

IOE



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation

129th
Evaluation
Committee



Thematic Evaluation of IFAD's support to nutrition Presentation of the evaluation report

10 June 2025

Evaluation objectives and scope

Objectives

- Assess the relevance, coherence and institutional capacity of IFAD as well as the effectiveness of practices and approaches adopted and the results thus far
- Provide lessons and recommendations that help refine IFAD's comparative advantage in nutrition, improve project quality and feed into preparing the new nutrition action plan and IFAD Strategic Framework



TE Nutrition

Scope

- 2016 (beginning of the first action plan) to 2023
- Corporate policies, commitments and design (relevance)
- Comparative advantage in nutrition, partnerships, knowledge management and policy engagement (coherence)
- Results achieved and interconnection with other mainstreaming themes (effectiveness)
- Human and financial capacities and reporting system (organizational set-up)



- **Design:** Extensive consultations on the design of the evaluation, sharing of the approach paper for comments and presentation to the EC.
- **Data collection:** Self-Assessment, global interviews and regional focus group discussions, e-survey and 10 Country Case studies:
 - Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Indonesia and Mozambique – mission based
 - Bangladesh and Zimbabwe - remote
 - Egypt and Laos – as part of CSPEs
- **Analysis and Reporting:** Presentation of preliminary results and recommendations to the CLP group, report shared with management for comments and comments integrated by the evaluation team.



Consultative process ensured internally by the establishment of the Core Learning Partnership Group including representatives from IFAD's relevant divisions and externally by the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders in data collection.



Overall relevance:

- IFAD's strategic commitment to nutrition has been strengthened in line with the global agenda.
- Enhanced corporate commitments had a positive effect on raising the profile of nutrition within IFAD and reinforced its image externally as a nutrition actor.
- The Nutrition Action Plan is relevant, but it does not provide sufficient guidance on how to apply a nutrition lens and does not reflect the more recent food systems transformation discourse.
- Nutrition is included in most of IFAD's policies with few exceptions.

Nutrition mainstreaming in design:

- Organisational commitments resulted in improved integration of nutrition in COSOPs and projects.
- There are still gaps in tailoring priorities to contexts and nutrition needs.
- There are improvements in the way nutrition is included at project design.
- The extent to which project design is translated in nutrition actions still varies.

At global level:

- Key comparative advantages highlighted by different actors reflect an opportunity to maximise IFAD's positioning on nutrition.
- IFAD involvement in the nutrition and food systems transformation dialogue has evolved positively.
- Partnership efforts at global level are relatively strong.
- IFAD has not yet been able to clearly articulate how its entry points can contribute to nutrition.

At country level:

- Internal challenges prevent translating the recognized comparative advantages into design and implementation.
- IFAD is not perceived as a nutrition actor, particularly by governments.
- Partnerships for nutrition are weak and fragmented.
- IFAD is missing an opportunity to use its position to strengthen commitment of Ministries of Agriculture and other sector ministries to the nutrition agenda.

Knowledge management:

- There have been growing corporate efforts to generate knowledge for nutrition.
- Knowledge products informed strategic discussions and provided operational guidance for mainstreaming nutrition.
- Knowledge management efforts insufficiently draw from country implementation experience.
- Knowledge produced is not systematically used to inform design and implementation.

Grants:

- Grants have been instrumental for building partnerships, engaging in policy dialogue and producing knowledge.
- Grants provided critical resources in supporting the design and implementation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions to complement investments.
- Challenges have been faced in ensuring linkages between grant-funded country research or capacity support and loan investments.
- Monitoring and quality assurance of grants is weak as is management of knowledge generated by grants.

Targeting and outreach:

- Geographical and community targeting took nutrition considerations into account to a sufficient level.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of project beneficiaries targeted with nutrition support, but it remains relatively small reflecting limited prioritisation of nutrition.

Results:

- Progress in assuring that investments apply a nutrition lens is still limited.
- Empowerment of women emerges as a central priority in IFAD-supported nutrition interventions.
- Access to water for improving nutrition has not been prioritized.
- There have been insufficient synergies between nutrition and climate change and limited efforts to include youth in nutrition interventions.

School-based interventions

- School-based interventions mainly focused on school gardens.
- Few projects have succeeded in linking producers to school feeding programmes.

Human and financial resources:

- There has been progress in the number of staff positions for nutrition, but staff capacity remains a constraint.
- Nutrition capacity development efforts have been modest considering the needs.
- Capacity gaps at country level have resulted in limited advocacy and prioritization of nutrition.
- Supplementary funds for nutrition have been limited and a solid resource mobilization strategy is lacking.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- The adoption of the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) as a nutrition indicator has been a relevant shift.
- Challenges remain in aligning objectives and indicators and in defining medium-term outcomes.
- Methodological inconsistencies reduce data reliability and IFAD's capacity to show results.
- Capacity gaps in data collection and analysis persist.

Strengths

- IFAD's corporate commitments to nutrition are strong and have kept pace with major global commitments and policy developments.
- IFAD is recognised as a key player for nutrition by international actors.
- IFAD's internal enabling environment for delivering on nutrition has evolved positively.
- COSOPs and project designs have progressively included IFAD's nutrition priorities.
- Women's empowerment has been central to nutrition interventions.

Weaknesses

- IFAD has missed opportunities to frame its contribution to nutrition through sustainable healthy diets and food systems transformation.
- At country level different challenges prevent IFAD to position itself on nutrition.
- Progress in mainstreaming nutrition in project investments remains modest.
- IFAD's internal capacity has not kept pace with the needs of an ambitious agenda.
- Supplementary funds and grants, while critical to progress on nutrition, have been limited.
- Monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management for nutrition remain critical weaknesses.
- Interconnections between nutrition and climate change have been insufficient.

1. Frame the nutrition work within the sustainable food system approach with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable healthy diets and define a more flexible approach to reflect context specificities
2. Prioritize and scale up efforts to ensure that human resources and capacities at different levels are commensurate with IFAD's nutrition ambitions and commitments
3. Strengthen nutrition related knowledge management and monitoring system and use knowledge to improve the accountability for, and delivery against, IFAD's nutrition agenda.
4. Adopt a more strategic and sustainable approach to resource mobilization by leveraging both internal and complementary external resources.

THANKS