

Independent Office of Evaluation



129th
Evaluation
Committee

Thematic Evaluation of IFAD's support to nutrition

Presentation of the evaluation report



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





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)

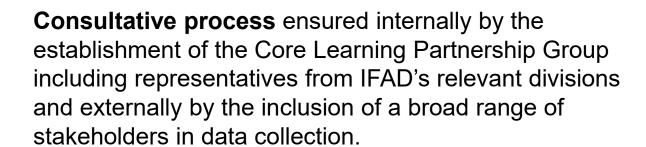
TE Nutrition

10 June 2025



Methodology and process

- **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.











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.



EQ3 – Effectiveness

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.



EQ4 – Organisational set-up

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.



Conclusions

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.

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Recommendations

- 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

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