

Document: EC 2022/116/W.P.6
Agenda: 7
Date: 18 February 2022
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Update on the IFAD11 Impact Assessment

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Evaluation Committee — 116th Session
Rome, 17 March 2022

For: **Review**

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Update on the IFAD11 Impact Assessment

I. Introduction and key facts

1. This document provides an update on the IFAD11 Impact Assessment (IA) as part of the commitment stated in the new Terms of Reference of the Evaluation Committee approved at the 132nd session of the Executive Board in April 2021. It presents an overview of the approach used to assess the impact of IFAD investments for the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11), 2019–2021, and the progress made, taking into account the challenges related to COVID-19 restrictions. The document follows the guidelines laid out in the Development Effectiveness Framework (DEF) and reports on actions taken by Management to address the feedback received from the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board on the IFAD10 Impact Assessment Report.¹
2. The DEF² sets out the guidelines for implementing rigorous IAs in the context of IFAD's overall efforts to improve development effectiveness. The purpose of the DEF – which was recently strengthened through an update³ in the form of DEF 2.0 – is to create the structure needed to facilitate the generation and use of evidence for the design and implementation of projects and country strategic opportunities programmes. The DEF and DEF 2.0 include a series of activities designed to overcome the constraints faced in generating and using evidence in decision-making and to push forward a results-based agenda.
3. The IFAD11 IA commitment aims to measure attributable impact by conducting high-quality, rigorous IAs on at least 15 per cent of IFAD's project portfolio reaching completion in each replenishment period. The Research and Impact Assessment Division (RIA) is in charge of delivering on this commitment and is currently finalizing activities to complete the IFAD11 IAs. The overarching IFAD11 IA exercise includes analysis of a sample of projects that completed during IFAD11. This period coincides with the COVID-19 crisis.
4. IFAD11 IA reports on five Tier II development indicators of the Results Management Framework (RMF). These indicators are closely linked to IFAD's overarching goal and strategic objectives (SOs). Table 1 provides a list of these RMF indicators and corresponding SDG indicators, along with IFAD11 targets.

Table 1
IFAD11 Tier II development impact indicators

Goal/SO	RMF indicator	Definition	SDG indicator	IFAD11 target (millions)
Goal	2.1.1	Number of people with increased income	2.3 & 1.2	44
SO1	2.1.2	Number of people with improved production	2.3.2	47
SO2	2.1.3	Number of people with improved market access	2.3	46
SO3	2.1.4	Number of people with greater resilience	1.5	24
Mainstreaming goal	2.1.5	Number of people with improved nutrition	2.1	12

Source: IFAD12/3/R.2/Add.1.

5. Additional key indicators are being used to track and monitor IFAD's other mainstreaming themes of gender, youth and climate change. Indicators on disability are also included to track IFAD's ongoing efforts to incorporate this theme

¹ [Minutes of the 126th Session of the Executive Board](#) discussing [EB 2019/126/R.4](#).
[Minutes of the 106th Session of the Evaluation Committee](#) discussing [EC 2019/106/W.P.5](#).
[Minutes of the 127th Session of the Executive Board](#) discussing [EB 2019/127/R.5](#).
[Minutes of the 109th Session of the Evaluation Committee](#) discussing [EC 2020/109/W.P.4](#).

² EB 2016/119/R.12.

³ EB 2021/134/R.24.

into its reporting.⁴ While basic indicators for mainstreaming themes are collected in all IAs, specific approaches are used for gender and climate change.⁵

6. Reporting on all these indicators requires detailed qualitative and quantitative data at the household, producer organization and community levels, covering all livelihood sources, merged with geo-referenced remote sensing and climatic data both from IFAD beneficiaries and from a comparison group. This allows for rigorous statistical analysis to ensure that the estimated impacts are attributable to IFAD investments. These data are the core components of IFAD's gold standard approach to IAs.
7. To date, the IFAD IAs have used an ex post methodology, relying on carefully selected samples at project completion while ensuring sufficient size for statistical power. The IAs use a mixed-method approach combining qualitative, GIS and quantitative data. The methodology used is defined in the IA plan, which is developed in collaboration with project stakeholders and predicated on extensive field, data and desk work to design a robust sample frame, and contextualize information, survey questionnaires and conduct pilot surveys to test the questionnaire. Data are normally collected through face-to-face interviews and recorded digitally on a tablet. To support sample selection, the quantitative analysis is complemented with qualitative and geo-referenced data to account for climatic and remote sensing data. Qualitative data are used to tailor survey instruments and validate the results and narrative. Results from individual project IAs are then synthesized in a meta-analysis, which helps to inform assessment of IFAD's overall impact. This is essential for reporting on aggregate development effectiveness, i.e. the overall impact of IFAD's portfolio on its goal, its strategic objectives and its mainstreaming themes.
8. The original IFAD11 IA sample was selected in June 2018, long before the pandemic started. The selection was made using the criteria provided in the DEF. The sample was composed of 24 projects, including 18 projects as first choices and six additional ones as reserves to ensure enough coverage in case of attrition (i.e. projects dropping out or not assessable for exogenous reasons). At the time of selection, these 24 projects represented more than one fifth (21 per cent) of the projects in IFAD's portfolio that were expected to complete by 2021.⁶ At the Evaluation Committee session in June 2020, IFAD Management "agreed that a larger [i.e. larger than 15 per cent of the portfolio] sample size would be better", and that IFAD should "try its best to increase the sample size given the resource constraints."⁷ The ambitious target of 24 projects for the IFAD11 IA was confirmed as the desirable target in spite of the challenges associated with COVID-19 and increasing resource constraints.
9. Since March 2020, the COVID-19 crisis has created uncertainty and restrictions related to fieldwork that pose critical challenges for the IFAD11 IA. These include: (i) freezing of all field-level physical data collection activities; (ii) questions about when field-level data collection would be possible again; (iii) additional budgetary burden for implementing data collection under COVID-19 regulations; and (iv) changes/extensions in official project completion/closing dates. These factors

⁴ [EB 2020/130/R.15/Rev.1](#).

⁵ For gender, six projects have been selected to undergo more detailed gender analysis as part of their IAs. These IAs include detailed indicators of women's empowerment and agency using specifically developed survey modules and are conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute and Center for Evaluation and Development under two grants.

For climate change, six of the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) projects are selected as part of the IA sample. These IAs include detailed indicators for climate adaptation and incorporate climate- and environment- related variables. All indicators related to mainstreaming themes and emerging priorities will be further consolidated in IFAD12 based on experiences and lessons from IFAD11

⁶ In July 2018, the universe was made up of approximately 112 such projects.

⁷ [Minutes of the 109th Session of the Evaluation Committee](#).

have had implications for which projects constitute the universe and the selected sample for IFAD11 IAs.

10. RIA has made significant efforts to deliver on the IFAD11 IA commitment (as reflected in the minutes of the 126th and 127th sessions of the Executive Board and the 106th and 109th sessions of the Evaluation Committee).⁸
11. By September 2022, RIA will present the following outputs to the Board:
 - Individual IA reports for 21 projects in the IFAD11 IA sample,⁹ each accompanied by a policy brief and infographic.
 - The IFAD11 IA Report, which will include a measure of in-sample aggregate impacts (and confidence intervals) and IFAD’s projected impact for its portfolio (including confidence intervals).¹⁰
 - A dedicated microsite that will present a user-friendly version of the IFAD11 IA Report, along with detailed methodology documents and easy-to-read policy briefs. The microsite will be dynamic and interactive, displaying data and estimated impacts, tools and showcasing additional knowledge products. With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, a descriptive analysis of the impact on IFAD beneficiaries will be provided, supported by data on income¹¹ and other livelihood indicators including alternative measures of well-being such as the multidimensional poverty index or the subjective well-being (SWB) index.
 - A section on lessons learned with regard to persons with disabilities using data collected across 14 projects.¹² This section will showcase findings from IAs, in which data were collected following methods used by the United Nations Washington Group on Disability Statistics (Short Set of Disability Questions).
 - An e-learning platform providing interactive courses developed as part of a grant to the Center for Evaluation and Development.
 - An IA manual with step-by-step guidelines and instruments to conduct rigorous IAs using IFAD’s approach.
 - A data collection kit developed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak as a tool for project management units (PMUs) and country offices to implement time- and cost-effective face-to-face household surveys.¹³
12. The remainder of this document reports on the status of the IFAD11 IA, detailing the approach taken, challenges faced, adaptive strategies explored and progress made.

⁸ [Minutes of the 126th Session of the Executive Board](#) discussing [EB 2019/126/R.4](#).
[Minutes of the 106th Session of the Evaluation Committee](#) discussing [EC 2019/106/W.P.5](#).
[Minutes of the 127th Session of the Executive Board](#) discussing [EB 2019/127/R.5](#).

⁹ This number is equivalent to 22 per cent of the portfolio of projects completing during IFAD11.

¹⁰ These figures will be updated once IA results from four IFAD investments, all of which have been delayed by the pandemic, are available.

¹¹ A section on “Beyond GDP: evidence from 21 IFAD11 IAs:” Following the work programme of the United Nations Statistical Commission on a revised “beyond GDP”, IFAD will showcase initial preliminary results of the contribution of the IA to the “beyond GDP” debate.

¹² This is part of the methodological exercise to collect data on persons with disabilities already developed and presented at the 130th session.

¹³ This kit can be used when local capacity for data collection is limited, and when the costs for implementing a full survey are too high. It consists of tools, guidelines and learning materials to support the user in the design and implementation of the survey. The kit reduces the costs of an IA and data collection for the M&E because it provides ready-to-use templates for each step of data collection, which can then be contextualized.

II. Management actions under COVID-19

13. At the Evaluation Committee session in March 2021, Management presented an update of the IFAD11 IA activities during the COVID-19 outbreak and discussed the following actions being taken to alleviate the challenges posed by the pandemic. These included: (i) a pilot of telephone surveys to test the feasibility of this medium to finalize pending IAs; (ii) consultation with the independent evaluation and self-evaluation units of major international financial institutions (IFIs) (the World Bank, African Development Bank [AfDB], Asian Development Bank [ADB] and Inter-American Development Bank [IDB]) to discuss their response to the pandemic and methodologies to deal with the effects on IAs; (iii) development of a brief IA questionnaire for contexts where travel restrictions were delaying/limiting the duration of physical data collection; and (iv) investment in additional knowledge products (IA manual and an e-learning platform).
14. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, RIA adapted its strategy, resources and approach to deal with the situation in a flexible and dynamic way, differentiated by country- and context-specific issues and difficulties. This adaptive strategy has called for a combined approach of: (i) focusing on face-to-face surveys and standard questionnaires where feasible, while applying the required COVID-19 security and safety measures; (ii) experimenting with the use of phone surveys as a fall-back option when face-to-face interviews are not possible; (iii) doing regular and detailed checks with project teams on progress in collecting data for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and assessing the extent to which the data can be utilized for rigorous IAs (i.e. inclusion of a comparison group);¹⁴ and (iv) re-evaluation by RIA of the robustness and size of the IFAD11 IA sample through sensitivity analyses. Throughout the process, Management was provided with regular updates on the status, progress and challenges being encountered.¹⁵
15. As mentioned above, RIA consulted the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) and the independent evaluation and self-evaluation units of IFIs (World Bank, AfDB, ADB and IDB) on the use of phone surveys in their operations. Although the findings indicated that phone surveys are not considered suitable for IAs of targeted interventions, RIA developed and tested a phone questionnaire as a last resort to be able to deliver on the IFAD11 IA commitment. A technical meeting with the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) team to validate the RIA phone questionnaire was organized. The LSMS team has experience in conducting phone surveys to assess COVID-19 impacts on households interviewed in their previous rounds of integrated surveys on agriculture.¹⁶
16. This meeting reinforced the findings of the consultations with IFIs. There was clear consensus that phone surveys should be used as a last resort to collect data for IAs of targeted interventions because: (i) phone surveys cannot exceed 30 minutes per respondent (for each call); (ii) the cognitive burden of phone surveys makes it impossible to collect detailed data for the Tier II indicators on which IFAD needs to report; and (iii) the phone numbers of a representative sample of beneficiaries and control group are essential. The latter creates bias since IFAD's main target group includes the most remote and isolated, and only wealthier subgroups are likely to have access to phones. Moreover, phone surveys rely on the availability of phone numbers from previous rounds of data collection. IFAD project M&E data do not include phone numbers.
17. Notwithstanding the challenges, RIA developed a short questionnaire for phone surveys to respond to questions raised by IFAD's Senior Management. The survey

¹⁴ Two datasets – namely Ethiopia (RUFIP II) and Mozambique (PROSUL) – were sourced from PMUs with the support of country directors and have been included in the analysis.

¹⁵ The annex details the updates provided to Management.

¹⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/lms/brief/lms-launches-high-frequency-phone-surveys-on-covid-19>.

was designed to be administered over two phone calls of 30 minutes each per respondent. The questionnaire covers a reduced set of questions that report on a minimum of Tier II indicators and some mainstreaming themes. The survey was tested in Kenya via GeoPoll using a random set of respondents selected from a national phone registry list who were not related to IFAD beneficiaries.¹⁷

18. At the same time, RIA attempted to prepare sample frames, including a full list of phone numbers of IFAD beneficiaries and a representative comparison group by contacting community leaders and producer organization managers in a couple of countries from the IFAD11 IA sample. Political, privacy and security concerns hampered progress and it was impossible to obtain a full list of phone numbers of a representative sample of beneficiaries (or the control group) in any country.¹⁸ The outcomes of these attempts demonstrated the difficulty and inappropriateness of conducting phone surveys for IAs due to the specific nature of IFAD's target groups and IAs.
19. The phone survey questionnaire, however, was a useful tool in developing a "light questionnaire" for use in face-to-face interviews in six countries where the survey duration had to be reduced to address COVID-19 restrictions and safety rules.
20. Additional tools have also been developed to help collect household data with remote backstopping support. This has been done in collaboration with the World Bank LSMS team. These provide PMUs and country offices with the means to carry out time- and cost-effective face-to-face surveys for reporting on IFAD11 Tier II development impact indicators (table 1) and some of the mainstreaming themes.
21. As a result of these different survey tools, IFAD11 IAs rely fully on data collected using face-to-face interviews.
22. The next section presents the current status of the IFAD11 IA exercise and a sensitivity analysis to attest to its validity.

III. IFAD11 IA status

A. IFAD11 sample and status

23. Table 2 shows the status of projects in the IFAD11 IA sample as at January 2022. Data collection and analyses have been finalized in 21 out of 25 countries (the remaining ones are Pakistan, Philippines, Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania). Fourteen IAs used the full standard questionnaire and five IAs used the light questionnaire. Two IAs use endline data provided by the PMUs, which had previously received RIA's support and backstopping. The table also presents information on the inclusion of questions on persons with disabilities, SWB and COVID-19.

¹⁷ GeoPoll is a survey company also used by the World Bank and the World Food Programme for COVID-19 surveys. At that time, international and regional organizations had started using phone surveys to assess the implications of the pandemic and conduct design or supervision missions remotely. Regardless of the differences in the nature of data collection activities for IAs, this trend prompted RIA to test their feasibility for IAs.

¹⁸ Significant effort was invested in recovering and validating phone numbers to conduct phone surveys in Kyrgyzstan and Plurinational State of Bolivia with the support of country directors (CDs) and PMUs. Accessing the phone numbers of beneficiaries and (even more so) control households was very problematic. The CDs and PMUs expressed a strong preference for face-to-face surveys when local COVID-19 restrictions allowed. In the end, face-to-face data were collected in both countries as soon as COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

Table 2
IFAD11 IA sample details

#	Region	Country	Project ID	Project full name	Project acronym	Survey type (full/light/endline)	Questions on...		
							Persons with disabilities	COVID-19	SWB
1	APR	Viet Nam	1100001664	Project for Adaption to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces	AMD	Standard full	Yes	No	Yes
2	APR	Papua New Guinea	1100001480	Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project	PPAP	Standard full	Yes	No	Yes
3	APR	Pakistan	1100001514	Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project	SPPAP - PK	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	APR	India	1100001348	Post-Tsunami Sustainable Livelihoods Programme for the Coastal Communities of Tamil Nadu	PTSPLP	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	APR	Solomon Islands	1100001716	Rural Development Programme - Phase II	RDP II	Light	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	APR	Philippines	1100001395	Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project	CHARM II	Light	Yes	Yes	No
7	ESA	Lesotho	1100001530	Smallholder Agriculture Development Project	SADP	Standard full	Yes	No	No
8	ESA	Kenya	1100001544	Upper Tana Catchment Natural Resource Management Project	UTaNRMP	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	ESA	Malawi	1100001534	Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme	SAPP	Standard full		Yes	No
10	ESA	Zambia	1100001567	Smallholder Productivity Promotion Programme	S3P	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	ESA	United Republic of Tanzania	1100001553	Marketing Infrastructure, Value Addition and Rural Finance Support Programme	MIVARF	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	ESA	Mozambique	1100001618	Pro-Poor Value Chain Development Project in the Maputo and Limpopo Corridors	PROSUL	Endline survey	No	No	No
13	ESA	Ethiopia	1100001521	Rural Financial Intermediation Programme II	RUFIP II	Endline survey	No	No	No
14	LAC	Peru	1100001498	Strengthening Local Development in the Highlands and High Rainforest Areas Project	PSSA	Standard full	Yes	No	No
15	LAC	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1100001598	Economic Inclusion Programme for Families and Rural Communities in the Territory of the Plurinational State of Bolivia	ACCESOS	Light	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	LAC	Nicaragua	1100001683	Adapting to Markets and Climate Change Project	NICADAPTA	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	LAC	Argentina	1100001610	Inclusive Rural Development Programme	PRODERI	Light	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	WCA	Mali	1100001441	Rural Microfinance Programme	PMR	Standard full	Yes	No	No
19	WCA	Nigeria	1100001594	Value Chain Development Programme	VCDP	Standard full	Yes	No	Yes
20	WCA	Ghana	1100001592	Rural Enterprises Programme III	REP III	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	WCA	Mauritania	1100001577	Poverty Reduction Project in Aftout South and Karakoro - Phase II	PASK II	Standard full	Yes		Yes
22	NEN	Kyrgyzstan	1100001709	Livestock and Market Development Programme II	LMDP-II	Light	Yes	Yes	Yes
23	NEN	Tajikistan	2000000977	Livestock and Pasture Development Project II	LPDP II	Light	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	NEN	Tunisia	1100001622	Agropastoral Development and Local Initiatives Promotion Programme for the South-East - Phase II	PRODESUD II	Standard full	Yes	Yes	No
25	NEN	Djibouti	1100001671	Programme to Reduce Vulnerability in Coastal Fishing Areas	PRAREV-PECHE	Standard full	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: All but Pakistan, Philippines, Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania estimates were ready by the end of January 2022.

APR = Asia and the Pacific; ESA = East and Southern Africa; LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; WCA = West and Central Africa; NEN = Near East, North Africa and Europe.

B. Sensitivity analysis

24. Given the changes in the IA sample that occurred due to the pandemic, RIA reconducted a sensitivity analysis in response to the request of the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board, who recommended that sensitivity analyses should be conducted on a routine basis to assess the robustness of the corporate impact estimates as well as the representativeness of the sample of projects selected for IA vis-à-vis the portfolio under consideration.¹⁹
25. Consequently, for the IFAD11 IA sample, sensitivity analyses were carried out to assess whether the projects selected for IA are representative of the IFAD11 universe and, if so, to what extent. These tests help rule out possible systematic differences between the IA sample and all other projects in the universe.
26. By September 2022, 21 projects will be used to measure IFAD's overall corporate impact and projections. This is equivalent to 22 per cent of the universe of projects that completed during IFAD11. The sample is larger than 15 per cent, as the universe of projects completing has decreased (due to COVID-19, some project completion dates have moved beyond 2021). The sensitivity analyses are conducted using the projects' ratings. Given that completion ratings are not available at the time of selecting the IA sample (conducted in June 2018 for IFAD11), implementation ratings at the time of selection (the first rating in the system) and key features such as overall financing and IFAD financing per beneficiary, number of actual beneficiaries and project amounts (both IFAD's share and total financing) were used for the analyses.
27. Table 3 shows that only the rating on M&E system performance has a significantly different average value for the IA sample compared to the full portfolio (3.8 versus 4.0). For other project characteristics, there are no such differences. It can be concluded from this preliminary analysis that there are no significant differences in ratings between the sample and the universe, and no differences are expected ex ante between the IFAD11 sample of IAs and the full list of projects in the portfolio. This indicates that the sample of projects chosen for the IFAD11 IAs is representative of the portfolio of projects that completed by 2021.

¹⁹ See footnote 1.

Table 3
Results of sensitivity analysis for the representativeness of IFAD11 IA sample

<i>First ratings</i>	<i>Universe average</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>IFAD11 IA sample average</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>p-score</i>
Assessment of the overall implementation	3.9	96	4.0	21	0.62
Likelihood of achieving the development	4.0	96	4.1	21	0.53
Portfolio-at-risk value	0.1	96	0.1	21	0.90
Effectiveness	3.9	83	4.0	19	0.61
Targeting and outreach	4.1	96	4.1	21	0.66
Gender equality and women's participation	4.0	96	4.0	21	0.86
Agricultural productivity	4.0	85	4.1	18	0.45
Adaptation to climate change	4.1	47	4.1	12	0.83
Institutions and policy engagement	4.0	87	4.1	19	0.60
Human and social capital and empowerment	4.0	87	4.0	19	0.69
Quality of project target group	4.1	96	4.1	21	0.83
Responsiveness of service provided	4.0	96	4.0	21	0.40
Environment and natural resource	4.0	48	4.1	11	0.49
Exit strategy	4.0	61	4.0	12	1.00
Potential for scaling up	4.0	85	4.1	19	0.67
Quality of project management	4.0	96	4.1	21	0.42
Knowledge management	4.0	88	4.1	19	0.60
Coherence between annual workplan and budget and implementation	3.8	92	4.0	21	0.13
Performance of M&E system	3.8	96	4.0	21	0.02
Acceptable disbursement rate	3.0	96	2.8	21	0.63
Quality of financial management	4.0	92	4.0	21	0.57
Quality and timeliness of audit	3.9	96	4.0	21	0.43
Counterparts funds	4.0	96	4.3	21	0.07
Compliance with loan covenants	4.0	96	4.1	21	0.24
Procurement	3.9	96	3.9	21	0.90
<i>Other project characteristics</i>	<i>Universe average</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>IFAD11 IA sample average</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>p-score</i>
Total funds per person (US\$)	884	95	322	21	0.14
IFAD funds per person (USD\$)	379	94	116	21	0.11
Share of approved IFAD financing over total approved financing	1	94	55%	21	0.69
Total approved financing (US\$)	74 809 453	95	78 629 375	21	0.83
Total approved IFAD financing (US\$)	33 360 634	94	39 764 189	21	0.55
Actual beneficiaries (#)	1 177 616	95	2 494 506	21	0.55

Note: Columns going from left to right display the variable, the average ratings for the completing portfolio, the number of projects in the portfolio that have ratings available, the average ratings for the IFAD11 IA sample and the number of projects in the IFAD11 IA sample. A p-score greater than 0.05 indicates that the difference between the values is not statistically significant, i.e. the two groups are similar on average.

IV. Conclusions

28. This paper presents a detailed account of efforts made to deliver the IFAD11 IA in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although COVID-19-related travel restrictions and health and safety regulations posed significant challenges to the implementation of IFAD's rigorous approach to IAs, the RIA team and Management as a whole demonstrated adaptability in addressing them and gleaned lessons for its work going forward:

- (i) IFAD remains the only IFI with a commitment to a rigorous approach to aggregate corporate measurement and reporting;
- (ii) There is a trade-off between rigour and commitment/pressure to deliver in the context of a global pandemic. This requires an adaptable approach;

- (iii) Phone surveys should not be used to evaluate targeted development interventions, especially if the target group consists of vulnerable rural poor in remote locations;
- (iv) Tools and approaches were developed in response to the pandemic that require minimal backstopping, can be used to build in-country capacity for data collection and can be further utilized to support other types of data collection including for core outcome indicator surveys.

Step-by-step management response to COVID-19

1. In July 2020, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) requested an update on the status of IFAD11 IA. In its response, RIA outlined two options: (i) keep the IA sample as originally selected (24 IAs); or (ii) decrease the IA sample to 18, which would still meet the IFAD11 commitment to cover 15 per cent of the portfolio. In October 2020, the EMC requested an alternative solution to move forward should the IA activities continue to be on standby. It also recommended that RIA start a working group with IOE to share updates on the IFAD11 sample and the changes and constraints resulting from COVID-19, and to discuss the choice of the methodology for IFAD12 with an external technical committee. RIA has established this working group, and an external technical committee (including the World Bank) has been set up to review RIA's methodology.
2. The first step in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 and discussed with the EMC included the re-evaluation of the representativeness of the IFAD11 IA sample (see main report for brief explanation). The number of projects in the IFAD11 IA universe (i.e. projects closing during IFAD11) has decreased because some closing dates have been postponed. Therefore, RIA: (i) re-evaluated the new smaller universe; (ii) ascertained whether the originally selected projects to undergo IAs remained representative; and (iii) recalculated the number of projects needed to meet the commitment to cover at least 15 per cent of the portfolio.
3. This re-evaluation showed that 96 projects (down from 112 in 2018) were scheduled to close in 2021 (as foreseen in December 2020), and the statistical tests showed that the 24 projects originally selected were still representative of this smaller portfolio of projects due to reach completion. The challenges posed by COVID-19, however, precluded finalization of all 24 IAs within reasonable timeframes. RIA therefore recalculated the number of projects needed to constitute 15 per cent of the new smaller universe, which resulted in a decrease from 18 to 14.
4. In September 2020, the Office of the President and Vice-President (OPV) held a meeting in which RIA provided an overview of the COVID-related challenges hampering IA activities in the field. RIA described the implementation challenges and agreed on a combined approach with different prioritization. During the meeting, the decrease in the number of projects in the IFAD11 universe was also discussed, along with RIA's re-assessment of the IA sample size and its representativeness. OPV recommended that at least 18 IAs (more if possible) be conducted using the combined approach.
5. As a follow-up to the OPV meeting, the Vice-President requested that RIA prepare a joint note on the IFAD11 IA methodology with the Quality Assurance Group (QAG) and the Operational Policy and Results Division (OPR) for presentation to the EMC. On 23 October 2020, RIA organized a meeting with all regional directors to inform them about the combined approach and requested their support in carrying out phone surveys (especially with regard to access to phone numbers of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) in their regions when face-to-face surveys were not doable.
6. A joint decision memo by RIA, OPR and QAG was presented to the EMC on 6 November 2020. The EMC approved the proposal to conduct at least 14 IAs for IFAD11 – representing 15 per cent of the IFAD11 portfolio given the universe of eligible projects due to postponements. A target sample size of up to 18 IAs would be maintained subject to the COVID-19 situation and budget constraints.
7. The efforts summarized in the main report enabled RIA to exceed the target sample size of 18, and deliver on the IFAD11 IA commitment with results from at least 21 project IAs.