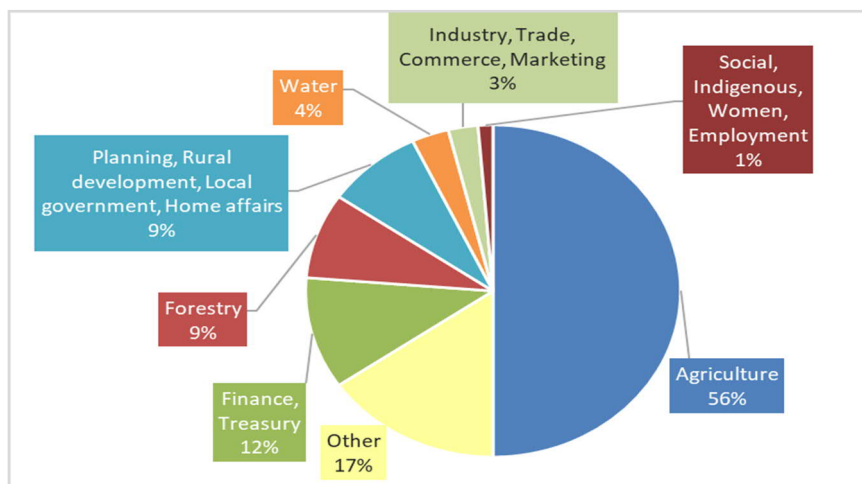
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 139).

Figure AB 3.  
**What is your role in IFAD operations?**



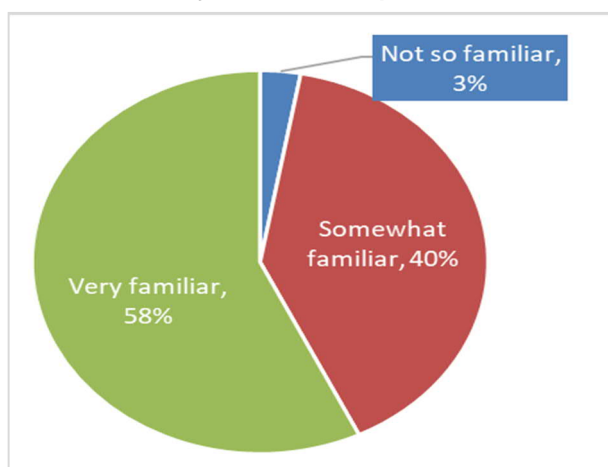
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 139).

Figure AB 4.  
**Which type of Ministry do you belong to?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 139).

Figure AB 5.  
**How familiar are you with IFAD operations?**



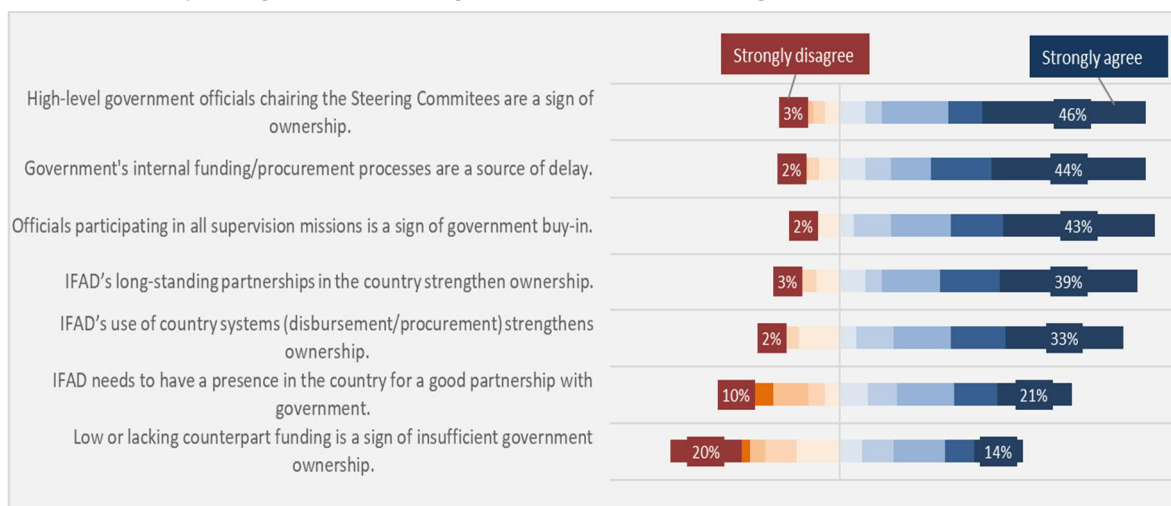
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 139).

Figure AB 6.  
**Have you participated in any of the following in the last ten years?**



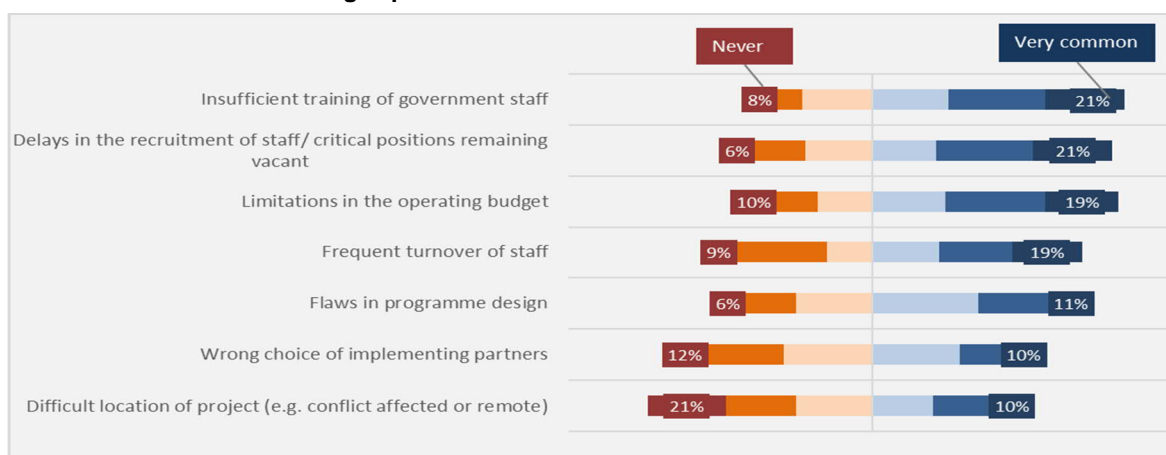
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 139).

Figure AB 7.  
**Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.**



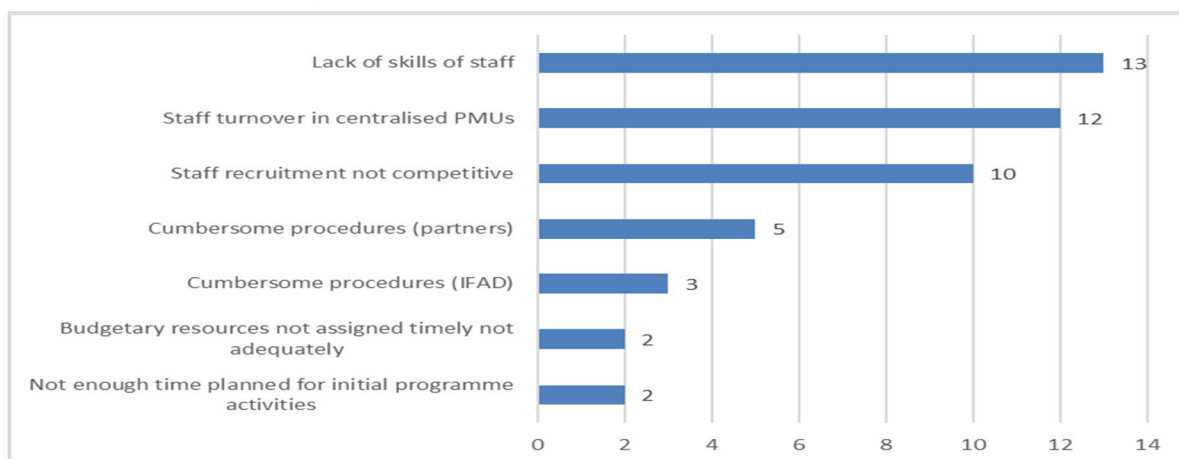
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 126).

Figure AB 8.  
**Insufficient partner capacities are often cited as a main reason for poor performance. In your experience, how common are the following capacities issues?**



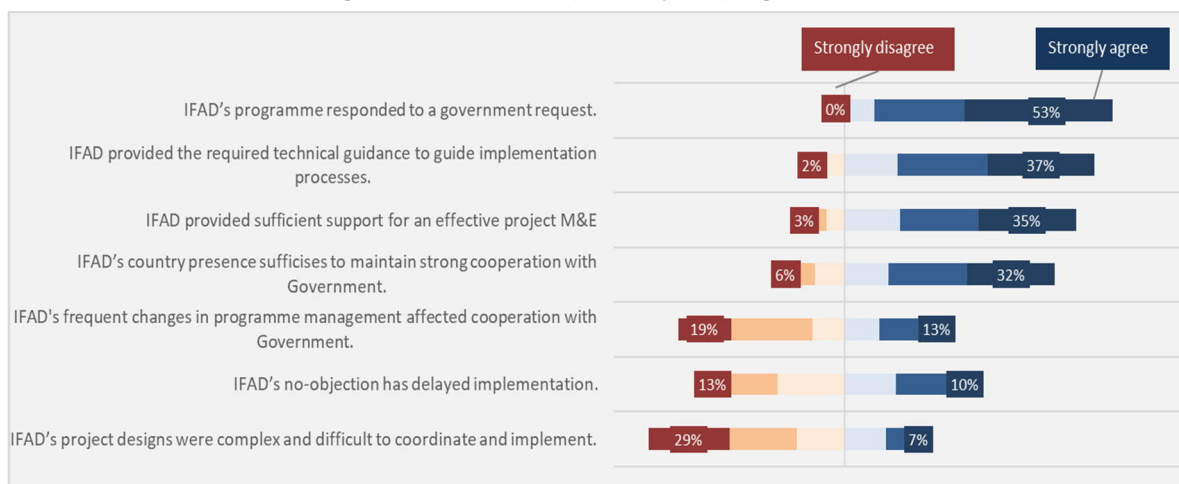
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 126).

Figure AB 9.  
**What are other common capacities issues?**



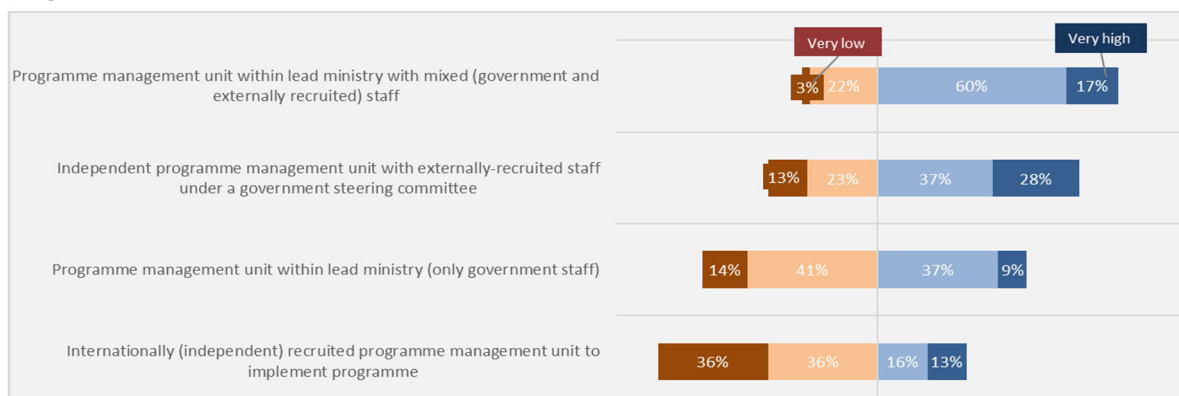
Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 26).

Figure AB 10.  
**Please indicate if the following situations have applied in your programme.**



Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 123).

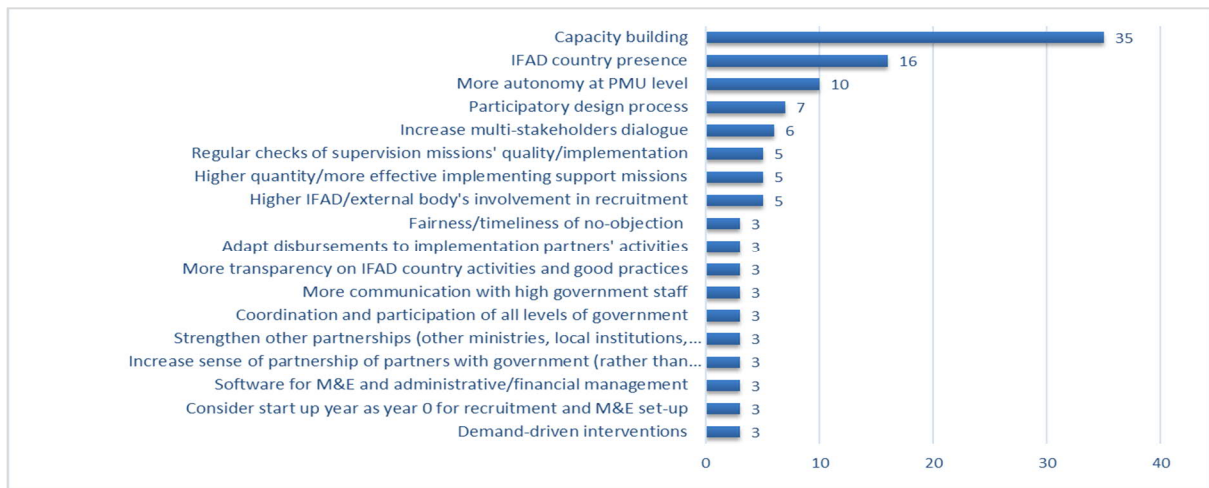
Figure AB 11.  
**How would you rate the performance of the following management structures used in IFAD programmes?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 123).

Figure AB 12.

**What could IFAD do to enhance the performance of implementing partners?**



Source: Government performance e-survey for Government staff (n= 57).

<b>Selected hypothesis</b>				
<i>Evaluation criteria</i>	<i>Issue (from ToC)</i>	<i>Working Hypothesis</i>	<i>Confirmed</i>	<i>Unconfirmed</i>
	IFAD-related issues	H1. Lack of adherence with IFAD guidance on fragile countries negatively affects efficiency and effectiveness of projects	3/15	0/15
	Country Context	H2. In countries under DSF conditions, project may start earlier because there is less conditionality on approval of project by the government or parliament (DSF is grant, i.e., free money that does not add to debt).	3/15	0/15
		H4. Weak decentralised structure (due to recent decentralisation reform or country's fragile context) affect ownership, coordination and sustainability.	11/15	0/15
		H5. Political instability negatively affects project/programme continuity	7/15	0/15
		H6. IFAD's administrative processes represent a challenge for the government	4/15	0/15
<b>Relevance</b>	Ownership	H9. Government ownership is a positive factor in scaling up a successful interventions	9/15	1/15
		H11. Government ownership contributes positively to programmes sustainability	5/15	0/15
		H12. High level government commitment ensures good government ownership	8/15	0/15
		H13. Government ownership promotes/ensures good programme performance on efficiency and effectiveness	8/15	0/15
		H15. Government ownership is weak in situations of fragility/political instability	5/15	3/15
	Lead Agency	H16. Relevant choice of lead agency positive factor in project performance on efficiency and effectiveness	6/15	0/15
		H17. Efficient decentralised mechanisms are key for project implementation at all levels	8/15	0/15
		H22. Diversity of partners improves the capacity to implement range of interventions	7/15	0/15
	Oversight structure	H23. Inadequate number or no supervision missions affects adaptive management processes and limits necessary corrections during implementation	6/15	0/15
		H27. Effective oversight ensures/maintains programme improvements over time	10/15	0/15
		H29. Stable IFAD country presence (office) promotes engagement with other stakeholders	3/15	2/15
		H31. Strong oversight structures promotes/ensures good government ownership	8/15	0/15
	Management arrangement	H33. PMU within government has strong ownership; may facilitate sustainability and scaling up; promotes institutional knowledge.	6/15	1/15
		H34. In contexts of limited capacity, an external partner supporting the management of a project component has proven a strategic choice.	5/15	0/15
		H35. Decentralised management arrangements by the government suffer from poor capacity	6/15	2/15
		H36. A Government central coordination unit facilitates policy engagement	4/15	0/15
	Design	H39. Inadequate understanding of country context or government capacity and specific challenges of project areas at design have severe repercussions on the entire project cycle	9/15	0/15

		H42. Overcomplex projects negatively affects management arrangements, staffing, and achievement of results	8/15	0/15
		H44. Weak programme design is correlated with weak oversight and government ownership	4/15	0/15
<b>Efficiency (Inputs)</b>	Counterpart funding	H45. High and timely counterpart funding is a reflection of Government ownership.	7/15	1/15
		H47. Additional commitments of counterpart funding is a reflection on Government ownership	5/15	0/15
		H48. No fulfilling or delayed counterpart funding hinders the performances of a programme	9/15	0/15
	Staff resources	H52. Inadequate assessment of project needs at design affects staff resources during implementation	6/15	1/15
		H53. Competitive salaries/working conditions influences the efficiency of staff resources	9/15	1/15
		H55. Instability in the country affects programme staffing and the overall performance	7/15	0/15
		H56. The reorganisation of government ministries negatively affects programme performance and contributes to high staff turnover	6/15	0/15
	Policies and procedures	H60. Hypothesis 60: Red tape, cumbersome/lengthy procedures, affect indirectly the achievement of results and particularly the delivery of goods and services [or : Red tape, cumbersome/lengthy procedures, affect implementation and efficiency, and ultimately achievement of results]	7/15	0/15
		H61. Lengthy procedures slow down recruitment processes affecting staff resources	7/15	0/15
		H62. Lengthy procedures cause disbursement delays	10/15	0/15
		H63. Country policies and procedures guide the design team on country priorities	6/15	0/15
		H64. Effective policies and procedures in place promote smooth implementation of programme	8/15	0/15
	<b>Efficiency: Functional performance</b>	Functioning management processes	H68. Differences in performance between projects	9/15
H69. Differences in performance between lead agencies.			5/15	0/15
Disbursements & projects at risks		H71. Poor financial management contributes to project's 'risk/problem' status	6/15	1/15
		H74. Timely disbursement is a positive factor in good programme performance	7/15	0/15
		H76. Delayed programme start up affects disbursement	12/15	0/15
<b>Efficiency: Adaptive management performance</b>	Adaptive management processes	H78. Adaptive management depends on functioning M&E and effective oversight.	4/15	1/15
		H79. Adaptive management leads to good improvements over time.	8/15	0/15
		H80. Good response to supervision recommendations ensures ownership and good performance	9/15	0/15
	Monitoring & Evaluation	H82. An efficient M&E system promotes ownership, accountability and transparency.	6/15	0/15
		H84. Inadequate staff resources (lack of M&E professionals) are the primary cause of M&E systems' inefficiency	8/15	0/15
		H86. Weak, delayed or no baseline studies negatively affects impact studies	6/15	0/15
		H87. Lack of programme robust M&E system is correlated with weak data evidence	7/15	0/15

		H88. Remoteness of project areas negatively affected the ability to monitor project performance	4/15	0/15
	Improvements in performance over time	H89. Where we have adaptive management, we would see improvements over time	13/15	0/15
		H90. IFAD country presence promotes/ensures improvements in programme performance over time	4/15	0/15
<b>Effectiveness: Achievement of results</b>	Goods and services	H93. Results are better where there is strong evidence of government ownership	5/15	0/15
		H94. Results are better where there is strong evidence of M&E	7/15	0/15
		H95. Results are better when there is strong evidence of coordination amongst implementing partners	4/15	0/15
		H96. Results are better where there is strong evidence of oversight guidance	7/15	0/15
	Coordination	H99. Lack of coordination mechanisms between government and IFAD lowers operations effectiveness	4/15	0/15
		H100. Lack of cooperation mechanisms between institutions undermines project components	5/15	0/15
		H101. Lack of IFAD country presence hinders coordination efforts	4/15	0/15
	Sustainability	H102. Sustainability correlates with government ownership	11/15	1/15
		H104. Adequate capacity building/training/support of decentralised public institutions and community-level organisations/farmers organisations, is essential when projects rely on these decentralised structures for sustainability.//OR:Low level of maturity of community level organisations and decentralised institutions limits sustainability	11/15	0/15
		H105. Strong decentralized structures promotes/ensures programme sustainability	5/15	0/15
		H107. Sustainability is correlated with programme exit strategies	6/15	1/15
	Scaling-up	H108. Scaling up correlates with government ownership	9/15	1/15
		H111. Scaling up promotes development and innovation	4/15	0/15
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Effectiveness	H112. Outreach to target groups are better where IFAD and Government priorities are well aligned	8/15	0/15
		H115. Outreach results are better where there is a proper M&E system in place	3/15	0/15
	Impact	H117. Poverty and gender outcomes do not correlate with government performance	4/15	0/15
		H118. Programme design flaws affects the results	10/15	0/15
		H119. Significant delays in programme implementation negatively affects the results	10/15	0/15



## Programme Management Units

### Types of management arrangements found

According to the guide for practitioners, there is no standard PMU structure for IFAD projects.<sup>123</sup> Hence establishing PMU structure, roles and responsibilities vary depending on the country context<sup>124</sup> and the project/programme type.<sup>125</sup> The structure of the Programme Management Unit (PMU) discovered in the sample countries is categorized into four categories:

- i) Single PMU (the most preferred option noticed),
- ii) National PMU coordinating decentralised PMUs,
- iii) Decentralised set up with multiple parallel PMU,
- iv) The Super PMU.

The evaluation team noticed that the PMU might be typically hosted within the lead ministry/department headquarters or at the local level (provinces and districts) in terms of integration. However, some PMUs are established as autonomous or parallel. In addition, the PMUs may have a “centralized and decentralized” structure, as shown in the table below.

Programme Management Arrangements	Criteria Definition	Classification of Case studies
Single PMU	One PMU is responsible for managing the implementation of project components over the project’s entire geographic area.	México, Nepal, Kenya, Ghana, Sudan, Niger, Ecuador, India, Burundi, Pakistan
National PMU coordinating decentralised PMUs	A categorized arrangement of PMUs based on the geopolitical structure of the project area. Mostly, a national PMU may coordinate between a number of PMUs at decentralized level (province or district levels), which in turn, coordinate PMUs at the county or township level, etc.	Turkey, Ecuador, Madagascar, Niger, Perú, Sudan, India (Federal), DRC
Decentralised set up with multiple parallel PMU	Multiple parallel PMUs are established to cover distinct geographic areas.	Ghana, Madagascar
Super PMU	Super PMUs are units that manage two or more IFAD-funded projects (or other donor agencies projects) while retaining the financial and managerial autonomy of PMUs.	Moldova (CPIU)

I identified staffing structure of the Programme Management Units. The review discovered four different staffing structures for the programme management types identified below (table 4), namely:

- i) PMU within government (with only government staff),
- ii) PMU within government with external + government staff,
- iii) Autonomous PMU established outside the government with mixed staff (externally recruited and government staff),

<sup>123</sup> Also, there is no standard PMU structure for IFAD projects (A guide for practitioners, p30)

<sup>124</sup> The factors which influences the country context includes economic status, rural development status (infrastructure, socio-economic dynamics), public administration system (organizational structures, government policies and regulations, processes and procedures, status of private-sector and non-state actors), population density, culture and attitudes.

<sup>125</sup> In terms of thematic coverage, nature of goods and services to be delivered, complexity of the project, target location and intended beneficiaries.

- iv) Other (including NGOs – mostly reporting to the government agency responsible for programmes).

	Programme Management Arrangements	PMU within government with ONLY government staff	PMU within government with external + seconded government staff	Autonomous PMU outside the government with external + government staff	Other (including NGOs)
Single PMU		Ghana, Mexico, Nepal, Kenya	México, Nepal, Ghana, Sudan, Kenya	Ghana, Niger, Ecuador, Sudan, India, Burundi, Pakistan	Nepal, Pakistan
National PMU coordinating decentralized PMUs			Turkey, Ecuador, Madagascar,	Niger, Peru, Sudan, India (Federal), DRC	
Decentralised set up with multiple parallel PMU		Ghana,	Madagascar		
Super PMU		Moldova			

Source: Sample case studies review.

- I) PMU with government staff refers to situations where the programme management unit comprises staff from the lead implementing agency and other ministries, including decentralized structures. Staff is usually housed within the lead agency, and only government staff is primarily known for being in charge of the programme's execution over the country's whole geographic area. 6 out of 15 countries have such type of PMU arrangements.
- Ghana's NORPREP's attached to the Regional Planning Coordinating Unit (RPCU) is a typical example. The RPCU had several challenges, most notably, understaffed, overloaded with other responsibilities and unable to drive programme implementation.
  - In Mexico, several projects had high difficulties in coping with changing circumstances. PMU established within government is preferred because it's aligned with the government's policy "of avoiding the duplication of administrative or implementation structures, and also with lessons drawn from IFAD projects in the country with regard to the inadvisability of creating alternative structures that may be terminated at the conclusion of donor-financed investments".<sup>126</sup>
  - Moldova's Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU) has proved to be very effective and efficient for the Moldovan government in implementing, documenting good practices besides been fast to provide feedback to demands. Mexico only uses public structures to execute; nonetheless, its fundamental flaw is unit's inability to react to shifting government objectives and implement corrective measures.
- II) PMU within government with external & government staff refers to situations where the programme management unit is established within the lead agency and comprises externally recruited staff to implement the programme and government

<sup>126</sup> Recommendations of the President on the PRODESNOs (2005) - President\_R-24-Rev-1.pdf

staff to provide support/guidance to the former. The external support is mostly either part-time or full time through the programme life cycle. The review noticed similar types of PMU in 9 out of 15 countries.

- Nepal' HVAP and PAFP have externally recruited staff working with government staff at all levels. Niger projects are organised in a national unit and regional project coordination units. The National Unit for Representation and Technical Assistance (CENRAT), located within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. An example is Niger's PUSADER, where the National Coordination Unit mainly relied on Regional Coordination Units for the implementation of activities. Also, the implementation of the project relied on outsourcing based on contracting with various operators.<sup>127</sup>

III) The third and four classifications (autonomous PMU) refer to situations where the programme management unit is established outside the government and comprises externally recruited staff on or plus government staff on secondment). The review identified 12 out of 15 countries with such arrangements for the third option and 2 out of 15 for the latter. Other PMU staffing – which has the least is usually executed by NGO, private sector in collaboration with the government partner. According to the FGD discussions, if PMUs are completely autonomous without government intervention, it is often noted to have challenges in having the resource available on time to operate.

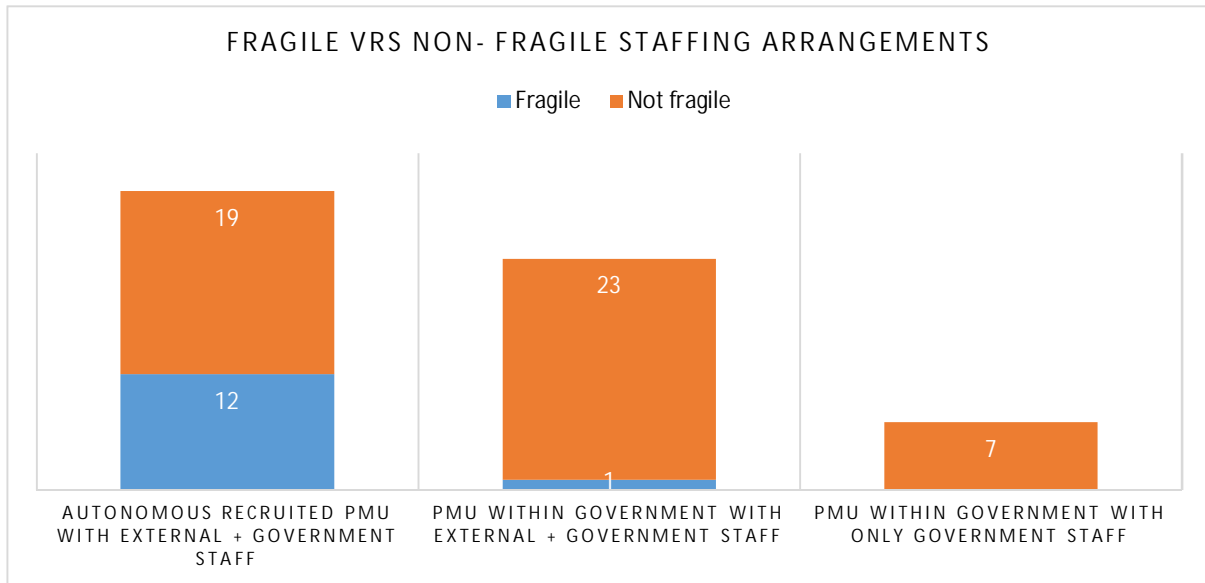
- In India, PTSLP was managed by a PMU under the Department of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj of the government of Tamil-Nadu, and MPOWER's PMU was under the responsibility of the Divisional Commissioner and received support from a Private Sector Liaison Office housed within the Marwar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).<sup>128</sup>
- In DRC PMUs are located outside Government and have Government staff. The CSPE notes the weak planning and management capacity of the PPAKIN PMU, which led to the failure to anticipate needs in the context of contract elaboration, the procurement planning and management, the provision to partners of the essential tools for carrying out their work and the planning and synchronising activities with the reality on the ground. Similarly, but with a varying performance, Pakistan's MIOP (and later PRISM) was outside a government agency called PPAF.

Fragile vs. Non Fragile Programme Management Units and their staffing preference. The findings presented below confirm that fragile countries mostly prefer autonomous PMU staffing, followed by PMU within government with external + government seconded staff than PMUs made up of government staff ONLY. On the other hand, non fragile countries mostly prefer PMU within government with external + government staff, followed by autonomous PMUs over PMUs with only government staff. In terms of PMU type, no fragile countries is noticed to prefer single PMU and National PMU coordinating decentralised PMUs.

<sup>127</sup> Outsourcing as a practice is described in the 2009 CSPE, which explains that most of the activities is delegated to NGOs, research departments and deconcentrated technical services.

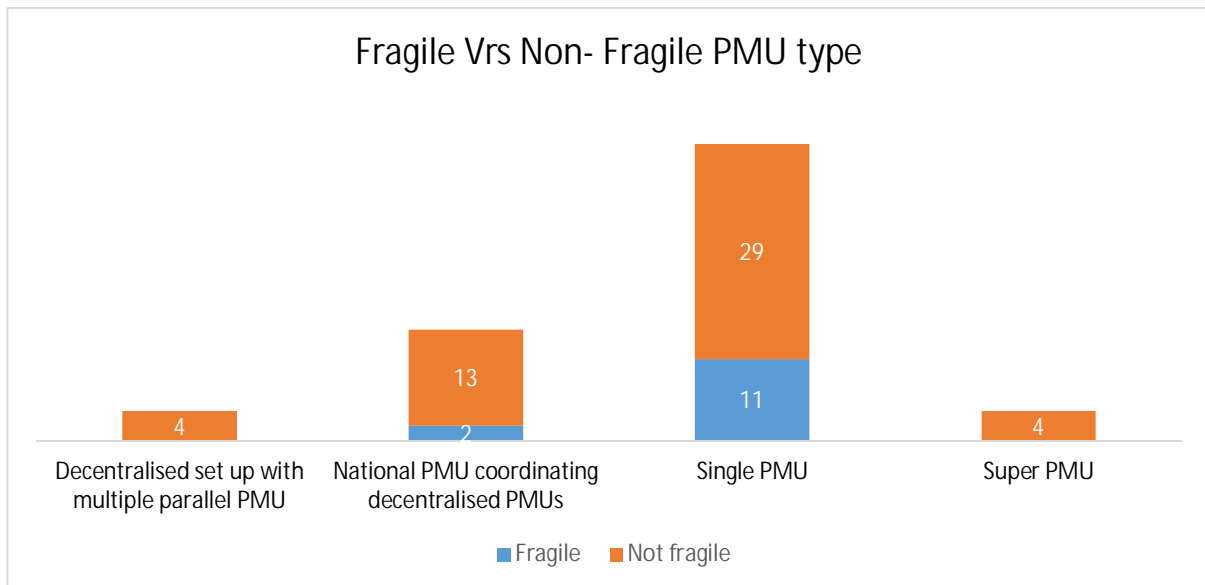
<sup>128</sup> CSPE 2015 India, PCRV 2017 OTELP India, PCRV 2020 CAIM India

Figure 14:  
**Number of projects distributed among different staffing arrangements in Fragile vrs Non Fragile (sample countries)**



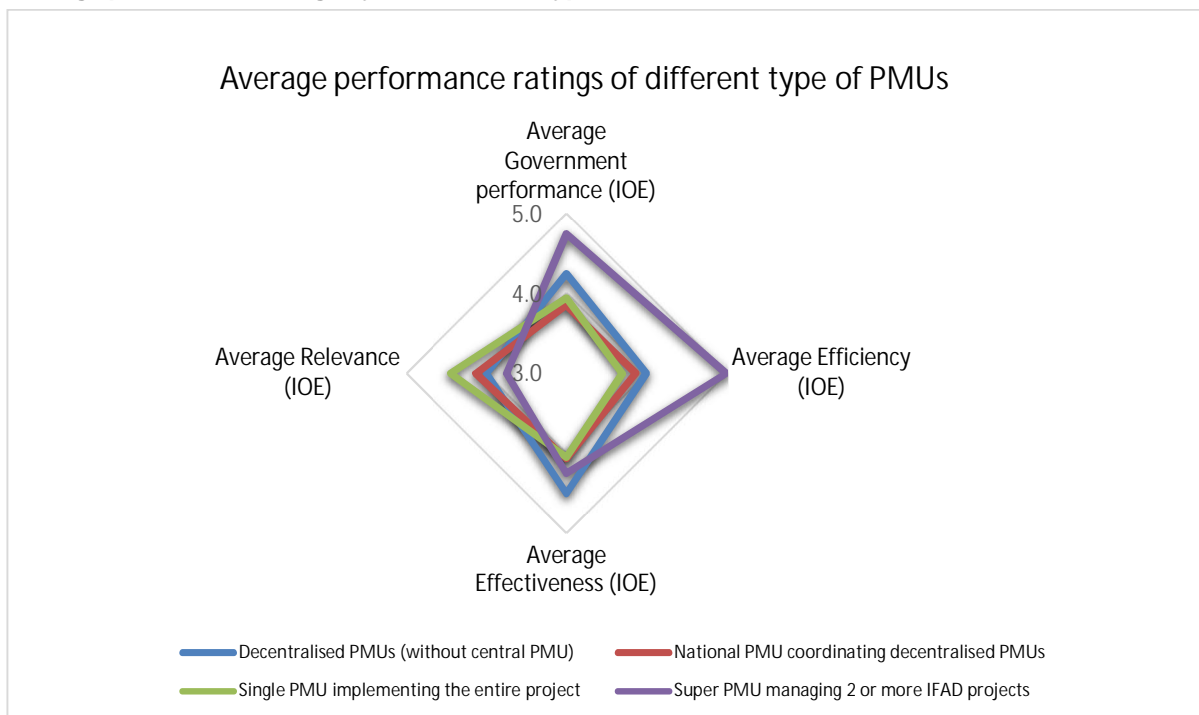
Source: ESR.

Figure 15:  
**Number of projects distributed between PMU types in Fragile vrs Non Fragile (sample countries)**



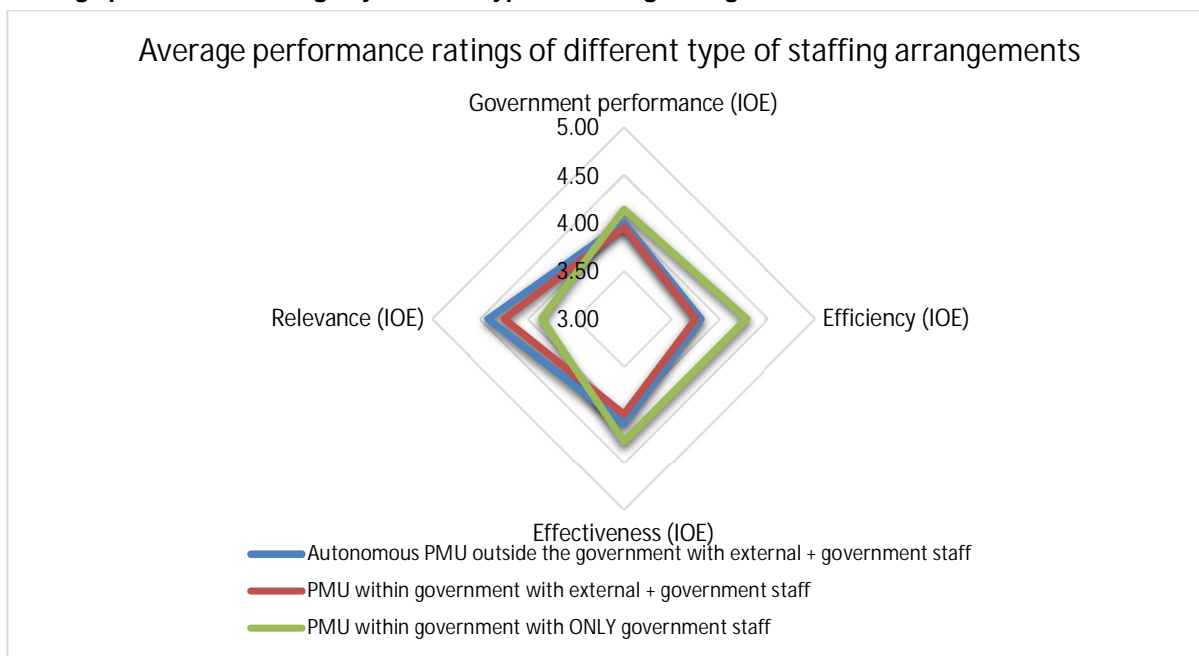
Source: ESR.

Figure 16:  
Average performance ratings by different PMU type



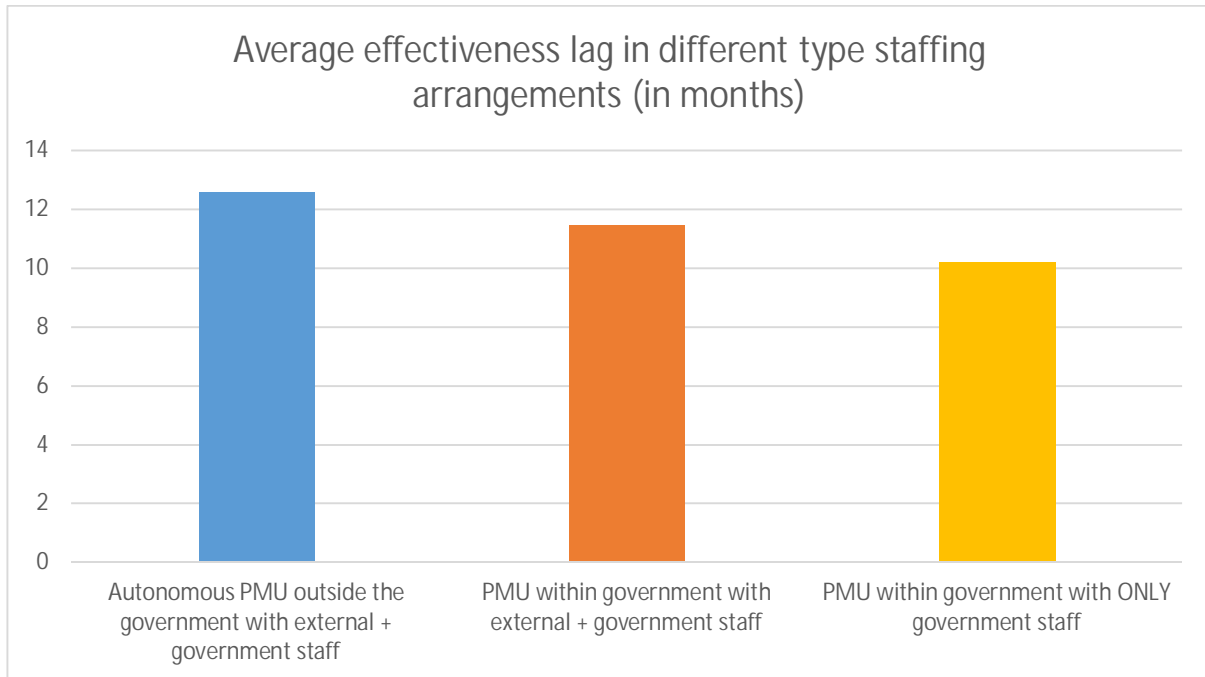
Source: ESR.

Figure 17:  
Average performance ratings by different type of staffing arrangements



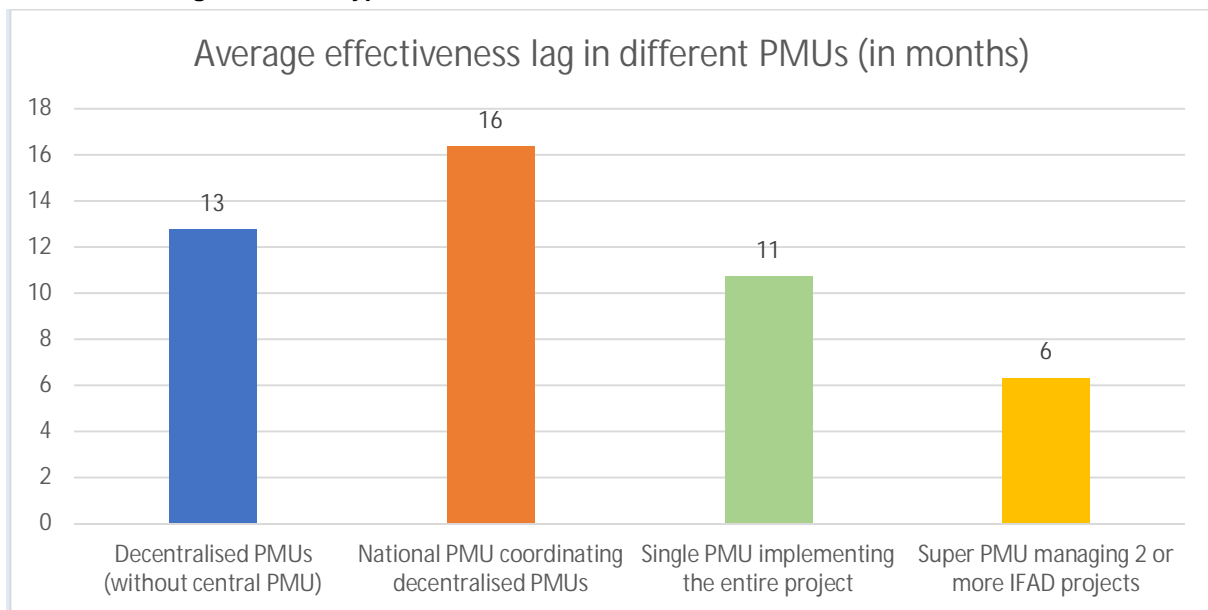
Source: ESR.

Figure 18:  
**Effectiveness lag in different type of staffing arrangements**



Source: ESR.

Figure 19:  
**Effectiveness lag in different type of PMU**



Source: ESR.

## Senior Advisor's report

The ESR takes a fresh look at the evaluation of government performance in IFAD. In doing so it sheds light on crucial facets of government performance that are not adequately covered by the current generation of evaluations. The array of findings which the ESR has been able to generate would seem to argue in favour of an overhaul of IFAD's approach to evaluating government performance, notably by re-focusing the existing evaluation framework and updating the related evaluation questions so as to guide future assessments.

It would have been desirable for the ESR to go somewhat further in applying the incentive (ownership) perspective to the various institutional layers of project implementation. Moreover, the interplay between ownership/incentives and capacities in driving government project performance would certainly have warranted some analysis. Yet, the reports forming the basis of the evaluation synthesis were bound to fall short on producing this type of evidence.

It would require a new generation of evaluation reports offering greater granularity with regard to this broader institutional dimension and its repercussions on project performance. The revised evaluation approach to government performance should be governed by the following considerations:

1. Government performance deserves sharper attention for its decisive influence on project results and impact;
2. Government performance is best discussed in the context of project efficiency rather than as stand-alone evaluation criteria;
3. Incentives (ownership) and capacities need to come into closer focus as central drivers of government performance;
4. As do project organization and management arrangements which boost or inhibit government performance by conditioning those drivers;
5. Dynamic aspects of government performance (adaptive performance) need to be analyzed, over and above compliance, as key ingredients to project achievement.

Naturally, amending the framework requires establishing a common understanding on what constitutes government performance. Further conceptual work on assessing project ownership/incentives, which cannot be directly measured, via the use of proxy variables and a parallel effort on determining knowledge capacities are bound to be necessary. A number of these and related questions are discussed in a methodological paper prepared for this ESR ("Issues paper for evaluation synthesis on government performance" January 2021). Lastly, in as much as the updated evaluation framework and evaluation questions cover new ground, it would be prudent to test their feasibility on a pilot basis prior to full rollout.

Ralf Maurer  
December 2021

## Lessons for case study countries

Country	Lessons from IFAD case studies	Lessons from IFI evaluation
Burundi	Continued engagement with a fragile country through periods of crisis contributes to government performance by building trust and ownership.	Similar lesson in: WB IEG - 2019
	In a fragile country with weak capacities, simplicity of both objectives and design is a priority.	Similar lesson in: WB IEG - 2019
	Continuous country presence and a portfolio evolving alongside the country situation can spread ownership across government. Effective involvement of local service providers and authorities helps spreading ownership further to local government levels.	
		Regional operations can be particularly effective in a small, landlocked country. Enhancing regional activities can help seizing upon the synergies and economies of scale that such activities entail. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the challenges of capacity and coordination (WB IEG - 2019).
Democratic Republic of Congo	<b>In a context of fragility and political instability, building institutions, together with decentralized channels and services, is an end rather than a mean.</b> It is essential to prioritize institution building at the government level and capacity building at the local level.	
	<b>In a context of weak institutions and limited procedures, it is important to explicitly pursue an inclusive targeting strategy to support access to programs for the most vulnerable.</b> Designs based on self-targeting, or simply lacking a defined targeting strategy, risk triggering elite capturing or self-exclusion mechanisms.	
	In a fragmented environment deprived of resources, avoid combining multiple interventions over multiple areas into one bigger programme. <b>Smaller and synergetic interventions can be more easily managed at the local level and avoid overstretching weak government capacity.</b>	
	<b>Government disengagement can be met through enhanced synergies and collaboration with other partners in the short term.</b> Partnerships will improve the effectiveness of wide-spread interventions in remote locations, but will not resolve issues of sustainability in a situation of a disengaged government with weak capacities.	
Ecuador	In the context of a middle-income country with good capacities, where political instability and lack of IFAD presence have led to government being insufficiently engaged, the following lessons apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Decentralized mechanisms for coordination, mutual learning, and scaling up</b> will complement weak government functions.</li> </ul>	Similar lesson in: IADB - Country Program Evaluation: 2012-2017



	<p>4. <b>Flexible implementation mechanisms</b> and goals will address government's limited cooperativeness: allowing for swift modifications of designs and agreements can help projects survive the complications of an unstable and disengaged political environment.</p> <p>5. Partnerships with other actors operating in the same area will establish <b>synergies between complementary interventions and enable</b> scaling despite the lack of follow-up and support.</p>	
	When covering a disperse area without the required government support, multiple projects with differentiated targeting strategies are more effective.	
	<b>Large, transversal projects relying on shared leadership will be subject to systemic implementation issues and delays in the absence of a proper institutional framework of collaboration.</b> It is therefore important to assess the level of cooperation and coordination between governmental agencies (even ministries) at the design stage.	
	In a middle-income country with low government commitment, <b>projects need to be adjusted to exploit and develop existing market mechanisms.</b> Once the communities have a better understanding of marketing and value chains, and are involved with private sector partners, it will be easier to scale up programs.	Similar lesson in: IADB - Country Program Evaluation: 2012-2017.
<b>Ghana</b>	In a context of weak government ownership, the established aid architecture can provide the basis for scalability of successful projects.	Similar lesson in: AfDB - CSP (2002-2015)
	In a politically stable country with adequate capacities and broad aid architecture, it is important to push the government at the center of the donors' network. Putting the government in the position to take advantage of donors presence and coordinate their efforts will develop ownership and result in better exploitation of donors resources.	
	In a context of ongoing decentralization, it is important to assess how close the process is to completion and what are the capacities of the decentralized channels. Proper evaluation will inform IFAD on whether to prioritize institution building of newly created structures or to resort to alternative means of coordination and management.	
<b>India</b>	Private-public partnership or partnerships with local organizations can compensate for the lack of coordination and capacities at the central level in a situation where local-level cooperation is better than central-level coordination. Such an approach may provide short-term efficiency while other projects focus on institution building in the long term.	
	<b>In a large and heterogeneous country, it is beneficial to diversify the project portfolio accordingly, especially when it comes to the choice of implementing partners.</b> In more developed areas, local NGOs are more agile in undertaking mobilization, compared to public structure. However, they are not as present in backwards areas, where greater involvement from the government is to be encouraged.	
	<b>In a large, fragmented country, authority of the implementing agency is crucial for the success of broader projects.</b> Good ownership at the federal level is best exploited when a single	

	implementing unit is given authority directly from the government and is embedded within the structure of a national agency. Importance and autonomy make it possible for the unit to oversee and coordinate multiple states even in a sluggish and understaffed bureaucratic environment.	
		Integration of individual sector operations at the state level is crucial for making the sum of engagement more than the parts (WB IEG – 2018 (CLR Review)).
<b>Kenya</b>	<b>Using existing procedures and institutions wherever they are functional will be an investment</b> into institution building and ownership.	
	Working with evolving/budding institutions requires flexible designs, continuous adaptation and adjustments in institution building efforts.	
	<b>An increasingly decentralized context will present more heterogeneity between locations and diversified government performance.</b> Choices are to be made whether to focus on areas with greater capacities or prioritize those that are lagging behind.	
<b>Madagascar</b>	Continued engagement with a fragile country through periods of crisis contributes to government performance by building trust and ownership.	
	In a context of limited capacities and resources, project-funded units at the central level can be a short-term tool of project implementation. Nevertheless, they do not contribute to institution building nor solve the issue of low resources flowing to decentralized actors, and thus hinder sustainability in the long run.	
	In a fragile country, flexible, community-driven designs at the lowest management and implementation level, involving local NGOs are often self-sustaining and thus not inherently limited by the low resources allocated at the decentralized level.	Similar lesson in: WB IEG – 2017 (CLR Review)
	In a fragile country, it is necessary to carry out careful appraisal of capacities and associated risks to ensure the former are not overestimated and the latter are not underestimated. It is then essential to ensure follow up of all the measures devised to tackle the detected issues.	Similar lesson in: WB IEG – 2017 (CLR Review)
<b>Mexico</b>	In a stable middle-income economy, the private sector can generate efficiency gains through competition and, eventually, scale up projects. Involvement of the private sector can offset the lack of government support or commitment to scaling up.	
	<b>In a context of inadequate commitment, limited cooperation, and political instability, flexibility and simplicity of design is a priority, regardless of the country's income level and resources.</b>	Similar lesson in: WB IEG – 2020 (CLR Review)

	Whenever government disengagement and lack of support constrain actual capacities, it is important to recognize these limitations and rescale the design and objectives of programs accordingly.	
	<b>In a context of limited cooperativeness, government mandated projects can improve trust and overall collaboration.</b> These projects increase ownership through greater government involvement in design and supervision and systematic involvement of the more collaborative agencies.	
	In a context of weak commitment, building knowledge at the local level in combination with market-focused designs, can make up for limited government support by producing self-sustainable outcomes.	
		<b>In middle income countries, it is important to deepen subnational engagement in lagging regions.</b> Even if it is possible to valuably accompany reform at the federal level, it is important to focus on the subnational level as there often are widespread differences in regional needs and human development levels (WB IEG – 2020 (CLR Review)).
<b>Moldova</b>	In a small state with adequate capacities direct country presence is not essential: a network of partnerships and a centralized PMU can provide supervision of implementation and representation on IFAD's side.	
	In a small country with an engaged government, it is advantageous to establish country presence at the central level, even if indirect (through representation), to foster policy dialogue and channel ownership downstream.	
	Delegation of authority by the central government to a single, consolidated PMU for all IFAD programs can prevent projects incorporation into the government's administrative and management systems. This is ultimately detrimental to the country's independence from international support.	
		Development partner coordination for budget support is essential for effective influence on key governance issues (WB IEG – 2017(CLR Review)).
<b>Nepal</b>	<b>In a context of political instability, continuity in the assignment of leading executing agency to a strict pool of ministries can cause efficiency gains.</b> Consistency of assignment fosters learning and experience despite the high turnover and makes these ministerial agencies struggle significantly less in launching and implementing new projects.	
	In a country undergoing a process of fundamental institutional transformation, it is critical to assess the capacity of the newly created institutions and adjust the complexity of projects to the identified constraints.	Similar lesson in: ADB validation of CSP - 2019

	<p><b>A country experiencing internal conflict is better approached with strategies normally used in a fragile context:</b> priority is given to protecting the most vulnerable and reaching remote areas directly if outside of the government's capacity by focusing directly on targeted beneficiaries through partnerships rather than centralized channels.</p>	
	<p>When governments focus on achieving targets (quantitative outputs) rather than results (impact), they risk not consulting with the direct beneficiaries and sacrifice sustainability in favor of superficial and temporary success.</p>	
	<p><b>When scaling up of entire projects is unfeasible, scaling up specific instruments or practices is a valid alternative</b> objective and still be quite beneficial if opportunities are detected at design and pick-up is incentivized at implementation.</p>	
		<p>To effectively address a country's needs after a natural disaster in a fragile environment, it is critical to be agile and flexible (WB IEG – 2018 (CLR Review)).</p>
		<p><b>Greater selectivity is needed in post-conflict environments to align with the limited implementation capacity and ensure sustained delivery of results.</b> Countries that move out of a conflict situation are bound to find themselves facing the broad challenges of institution building (WB IEG – 2018 (CLR Review)).</p>
<b>Niger</b>	<p>In a context of good ownership but limited country presence, the creation of a national coordinating body close to the central government (or its relevant ministries) and representing IFAD can lead to strong policy engagement through continued policy dialogue and projects informing the government's strategies.</p>	
	<p>While horizontal scaling up (e.g., diffusion and replication in other projects) can be achieved with adequate policy support, vertical scaling up requires substantial engagement at the central level and policy dialogue.</p>	
	<p>In a country with limited capacities but a cooperative government scaling up might be unfeasible in collaboration with the government, while it could still be achieved successfully in partnership with other international agencies.</p>	
		<p>The effectiveness of interventions in fragile environments is enhanced through working with other development partners and in partnership with local communities and established NGOs to mobilize resources, deepen knowledge of local circumstances and facilitate implementation (WB IEG – 2018 (CLR Review)).</p>
		<p>In a fragile country, it is important to combine short term economic and humanitarian needs with longer term development objectives to</p>

		maximize the impact of emergency operations (WB IEG – 2018 (CLR Review)).
		In a context of good ownership, it is valuable to encourage government leadership of financed projects through early involvement, simpler program design, and better linkages across the portfolio (WB IEG – 2018 (CLR Review)).
<b>Pakistan</b>	When existing procedures and institutions are a functional starting point, it is preferable to rely on them for project implementation, rather than on project-specific structures such as PMUs. Investing in existing agencies will contribute to institution building and ownership in the long run.	
	Flexibility of design, resource allocation, and implementation is necessary in a large and crises-prone country to be responsive of emerging necessities. This approach is especially valid when working with a collaborative government.	
	Involving community members in design, monitoring, and implementation contributes to the development of strong ownership by the communities, which can foster sustainability through clear responsibilities and arrangements (e.g., O&M) and generally proactive management of the program's outputs.	
		The urgency of crisis management and response in a crises-prone country can lead to reduced due diligence in project design, and less attention for results frameworks and monitoring arrangements (ADB).
<b>Peru</b>	<b>In a stable middle-income economy, the private sector to generate efficiency gains through competition and, eventually, scale up projects.</b> Involvement of the private sector can offset the lack of government support or commitment to scaling up.	
	In a context of ineffective public management, government ownership and high-quality human capital make it possible to decentralize project management.	
	<b>In a context of good ownership and commitment, it is crucial to engage in strategic dialogue and formalize a detailed long-term plan to ensure institutionalization of public policies and synergies between interventions.</b> Government performance is maximized by actively exploiting commitment, whereas a relationship based on trust and mutual consensus is not as productive.	
		It is important to build on previous successes in vulnerable areas to encourage greater policy support from the government, especially regarding social inclusion and poverty reduction (IADB - Country Program Evaluation 2012-2016).
<b>Sudan</b>	In a fragmented and conflict-afflicted country, it is valuable to take into consideration drivers of tension and socio-political contexts and their implications when designing community-focused	

	<p>projects. It is important to balance sensitivity to the needs of community members and awareness of the general context of the country.</p>	
	<p>Working within a context of evolving institutions requires flexible designs, permissive of adaptation and redirection of institution building efforts.</p>	
	<p>Involving community members in design, monitoring, and implementation contributes to the development of strong ownership by the communities, which can foster sustainability through clear responsibilities and arrangements (e.g., O&amp;M) and generally proactive management of the program's outputs.</p>	
	<p>In a context where there is greater cooperation between units or agencies at the lower (close to the field) than at higher (central) level, private-public partnership or partnerships with local organizations can be a useful tool to escape the lack of coordination and capacities at the central level. Such frameworks provide relative short-term efficiency while other projects focus on institution building in the long term.</p>	
	<p>Scalability in a fragile country can be achieved in spite of limited resources and capabilities through continuity of new projects that build on previous ones.</p>	
<b>Turkey</b>	<p>In a country with good ownership but sporadic commitment, it is beneficial to seek partnerships outside the central government, either in the private sector, through NGOs, or with other IFIs. Involving the private sector or other donors can spread ownership when there are frictions with the government regarding certain objectives.</p>	
	<p><b>In a stable middle-income economy, private sector to generate efficiency gains through competition and, eventually, scale up projects.</b> As long as the country economy is relatively developed in the areas relevant to the projects, involvement of the private sector can offset the lack of government support or commitment to scaling up.</p>	
	<p>In a context of limited government commitment on specific but valuable goals (e.g., gender, youth), direct targeting is necessary to strengthen the focus on neglected areas of implementation.</p>	
	<p><b>In the context of a stable economy with generally adequate capacities, it is still vital to be aware of development disparities within the country.</b> Project design must be informed on which regions are lagging behind and the level of variability in capacities and resources allocated between regions.</p>	
		<p>In a country with good ownership but sporadic commitment, it is essential to pursue long-term engagement and sequenced interventions (WB IEG – 2017 (CLR Review)).</p>

Source: ESR

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