

IOE



Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation

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Committee

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Evaluation of IFAD's engagement in Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)

Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Scope: 30 IFAD-financed loan operations and non-lending activities in 18 recipient SIDS in APR, LAC, NEN and WCA

Evaluation design: theory-based, integrating multi dimensional (social, economic, environmental and climate) vulnerability vs. resilience

Mixed-methods approach: Extensive desk review; Secondary data analysis; Virtual and in-person interviews of various stakeholders (from IFAD, Governments representatives, projects' teams and projects' partners); Case-study missions in 6 SIDS; Online Surveys

Analysis: Usage of AI-assisted tool for desk review and analysis
Triangulation from various sources of information, and approaches, to draw findings and conclusions.

Findings: relevance and coherence

- Alignment of the 2014 SIDS Approach and 2022–2027 SIDS Strategy with corporate and international frameworks
- Lower focus on marine ecosystems in the 2022 Strategy
- Focus on the three resilience dimensions was moderate in SIDS countries' strategies and operations
- Institutional capacity gaps not considered among strategic or operational priorities, with reduced delivery performance
- Implementation arrangements poorly adapted to SIDS unique contextual challenges
- Non-lending activities showed insufficient results in supporting rural resilience in SIDS



Findings: effectiveness and impacts

- Modest progress in mitigating economic vulnerabilities in SIDS: Investments helped improving agricultural productivity, but mixed results in supports for storage, processing and economic diversification.
- Investments in transportation improved market access and helped reducing remoteness
- Promoted sustainable production approaches contributed to environmental resilience
- Good progress made in promoting climate-smart practices, for better climate resilience
- In terms of contributions to impacts:
 - Moderately satisfactory for increased beneficiary household incomes, improved food security, and to diversification of diets within households
 - Satisfactory in strengthening human and social capital, while Institutional strengthening has remained incomplete

Social inclusion

- Adequate mainstreamed gender equality-related topics in SIDS' projects designs
- Insufficient results for women's economic empowerment and workload reduction; Modest results in enhancing women's influence in decision-making
- Moderately unsatisfactory results for economic empowerment of Youth and Indigenous Peoples

Sustainability

- Strengthened social capital led to better ownership and viability, but fragile social sustainability due to limited capacities
- Low technical and institutional sustainability also due to limited financial and technical capacities
- Scaling up results occurred in only few SIDS

- SIDS projects generally exhibited faster startup and first disbursement timing
- SIDS projects showed greater extensions of their implementation periods and exhibited higher management costs than non-SIDS
- Procurement processes were particularly challenging
- Investments in SIDS demonstrated good economic efficiency, but significant increasing of costs per beneficiary
- Operational and technical supports lacked contextual customization to SIDS' challenges, resulting in reduced their effectiveness
- National oversight mechanisms (strategic supervision and steering committee) showed mixed effectiveness, affecting the overall performance
- IFAD demonstrated strong resource mobilization capacity in SIDS

Main strengths

- IFAD's niche confirmed in promoting inclusive and resilient smallholder agriculture, in remote islands.
- Contributions to enabling socio-economic resilience, and to environmental and climate resilience.
- Contributions to improving food security and nutrition

Main challenges

- SIDS multidimensional resilience approach not systematic
- Institutional weakness considered as risk, not as a priority
- Operational approaches are not appropriate to SIDS contexts
- Modest women's economic empowerment, while support for youth and indigenous peoples were minimal



1

Recommendation 1. Adopt a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to resilience building in SIDS.

2

Recommendation 2. Strengthen and leverage strategic and operational partnerships to enhance performance in SIDS contexts.

3

Recommendation 3. Tailor operational approaches to SIDS contexts, for increased effectiveness of resilience building supports.

4

Recommendation 4. Improve the focus of knowledge management (KM) systems in line with SIDS vulnerability versus resilience topics, and to leverage policy and scaling up outcomes.

Thank you for your attention

