
Country strategy and programme evaluation of the Kyrgyz Republic

Agreement at completion point

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Action: The Evaluation Committee is invited to review the agreement at completion point of the country strategy and programme evaluation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Technical questions:

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Kyrgyz Republic

Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation

Agreement at Completion Point (ACP)

A. Introduction

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) undertook a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in the Kyrgyz Republic (hereinafter referred to as Kyrgyzstan) in 2022. The main objectives of the CSPE were to: (i) assess the results and performance of the IFAD-financed strategy and programme; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations to steer the future partnership between IFAD and the Government. The evaluation covered the period from 2009 to mid-2022.
2. This agreement at completion point (ACP) contains recommendations based on the evaluation findings and conclusions presented in the CSPE report, as well as proposed follow-up actions as agreed by IFAD and the Government. The signed ACP is an integral part of the CSPE report in which the evaluation findings are presented in detail, and will be submitted to the IFAD Executive Board as an annex to the new country strategic opportunities programme for Kyrgyzstan. The implementation of the recommendations agreed upon will be tracked through the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions, which is presented to the IFAD Executive Board on an annual basis by the Fund's Management.

B. Recommendations and proposed follow-up actions

3. **Recommendation 1. Carefully revisit the strategic thrusts, a mix of thematic, sectoral and geographic focus of the country programme with a view to strengthening a poverty focus.** In preparation for the new COSOP, IFAD should conduct a diagnostic analysis of rural poverty and livelihoods. There is need for a more granular analysis of socio-economic situation in the rural areas, in different parts of the country as well as within certain geographical areas. Based on the poverty and livelihoods analysis, prevailing economic opportunities and constraints, IFAD and the Government should identify appropriate entry points, interventions, commodities or value chains that are the most relevant for the rural poor to sustainably build wealth, diversify livelihoods and build resilience. This may point to continued support for livestock-related interventions but with more targeted measures focusing on poor households, or the need for supporting non-livestock (e.g. crop, off-farm) economic opportunities. IFAD should explore opportunities for pro-poor innovations that may be scaled up.

Proposed Follow-up: *The Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic and IFAD concur with this recommendation and upon the drafting of the new COSOP (2023-2027) which will include the Project Identification Form for the upcoming IFAD investment in Kyrgyzstan (IFAD12 and IFAD13), a diagnostic on the governance structure and financial viability of Farmers Groups and Pasture Committees shall be undertaken prior to the design mission. Moreover, poverty/livelihoods and socio-economic assessment as well as food security analysis (similar to the WFP-led Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping - VAM) will be envisaged, in addition to value chain assessment, with the aim to inform the targeting strategy as well as identify which food crops to support in an attempt to promote nutrient-rich diet in the rural society. Pro-poor vegetables gardening at household level and small-scale horticulture shall be foreseen, in partnership with Development Partners who already demonstrated past experience in the area (i.e. WFP). This will be envisaged in line*

with the under development Food Security and Nutrition Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2023-2027 and its related Action Plan.

Responsible partners: Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD Country Team/WFP

Timeline: December 2023

4. **Recommendation 2. Adopt a strategic approach to pro-poor value chain and cluster development, articulating the additionality and impact pathways for the rural poor.** The focus of IFAD and public sector support should be on how to facilitate the participation of poorer households in priority clusters, for example, by strengthening inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms, or enabling them to improve their productive capacity and practices, or build their business orientation and skills. While better-off and/or more entrepreneurial rural households are not to be excluded, how their participation would benefit the poor (e.g. job opportunities) should be clarified and properly monitored. Support to farmer groups or cooperatives should be a gradual, demand-driven and an organic process based on their understanding of the advantages of being in a group with a clear vision. IFAD should also explore opportunities to facilitate the use of remittance in-flows for productive investment in value chains (other than purchasing more animals), which should also contribute to reducing the pressure on pastures.

Proposed Follow-up: *The above recommendation is taken into consideration by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic and IFAD since the Mid-Term Review mission (October/November 2021) of the Access to Markets Project (ATMP) where additional investments have been considered to support the Governance strengthening of legalized Farmers Groups (vulnerable farmers), as well as the promotion of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and Business Action Learning for Innovation (BALI) methodologies, towards rural women empowerment.*

As such, Farmers Groups are being assessed on their level of maturity and ad-hoc support package is proposed, depending on their level, to accompany them in a sustainable way towards economic viability, thus transforming them into structured and solid private actors. The selection of Farmers Groups will take into account the level of vulnerability from the members of the legalized groups, thus ensuring a more stringent pro-poor targeting for the upcoming investment project.

On the remittances, the IFAD's multi-donor Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR) is currently mobilizing an EU-funded grant, which aims to promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances, as well as leveraging these flows to advance digital financial inclusion and income-generating activities for sustainable development in Central Asia. As Kyrgyzstan is intended to be among the recipient countries, the Government and IFAD will leverage on this parallel financing to facilitate the remittance in-flows for productive investment in strategic pro-poor value chains, as well as for the acquisition of quality breed cattle and artificial insemination, also aiming to reduce the pressure on pasture (with less cattle for more quality and quantity of raw material).

Responsible partners: Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD Country Team + FFR team on remittances

Timeline: By the next design mission under IFAD12 scheduled for early 2024

5. **Recommendation 3. Focus on consolidating the achievements in pasture management and veterinary services and their sustainability.** With important progresses made in policy and legislative frameworks and institutional development (e.g. community-based pasture management, private veterinary services), it is crucial to ensure their effective implementation, compliance and enforcement. Strategies need be developed and acted on to address the gaps in a number of areas, such as: promoting more sustainable management of pasture resources; disincentive

to large herd ownership; timely payment of pasture fees by all; enforcing the link between registration of veterinarians and their rights to practice and to be contracted to deliver the vaccination programme; enforcement of animal health checks for herd movements; and exploring the ways to institutionalize the incentives for young veterinarians to work in rural areas. With the growing role of shepherds in all these areas, there should be more attention to their training and capacity building. The importance of securing continuous funding for vaccination and treatment programmes for key animal diseases cannot be overemphasized, as a failure in this can jeopardize the progresses made.

Proposed Follow-up: *The Government of Kyrgyzstan with the support from IFAD will keep advocating for more sustainable pasture management practice, by working on the amendment of the 2009 Pasture Law, which shall offer incentive to livestock farmers to increase the fodder quality, to improve breed quality as well as to promote environmental sustainability of grazing practices. The Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic will continue to work to encourage the transition of farmers from the quantitative to qualitative ownership of large and small cattle.*

Moreover, further support will be offered to the Veterinary faculty to develop their curriculum and training capacity, by offering scholarships and facilitating training nationally and in the sub-region. The promotion of new technologies in the field of animal health will also constitute a motivation for young professional to engage in this career path.

Responsible partners: Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD Country Team

Timeline: By the next design mission under IFAD12 scheduled for early 2024

6. **Recommendation 4. Strengthen the approach to supporting gender equality and women's empowerment.** Activities to address gender inequality need more facilitation and hands-on support in order to overcome the social and gender constraints of the context, including the promotion of women economic empowerment in other value chains which go beyond traditional gender roles. The use of quotas for women participation is insufficient. Successful experience with GALS/BALI/JP-RWEE needs to be considered in the ongoing and future investment portfolio, finding cost-effective solutions. Given that the role of women in livestock production is relatively limited (other than milking), diversification of activities (e.g. processing and value addition in livestock value chains, poultry, gardening, and off-farm income generating activities) might provide more opportunities for their economic empowerment.

Proposed Follow-up: *Based on the successful experience and lessons learned from the JP-RWEE, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic and IFAD already mainstreamed the promotion of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and Business Action Learning for Innovation (BALI) methodologies, towards rural women empowerment into its on-going investment project (Access to Markets Project – ATMP).*

Moreover, the Regional Resilient Pastoral Communities Project (RRPCP), currently at the signing phase, also foresees similar support to develop technical capacity through training and reference material provision to farmers and agribusinesses, among others. As such, capacity building of local institutions, transformation leaders and end-beneficiaries (women and youth) on green technologies and innovative methods to mitigate and adapt to climate change are expected. Specific training modules to be developed in the Value Chain Development Business Plans and the application of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) will also be largely promoted in the context of the project.

Responsible partners: Ministry of Agriculture/IFAD Country Team

Timeline: By the next design mission under IFAD12 scheduled for early 2024

Signed by:



Mr Nurdin Alisherov
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Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic

Date: *22, May 2023*



Mr Donal Brown
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International Fund for Agricultural Development

Date: 24/05/2023