

IOE



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation



Evaluation
Committee


118th session

Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation


Republic of Malawi

2 September 2022

Main objectives:






To assess the results and performance of ongoing Country Strategic Opportunity Programme (COSOP 2016)



To generate findings and recommendations for new COSOP in 2022

Scope:

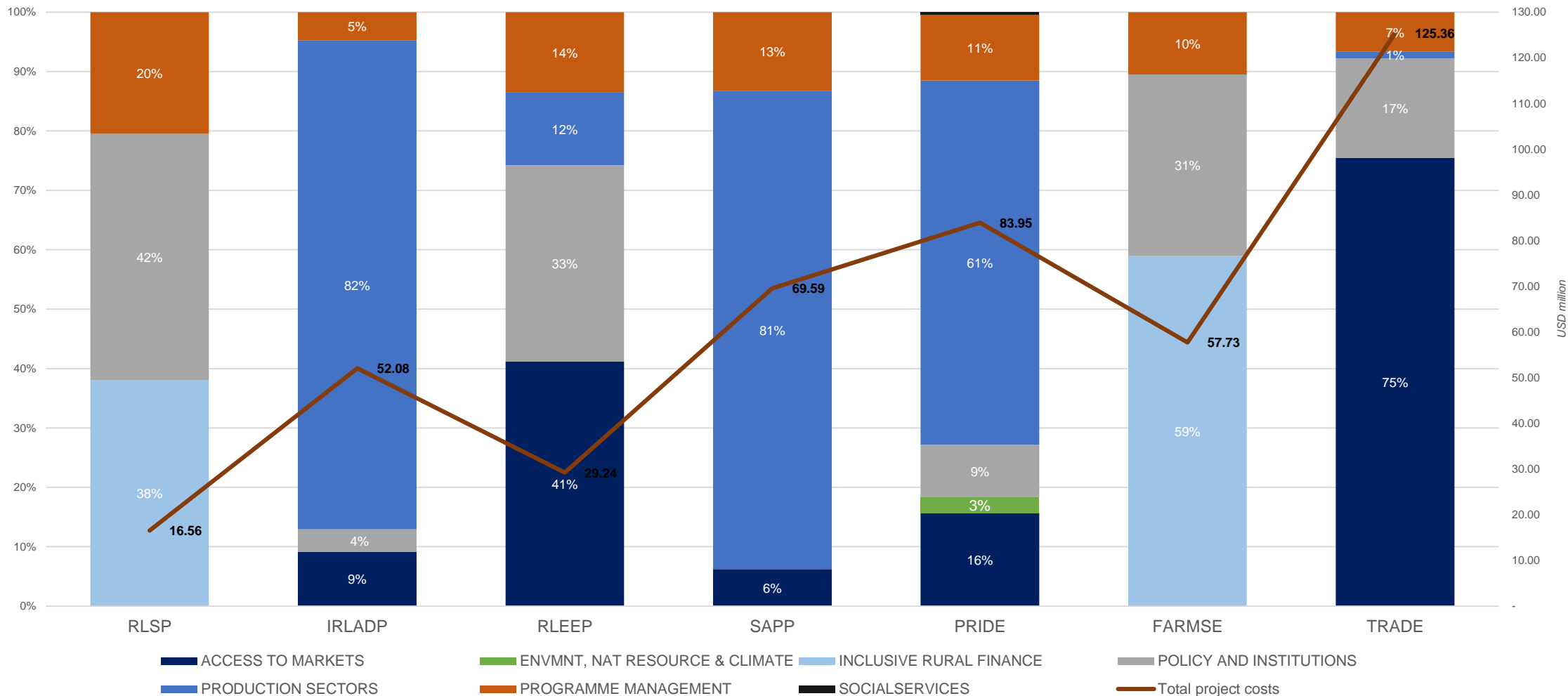
- 
- IFAD-supported loans (2011-2020):
USD 437.3 million (IFAD **USD 271.6 million**)
- 
- ✓ 4 ongoing loan projects (SAPP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE)
 - ✓ 3 closed loan projects (RLSP, IRLAP, RLEEP)
- 
- “Non-lending activities”: knowledge management, partnership building and policy engagement, and 65 grants (USD 160.2 million, including UDS **51.3 million** from IFAD).



CSPE – Republic of Malawi

Total project costs

Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data



- ✓ COSOP (2011, 2016) aligned with Government's development frameworks
 - Growing emphasis on **commercial agriculture** and **value chains**
- ✓ **Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)** practices, additional grant funding for CCA
- ✓ **Poverty and gender focus** adequate
 - Targeting ultra-poor, vulnerable and food-insecure households
 - Gender-transformative approaches
- Analysis of existing **government capacities** not adequate, particularly at district and lower level
- Increased **size and complexity** of projects overstretched existing implementation capacities
 - Service providers ensure outreach to IFAD's target groups
- **Long-term resilience to climate change** requires maintenance and scaling up of support

• **Harmonization and coordination** with other development partners limited at district level

• **Coordination within IFAD programme** improved under COSOP 2016-2020

• **Projects designs** complementary, but limited overlap and coordination at district level

• **Grants:** significant; well used to enhance loan interventions.

• **Knowledge management and partnership building** supported achievement of project results

COSOP objectives	Pathway	Achievements
Strategic objective 1: Smallholder households become resilient to shocks and enhance food and nutrition security	Environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural production systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved productivity ✓ Promotion of good agricultural practices (GAPs) and nutrition mainstreaming • Delays in irrigation schemes • Water user associations still informal
	Climate-resilient land and water management systems	
Strategic objective 2: Smallholder households access remunerative markets and services	Smallholder farmers in rural areas accessing financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remote farmers linked through bank agents ✓ High share of women in savings groups • Insufficient liquidity of microfinance institutions
	Improved access to markets by smallholder producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on traders • Low sales prices • Regulatory and institutional framework

- **Productivity gains** eroded as soon as farmers stopped receiving inputs (fertilizer, improved seeds) and services
- Limited impact
 - **Diversifying production systems** and securing reliable **market access** for smallholder farmers
 - **Food security**
 - **Market access and incomes** from crop production was insignificant
- **Farmer groups and WUAs**; but they lack formal registration and are insufficiently empowered



Positive trajectory:

- Continuity and progression of country strategy
- Larger and more complex projects
- Multitude of initiatives and practices
- Many positive practices; they need to be sustained and scaled up

Challenges:

- **Comprehensive approaches** required to address smallholder farmers' multiple challenges and trade-offs
- **Food security and climate change resilience** are paramount challenges
- Government's insufficient engagement and capacities in **knowledge management**, including M&E
- **Institutional capacities** main bottleneck undermining efficiency and effectiveness

Recommendation 1

- Adopt an **explicit approach to addressing chronic food insecurity and malnutrition** through diversified and sustainable production system as COSOP objective.

Recommendation 2

- Develop a strategic approach for **enhancing the impact and scale of successful practices and initiatives.**

Recommendation 3

- Address implementation bottlenecks through targeting **specific capacity constraints at various levels.**