
República Socialista de Viet Nam

Evaluación de la estrategia y el programa en el país

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Preguntas técnicas:

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Agradecimientos

La presente evaluación de la estrategia y el programa en el país estuvo dirigida por Paolo Silveri, Oficial Principal de Evaluación de la Oficina Independiente de Evaluación del FIDA (IOE), quien contó con el apoyo de Nick Bourguignon, Oficial de Evaluación de la IOE. También hicieron aportaciones a la evaluación los siguientes consultores internacionales y nacionales: Pamela White (Especialista Principal), Tran Hoang Yen y Ho Le Phi Khanh. Además, Alice Formica, Giulia Torri, Edoardo Epifori y Asia Celani participaron como pasantes y consultores analistas de evaluación. Nene Etim, Auxiliar de Evaluación de la IOE, prestó apoyo administrativo al equipo.

El proyecto de informe de evaluación se sometió a un examen *inter pares* por parte de otros miembros del equipo de la IOE. Mona Saleh Fatouh, Jeanette Cooke, Hansdeep Khaira y Kouessi Maximin Kodjo formularon observaciones en etapas clave de la evaluación, con la orientación general de Indran Naidoo, Director de la IOE.

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Resumen

A. Antecedentes

1. De conformidad con la Revisión de la Política de Evaluación del FIDA (2021) y el programa de trabajo y presupuesto de la Oficina Independiente de Evaluación del FIDA (IOE) para 2025, basados en los resultados, que la Junta Ejecutiva del Fondo aprobó en diciembre de 2024, la IOE llevó a cabo una evaluación de la estrategia y el programa en el país (EEPP) para la República Socialista de Viet Nam en 2025.
2. **Alcance.** La evaluación abarcó el período 2012-2024. Durante este período se aprobaron dos programas sobre oportunidades estratégicas nacionales (COSOP) en 2012 y 2019, respectivamente. El costo total estimado de los 11 proyectos de inversión analizados en el marco de la EEPP asciende a USD 696 millones, de los cuales USD 362 millones fueron aportados por el FIDA y el resto se financió con contribuciones del Gobierno y cofinanciación internacional. En la EEPP se evaluaron los siguientes aspectos: la estrategia general (implícita y explícita); las actividades no crediticias (gestión de los conocimientos, asociaciones, diálogo sobre políticas y donaciones); los resultados de las operaciones financiadas mediante préstamos (cartera de proyectos); y el desempeño de los asociados (el Gobierno de Viet Nam y el FIDA) en la gestión de la estrategia y el programa en el país.
3. **Objetivos.** Los principales objetivos de la EEPP fueron los siguientes: i) evaluar los resultados y el desempeño de la estrategia y el programa del FIDA en Viet Nam; y ii) extraer hallazgos y formular recomendaciones para orientar la futura asociación entre el FIDA y el Gobierno a fin de mejorar la eficacia de las actividades de desarrollo y la erradicación de la pobreza rural. Además, la evaluación permitió analizar el estado de aplicación de las recomendaciones derivadas de la evaluación del programa en el país de 2012, así como la evolución de los resultados del programa. Los hallazgos, las enseñanzas extraídas y las recomendaciones servirán de base para el nuevo COSOP que se elaborará en 2027 en consulta con el Gobierno.
4. **Contexto nacional.** Viet Nam ha pasado de ser una economía de subsistencia devastada por la guerra en 1975 a ser un país de ingreso mediano próspero y con un considerable poder económico en la región. Durante los primeros años del período evaluado, la economía presentó resultados sólidos de manera constante. Sin embargo, Viet Nam se vio afectado por la pandemia de COVID-19 y la actual guerra en Ucrania, lo que dio lugar a un marcado descenso del crecimiento del producto interno bruto (PIB), que actualmente está repuntando. Además, el país logró una importante reducción de la pobreza multidimensional durante el período que abarca la evaluación. No obstante, las tasas de pobreza siguen siendo más elevadas entre los hogares rurales y de minorías étnicas dedicados principalmente a la agricultura, debido a la baja calidad de las tierras agrícolas, los vínculos poco firmes con los mercados y otras oportunidades económicas y la falta de acceso a la financiación y la capacitación. Si bien la contribución de la agricultura, la silvicultura y la pesca al PIB ha disminuido en los últimos años (el 11,9 % en 2024), la parte de la población activa que trabajaba en el sector agrícola seguía siendo del 34 % en 2022. La mayoría de las explotaciones agrícolas son pequeñas y la producción está fragmentada, con excepción de la producción de arroz, el principal producto básico agroalimentario de exportación del país. Viet Nam es particularmente vulnerable al cambio climático y cada vez son mayores los daños derivados de los tifones, la intrusión salina, las inundaciones y las sequías, lo que pone en peligro la producción de alimentos y los medios de vida.
5. **Actuación del FIDA en Viet Nam.** Las actividades del FIDA en Viet Nam comenzaron en 1993 con el Proyecto de Ordenación de Recursos con la Participación de los Beneficiarios en la Provincia de Tuyen Quang, ubicada en el nordeste del país. En 2005, el Fondo abrió en Hanói una oficina en el país, que se

convirtió en el Centro del Mekong en 2016. Desde entonces, la cartera en Viet Nam ha incluido 16 proyectos financiados mediante préstamos, y hay otros 2 proyectos cuya ejecución ya se ha aprobado. Los principales asociados gubernamentales del FIDA son el Ministerio de Finanzas, el Ministerio de Agricultura y Medio Ambiente y los gobiernos provinciales.

B. Resultados de la estrategia y el programa del FIDA en el país

Principales hallazgos

6. La **pertinencia** se ha calificado como satisfactoria. Las estrategias e intervenciones del FIDA se ajustaron correctamente a las políticas nacionales de desarrollo y a las prioridades del propio Fondo, sobre todo en lo que respecta a la reducción de la pobreza rural, el desarrollo basado en el mercado y la resiliencia al clima. Los COSOP se adaptaron eficazmente a la evolución de los contextos y las condiciones de financiación, y el diseño de los proyectos reflejó un esfuerzo constante por orientar la labor hacia las poblaciones vulnerables, incluidas las minorías étnicas y las mujeres de las provincias más pobres. Los enfoques programáticos y participativos del FIDA hicieron posible una ejecución y un aprendizaje basados en el entorno local. La colaboración con el sector privado ha aumentado, entre otras cosas mediante la promoción de asociaciones público-privadas y asociaciones entre el sector público, el sector privado y los productores, y la utilización de donaciones de contrapartida. Sin embargo, algunos cambios introducidos recientemente en las políticas por el Gobierno han limitado estos mecanismos. La pertinencia de los COSOP se vio restringida en cierta medida por las limitaciones para abordar los temas transversales, entre ellos la juventud, la nutrición y la discapacidad, así como por la concentración cada vez mayor de proyectos en provincias más prósperas debido a las limitaciones fiscales en las zonas más pobres. Pese a estas deficiencias, la labor del FIDA siguió respondiendo, en general, a la evolución de las necesidades nacionales y locales de las zonas rurales.
7. La **coherencia** se ha calificado como moderadamente satisfactoria. Los COSOP del FIDA presentaban una lógica interna sólida, que incluía sinergias entre los objetivos estratégicos y a lo largo de las líneas temáticas. Las cadenas de valor, la financiación rural y la resiliencia estaban bien integrados. Los procesos del plan de desarrollo socioeconómico participativo y orientado al mercado (MOP-SEDP), que contaron con el apoyo del FIDA en el plano local, se ajustaban a las políticas nacionales, y la ejecución continua de proyectos en las mismas zonas permitió consolidar las capacidades y el impacto. Con frecuencia, estos enfoques fueron adoptados por otros asociados. Pese a ello, la coherencia se vio limitada en cierta medida por problemas de coordinación entre las provincias. Los cambios en las normas relativas a la asistencia oficial para el desarrollo (AOD) afectaron la coherencia, ya que produjeron demoras en la asistencia técnica y una sobrecarga de la capacidad del personal local.
8. La **gestión de los conocimientos** se ha calificado como satisfactoria. En ambos COSOP —especialmente en el segundo— se determinó que la gestión de los conocimientos era un factor clave para ampliar el impacto, orientar la colaboración en el ámbito de las políticas y promover el aprendizaje interinstitucional. El FIDA no adoptó una estrategia independiente de gestión de los conocimientos a nivel nacional y, si bien los proyectos reunieron y difundieron las enseñanzas extraídas, las iniciativas estuvieron fragmentadas y a menudo carecieron de coordinación. La gestión de los conocimientos se benefició del apoyo de donaciones regionales, entre otras cosas en el marco de la cooperación Sur-Sur e iniciativas de grupos de estudio sobre el desarrollo agrícola y rural. Sin embargo, la adopción de estas actividades fue desigual y muchos de los productos obtenidos siguieron estando limitados a esferas de políticas específicas, con una escasa integración en los sistemas nacionales más amplios. El aprendizaje y la creación de redes arrojaron mejores resultados en el período del COSOP de 2012. El intercambio de conocimientos entre las provincias se facilitó por medio de actividades conjuntas de

aprendizaje. No obstante, su eficacia se vio limitada por dificultades logísticas y por la falta de proximidad geográfica. Si bien muchos productos del conocimiento sirvieron de base para nuevas estrategias y proyectos, y se comprobó que eran pertinentes cuando se difundieron en los idiomas locales, los problemas para obtener esos materiales redujeron su impacto general. Asimismo, la cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular contribuyó al intercambio de conocimientos y al fomento de las cadenas de valor, pero su alcance siguió siendo reducido debido a las limitaciones en materia de capacidad y financiación.

9. La **creación de asociaciones** se ha calificado como moderadamente satisfactoria. Las asociaciones se aprovecharon para la movilización de recursos, la asistencia técnica, las actividades en la base de las comunidades y la facilitación de conocimientos generales y especializados. Si bien la asociación con el Gobierno siguió siendo sólida y el FIDA logró movilizar recursos gracias a su cooperación estratégica con mecanismos mundiales de financiación para el clima, la colaboración con otras organizaciones de las Naciones Unidas y asociados para el desarrollo fue más limitada. Estas relaciones se centraron en el diálogo sobre las políticas y el intercambio de información, pero hubo pocas iniciativas ejecutadas conjuntamente. Las asociaciones con el sector privado aumentaron durante el periodo evaluado, pero su escala y profundidad siguieron siendo moderadas.
10. La **colaboración en el ámbito de las políticas** se ha calificado como satisfactoria. En ambos COSOP se definieron prioridades claras en cuanto a la colaboración en el ámbito de las políticas, aunque se obtuvieron resultados dispares. El COSOP de 2012 logró efectos directos positivos en relación con los dos primeros objetivos estratégicos, pero el progreso con respecto al objetivo estratégico 3 fue limitado. Asimismo, según el examen de mitad de período del COSOP de 2019, las distintas actividades habían arrojado resultados desiguales. El FIDA sirvió de asociado confiable para aplicar las políticas nacionales a nivel de las provincias, los distritos y los municipios. También contribuyó a los debates sobre las políticas y a la ejecución a nivel local, basándose en su experiencia en los ámbitos de la microfinanciación, la adaptación al clima, el fomento del sector privado y la planificación participativa. Si bien la influencia directa del FIDA en las políticas nacionales sigue siendo limitada, su colaboración en ese ámbito en general se está ampliando mediante la participación en foros de alto nivel sobre políticas y la difusión de enseñanzas extraídas sobre el terreno.
11. La **eficacia** se ha calificado como satisfactoria. Se obtuvieron resultados positivos en la labor relativa a lo siguiente: los grupos de ahorro y crédito; el Fondo para el Desarrollo de las Mujeres; los grupos de interés común; las cooperativas y otros grupos comunitarios; y el fomento de las cadenas de valor, por ejemplo mediante asociaciones público-privadas y asociaciones entre el sector público, el sector privado y los productores. Esto abarcó las siguientes iniciativas: aumento del acceso de los hogares, los grupos y las empresas a la financiación; mejora de la infraestructura asociada a la producción; fomento de la producción vinculada al mercado; y certificación de productos para mejorar los mercados y los precios. Estas actividades tuvieron como objetivo general mejorar los medios de vida resilientes al clima y las cadenas de valor en favor de la población pobre. Los cambios en las normas relativas a la AOD desaceleraron el progreso en el período del COSOP de 2019, particularmente en relación con el objetivo estratégico 3, al tiempo que la oficina del FIDA en el país se esforzó por hallar fuentes alternativas de donaciones. Las estrategias para llegar a las minorías étnicas, la población rural pobre y las zonas remotas fueron muy eficaces. Sin embargo, el fomento de las cadenas de valor en las zonas remotas y con las minorías étnicas planteó dificultades debido a la reticencia de las empresas del sector privado a asumir riesgos y superar los obstáculos. La evolución y reproducción del MOP-SEDP entrañó una mayor atención a la adaptación al cambio climático y la gestión del

riesgo de desastres. Esto fue muy valioso para mejorar la participación y para la sostenibilidad de los procesos de planificación de los gobiernos locales. Sin embargo, el seguimiento se vio limitado por la falta de datos fiables.

12. La **innovación** se ha calificado como satisfactoria. Durante el período del COSOP de 2012, el FIDA logró poner a prueba y reproducir varias innovaciones, algunas de las cuales se aplicaron a mayor escala dentro de las mismas provincias e incluso fuera de ellas. El hincapié en las cadenas de valor, la ampliación del MOP-SEDP y el establecimiento de infraestructura participativa generaron resultados particularmente positivos. Sin embargo, los cambios en las normas relativas a la AOD durante el período del COSOP de 2019 limitaron las posibilidades de poner a prueba innovaciones.
13. La **eficiencia** se ha calificado como moderadamente satisfactoria. Los recursos del FIDA se utilizaron de manera eficiente, como se refleja en la agilidad con que se pusieron en marcha los proyectos y los buenos resultados económicos obtenidos. Las tasas de desembolso fueron elevadas en general, aunque se observaron demoras iniciales en varios proyectos. Los costos de gestión se mantuvieron en gran medida dentro de los límites aceptables y se ajustaron a los requisitos del FIDA. No obstante, en intervenciones más recientes se presentaron demoras y otras dificultades, principalmente debido a los cambios en el entorno de políticas de Viet Nam. Estas modificaciones no solo ralentizaron la ejecución de nuevos proyectos, sino que también dieron lugar a la cancelación de un proyecto previsto, lo que repercutió en la eficiencia general de la cartera.
14. El **impacto en la pobreza rural** se ha calificado como satisfactorio. Las intervenciones respaldadas por el FIDA contribuyeron de manera significativa al capital social y humano y fortalecieron las instituciones de la población rural pobre y las minorías étnicas. La actuación en consonancia con los programas nacionales específicos y los gobiernos provinciales permitió garantizar una planificación de los proyectos participativa y orientada al mercado. Esto implica que las enseñanzas extraídas de los proyectos podrían utilizarse para influir en la planificación y ejecución de iniciativas gubernamentales y proporcionar flexibilidad presupuestaria. Los ingresos y activos de los hogares participantes aumentaron gracias a la mejora del acceso a la financiación rural y el empleo, así como al incremento de la producción y la participación en las cadenas de valor. Es probable que las actividades de los proyectos hayan contribuido a la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición; sin embargo, la falta de datos de seguimiento de buena calidad impidió realizar una evaluación precisa.
15. La **igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de la mujer** se han calificado como satisfactorios. Las unidades de gestión de los proyectos recibieron un apoyo adecuado del FIDA, colaboraron estrechamente con las uniones provinciales de mujeres y recopilaron datos desglosados por género. El alcance en relación con las mujeres fue bueno en general, y estas manifestaron haber pasado a tener un papel más activo en los procesos de toma de decisiones en las comunidades y los hogares (aunque la participación activa es difícil de evaluar). El fomento de los grupos de ahorro y crédito y los fondos para el desarrollo de las mujeres obtuvo resultados particularmente positivos y sirvió como punto de entrada para mejorar la situación económica y la confianza de las mujeres. Sin embargo, las mujeres que pertenecen a minorías étnicas se enfrentan a obstáculos relacionados con la alfabetización y el lenguaje, que pueden limitar su capacidad para beneficiarse de las intervenciones de los proyectos. Si bien la labor general del FIDA en materia de igualdad de género y empoderamiento de la mujer en Viet Nam ha tenido en cuenta las cuestiones de género, no ha sido transformadora en materia de género.
16. La **sostenibilidad** se ha calificado como satisfactoria. El programa aplicado en el marco de los dos COSOP demuestra que se han sentado bases sólidas para la sostenibilidad institucional, social y estructural. El fomento de la capacidad

institucional por medio del MOP-SEDP y la ejecución continua de distintos proyectos en las mismas zonas promovió los conocimientos y la eficacia de las instituciones. Algunas instituciones comunitarias, como los fondos para el desarrollo de las mujeres y las cooperativas, evolucionaron con el apoyo de las políticas gubernamentales. En general, las estrategias de salida fueron adecuadas, y las modalidades de funcionamiento y mantenimiento garantizaron la financiación, así como la propiedad de los activos por las comunidades.

17. **El medio ambiente, la gestión de los recursos naturales y la adaptación al cambio climático** se han calificado como moderadamente satisfactorios. La cartera hizo importantes aportaciones a la gestión de los recursos naturales y la adaptación al cambio climático mediante la utilización de prácticas agroecológicas, la agricultura climáticamente inteligente e infraestructuras de protección en las zonas vulnerables. Las iniciativas relacionadas con la conservación del suelo y el agua, el control de la salinidad y la integración del riesgo climático en los procesos de planificación arrojaron resultados prometedores. Sin embargo, muchos logros seguían dependiendo de los proyectos y su integración en los sistemas nacionales era limitada. La gestión de los recursos naturales puede mejorarse aplicando técnicas coordinadas de gestión del paisaje. La cartera también contribuyó a los nuevos mecanismos de coordinación introducidos con fines de preparación para casos de desastres, pero estos mecanismos siguieron aplicándose a pequeña escala y exigen una mayor integración con otras medidas, como los sistemas nacionales y de seguros.
18. La **ampliación de escala** se ha calificado como moderadamente satisfactoria. Las provincias ampliaron la escala de ejecución de varios procesos y actividades. El sólido sentido de apropiación y la importante adopción a nivel provincial permitieron ampliar el MOP-SEDP basado en el clima, las prácticas de agricultura climáticamente inteligente y la infraestructura comunitaria. Algunos grupos de interés común pasaron a ser cooperativas o grupos de colaboración, y las plataformas de intercambio de conocimientos apoyaron el aprendizaje entre pares. No obstante, la ampliación de escala en las distintas provincias siguió siendo limitada y puntual, y se necesita más apoyo para establecer vínculos con los mercados y para la integración institucional. A pesar del interés del Gobierno, la escasez de recursos humanos y las normas relativas a la AOD limitaron el potencial de ampliación de escala.

Desempeño de los asociados

19. El desempeño del **FIDA** se ha calificado como satisfactorio. En general, el Fondo logró un buen desempeño, pues colaboró estrechamente con el Gobierno a nivel nacional y provincial, hizo frente a la burocracia y los cambios en las políticas y apoyó el avance de Viet Nam hacia la categoría de país de ingreso mediano alto. La presencia del FIDA por conducto de la oficina en el país durante todo el período que abarca la EEPP contribuyó en gran medida a fomentar la confianza con el Gobierno. El FIDA es reconocido como un asociado con buena capacidad de respuesta y tiene una ventaja comparativa en la labor con las minorías étnicas y los pequeños productores que viven en zonas remotas. También ha logrado encontrar maneras de afrontar los cambios en las normas relativas a la AOD y determinar fuentes de financiación alternativas.
20. **Gobierno.** El desempeño del Gobierno se ha calificado como moderadamente satisfactorio. El Gobierno mostró un sólido sentido de apropiación del programa en el país, y la gestión provincial de los préstamos y la ejecución fue exitosa. Todos los niveles de la Administración participaron activamente y prestaron apoyo en las etapas de diseño y ejecución. Sin embargo, los resultados de los sistemas de seguimiento y evaluación (SyE) y la gestión fiduciaria disminuyeron entre el período del COSOP de 2012 y el del COSOP de 2019. Es posible que esto obedezca a los cambios en las normas relativas a la AOD, la menor disponibilidad de fondos

para algunas actividades y las restricciones al uso de los préstamos. Estos cambios dieron lugar a demoras y afectaron el desempeño. Tanto el Gobierno como el FIDA están decididos a dar respuesta a estas dificultades.

C. Conclusiones

21. **El programa del FIDA en Viet Nam ha generado una sucesión de resultados sostenibles, ha fortalecido las instituciones y ha dado lugar a cambios duraderos** gracias a una búsqueda continua de la combinación adecuada de inversiones y conocimientos de especialistas, lo que mejoró la contribución del FIDA a los planes nacionales de desarrollo y reducción de la pobreza. Esa contribución se potenció al máximo por medio de un conjunto de elementos: i) el hincapié del FIDA en el desarrollo local en el plano provincial y en los planos inferiores; ii) su persistencia en las intervenciones locales —donde las autoridades locales podían responder y cooperar mejor— hasta que se desarrollaran las capacidades necesarias para internalizar e institucionalizar una planificación e inversión descentralizadas; iii) la focalización exitosa en las minorías étnicas que vivían en zonas remotas; y iv) la definición de la combinación adecuada de elementos físicos (inversiones en infraestructura) y elementos humanos (inversiones en las personas) para que hubiera una alta probabilidad de que la transformación rural fuera sostenible y pudiera reproducirse a gran escala.
22. **Aprovechando los experimentados y cualificados equipos en el país y sus servicios, el FIDA y las autoridades nacionales lograron cooperar para establecer y perfeccionar el ámbito particular de actuación del FIDA dentro del país.** Los programas que recibieron apoyo del Fondo contribuyeron de manera significativa y duradera a la transformación rural, la reducción de la pobreza y la creación de sociedades y economías locales dinámicas, incluso en zonas remotas y especialmente en la labor realizada con las minorías étnicas. Esto se vio respaldado por el sólido sentido de apropiación del Gobierno y la existencia de interesados locales muy dedicados.
23. **Durante la fase inicial del período que abarca la EPPP (el período del COSOP de 2012), el programa del FIDA obtuvo resultados muy positivos,** aprovechando los esfuerzos progresivos realizados desde 1993. El valor añadido del FIDA se evidencia en la institucionalización de diversos enfoques, como los planes de desarrollo participativo (MOP-SEDP), la infraestructura, el fomento de cadenas de valor favorables a la población pobre y el hincapié en las provincias más pobres con grandes poblaciones de minorías étnicas, entre otras cosas. El programa contribuyó a lograr una transformación rural resiliente, autosuficiente y sostenible, para lo cual se estudiaron formas de hacer llegar el sector privado y la infraestructura a las zonas remotas. Desde sus primeros años en Viet Nam, el FIDA promovió una ejecución descentralizada, en la que las provincias obtuvieron préstamos que luego se ejecutaron a nivel de comuna y distrito bajo la orientación del MOP-SEDP. Si bien los préstamos del FIDA son relativamente pequeños a escala nacional, tienen una importancia estratégica a nivel provincial. Los vínculos estrechos que mantiene el FIDA con el Gobierno facilitaron la ejecución por parte de las administraciones locales, que pudieron utilizar indistintamente la financiación gubernamental o de los programas nacionales específicos, o bien los fondos de los préstamos del FIDA. La programación del Fondo hizo especial hincapié en las minorías étnicas, los pequeños productores y, gradualmente, dedicó más atención a la adaptación al cambio climático, la agricultura innovadora y sensible al clima, y la gestión del riesgo de desastres. Los sistemas de microfinanciación y una variedad de donaciones y fondos de incentivos se implementaron satisfactoriamente para apoyar las cadenas de valor.
24. **En el período del COSOP de 2019 se presentaron algunas dificultades de índole más práctica, sobre todo debido a los cambios en el posible uso de los fondos procedentes de los préstamos, y el camino a seguir en el futuro continúa siendo poco claro.** A raíz de la reclasificación de Viet Nam a la

categoría de país de ingreso mediano, el costo de los préstamos aumentó, al tiempo que la normativa de 2017 relacionada con la AOD pasó a ser cada vez más rigurosa (hasta convertirse en el Decreto 114 en 2021) y limitó el uso de los recursos obtenidos en préstamo a la infraestructura (un problema que afectó a todas las instituciones financieras internacionales). Los conocimientos especializados fundamentales del FIDA en materia de fomento de la capacidad, asistencia técnica y microfinanciación rural ya no pueden financiarse mediante préstamos, y la oficina del FIDA en el país ha sabido hallar soluciones alternativas. En ocasiones, los comités populares provinciales han intervenido para financiar de manera flexible las inversiones intangibles de los presupuestos provinciales o los programas nacionales específicos. Además, el FIDA tuvo que determinar fuentes alternativas de financiación mediante donaciones, lo que llevó algún tiempo e imposibilitó ciertas actividades de los proyectos en curso¹. Después de 2020, a estas dificultades se les sumaron procesos más lentos de toma de decisiones por parte del Gobierno (lo que afectó negativamente a todos los asociados para el desarrollo), además de la ralentización general que supuso la COVID-19. Asimismo, las actividades no crediticias se vieron limitadas por el endurecimiento de las normas, la escasa gestión de los conocimientos y los debates sobre las políticas. Las normas relativas a la AOD se encuentran actualmente en proceso de examen, y la reestructuración institucional implementada a nivel nacional en 2025 tardará tiempo en asentarse. El período del COSOP se prolongará hasta que el camino a seguir sea más claro.

25. **El Gobierno ha demostrado un sólido sentido de apropiación y liderazgo de los procesos introducidos por la cartera del FIDA.** En el avance de Viet Nam hacia la categoría de país de ingreso mediano alto (y, en última instancia, de ingreso alto), los cambios en la obtención de fondos del FIDA en condiciones favorables hicieron que el Gobierno adoptara una posición firme con respecto a la toma de más deuda. Al mismo tiempo, las restricciones en cuanto al uso de las donaciones y los préstamos en concepto de AOD han afectado negativamente virtudes fundamentales del FIDA como son la prestación de asistencia técnica y el fomento de la capacidad. Además, los sistemas de SyE en algunos proyectos han sido deficientes, lo que no siempre permitió demostrar claramente el impacto en el cambio climático, los medios de vida y la reducción de la pobreza. Pese a estos desafíos, los sólidos vínculos con los comités populares provinciales permitieron seguir llevando adelante la ejecución, a menudo con mayores contribuciones de las administraciones locales.

D. Recomendaciones

26. **Recomendación 1. El FIDA debe fortalecer su labor de movilización de recursos, atrayendo fondos en forma de donaciones y aumentando la financiación de contrapartida.** Se está trabajando con fondos para el clima, como el Fondo Verde para el Clima (FVC), el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial (FMAM) y el Fondo de Adaptación, con el fin de dar prioridad a la adaptación al cambio climático, al tiempo que se mejora también la financiación combinada y se garantiza que no se pierda el valor añadido del FIDA. Estos recursos exigen un trabajo considerable por parte de la oficina del FIDA en el país, pero podrían canalizarse a través de los comités populares provinciales y utilizarse con mayor flexibilidad, en combinación con los fondos del Mecanismo de Acceso a Recursos Ajenos (BRAM). Además, los fondos orientados a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de las Naciones Unidas pueden convertirse en una valiosa fuente de financiación para las innovaciones, entre otras cosas. Con miras a determinar el modo en que la oficina del FIDA en el país podría seguir apoyando la microfinanciación (que ha desempeñado un papel tan importante en el programa

¹ Entre esas fuentes figuran el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial (FMAM), el Fondo Verde para el Clima (FVC), el Fondo de Adaptación, el Servicio Neerlandés de Cooperación al Desarrollo (SNV), el World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) y el Fondo Neerlandés para el Clima y el Desarrollo (DFCD).

hasta la fecha), el FIDA podría estudiar posibles opciones mediante la concesión de préstamos sin garantía soberana, a fin de otorgar recursos en préstamo a instituciones financieras a escala local.

27. **Recomendación 2. El FIDA debería seguir centrándose en el desarrollo local, dando prioridad a los pequeños productores pobres y vulnerables y las minorías étnicas.** Esto se ajusta a las políticas del Gobierno y los planes nacionales específicos. Si el FIDA aporta recursos a un fondo común destinado a proyectos de agricultura comercial o de infraestructura a gran escala, existe el riesgo de que se diluyan tanto los limitados recursos financieros del Fondo como su mandato en ámbitos en los que tiene un valor añadido demostrado. La misión básica del FIDA consiste en prestar apoyo a los pequeños productores pobres y vulnerables, y su valor añadido radica en ello, en respaldar cadenas de valor en favor de la población pobre prestando especial atención al cambio climático. Teniendo en cuenta su experiencia demostrada en la labor con las minorías étnicas y las personas pobres, tiene sentido que el FIDA centre sus actividades en las regiones donde se concentran estos grupos y en seguir colaborando a nivel comunal y provincial. No obstante, el hecho de dar prioridad a las zonas y comunidades pobres y vulnerables no debería evitar que el FIDA colabore también con agentes del desarrollo local que se encuentran en una mejor situación económica, para maximizar las posibilidades de creación de empleo, así como la sostenibilidad económica y social a lo largo de cadenas de valor inclusivas.
28. **Recomendación 3.** Durante la preparación del próximo COSOP, **el FIDA debería analizar cuál es la mejor manera de operar en el contexto económico de Viet Nam, que se encuentra en vías de fortalecimiento, evaluando el papel que desempeñarán las actividades no crediticias a la hora de redefinir la singular propuesta de valor del Fondo y de ampliar su capacidad en materia de colaboración en el ámbito de las políticas, reproducción de enfoques y ampliación de escala** de las innovaciones que respalda. Como país que pretende acceder a la categoría de país de ingreso mediano alto (y, en última instancia, de país de ingreso alto), Viet Nam está interesado en difundir a escala internacional sus conocimientos generales y especializados sobre la transformación rural, y el FIDA está bien posicionado para dar a conocer la situación del país a los asociados mundiales. Las actividades enmarcadas en la cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular y las iniciativas mejoradas de gestión de los conocimientos son instrumentos que podrían contribuir a lograrlo. Las contribuciones no financieras, como la asistencia técnica (incluida la facilitación de vínculos comerciales y cadenas de valor internacionales), el fomento de la capacidad y la gestión de los conocimientos, son fundamentales para la capacidad del FIDA de prestar apoyo al país en el futuro. De este modo, Viet Nam podría servir de modelo para otros países, al tiempo que avanza hacia la categoría de país de ingreso alto.
29. **Recomendación 4.** En el contexto de las importantes reestructuraciones y transformaciones institucionales que se están llevando a cabo en las operaciones tanto del Gobierno como del FIDA, **el Fondo deberá reposicionarse y redefinir su ámbito particular de actuación y su valor añadido en Viet Nam** a fin de mantener su ventaja comparativa y, ulteriormente, el sólido apoyo que ha obtenido a lo largo de decenios con un desempeño cada vez mayor, tanto dentro como fuera del país. Esto podría entrañar cambios profundos en la dotación de personal y el *modus operandi* de su oficina en el país, en función de lo que exige y determina una presencia más cercana en el plano regional. El FIDA deberá estar a la altura de sus ambiciones en nuevos escenarios, incluidas las importantes necesidades de seguimiento y apoyo que requieren los nuevos proyectos. Esto también podría exigir procedimientos administrativos y financieros simplificados, así como redes de asociación más amplias y una nueva combinación de actividades crediticias y no crediticias, teniendo en cuenta la evolución de las normas y los reglamentos nacionales sobre el uso de la AOD.

30. **Recomendación 5. El FIDA debería colaborar con el Gobierno para determinar formas de reforzar la capacidad de SyE a nivel local** a fin de presentar mejor los resultados y efectos directos de su programa en el país. A su vez, esto contribuiría a orientar mejor los recursos, que son limitados y cada vez más costosos. No obstante, esto podría exigir el uso de fondos tomados en préstamo para actividades relativas a esferas que no sean la infraestructura. La reestructuración institucional que se está implementando a escala nacional ofrece la oportunidad de establecer nuevos sistemas de SyE en el Ministerio de Finanzas y el Ministerio de Agricultura y Medio Ambiente (posiblemente mediante la utilización de sistemas digitales, como las aplicaciones móviles, entre otras soluciones), así como introducir mejoras en la administración provincial y comunal. Esto perfeccionaría aún más el modelo de planificación descentralizada (el MOP-SEDP), que ya ha arrojado buenos resultados. La mejora de los mecanismos de recopilación de datos aumentaría la fiabilidad de las evaluaciones del impacto, lo que permitiría obtener datos más sólidos sobre las esferas eficaces y las que deberían mejorarse. La gestión de los conocimientos será fundamental para extraer enseñanzas tanto de los éxitos como de los desafíos.

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Currency equivalent, weights and measures

Currency equivalents

Currency unit	= Vietnamese dong (VND)
US\$1.0	= 26413 VND (October 2025)

Weights and measures

1 kilogram (kg)	= 2.204 pounds (lb)
1 000 kg	= 1 metric tonne (t)
1 kilometre (km)	= 0.62 miles (mi)
1 metre (m)	= 1.09 yards (yd)
1 square metre (m ²)	= 10.76 square feet (ft ²)
1 acre	= 0.405 ha
1 hectare (ha)	= 2.47 acres

Abbreviations and acronyms

3EM	Project for the Sustainable Economic Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities in Poor Communes
3PAD	Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development Project
4P	Public-Private-Producer-Partnerships
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Climate Adaptation Fund
AMD	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta Project
APIF	Agribusiness Promotion Investment Fund
APR	Asia and the Pacific Region
APRACA	Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association
ARP	Agriculture Restructuring Programme
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASWQMS	Automated Salinity and Water Quality Monitoring System
CASRAD	Center for Agrarian Systems Research and Development
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CD	Country Director
CDF	Commune Development Fund
CEMA	Council of Ethnic Minority Affairs
CG	Collaborative Group
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
CIG	Common Interest Group
CLE	Corporate Level Evaluation
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CPM	Country Programme Manager
CPRP	Commodity-oriented Poverty Reduction Program in Ha Giang
CRWIS	Climate Resilient and Inclusive Water Infrastructure for Rural Smallholders in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces
CSA	Climate Smart Adaptation
CSAT	Climate Smart Agricultural Value Chain Development in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces

CSPE	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
CSSP	Commercial Smallholder Support Project in Bac Kan and Cao Bang
DARD/DAE	Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development
DBRP	Developing Business with the Rural Poor Programme
DFCD	Dutch Fund for Climate and Development
DP	Development Partner
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
E2F	Enterprise-to-Farmer
EIRR	Economic Internal Rate of Return
EM	Ethnic Minority
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resource Management
EU	European Union
F2F	Farmer-to-Farmer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FHH	Female Headed Household
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GI	Geographic Indications
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women 's Empowerment
GhG	Greenhouse Gases
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
Government	Government of Viet Nam
HH	Household
ICO	IFAD in-country office in Ha Noi (also known as Multi-Country Office or Mekong Hub)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation
IPSARD	Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development
IRR	International Rate of Return
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KM	Knowledge Management
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LMIC	Lower-Middle Income Country
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAE	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MCO	IFAD multi-country office
MFI	Microfinance institution
MKD	Mekong Delta
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOP-SEDP	Market-oriented participatory climate-smart socio-economic development plan
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MPTF	Multi Person Trust Fund
MTR	Midterm Review
NARDT	Agriculture and Rural Development Thinktanks
NBSP	Nature Based Solutions for Inclusive Rural Development Project
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSO	Non-Sovereign Operations
NTP	National Targeted Programmes
NTP-NRD	National Targeted Programme for New Rural Development

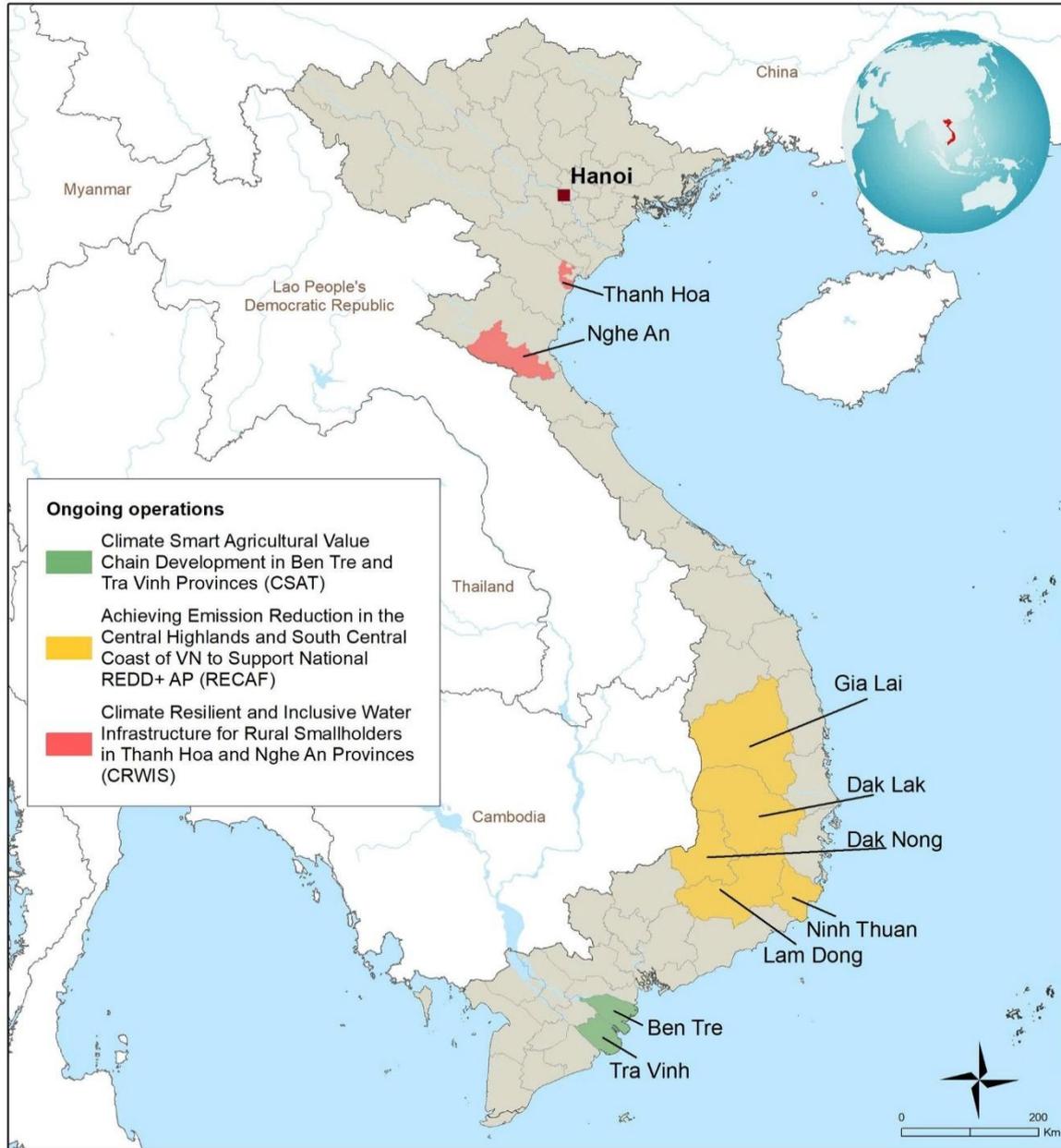
NTP-SEDEMA	National Targeted Programme for Socio-Economic Development of the Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas
OCOP	One Commune One Product
ODA	Official Development Assistance
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
ORMS	Operational Results Management System
PCR	Project Completion Report
PCR/V	Project Completion Report Validation
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PFES	Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services
PMD	Programme Management Department
PMU	Provincial Project Management Unit
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PPE	Project Performance Evaluation
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PWD	Persons with disabilities
RECAF	Reduced Emissions through Climate Smart Agroforestry
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SAP	Smallholder Adaptation Programme
SBV	State Bank of Viet Nam
SCG	Savings and credit group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SIP	Strategic Investment Plans
SO	Strategic Objective
SRDP	Sustainable Rural Development for the Poor Project
SSCVC	South-South Cooperation for Scaling up Climate Resilient Value Chain Initiatives
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
TA	Technical Assistance
TNSP	Agriculture, Farmers and Rural Areas Support Project in Gia Lai, Ninh Thuan and Tuyen Quang Provinces
ToC	Theory of change
UMIC	Upper Middle-Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nation Industrial Development Organization
VBARD	Vietnam Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
VBSP	Vietnam Bank for Social Policies
VC	Value Chain
VCA	Value Chain Action Plan
VFU	Viet Nam Farmers' Union
VWU	Viet Nam Women's Union
WB	World Bank
WDF	Women's Development Fund
WU	Women's Union

Maps of on-going and closed projects in Viet Nam during 2012 – 2024

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

IFAD-funded ongoing projects

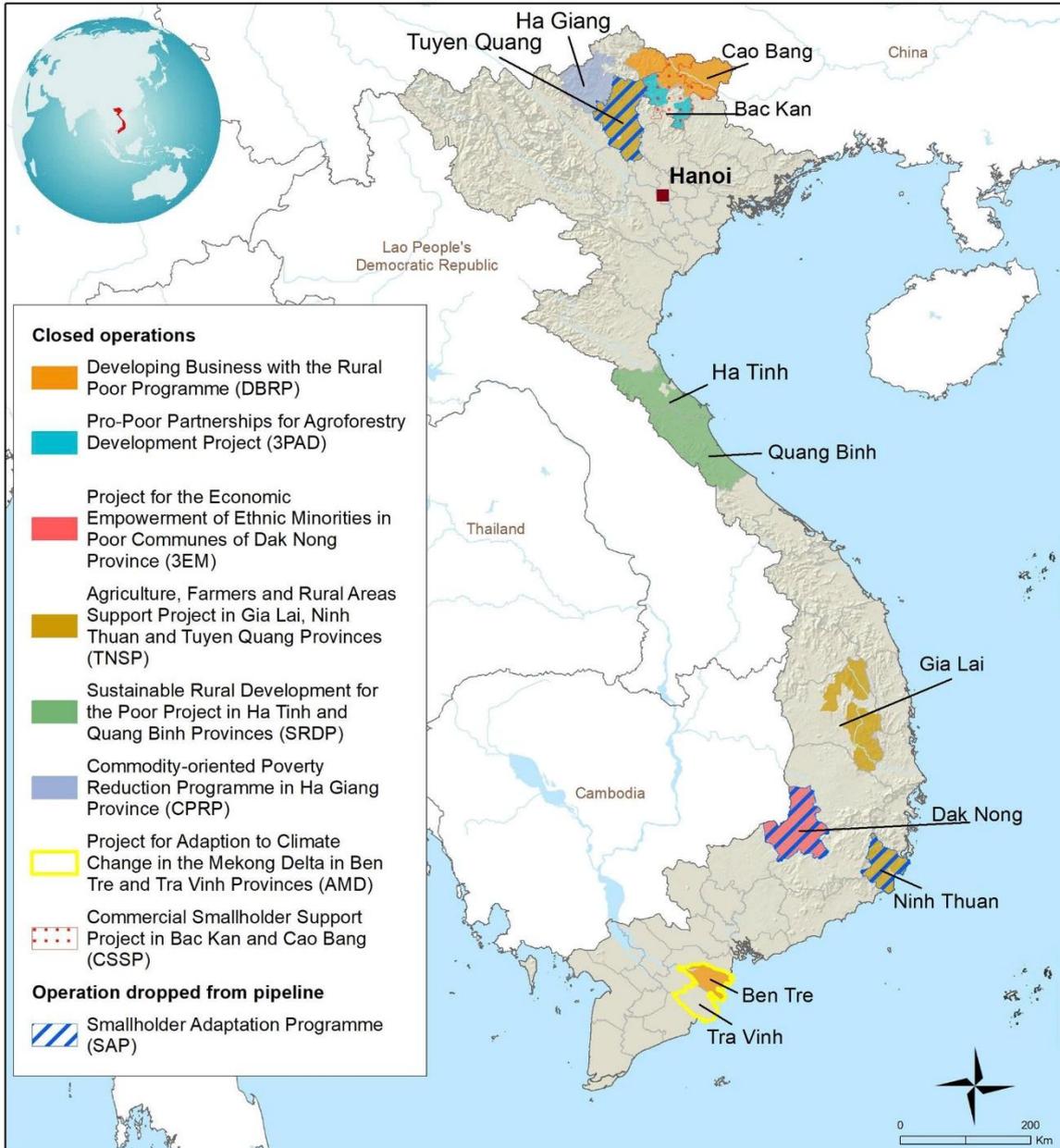
Country strategy and programme evaluation



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.
 Map compiled by IFAD | 11-06-2025

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam IFAD-funded completed projects

Country strategy and programme evaluation



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Map compiled by IFAD | 10-06-2025

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Country strategy and programme evaluation

I. Background and rationale

A. Introduction

1. In line with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Revised Evaluation Policy² and the results-based programme of work and budget of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) for 2025, IOE undertook a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.³ The findings, lessons and recommendations will inform the preparation of the new country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) in 2027 by IFAD, in close consultation with the government.
2. The evaluation covered the period 2012-2024, which has included significant changes. Viet Nam reached Lower-Middle Income Country (LMIC) status in 2009⁴ and is expected to progress to Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) status in 2025. Since the inception of IFAD operations in Viet Nam in 1993 (and the first investment in a project, the Participatory Resource Management Project in Tuyen Quang in 1994), the Fund has approved grant and loan funded projects with a total financing of US\$ 883 million, of which IFAD has financed US\$ 495 million. The total estimated cost of the eleven (11) investment projects covered by the CSPE amounts to US\$ 696 million, of which US\$ 362 million is financed by IFAD, with government and international co-financing making up the rest.

Table 1
Snapshot of IFAD operations in Viet Nam

Description	Key figures
First IFAD investment project	1993
No. IFAD investment projects approved	18
No. IFAD ongoing investment projects	3
Total IFAD investment projects financing (from 1993 to date)	US\$ 495,137,711
Government contribution	US\$ 151,762,235
Beneficiary and other domestic contributions	US\$ 97,668,203
Total cost of portfolio evaluated (11 projects)	US\$ 696,263,409
Government co-financing (11 projects)	US\$ 125,779,146
Total IFAD investment projects financing (11 projects)	US\$ 362,344,596
International co-financing (11 projects)	US\$ 121,031,008
Current country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP)	2019-2025 ⁵
Current Lending terms	Blended and Ordinary terms (completed projects are highly concessional)
Country Office	IFAD established its country presence as an ICO in 2005. It became the MCO or

² <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/132/docs/EB-2021-132-R-5-Rev-1.pdf>

³ Hereafter referred to as Viet Nam.

⁴ https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/336401497026899115/pdf/Vietnam-CLRR-to-the-Board-FINAL-05192017.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁵ Extended to 31 December 2027 on July 3, 2025.

Mekong Hub in 2016	
Country Directors (since 2012)	Ambrosio Barros (CD since 2022 - ongoing); Francisco Pichon (CD 2021 – 2022); Thomas Rath (CD 2017 – 2021); Henning Pedersen (CD 2012 – 2017); Atsuko Toda (CPM 2005 - 2012)
Main government partners	Ministry of Planning and Investment; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ministry of Finance. For most projects, implementation responsibility is with Provincial People's Committees.

Source: IFAD's Oracle Business Intelligence (OBI)

B. Objectives, methodology, scope and processes

3. **Objectives.** The main objectives of the CSPE were to: (i) assess the results and performance of the IFAD strategy and programme in Viet Nam; and (ii) generate findings and recommendations for the future partnership between IFAD and the Government of Viet Nam for enhanced development effectiveness and rural poverty eradication. The evaluation also provides an opportunity to review the extent to which the recommendations of the 2012 Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) have been implemented and assess how programme performance has developed. The CSPE assessed the overall strategy (implicit and explicit), non-lending activities (knowledge management, partnerships, policy dialogue and grants), the performance of loan-financed operations (portfolio of projects), and the performance of partners (Government of Viet Nam and IFAD) in managing the country strategy and programme.
4. **Evaluation approach.** The CSPE adopted a theory-based, mixed-methods approach that used triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data collected from various sources. As per the revised IOE Evaluation Manual, the CSPE used the following criteria to assess the country strategy and programme: relevance, coherence (including knowledge management, partnership development and policy dialogue), efficiency, effectiveness (including innovations), sustainability of benefits, impact on rural poverty, gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainability and scaling up (including environment and natural resources management, and adaptation to climate change), performance of partners (performance of IFAD and government). For every evaluation criterion, a core evaluation question and clarifying sub-questions were identified. The full list of questions per evaluation criterion is presented in the Evaluation Matrix in Annex II.
5. In addition, various methods and data collection tools were developed. Interview sheets based on the evaluation framework were prepared for and tailored to different types of respondents (IFAD staff, development partners, local governments, private sector, etc.). An anonymized scorecard questionnaire was administered to ICO and PMUs of recent projects online, as well as to government staff participating at provincial level during field visits (60 responses collected from the latter). During provincial field visits, data on the WDFs was collected.
6. **Theory of change (ToC).** A theory of change (ToC) for the country strategy and programme was reconstructed based on the analysis of the project documentation, the 2012 CPE, the 2019 COSOP and the Midterm Review (MTR) of the 2019 COSOP, using the 2019 COSOP strategic objectives (see Annex III). The impact expected was 'Sustainably improved incomes of smallholders and rural poor people through market participation and reduced climate vulnerability'. Outputs and outcomes fed into three overall strategic objectives: development of pro-poor value chains (VCs), leveraging pro-poor investments; expansion of financial inclusion for climate-

resilient rural livelihoods; and environmental sustainability and climate resilience of ethnic minorities' smallholder economic activities. Risks and assumptions are particularly important to the ToC. In particular, the risks regarding the change in lending terms as UMIC, making IFAD loans less attractive, and the constraints on use of loans leading to limits on soft activities (IFAD's traditional strength). The ToC was revisited in consultation with relevant IFAD staff and the Government of Viet Nam.

7. **Strategic aspects.** The CSPE assessed the relevance of IFAD's strategic choices, positioning and comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development partners, as well as the complementarities and synergies that these enable. IFAD has prioritized remote areas and work with ethnic minorities (EMs), aligning with National Targeted Programmes (NTPs).
8. **Portfolio evaluated.** The projects were evaluated in line with their implementation progress, as presented in table 2. The first eight projects were assessed according to all evaluation criteria, while the last three were assessed for selected criteria only.

Table 2

Portfolio projects covered by the present CSPE

Project name	Project status	Implementation period	Geographic coverage	Availability of secondary data	Evaluation criteria for CSPE 2025
Developing Business with the Rural Poor Programme (DBRP)	Completed	12/2007 – 6/2014	Cao Bang and Ben Tre Provinces	MTR, 2 PCRs, PCR, project data	All criteria
Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development Project (3PAD)	Completed	12/2008 – 6/2015	Bac Kan Province	MTR, PCR, PPE, project data	All criteria
Project for the Sustainable Economic Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities in Poor Communes (3EM)	Completed	4/2010 – 12/2016	Dak Nong Province	MTR, PCR, PCR, project data	All criteria
Agriculture, Farmers and Rural Areas Support Project (TNSP)	Completed	12/2010 – 3/2017	Gia Lai, Ninh Thuan and Tuyen Quang Provinces	MTR, PCR, PCR, project data	All criteria
Sustainable Rural Development for the Poor Project (SRDP)	Completed	9/2013- 12/2018	Ha Tinh and Quang Binh Provinces	MTR, PCR, PCR, project data	All criteria
Commodity-oriented Poverty Reduction Programme (CPRP)	Completed	9/2014 – 3/2020	Ha Giang Province	MTR, PCR, PCR, project data	All criteria
Project for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta (AMD)	Completed	12/2013 – 9/2020	Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces	MTR, PCR, PCR, RIA, project data	All criteria
Commercial Smallholder Support Project (CSSP)	Completed	12/2016 – 3/2025	Bac Kan and Cao Bang Provinces	MTR, PCR, project data	All criteria*
Climate Smart Agricultural Value Chain Development (CSAT)	Ongoing	12/2021 -	Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces	project data	Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency
Reduced Emissions through Climate Smart Agroforestry	Board Approved	12/2024 -	Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Ninh Thuan,	Project design documents	Relevance

(RECAF)	Lam Dong				
Climate Resilient and Inclusive Water Infrastructure for Rural Smallholders (CRWIS)	Board Approved	12/2024-	Thanh Hoa, Nghe An	Project design documents	Relevance

PCR: project completion report; PCRV: project completion report validation; PPE: Project Performance Evaluation

* All criteria, possibly except for rural poverty impact, sustainability of benefits, scaling-up

9. **Evaluation of non-lending activities.** Non-lending orientations in the 2012 COSOP revolved around supporting the thrusts of its strategic objectives (SOs) through policy dialogue actions, leveraging and disseminating project-generated knowledge, and maintaining or building new partnerships for the policy agenda. The 2019 COSOP reflected recent constraints in the use of loans for many of the typical IFAD activities,⁶ and more efforts have been made to share IFAD-supported experiences and lessons learned with government representatives and research programmes, via knowledge management and policy dialogue (for instance, support for Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) for a Decree on organization and operation of commodity groups in 2017).⁷ However, there have been limited grant funds available for this within the projects, and COSOP partnership building focuses on reaching out to the private sector, research institutions and bilateral organizations (see Annex X table A1 for a more detailed comparison of the two COSOPs' orientations on non-lending activities). In addition, efforts have been made by the IFAD in-country office (ICO) to identify more grants and domestic funds. The CSPE looked at knowledge management, policy engagement and partnership building experiences. This includes for instance, in the development of the NTP-NRD, as well policy work regarding Mekong Delta development, and policies regarding cooperatives.
10. **Performance of partners.** The CSPE assessed the extent to which: (i) IFAD performed its supervisory and advisory functions; and (ii) the Government of Viet Nam has played its management and oversight roles for efficient and effective delivery of the country programme in achieving results. This entailed an assessment of the implementation of their respective responsibilities in design, finance, implementation support, monitoring, and evaluation, overcoming bottlenecks, addressing challenges and managing risks.
11. **Analytical themes.** Based on the review of the documentation and the ToC, four key topics to underpin this evaluation were identified for a deeper dive. They were Value chain development and access to markets; Sustainable natural resources management and climate change adaptation; Social Inclusion and Targeting; and IFAD's changing role in Viet Nam. The contribution of the IFAD-funded projects, knowledge management and partnerships to policy dialogue were also assessed.
12. **Evaluation process.** Aligned with the methodological building blocks, the conduct of the CSPE followed the following steps:
 - i) **Preparation/inception phase.** This entailed a desk review and virtual meetings with national stakeholders. The approach paper was shared in December 2024. The evaluation reviewed studies, evaluation reports and operational documents from other organizations as well as policies, strategies, and secondary data available at the country level. IFAD's country office (ICO) and the Provincial Project Management Units (PMUs) responded to self-assessment questionnaires, highlighting key achievements, shortcomings and issues for the Viet Nam country programme. The evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews,

⁶ Due to changes in the ODA related legislation – starting in 2017 with the *Law on Management of Public Debts*, Nov. 23 2017; which tightened to the *Law on Public Investment* of June 13, 2019. This was later tightened further with the Decree No. 114/2021/ND-CP (December 16, 2021) on *Management and Use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Concessional Loans Provided by Foreign Donors*

⁷ IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review

face-to-face or remote, with IFAD staff and consultants, representatives of the PMUs, national ministry and provincial government departments, relevant multilateral and bilateral organizations, and national stakeholders (such as universities and research bodies, financial organisations, private sector participants and other partners).⁸

- ii) **Field mission.** The CSPE team met with the ICO and with stakeholders from the Government and development partners. The CSPE evaluation team split into two field missions – one to the north and one to the south – visiting a sample of communities representing a broad diversity of experiences, climate zones, locations and projects (see Annex IX for details). Visits were made to:
- Bac Kan (CSSP and 3PAD (and discussion of CSSP II/Nature Based Solutions Project (NBSP) initial ideas)
 - Cao Bang (CSSP and DBRP (and discussion of NBSP initial ideas))
 - Ha Giang (CPRP)
 - Tuyen Quang (TNSP and the planned SAP, plus earlier projects pre-2012)
 - Ben Tre (DBRP, CSAT and AMD)
 - Tra Vinh (CSAT and AMD)
 - Ninh Thuan (TNSP, RECAF and the planned SAP)

The evaluation team visited selected communities to collect data on their project experiences through interviews with key local informants and focus groups with smallholder farmers, including women, youth and ethnic minorities, and mass organization representatives. The team also met private sector stakeholders, and savings and credit group participants.⁹

The CSPE team had a hybrid wrap-up meeting on 11th April 2025 with the ICO, representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, and representatives of all the PMUs.

- iii) **Draft report and review.** Following the field visit some additional interviews were conducted. The team analysed field data gathered and triangulated from various sources including project monitoring data to generate findings and prepare the draft report. The questions listed in the evaluation framework and the ToC guided the analysis and helped to draw up the main conclusions and recommendations. After an internal, thorough IOE peer review, the draft report was shared with the Government and IFAD for review and comment.
- iv) **Report finalization and dissemination.** IOE finalized the CSPE report, after engagement with IFAD and Government of Viet Nam stakeholders, and prepared audit trails explaining how comments were addressed. A national in-person workshop was organized on 15 October 2025 in Ha Noi to discuss key findings and recommendations of the CSPE.

13. **Limitations.** Given the long period of the program under evaluation, it was not feasible to cover all projects implemented in depth. The geographic spread also limited the team from visiting all project sites (yet there was a strong preference for in-person interviews expressed by government stakeholders). As in most country level evaluations, the multitude of factors that affected communities reached by IFAD-financed activities, mean that *attribution* of impact is challenging (*contribution is easier to identify*) – especially with regard to policy influencing. In

⁸ 47 key persons were met. See Annex VIII for list of names.

⁹ Approximately 145 key persons (and many other group members). See Annex VIII for list of names.

the individual projects, it was rare to have other development partners working in the same sector and location, making attribution clearer. However, sufficient data was not always available, especially regarding impacts. The CSPE addresses these limitations by triangulating among several sources of information.

14. The non-lending activities have limited documented results available and required further analysis of their outcomes and the connections with the country programme during the desk study and via KIIs.
15. During 2025, the evaluation and main mission in Viet Nam coincided with significant government reform. Several ministries have merged, including the key IFAD counterparts. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment merged with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – now the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) – and the Ministry of Planning and Investment is now part of the Ministry of Finance (MoF). At the same time there have been mergers of provinces, dissolution of the entire district level structure, and mergers of communes. This meant that during the CSPE visits, many government staff had changed posts (resulting in loss of institutional memory) or were uncertain of their future.

Key points

- This is the third country evaluation of IFAD's support in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The previous one was conducted in 2012. This CSPE assessed the period between 2012 and 2024 and covered eleven investment projects (8 completed, one ongoing, and two approved).
- The total cost of the investment portfolio covered in this CSPE is US\$ 696 million, of which US\$ 362 million is financed by IFAD.
- The scope of the evaluation included an assessment of the country strategy and the performance of the portfolio, non-lending activities and partner performance (IFAD and the Government of Viet Nam).
- The evaluation applied a theory-based model and a mixed methods approach including qualitative and quantitative data. Data was triangulated from various sources to generate findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- The end of the evaluation period has coincided with significant government reform, an anti-corruption drive and restructuring. Counterparts were experiencing uncertainty regarding their future.

II. Country context and overview of IFAD's strategy and operations

A. Country context

Economic and social development

16. **Geography and demography.** In 2025, Viet Nam's population reached 101.5 million, making it the 15th largest country by population in the world, and the eighth most populous in Asia.¹⁰ The land mass covers 331,212 km² in a narrow strip, stretching 1650 kilometers from north to south and at its narrowest, only 50 kilometers wide. It borders China, Lao PDR and Cambodia. Land types range from mountainous or hilly terrain in the north and central highlands, to coastal plains and tropical forest in the Red River delta (in the north) and the Mekong delta (in the south).¹¹
17. **Political organisation.** Viet Nam is governed by the Communist Party of Viet Nam, as institutionalized in the constitutions of 1980 and 1992. The Party provides overall policy directions, while the President and the Government are responsible for governance and the implementation of national policies. During the evaluation period, the country was administratively organized into 63 provinces, which were further subdivided into districts and, at the lowest level, communes.¹² Key mass organizations working with IFAD include the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU) and the Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VFU).
18. **Economy.** The early period of the CSPE showed consistently strong economic performance. The economy is growing rapidly, after a strong setback due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in 2020 and 2021. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annual growth dropped from approximately 7 per cent in 2015, to 2.6 per cent in 2020 and 2021, before rising again to 8.5 per cent in 2022. GDP growth continued to fluctuate in 2023-24 (falling to 5.1 per cent in 2023), due to the global economic slowdown and increasing conflicts (such as the war in Ukraine), followed by a subsequent increase to 7.1 per cent in 2024 (see Table 3 below). The key contributors to growth are tourism, processing, services and manufacturing sectors. Personal remittances peaked in 2007 at 8 per cent of GDP but have steadily reduced during the evaluation period to 3.2 per cent of GDP in 2023.¹³ Viet Nam joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995, benefitting from this large free-trade export market, as well as in security issues. However, reliance on exports has made it vulnerable to tariffs, and the economy is likely to experience uncertainty during 2025.¹⁴

Table 3
Key Economic Development Indicators

Indicators	2013	2015	2021	2022	2023	2024
GDP per capita (current US\$)	2359.5	2577.6	3704.2	4147.7	4323.4	4717.3
GDP growth (annual per cent)	5.6%	7%	2.6%	8.5%	5.1%	7.1%
Exports of goods and services (per cent of GDP)	66.8%	72.9%	93.9%	93.4%	86.5%	N/A

¹⁰ <https://statisticstimes.com/demographics/country/vietnam-population.php>

¹¹ <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Vietnam/geography.htm>

¹² In early 2025, the political restructuring is leading to significant changes. The district level will be eliminated entirely, while the country's 63 provinces and cities will be merged into 28 provinces and six centrally-run cities. The number of communes will be reduced via mergers by 60-70 per cent. <https://thedi diplomat.com/2025/04/vietnam-to-cut-provinces-by-half-in-radical-administrative-restructure/>

¹³ World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/country/VN>

¹⁴ In April 2025, the US announced tariffs of 46 per cent on imports of goods from Vietnam. It is still unclear what will eventuate.

External debt stocks, total (DOD, current US\$ billion)	66.25	81.83	139.8	146.6	141.8	N/A
Imports of goods and services (per cent of GDP)	64%	71.9%	92.8%	89.7%	78.4%	N/A
Foreign direct investment, net inflows (per cent of GDP)	4.2%	4.9%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.2%
Inflation, consumer prices (annual per cent)	6.6%	0.6%	1.8%	3.2%	3.3%	3.6%
Manufacturing, value added (per cent of GDP)	20.6%	20.9%	24.4%	24.5%	23.8%	24%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing value added (per cent of GDP)	15.2%	14.5%	12.6%	11.9%	11.9%	11.9%
Services, value added (per cent of GDP)	40.5%	42.2%	41.3%	41.1%	42.3%	42.4%

Source: World Bank Database (2024)

19. **Human development and poverty.** Viet Nam's Human Development Index (HDI) rating was 0.726 in 2022,¹⁵ showing dramatic improvement since 1990 (when it scored 0.492). Viet Nam has achieved a significant reduction in multidimensional poverty during the evaluation period. The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024 recorded that, in 2013-14, there were 4,517,000 people or 4.9 per cent living in multidimensional poverty; and by 2020-21, that figure had reduced to 1,899,000 or 1.9 per cent.¹⁶ However, there are some challenges, with poverty and low living standards in remote, mountainous and ethnic minority communities. Viet Nam's Gini index was 36.1 in 2022, having decreased from a high of 39.3 in 2010.¹⁷ While poverty rates in all regions are falling, the poverty rates at the start of the CSPE period were higher and the rate of decline slower in areas such as the northern midlands and mountain areas, and the Central Highlands (General Statistics Office, Viet Nam 2020).¹⁸
20. **Gender equality.** Women have comparatively high workforce participation¹⁹ and access to economic opportunities and are equal under the law. They also have high literacy, education achievements and health. Viet Nam scored 0.997 in the Gender Development Index in 2023 (although the estimated Gross National Product (GNP) per capita for women is approximately 80 per cent that of men).²⁰ Gender is defined in binary terms in Viet Nam and does not consider gender identity or sexual orientation.²¹ A gap still exists on empowerment and participation. There are fewer women in leadership at each governance level (national, provincial, district, commune and village);²² families continue to demonstrate a preference for boy children, using pre-natal sex-selection to allow them to produce sons; women experience more drudgery (particularly expectations of domestic chores); and

¹⁵ UNDP 2023/24 *Human Development Report*. This positioned Viet Nam at 107 out of 193 countries and territories in 2022 in the Gender Development Index

¹⁶ <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdp-document/mpireport2024en.pdf> 4.3 per cent of the population were living below the national poverty line and only one per cent of the population were living below the poverty line of \$2.15 per day.

¹⁷ World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=VN> A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.

¹⁸ ADB. 2022a. *Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development Sector Assessment, Strategy and Road Map - Viet Nam 2021–2025*

¹⁹ UNDP 2025 *Human Development Report*. In 2023, Viet Nam had 67.9 per cent labour force participation by women, greater than other countries in the region, other than Cambodia. Labour force participation by men was 76.7 per cent.

²⁰ UNDP 2025 *Human Development Report*. The Gender Development Index (GDI) measures gender inequalities in the achievement of key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, a good education, and a decent standard of living. Values close to 1, as here, signify gender equality in these topics (though not all issues). In 2023, Viet Nam was positioned in 78th place in the Gender Inequality Index (of 172 countries ranked).

²¹ Transgender persons are not recognized in law, and it is difficult to change gender in legal documents.

²² In 2022, 30.3 per cent of National Assembly deputies were women, and 29 per cent of provincial and district level council members. However, there are only 16.0 percent female members of PPCs and 14.3 percent of provincial party secretaries were women (20.1 per cent and 9.7 per cent at district PC level; and 25.6 percent and 11.4 per cent at commune level). UN Women. *Country Gender Equality Profile Vietnam 2021*

women face gender-based violence.²³ There are also intersectional differences for women from ethnic minority groups, women living with disabilities, rural or migrant women, and single mothers. Examples include gender inequalities in agricultural labor, access to land (despite the provisions of the 2013 Land Law requiring both husband and wife's name on the certificate) and decreased access to agricultural extension and technology.²⁴ The 2011-2020 National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) has been updated, with an updated strategy for 2021-2030 (Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP), and with targets to challenge gender stereotypes and overcome the 'gendered structure'.^{25 26}

21. **Youth engagement.** The youth population²⁷ is gradually decreasing.²⁸ Between 2000 and 2023, young male unemployment oscillated between 3.4 and 7 per cent (currently at 6.5 per cent), while young female unemployment has oscillated in a similar manner from 3.2 to 7.5 per cent in the same period (and currently at 5.9 per cent). Both these rates are higher than the overall national average unemployment rate of 1.8 per cent over the same period.²⁹ There is recognition of the lack of appropriately skilled workers to meet market needs, and a disparity of education between rural and urban areas.³⁰ The Government has recognized the importance of identifying off-farm jobs and vocational training for youth and hopes to promote this via the Youth Development Strategy 2021-2030.
22. **Ethnic minorities.** Viet Nam has 54 recognized ethnic groups, 53 of which are ethnic minorities. Notable groups include the Tay (1.9 per cent), Thái (1.89 per cent), Mường (1.51 per cent), Hmong (1.45 per cent) and Khmer (1.32 per cent).³¹ The Northern Mountains and Central Highlands regions, home to most ethnic minorities, have multidimensional poverty rates more than twice the national average. Poverty rates remain higher among rural and ethnic minority households (HHs) primarily engaged in agriculture, due to challenges of being largely reliant on agriculture on poorer agricultural land, with poor links to markets and other economic opportunities, prejudice, and less access to finance and training. In 2020, 79 per cent of poor people were ethnic minorities, despite representing only 15 per cent of the population. There is significantly more involvement of ethnic minorities in forestry (69 per cent vs. 11 per cent) and livestock (82 per cent vs. 64 per cent), compared to the majority ethnic group, Kinh. There are also significant differences in productivity in almost all crops and sectors. Ethnic minority women lag behind on almost all socio-economic indicators.³² Several of the NTPs are addressing the problems faced by ethnic minorities.
23. **Nutrition and food security.** In 2022, Viet Nam was in 46th place out of 113 countries in the Global Food Security index, due to dramatic increases in agricultural production and favourable policies, and had improved its composite score significantly between 2012 and 2022.³³ However, despite making significant improvements in food availability, Viet Nam is not currently meeting all targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition. Of the group of children under five years of age, 19.6 per cent are still affected by stunting and 5.2 per cent are impacted by

²³ Viet Nam has strengthened efforts to combat GBV over the last decade, via a combination of legislation and work with civil society. The rates of physical violence by a partner decreased in 2019 to 26 per cent compared to 32 per cent in 2010, with greater changes among younger women. UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, 2020.

²⁴ FAO. 2019. *Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Viet Nam*. Hanoi

²⁵ UN Women. *Country Gender Equality Profile Vietnam 2021*

²⁶ <https://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/vietnam-implements-gender-equality-strategy-but-challenges-remain.html/>

²⁷ Defined as 16-30 years in the Youth Law, 2020, but as 15-24 by the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (GSO)

²⁸ The population 15-24 years fell from 19.5 per cent in 2011 to 13.4 per cent in 2021 (GSO 2022)

²⁹ World Bank Data.

³⁰ UNFPA. 2020. *Report on Vietnamese Youth 2015-2018*

³¹ The Indigenous World 2024, IWGIA: https://www.iwgia.org/en/vietnam/5375-iw-2024-vietnam.html#_edn1

³² World Bank. 2022a. *From the Last Mile to the Next Mile – 2022 Vietnam Poverty & Equity Assessment*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

³³ Economist Impact. 2022. *Global Food Security Index 2022* https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/project/food-security-index/reports/Economist_Impact_GFSI_2022_Global_Report_Sep_2022.pdf Viet Nam scored 67.9 in 2022, and 50.4 in 2012.

wasting, while 7.4 percent are overweight (especially boys).³⁴ These problems are particularly evident among ethnic minorities, due to unbalanced nutrition, seasonal hunger periods due to unstable incomes, and poor water supply and sanitation.³⁵ Considering the national data (National Institute of Nutrition), there is also increasing obesity. Data by project province and in total is available in Annex X, figures A1-A4.

Agricultural sector and rural development

24. **Agricultural sector and emerging value chain activities.** Although the contribution of agriculture, forestry and fishing to the GDP has fallen in recent years (11.9 per cent in 2024, from 16.2 per cent in 2012),³⁶ the proportion of the active labor force working in agriculture remains high (34 percent in 2022, decreasing from 47 percent in 2012).³⁷ About 70 percent of farms operate on less than 0.5 hectare (ha) and only 8 per cent nationally have more than 2 ha.³⁸ Fragmented production and limited organization of farmers (beyond cooperatives in the rice sector) are challenges for commercialization. In addition, there are low technical capacities and access to extension services for smallholders (particularly when considering the coming changes in conditions caused by climate change, and the needs for adaptation). There are growing problems with domestic food safety – ranging from agrochemical residues in food, weak food inspection chains, many wet markets with poor food handling and storage, and other risks. Limits to rural infrastructure are being addressed, but this remains a barrier for emergent value chain activities – which includes the construction and maintenance of rural access roads and irrigation systems – as well as weak market linkages.
25. **Impediments to rural finance.** Another constraint faced by farmers and other actors across agricultural value chains is access to finance and financial literacy. The sector currently includes the Viet Nam Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (VBARD/Agribank), using land as collateral, and the Viet Nam Bank for Social Policy (VBSP) as the main sources of credit. In addition, microfinance is popular in rural areas for farming households.³⁹ This however is mainly dependent on donor financing, and the government has constrained the use of loan funds for this purpose.⁴⁰
26. **International exports.** The main international agricultural export is rice (7.8 million tons exported in the first 10 months of 2024, mainly to China and ASEAN nations but also further afield, such as the USA and the EU, with an annual increase of 10.2 percent of volume and 23.4 per cent in value).⁴¹ Other significant exports are coffee, pepper, cashew nuts, green tea and wood, as well as marine and aquaculture products. The value of agriculture, forestry, and fishery exports has increased from US\$ 22.8 billion in 2012 to US\$ 33.8 billion in 2019.⁴² Nonetheless the importance of the value of agricultural exports as a percentage of total merchandise exports from Viet Nam has decreased over the past two decades, from 23 per cent in 2004 to 10 per cent since 2020.⁴³ A significant and growing market is China, where Viet Nam maintains a trade surplus, but also faces some risks of

³⁴ <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/asia/south-eastern-asia/viet-nam/>

³⁵ Dao The Anh and Pham Cong Nghiep. 2020. *New Challenges for Food Security in Vietnam*. Food and Fertilizer Technology Center for the Asian and Pacific Region. <https://ap.iftc.org.tw/article/2547>

³⁶ World Bank Data - <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=VN>

³⁷ World Bank Data. Based on ILO estimates of employment in agriculture as a percentage of total employment <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=VN>

³⁸ World Bank, 2019. *Vietnam Agriculture Finance Diagnostic Report*

³⁹ In addition to VBARD and VBSP, various public and private/commercial banks, cooperative banks and MFIs are actively operating in rural areas; with some giving non-collateral loans through mass organizations such as the Women's Union and Farmers' Union

⁴⁰ The ODA regulations have been gradually tightening since 2017, restricting use of loans for infrastructure in 2021

⁴¹ <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rice-exports-likely-to-set-new-record-in-2024-post301396.vnp>

⁴² ADB. 2022a. *Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development Sector Assessment, Strategy and Road Map - Viet Nam 2021–2025*

⁴³ WTO Statistics. <https://stats.wto.org>

technical barriers, restrictions and frequent changes in policy.^{44 45} In order to maintain agricultural exports, certificates of origin and sanitary and phyto-sanitary certification are increasingly demanded. Viet Nam is a member of many Free Trade Agreements, giving it lower tariffs. Although outside of the evaluation period, uncertainty over potential new U.S. import tariffs poses a risk to Vietnam's access to the U.S. market and to Vietnamese export-led economic growth.

27. **Water resources and irrigation.** Water resources are publicly owned, and water users and their organizations have the right to use water to meet their daily needs. Both gravity- or pump-fed irrigation have made an important contribution to agricultural production, with historical subsidisation and elimination of water user fees for agricultural (principally) rice production.⁴⁶ However, as in many countries, there is insufficient understanding of water efficiency and crop needs, methods to reduce water losses⁴⁷, and risks of pollution with pesticides and chemical fertilizers. There is significant land fragmentation, making it problematic to efficiently use irrigation on scattered and small landholdings.
28. **Environment and natural resources management.** Significant environmental damage has resulted from removal of protective coastal mangrove forests to make way for shrimp farming ponds and salt production (making farmland more vulnerable to the impacts of typhoons), although recent government actions are trying to restore and replant mangrove areas.⁴⁸ Upland soils are vulnerable to erosion, particularly following deforestation, and there has been excessive extraction of water and insufficient use of soil and moisture conservation practices, leading to difficulties to meet domestic and agricultural water needs. The Government has made efforts to promote forest protection – for instance, via small trials of Payments for Forest Ecosystem Services (PFES); and development of the voluntary carbon credit market (through activities such as agroforestry); as well as engaging in ASEAN regional collaboration and policy dialogues on haze-free sustainable management.
29. **Climate change impacts.** With over 3000 kilometers of coastline, and a large proportion of its population living in coastal areas, Viet Nam is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, and saline intrusion.^{49 50} Already apparent increases in temperature may also impact the viable geographical range of plant species and risk of animal and plant diseases. Water flows in main river basins in the dry season have decreased, while typhoons, storms and heavy rains are causing flooding and erosion, as well as damage to infrastructure. The likely increases in extreme weather may result in more frequent and powerful typhoons, increased flooding, drought periods, and heat stress (with particular negative impacts on outdoor laborers, people with disabilities, elderly people, children and women). It is estimated that climate change cost 3.2 per cent of Viet Nam's GDP in 2020 and could cost even 12–14.5 percent of GDP or cumulative costs of US\$400–\$523

⁴⁴ Tian J, Zhu Y, Hoang TBN, Edjah BKT (2024) Analysis of the competitiveness and complementarity of China-Vietnam bilateral agricultural commodity trade. PLoS ONE 19(4): e0302630. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0302630>. The two countries also signed a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on January 1, 2022.

⁴⁵ Le Hai Binh and Lam Thanh Ha. 2021. *Vietnam – China Agricultural Trade. Huge Growth and Challenges*. Issue 4 – 2021. ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institut. Series: Trends in Southeast Asia, ISSN 0219-3213

⁴⁶ Phu, L.V. 2023

⁴⁷ On the importance of efficiency in water use in Viet Nam, also see <https://vietnamnews.vn/environment/1725432/water-security-concerns-grow-amid-rising-pressures.html>

⁴⁸ Various sources are available describing this online – for instance, Quan T. Lai et al. 2022. 'A closer look into shrimp yields and mangrove coverage ratio in integrated mangrove-shrimp farming systems in Ca Mau, Vietnam.' *Aquacult Int* 30, 863–882 (2022). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10499-021-00831-1>; or Hoang Ha Anh et al. 2024. 'Economic effects of a controlled mangrove-to-pond coverage ratio policy on mangrove conservation and shrimp farming: A case study in Vietnam using instrumental regression analysis.' *Trees, Forests and People*. Vol. 16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tfp.2024.100579>

⁴⁹ IPCC. 2018. IPCC Press Release. *IPCC presents findings of the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C at event to discuss Viet Nam's response to climate change*

⁵⁰ World Bank. 2021. *Climate Risk Country Profile. Vietnam*

billion, by 2050.⁵¹ Incidents during the CSPE period include the serious saltwater intrusion in the Mekong Delta area and the impacts of Typhoon Yagi in the north. Climate change is one of several factors linked to the emergence of new pests and diseases, such as lumpy skin disease in cattle in 2020-21, and the serious African Swine Fever outbreak from 2019.

Poverty Reduction and Agricultural Strategies

30. **Agricultural strategy and policy frameworks.** The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategies for the period 2021-2030, with a vision toward 2050 (approved 2022) has an objective to develop agriculture and natural resources into a major strategic export sector by 2030; as well as providing rural employment and a decrease in rural household poverty. It highlights innovative agricultural models such as smart, ecological, circular organic, and high-tech agriculture. These are reflected in the Agriculture Restructuring Programme (ARP) 2021-25 and the NTPs.⁵²
31. **National strategies and programmes.** Viet Nam's rural poverty reduction efforts are guided by a series of policies and National Targeted Programmes (NTPs) and sub-projects, many of which have been renewed regularly (Box 1).

Box 1

Viet Nam's key socio-economic strategies and NTPs

- The Socio-Economic Development Strategy, 2021–2030 (2021)
- NTP for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR) 2021-2025 aims for multidimensional, inclusive and sustainable poverty reduction. It aims to reduce the national poverty rate by 1-1.5 per cent, and by more than 3 per cent in ethnic minority households.
- NTP for New Rural Development (NTP-NRD) 2021-2025 is the key instrument of the Agriculture Restructuring Programme. It includes the promotion of the One Commune One Product (OCOP) approach, which has been applied by IFAD.
- NTP for Socio-Economic Development of the Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas (NTP-SEDEMA) 2021-2030 (formerly NTP-135). This addresses the disproportionate levels of poverty amongst ethnic minority and remote households.
- NTP for Climate Change Response and Green Growth (2016-2020); and the later National Strategy for Climate Change toward 2025; the National Action Plan on Green Growth 2021-2030; and the 2022 National Strategy for Climate Change towards 2050. These include actions on Climate Change (CC) mitigation and adaptation, a reduction in CC vulnerability and damage, and increasing resilience.

32. **United Nations (UN) strategies.** The UN's One Strategic Plan (OSP) 2017-2021 and now the One Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development Cooperation between the UN and the Government for the period 2022-2026 guide the cooperation. These emphasise support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with four main foci: inclusive social development; climate change response, disaster resilience and environmental sustainability; economic transformation; and governance and access to justice.
33. Viet Nam's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2022) prioritizes development of climate chain-informed Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDP), early warning systems, adaptation processes for the most vulnerable communities, targets for reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GhG) emissions, and technology and finance for CCAs to develop resilience. The review and update of the NDC 2020 demonstrated an increase in emission reductions, as well as the increase in climate-induced risks.⁵³

⁵¹ World Bank. 2022b. *Vietnam. Country Climate and Development Report*

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a27f1b05-910d-59ab-ba2c-84206bf107c2/content>

⁵² World Bank. 2020. *Vietnam: Improving agricultural interventions under the new National Target Programs*. World Bank

⁵³ GoV. 2022. Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Available on UNFCCC site:

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-11/Viet%20Nam_NDC_2022_Eng.pdf

34. **Institutions.** The key Government stakeholders for IFAD during the evaluation period have been the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE), the Council of Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), as well as their departments, and the provincial line ministries.⁵⁴ The Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the official representative of the Government as the Borrower/Recipient of IFAD loans, while the Provincial People's Committees have delegated power to co-sign the loans and implement the projects. Under the 2025 restructuring, MPI and MoF are merged (now called only MoF). MoNRE and MARD are merged (now called the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, MAE). CEMA and the VWU and VFU are now part of the Fatherland Front. Some provinces are merging, as are some communes. The district level will be abolished, and responsibilities (and some staff) moved to the commune level

Development Cooperation

35. Viet Nam has been one of the largest Official Development Aid (ODA) recipients globally. ODA commitments during the period rose to a peak of billion US\$ 4.2 in 2014. ODA is now declining dramatically – to million US\$48.9 in 2022.⁵⁵ As a percentage of GDP, ODA decreased from 1.81 per cent in 2016 to 0.63 per cent in 2020. Data regarding the ODA flows by year, donor and sector is available in Annex X, Figure A5.
36. International financial institutions (IFIs) working in the agriculture, natural resources management and climate change sectors during the evaluation period include: the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, and others. All are facing operational challenges, partly due to the complex and frequently revised regulations and challenging government approvals processes.⁵⁶ As grant funds are becoming more important, Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Adaptation Fund (AF) and others are becoming more prominent. Most UN organizations are active here, however, the World Food Programme (WFP) does not have any active presence.
37. As Viet Nam has progressed to middle-income status and is rapidly developing, many bilateral development partners have ended their programmes, or have moved to commercial relationships via concessional credit, or institution-institution capacity building linkages (gross ODA peaked in 2014, see figure A6 in Annex X). The largest donor countries/organisations from 2012-2022 are Japan, World Bank (WB) Group, Asian Development Bank, Germany, France, Korea, United States, Australia, EU institutions and the Global Fund (see table A2 in Annex X). The Government issued Decree 114/2021/ND-CP on the management and use of ODA and concessional loans provided by foreign donors, which came into effect in December 2021 (replacing the previous Decree 56/2020/ND-CP). It governs the use of ODA grants and concessional loans. Loans are determined to be for infrastructure – and not for capacity building.⁵⁷ Nor can they be used for microfinance. In addition, Resolution 23/2021/QH15 of the National Assembly reduced the statutory level of public debt to 60 per cent in 2021 – this applies to both national and provincial debt levels on an annual basis. This can limit the capacity of a province to take a loan, even if it is considered important.

⁵⁴ The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD – now MAE) controls irrigation policy, as well as major infrastructure, at the national scale, via its Department of Water Resources Management (DWRM) and associated institutes, as well as some corporations and companies.⁵⁴ The provincial and district level Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD/DAE) have responsibility locally, including smaller scale infrastructure planning, construction and management. Irrigation and Drainage Management companies (IDMCs) manage main canals and drainage and liaise with Water User Associations (WUAs) at community or cooperative level.

⁵⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD?end=2022&locations=VN&start=1960&view=chart>

⁵⁶ ADB. 2023. Member Fact Sheet. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27813/vie-2023.pdf>

⁵⁷ <https://www.allens.com.au/insights-news/insights/2022/01/Updates-to-vietnams-management-and-use-of-ODA-and-concessional-loans/>

38. Viet Nam participates in some South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) initiatives in agriculture, particularly in cooperation with African countries in rice production.⁵⁸

B. Overview of IFAD's country strategies and programme during the evaluated period

39. **Past country strategies and evaluations.** IFAD's activities in Viet Nam started in 1993 with the Participatory Resource Management Project in Tuyen Quang Province, in the northeastern region of the country. Since then, the country portfolio has included 16 loan-funded projects implemented nationwide, and two beginning (see Annex IV). The portfolio has undergone two evaluations: the first was a joint Country Programme Review and Evaluation conducted in 2001 by the Asia and Pacific Division in collaboration with the Office of Evaluation and Studies (though not an independent evaluation). The second was a CPE published in 2012, covering the period from 1993 to 2010, which assessed the first country strategy developed in 1996 and subsequent COSOPs in 2003 and 2008.
40. **An evolution in COSOPs.** The goals of COSOPs in Viet Nam have evolved to address changes in rural poverty and economic development. The 2003 COSOP prioritized developing and testing innovative approaches to poverty reduction that could be replicated and scaled up by improving access to human, social, and productive assets, including technology; fostering good governance; and strengthening knowledge-sharing. By 2008, the COSOP aimed to enhance rural livelihoods in upland areas by integrating private-sector partnerships, expanding pro-poor business opportunities, and supporting climate adaptation, value chains, and local capacity-building.⁵⁹
41. **The 2012 CPE** evaluated the aforementioned COSOPs and reported some successes with diversification of production, moving from an area-based development model to a more market-oriented focus. There had also been strong contributions to decentralization, capacity building, participatory planning, gender mainstreaming, small-scale infrastructure, savings and credit groups, productivity of agriculture, livestock and production forestry, and production for markets. However, constraints were evident with access to credit by smallholders. It recommended further support to markets and credit, strengthened knowledge management (KM), non-lending activities and partnerships, and scaling up of work on natural resources management and climate change. The CPE also recommended working with contiguous provinces or a thematic model, to improve design, implementation and monitoring of projects (see Annex VI). Since the last CPE, two COSOPs have been operationalized in 2012 and 2019 (responding to all the CPE recommendations), and these have been covered as part of this evaluation. The following paragraphs provide details of the two COSOPs followed by a synopsis in selected areas (see

- 42.

⁵⁸ <https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-highlighted-at-viet-nam-2023-international-rice-festival-in-hau-giang/>

⁵⁹ Three projects under the current CSPE were designed during the 2008 COSOP – 3PAD, 3EM and TNSP; while DBRP was developed at the end of the 2003 COSOP period.

43. Table 4).

Table 4
Main features of the COSOP 2012 and 201960

	<i>COSOP 2012-2017 (extended to 2020)</i>	<i>COSOP 2019-2025 (extended to 2027)</i>
Goal	Not stated	Sustainably improve incomes of smallholders and rural poor people through market participation and reduced climate vulnerability
Strategic objectives and related outcomes	SO1: Enable poor rural provinces to carry out market-led, pro-poor rural development; SO2: Improve access of poor rural people – particularly women – to commodity and labour markets; SO3: Enhance the capacity of poor rural households to adapt to climate change.	SO1: Build pro-poor and stable value chains leveraging significant investments from the private sector; SO2: Enhance and expand financial inclusion for climate-resilient rural livelihoods; SO3: Foster the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of ethnic minorities' smallholder economic activities
Geographic priority	North-East, the Central (including North-Central Coastal, Central Coastal and South-East) and the Mekong River Delta regions.	Targeted to smallholders and agricultural small and medium-sized enterprises in underserved areas with a concentration of ethnic minorities. Not a specific geographic focus.
Thematic focus	Market-based production, pro-poor value chains, ethnic minority issues and microfinance	Pro-poor value chain, financial inclusion and climate resilience
Main partners	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Planning and Investment.	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs, Provincial People's Committees, State Bank of Viet Nam, Vietnamese Women's Union, Vietnamese Farmers' Association, ADB, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), WB, JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), EU, Netherlands, Green Climate Fund FAO, UNDP, UNOPS, UNIDO, International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD), International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)
Main target groups	Provinces with high rural poverty rates and poverty head counts and they are significantly affected by one or more manifestations of climate change. Smallholder farmers, wage laborers, landless and market-participant smallholder farmers, plus 'near poor'.	Poor smallholders, agricultural small and medium-sized enterprises, ethnic minorities, rural women, rural youth, landless poor

Source: IFAD. COSOP 2012-2017 and 2019-2025.

44. **The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs evolved in response to the CPE**

⁶⁰ IFAD and the Government extended the COSOP to the end of 2020. The idea was that it would continue to be relevant in supporting Viet Nam's development goals, and the new COSOP period would align with the next SEDP planning cycle. However, in practice the new COSOP was designed and executed in 2019 – presumably as it was considered necessary to develop a response to the change in legislation governing ODA.

recommendations. COSOP 2012 focused on supporting Viet Nam's shift to an inclusive, market-oriented rural economy by empowering rural provinces and their provincial Project Management Units (PMUs)⁶¹ to adopt pro-poor growth strategies, enhancing market access for rural poor people - especially women - and bolstering climate change adaptation at the household level. It prioritized participatory planning, market-driven approaches, and capacity-building while integrating climate adaptation into development efforts, highlighting the role of women and ethnic minorities in agricultural progress. It aimed to use evidence-based learning to scale up lessons from the field for replication and incorporation in policy dialogue at national level. COSOP 2019 aims to boost incomes of rural smallholders, particularly in underserved areas with high concentrations of ethnic minorities. It sought to develop stable, pro-poor value chains supported by private sector investments, and expand financial inclusion for climate-resilient livelihoods. Additionally, it emphasized fostering environmental sustainability and promoting the climate resilience of ethnic minority economic activities.

45. **Investment over the evaluation period reached down to the grassroots.** Over the evaluated period, IFAD-funded projects in Viet Nam have consistently aimed to improve rural livelihoods, enhance economic participation, and increase resilience to climate change (see the snapshot earlier in Table 1 and pie charts in figure A7 and A8 in Annex X). The largest investments by sub-component type went to business development services (28 per cent), community development (14 per cent), programme management (11 per cent), inclusive finance for providers (10 per cent) and inclusive finance for agricultural value chains (7 per cent). IFAD's approach has focused on decentralization, via work at provincial level and investing several times in the same province, to allow approaches to be piloted and replicated, and eventually achieving impact ("hitting the nail as many times as needed until it sticks"). IFAD has also supported decision-making down to the grassroots with an improved socio-economic planning process (MOP-SEDP) for communes that offers the opportunity for inclusion and empowerment of grassroots, rural poor people.⁶²
46. The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs have given more emphasis to environmental sustainability and climate resilient livelihoods. IFAD has invested in issues such as resilient local infrastructure, climate smart agricultural niche products, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), carbon markets, agroforestry and ecotourism. These reflected the increasing climate change focus in the Market-oriented participatory climate-smart socio-economic development plans (MOP-SEDPs).
47. Projects designed under the 2003 COSOP had a strong focus on agricultural value chains, particularly within ethnic minority communities. Infrastructure has received sizable investments – either as small roads to market, storage or basic drinking water supplies. In addition, inclusive finance has been a significant part of the investments. Projects designed under the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs introduced a stronger focus on climate resilience. The concept note for one project was approved in 2017 (the Smallholder Adaptation Programme, continuing the work in earlier projects such as TNSP and 3EM on mainstreaming climate change adaptation (CCA) in decentralized participatory planning; value chain development; and rural finance) However, it was cancelled in 2023, as the Decree 114/2021/ND-CP on the use of investment loans, issued during its preparation, made it non-viable. See table 5 below for a summary of approaches by COSOP (more detail on the project approaches is found in Annex X, table A3).

Table 5

Programmatic approaches by COSOP and projects designed under them

⁶¹ These management or coordination units at provincial level are variously referred to as PMU, PCU and PCO

⁶² IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review - seven of the ten provinces where the MOP-SEDP process had been used had institutionalized the commune level process by 2019

COSOP 2003	2012 COSOP	2019 COSOP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value chains (DBRP) Sustainable land and forest management (3PAD) Empowering ethnic minorities (3EM, TNSP) Microfinance development (3PAD, DBRP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market-based production, rural financial services, pro-poor climate smart value chains (SRDP, CPRP) Climate resilient agriculture, market-led development planning, pro-poor market-based production (AMD, CSSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate resilient agriculture and provincial climate policy support (CSAT) Climate smart and emission-reducing agroforestry (RECAF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate-resilient irrigation (CRWIS)

Source: IFAD. COSOP 2003-2011, 2012-2017 and 2019-2025.

48. **Geographic focus.** In line with the CPE recommendations, the projects under the 2012 COSOP (SRDP, CPRP, AMD and CSSP) were implemented in contiguous provinces (with a maximum of two provinces), as was CSAT (under the 2019 COSOP). The Smallholder Adaptation Programme (SAP) was planned for three non-contiguous provinces but was dropped. The CRWIS and RECAF projects are also planned for contiguous provinces, however RECAF would involve five provinces (though this is likely to reduce with the provincial restructuring).
49. **Grants.** Viet Nam has witnessed the implementation of 36 **IFAD-funded grants** totaling \$93 million, with IFAD contributing \$32.4 million. Of these grants, 8 are country-specific, while 28 are regional, primarily benefiting non-profit organizations (38 per cent), Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) organizations (18 per cent), and umbrella organizations (13 per cent). The country-specific grants have mainly supported government institutions, including the Ministry of Finance, the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Coordination Office, various Provincial People's Committees, and the Viet Nam Academy of Agricultural Sciences. The latter is the primary beneficiary of the most recent grant, Innovative Financial Incentives for Adaptation in Wetland Livelihoods, approved in late 2023. These grants cover several areas related to non-lending activities, such as policy support, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and innovation. Specific initiatives include community development, coastal and mangrove development, policy dialogue, and advisory support for pro-poor value chains and crop technology development. Other initiatives with IFAD assistance include the SST Scaling up Climate Resilient Value Chain Initiatives in China, Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam worth USD 500,000, or the Network for Agriculture and Rural Development Thinktanks (NARDT) for Countries in Mekong subregion, funded with a USD 2.5 million IFAD grant.
50. **IFAD country office.** The ICO in Viet Nam was officially established in 2005 as part of the IFAD Field Presence Pilot Programme⁶³. In 2008, the Executive Board formalized IFAD's presence by appointing a Country Programme Manager (CPM). In 2018, as part of IFAD's accelerated decentralization plan (2018-2019), the ICO was officially renamed the "Mekong Hub."⁶⁴ Under the ongoing Decentralization 2.0 plan, as of 2022, the Mekong Hub was designated as a Multi-Country Office (MCO) headquartered in Ha Noi. In 2024 the Mekong MCO included 11 staff members⁶⁵, including the Country Director, who oversees the portfolios for Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand. The Country Director is responsible for the overall COSOP, knowledge management, donor coordination, and leads the design and supervision of IFAD-funded loans, as well as regional and country-specific grants. The MCO has also organized Mekong Learning and Knowledge Fairs for partners from the public and private sectors, as part of the KM activities. As of 2025, the regional hub is established in Bangkok, and the future of the ICO/MCO is yet to be determined.

⁶³ Evaluation of IFAD's Field Presence Pilot Programme:

https://ioe.ifad.org/documents/38714182/39711115/field_2007.pdf/fecfdb6e-ed90-42c4-b058-6de22f449c96

⁶⁴ In 2018, IFAD's Mekong Hub covered five countries: Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and the Philippines

⁶⁵ IFAD People as of November 2024

Key points

- The economy of Viet Nam has grown rapidly throughout the CSPE period, despite setbacks due to COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine.
- Viet Nam reached Lower-Middle Income Country (LMIC) status in 2009 and is expected to progress to Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) status in 2025.
- Viet Nam has achieved a significant reduction in multidimensional poverty during the evaluation period. Although poverty rates in all regions are falling, there is a slower decline in some areas – particularly mountain and remote areas with significant ethnic minority populations.
- Although the contribution of agriculture to the GDP has fallen, the proportion of the active labour force working in agriculture remains high
- The Agriculture Restructuring Programme (ARP) 2021-25 and the National Targeted Programmes guide the government's approach to rural poverty reduction.
- Climate change and environmental damage are growing threats, recognized by the Government.
- The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs continue more than 25 years of addressing rural poverty and economic development.
- COSOP 2012 focused on supporting Viet Nam's shift to an inclusive, market-oriented rural economy by empowering rural provinces and their Provincial Project Management Units (PMUs) to adopt pro-poor growth strategies, enhancing market access for the rural poor - especially women - and bolstering climate change adaptation at the household level.
- COSOP 2019 aims to boost incomes of rural smallholders, particularly in underserved areas with high concentrations of ethnic minorities. It sought to develop stable, pro-poor value chains supported by private sector investments, and expand financial inclusion for climate-resilient livelihoods.

III. Performance and rural poverty impact of the country programme and strategy

A. Relevance

51. This section assesses the relevance of IFAD strategies and interventions to the Government's and IFAD's policies and strategies, the priorities and needs of the country and rural poor people. It also discusses the relevance of COSOP and project strategies and targeting approaches in the projects.

Relevance to country priorities, IFAD strategies and priorities, and beneficiaries' needs

52. **The IFAD portfolio and COSOPs were well aligned with national policies and strategies, which in turn allowed it to tune in to local challenges and needs.** This was achieved by aligning with and implementing SEDPs and NTPs at multiple levels (from commune through to province), which encourages local identification of issues and needs to tackle these. At a broader scale, projects aligned with country needs on tackling rural poverty reduction, agricultural modernization, value chains, and climate change adaptation. Engagement with the 5-year SEDP planning and implementation process was already a feature of the portfolio prior to this CSPE⁶⁶ and outlined in both the 2012 COSOP and the 2019 COSOP, with the latter adjusting these to incorporate new government priorities of market inclusion and climate change adaptation via MOP-SEDPs⁶⁷. All projects evaluated worked with SEDP planning processes, and upcoming approved projects intend to as well.⁶⁸ This is supported by scorecard responses developed and administered by the CSPE team showing that all province-level government staff responded that they 'agree' or 'fully agree' that IFAD projects respond to government priorities.⁶⁹
53. **The portfolio was aligned with IFAD strategies in corporate policies when these coincided with government priorities.** The COSOPs addressed IFAD's strategic framework pillars on productivity, inclusive markets, and climate resilience. The 2019 COSOP identified both IFAD's added value and comparative advantage in Viet Nam as aligning with the 11th Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11) priorities, which include directing resources to rural poor, strengthening lending and non-lending synergies, discussion on mainstreaming themes, and engagement with the private sector. Mainstreaming priorities are addressed somewhat unevenly, reflecting on the one hand where they coincided with the government's own priorities, but also appearing in line when they emerged as IFAD corporate priorities. For example, while climate change features heavily in the COSOP and project designs, activities focusing on gender and youth focus more on mainstreaming rather than introducing transformative approaches. The development of IFAD's action plan for rural youth was introduced in 2019, which did not allow much time for mainstreaming in the COSOP, or in the then ongoing CSSP and CSAT projects.⁷⁰ the newly approved projects on the other hand do target youth. Nutrition does not feature in project or COSOP outputs, reflecting that nutrition is evolving as a priority for both IFAD and the government.⁷¹ Finally, Although the inclusion of people with disabilities is a recent IFAD priority (2022)

⁶⁶ As noted in the 2012 Viet Nam CPE

⁶⁷ 2019 COSOP pg.10

⁶⁸ RECAF concept note 2021; CRWIS design report 2024

⁶⁹ Government scorecard average of 4.4 (on a scale of 1 = fully disagree and 5 = fully agree). 60 province-level government staff responded to the scorecard. Data in Annex X Table A4 Government scorecard results – summary

⁷⁰ The 2019 COSOP mentions youth as part of its targeting strategy via public programmes on vocational training

⁷¹ The 2019 COSOP considers nutrition as cutting across all strategic objectives but is most prominent in strategic objective 3, when targeting EM communities with undernutrition rates above the national average. At the project level it is considered an assumed impact of other activities as seen in CSAT, or not featured in CRWIS. Only RECAF includes nutrition-sensitive value chains as part of project components and goals

that came after COSOP designs, there is evidence of informal or incidental inclusion of people with disabilities in observed projects.

54. **COSOPs and projects were designed consistently with a focus on target groups, and attuned to lived realities.** This was achieved through a variety of means, including explicit targeting strategies that were culturally sensitive to EM communities. The menu of interventions was highly relevant to the needs of the targeted communities, providing above all asset transfers, infrastructure (roads, irrigation, electrification), financial services, and market access. This menu was made relevant through community-level SEDP and MOP-SEDP processes

Quality of designs and relevance of proposed instruments

55. **COSOPs adapted to changing circumstances, though exogenous shocks and debt present risks.** Overall, both COSOPs and the proposed projects adapted well to Viet Nam's transition to LMIC status and changing financing terms. This includes the shift from support in production to value chains and marketing, and greater private sector engagement. IFAD was able to quickly adapt to the ODA regulations with the adoption of the 2019 COSOP⁷², which shifted co-financing modalities to engage with grant funds (GCF, GEF and AF) and leverage more national co-financing. The portfolio's shift to more market-based and value chain approaches also coincided with government attention to these approaches. Adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic was also achieved with shifts in implementation schedules, engaging with small group cooperatives rather than large groups and exploring e-commerce platforms. Some provincial stakeholders had better capacity to respond and lead local level responses to COVID. There is no evidence of programmatic responses to disruptions in commodity and supply chains stemming from the war in Ukraine affecting beneficiaries (such as rising fertilizer prices or shipping delays)⁷³, however, there were local coping strategies such as bulk input purchasing and increased reliance on local markets. Stakeholders expressed concerns about provincial debt risks stemming from post-COVID fiscal pressures and changes in international trade patterns. It could be assumed that private sector-led projects and value chain approaches that boost job creation, taxable income and exports for provinces are ways to partly ameliorate these risks. However, the risk of falling exports in the future (with imposition of tariffs) could lead to debt problems at provincial level.
56. **Participatory planning has been the foundation of IFAD's approach, enabling relevant and continued action in thematic areas.** The implementation of SEDPs and MOP-SEDPs throughout the portfolio enabled continued institutional learning across different levels of local government where IFAD was present (see box 2). This also allowed the testing, implementation and scaling up of innovative processes and approaches, such as the climate-smart agroforestry, One Commune – One Product (OCOP)-linked enterprises, and women-led rural finance institutions. However, IFAD's more recent mainstreaming priorities, particularly youth and people with disabilities, have either not been adequately targeted or are very recent priorities. These groups were not present in the participatory process and represents a missed opportunity to engage these groups more deeply in rural and agricultural processes.

⁷² See section II B. on ODA regulations

⁷³ Based on CSPE interviews with stakeholders, the war in Ukraine reportedly led indirect impacts on logistics, export delays, and fertilizer/input price hikes. in Ha Giang and Ben Tre provinces, tea and coconut enterprises cited shipping issues and rising costs as key constraints during 2022–2023.

Box 2

Evolution of IFAD-funded participatory planning – MOP-SEDPs

Participatory appraisal and planning processes at commune level emerged in the 1990s and first used in the Participatory Resources Management Project in Tuyen Quang. These were replicated and gradually developed; the standard SEDP process tended to be relatively top-down from national and provincial levels, though new ideas were gradually introduced such as secret voting, bottom-up planning, participatory assessments, and decentralization to commune-level authorities, helping build social capital and empower communities to set their own priorities. However, integration with official SEDP processes remained limited. In 2009, the Programme for Improving Market Participation of the Poor introduced and piloted market-oriented participatory SEDP planning process in target communes, introducing innovative market information and value chain analyses, encouraging participation and ownership across different levels of government, and integrating it into five-year SEDP process.

Under the evaluation period, IFAD-supported projects played a key role in transforming the SEDP process into a more participatory, market-oriented, and climate-responsive tool for local development. MOP-SEDPs were used in projects like DBRP and 3PAD and replicated beyond project communes. CCA and DRM were incorporated into the later MOP-SEDPs, as encouraged by a Government 2016 circular. In AMD, CCA-informed MOP-SEDPs was tested, and Tra Vinh PPC approved the AMD SEDP handbook to apply it to all 106 communes from 2018 onwards. MOP-SEDPs have been replicated in all the 11 provinces

Source: Annex X – box A1

57. **IFAD’s approach to rural finance has been had some faults and various successes, but replication of successful models is increasingly challenging.** Prior to the 2012 COSOP period, projects such as DBRP and 3EM experimented channeling credit lines through VBARD, but these were poorly designed due to misaligned interest rates that limited outreach to the rural poor. A shift occurred with DBRP and 3PAD which redesigned credit lines to be managed by the Women’s Union (WU); and culminated under TNSP with the Women’s Development Fund (WDF) model that successfully enabled non-collateral lending to poor households and women. The 2012 COSOP formally backed this model, promoting funds managed by mass organizations with the expectation they would evolve into Microfinance institutions (MFIs) under Decree 28. Projects like SRDP, CPRP, AMD, and CSSP applied and expanded the approach, adding thematic funds for climate adaptation, agribusiness promotion, and infrastructure, though complex procedures and regulatory shortcomings persisted.
58. **The 2019 COSOP acknowledged the WDF model’s success but, limited by ODA constraints, refrained from initiating new loan-funded microfinance projects.** Instead, it emphasized building on existing WDFs and mobilizing external resources. CSAT aimed to converge financing from institutions like VBARD and VBSP, development partners such as the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the AF, and initiatives like the Dutch Fund for Climate and Development (DFCD) to support WDFs and a Farmer Support Fund. RECAF extended this by integrating Cooperative Development Funds, supporting deforestation-free value chains, and enhancing commercial bank engagement, while commissioning the first study into the operational, regulatory, and financial dimensions of WDFs and Commune Development Funds (CDFs). CRWIS diverged entirely, omitting rural finance from its scope. Across both COSOP periods, the ambition to graduate WDFs into licensed MFIs has remained an ambition but ultimately unfulfilled—consistently constrained by inadequate government regulation and failure to meet liquidity thresholds.
59. **Attention to nutrition has belatedly started in RECAF,** even if it was a cross-cutting theme under both COSOPs. Under the 2019 COSOP, nutrition is assumed to feature mostly in the achievement of SO3 through targeting of EM groups. Projects designed under the 2012 COSOP did not have any mention of nutrition (SRDP, CPRP, CSSP) or had indicators with no activities to build on these (AMD). Under the

2019 COSOP, recent project designs have begun to address nutrition more directly. The CSAT design report did not anticipate nutrition activities, though the CRWIS design assumes positive nutrition impacts through production improvement activities. RECAF is validated as nutrition-sensitive and has outputs for VCs of nutritiously sensitive products and targeted support for improved nutrition, though these have yet to be designed.

Relevance of changes made to COSOP and project designs

60. **The shift in ODA regulation in 2018 came as a shock and required significant design changes in IFAD's modus operandi.** Overall project designs were sound based on appropriate needs assessments, but changes in ODA regulations represented a major change in project delivery. The requirement to only use loan funds for infrastructure development in practice meant that for projects from CSAT onwards required other partners (government and grant funding) to cover capacity building and technical assistance, hallmarks of IFAD support in the portfolio. This is reflected in the sub-component type financing of the portfolio, where types of financing have reduced from 19 in projects designed before the 2012 COSOP, to 14 in projects designed under the 2012 COSOP, to 7 for projects designed under the 2019 COSOP. Where under the previous COSOPs IFAD financing was dedicated to all but one sub-component type, under the 2019 COSOP projects, IFAD is only allocated financing for 3 of these sub-component types.⁷⁴
61. **ODA restrictions also limited the implementation of past successful approaches in rural finance.** The ODA regulations of limiting loan financing to infrastructure limits the continued success of IFAD's approach to rural finance.⁷⁵ Projects from CSAT onwards require counterpart grant funding to finance these activities, and therefore also commitments from these same counterparts.

Relevance of targeting

62. **An important feature of the portfolio is the replication and scaling of projects in the same provinces to generate learning and capacity.** Various projects in the north and south have succeeded each other in the same provinces over the evaluation period. In the Mekong Delta, DBRP, AMD and CSAT took place one after another, while in the northern provinces DBRP and 3PAD were succeeded by CSSP (and in 2025 NBSP is being planned to succeed CSSP). IFAD's constant presence was described as "hitting the nail on the head until it sticks" and is an approach that was appreciated by provincial authorities that has generated learning across projects and a continuity of PMU staff across projects in the same area. New projects are in part repeating this process but also entering new areas. RECAF will be implemented in provinces where 3EM and TNSP were completed in 2016-17 as well as in entirely new provinces. This will also be the case for CRWIS provinces, which have not had an IFAD presence. Province mergers being undertaken in 2025 may change this status, however.
63. **IFAD projects generally operated in poorer provinces, though not always the poorest.** Projects designed under the 2012 COSOP and prior generally operated in poorer provinces, though not the poorest.⁷⁶ Considering overall declining poverty rate⁷⁷ nation-wide, the average 2006 poverty rates of provinces in which pre-2012 COSOP projects were present was 27 per cent, when the average poverty rate of the poorest 2 provinces was 51 per cent. For projects designed under the 2012 COSOP, the average 2012 provincial poverty rate in which 2012 COSOP projects were present was 23 per cent when the average poverty rate of the

⁷⁴ Analysis from data in Oracle BI. These are Business Development Services, Irrigation/Drainage Infrastructure, and sustainable forest management, representing 37 per cent (USD 118 million) of the total portfolio of the projects designed under the 2019 COSOP (this includes CSAT, RECAF, and CRWIS)

⁷⁵ Recent discussions between IFAD and MoF indicate that government is curtailing the use of grant financing for microfinance.

⁷⁶ There was a change in poverty measurements in 2016, from poverty headcount to multidimensional poverty standard

⁷⁷ Poverty data obtained from National Statistic Office, 2024

poorest 2 provinces was 43 per cent. In both cases, IFAD operated in provinces spread across the poorest half of Viet Nam's 63 provinces. With the shift to multidimensional poverty rate calculations in 2016, the 2019 COSOP shows a continuing trend with two creeping into the richer half of Viet Nam provinces (Ben Tre and Lam Dong). Provinces have discretion to choose districts in which to implement projects, and evidence does suggest that these are implemented in poorer, rural areas of said provinces.

64. **Fiscal responsibility for provinces to repay IFAD loans may have excluded the poorest ones.** While IFAD operated in poorer provinces in line with Government guidance (as do other IFIs and DPs), government requires provinces to repay loans as a means of fiscal discipline and to combat tendencies of taking on additional debt.⁷⁸ Nonetheless as of 2023 the poorest provinces with multidimensional poverty rates above 20 per cent are all located in the north-east and north-west of Viet Nam, and only includes two provinces in which IFAD has operated – Cao Bang and Ha Giang. This can be expected to shift with the 2025 provincial mergers, where larger provinces may be able to absorb additional debt, but the trade-off will be a larger population and geography to target. While the poorest provinces (including those where IFAD operates) have more generous ODA on-lending rates,⁷⁹ interviews suggest it may still be too much for some PPCs to take on.
65. **IFAD has successfully targeted vulnerable groups such as poor and near poor people in remote and upland areas, ethnic minorities and women.** Targeting of ethnic minorities, women and disadvantaged, poor and remote communities in general, are discussed in all the COSOPs and SO3 of the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs focused on EMs. These are key issues for the Government (and are addressed in government strategies and the NTPs), and this has been a comparative advantage of IFAD).
66. Many of the targeted provinces have a high share of ethnic minority groups as part of their overall population, or with significant representations of groups.⁸⁰ All of the loan projects during the evaluation period have a significant percentage of EMs in at least one of their provinces, while poor and disadvantaged groups are present in all project areas.⁸¹ ⁸² Commune selection within these provinces was based on **multi-criteria poverty mapping**, ensuring focus on remote and underserved communities. This is particularly true in projects designed prior to the 2019 COSOP which operated in the North (DBRP, CSSP, 3PAD and CPRP) which have the highest proportion of EMs relative to total provincial population. Projects designed under the 2019 COSOP moved away from the north, though RECAF is operating in provinces in Central Viet Nam where EMs make up between 24 to 46 per cent of total provincial populations.⁸³ Few provinces (such as Ben Tre) had low proportions of EMs. Regarding the **targeting of women**, modalities such as the establishment of WDFs or WU-led funds (in all projects apart from CRWIS) were relevant entry points to increase outreach to women across the portfolio, though this could be jeopardised in the future due to ODA restrictions mentioned above. Women leaders

⁷⁸ According to a recent official dispatch, on-lending rates for different PPCs were established by government at 10, 30 and 50 per cent, based on central budget balancing supplement ratios of the PPCs (70 per cent or above, 50-70 per cent, and below 50 per cent) (GoV. 2023.).

⁷⁹ Government 2023

⁸⁰ for example Ha Giang (over 87 per cent EM population), Cao Bang (almost 95 per cent), Bac Kan (88 per cent), and Ninh Thuan (with significant Raglai and Cham populations). On the other hand, Quang Binh, Ben Tre and Ha Tinh had minimal EM populations in 2019. *Survey on the Socio-Economic Situation of 53 Ethnic Minority Groups* conducted by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam in 2015 and 2019 (report: *01-Bao-cao-53-dan-toc-thieu-so-2019_ban-in.pdf*)

⁸¹ There has been an average targeting and outreach rating of 4.2 across all project PCRs, with an improvement across projects since 2018.

⁸² During implementation, selection of beneficiaries was conducted at the grassroots level according to the manuals of SIP, MOP-SEDP, CIGs-CSG, SCG and APIF, monitored and confirmed by the relevant departments and authorities at all levels. Beneficiary selection tools included poverty mapping, commune ranking exercises, and gender/ethnicity quotas.

⁸³ Data from 2019 survey from the Ministry of Ethnic and Religious Affairs.

were promoted for groups such as CIGs and cooperatives, and also as extension agents. Infrastructure and irrigation also allowed for the reduction of women's labour, allowing for spared time to be dedicated to other income-generating activities. **Youth targeting** was not explicit, though some interventions such as vocational schools did cater to youth needs.

67. **The combination of geographic targeting, participatory planning, culturally sensitive TA, and group-based financial services led to high levels of inclusion.** It takes time for farmers – particularly those that are poor and from EMs - to move to market-oriented production, analyzing investments and losses/gains, and not just selling immediately after harvesting. Implementation has been facilitated on the ground by work with the PPCs and line ministries, but also the VWU, VFU and CSOs. However, persistent structural barriers remain, and it is noted that capacity building and rural finance are not currently supported under the ODA regulations.
68. **The shift towards value chain approaches meant that the poorest people were not always directly targeted.** The selection of beneficiaries to form groups that were then inserted in value chains often required that these have some form of asset and labour available (for instance, observed in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh). While focus on the productive poor has been IFAD's target group since 2008 (and which strongly aligns with value chain targeting approaches), the revised 2023 targeting policy focuses on people living in poverty in rural areas, vulnerable populations, and priority on the poorest and most excluded. The implication is that RECAF and CRWIS will have to bring in stronger inclusivity measures within value targeted value chains, which are on paper the case.
69. **Overall relevance.** IFAD's strategies and interventions were well aligned with national development policies and IFAD's own corporate priorities, particularly in rural poverty reduction, market-based development, and climate resilience. The COSOPs adapted effectively to changing national contexts and financing conditions, and project designs reflected a consistent effort to target vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities and women in poorer provinces. IFAD's programmatic and participatory approaches enabled locally grounded implementation and learning. However, relevance was somewhat constrained by limitations in addressing some mainstreaming themes—particularly youth, nutrition, and disability—and the increasing concentration of projects in relatively more prosperous provinces due to fiscal constraints on the poorest. Despite these gaps, IFAD's work remained generally responsive to evolving national and rural needs. The CSPE rates relevance as **satisfactory (5)**.

B. Coherence

70. This section assesses external coherence (i.e. the consistency of the strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context) and internal coherence (i.e. the internal logic of the strategy, synergies and linkages between different elements of the country strategy and programme). The section also discusses the performance on knowledge management, partnership building and policy engagement.

External coherence

71. **IFAD's comparative advantage shifts between the 2012 and 2019 COSOP, though commonalities center on inclusivity of smallholders and the rural poor, working with local governments, and harmonizing government policies.** The 2012 COSOP identified IFAD's comparative advantage in three areas. Firstly, its relationship with the provinces allows it to test innovations that can be scaled up. Secondly, this relationship allows for a more systemic incorporation of project-based lessons at provincial level into national-level policy dialogue. Finally, within the context of Viet Nam's economic development, there are fewer donor and government projects that can pilot reforms to address emerging rural challenges, particularly in the poorer provinces. IFAD therefore sits in a niche that also fulfills

its own strategic framework and targeting strategy. The 2019 COSOP was far more synthetic. It identified IFAD's added value in its operations being people-centered and based on smallholder agriculture, and that project designs ensure that public and private investments include smallholders and the rural poor and for ethnic minority groups and strengthening commune institutional capacities. It identifies its comparative advantage as an agent of institutional and technological change in agriculture and rural finance for sustainable, inclusive development, and its country programme is claimed to directly contribute to harmonizing diverse government policies in the agricultural, rural and environmental domains.

72. **IFAD's focus on rural areas and smallholder agriculture, and its relationships with provinces, gives it a cutting edge compared to other development partners.** Discussions with development partners reinforce the COSOPs' diagnoses of IFAD's comparative advantage. Firstly, IFAD's close relationship with provinces is recognized by others, and allows for multi-sectoral loan financed projects that other IFIs face difficulty getting approved. Other partners face difficulty since they liaise with central governments and potentially multiple ministries, which are reticent to approve project proposals within the context of the government's anti-corruption drive. Secondly, the focus of IFIs' financing includes large scale works in irrigation and water management (ADB) and rice production via the One Million Hectares Rice Project (involving FAO and WB), while IFAD's niche is firmly in financing small-scale investments in rural areas and smallholders. IFAD's positive reputation, flexibility and trust allows it to get projects off the ground more readily than other IFIs' own proposed projects.
73. **Areas for complementarity with development partners exist in climate change adaptation and mitigation, natural resource management, and value chains, though competition for grant financing limits cooperation.** Development partners have focussed on areas of interest of the government, particularly in climate change adaptation and mitigation (World Bank, French Development Agency, GIZ), natural resource management (ADB, KOICA, EU), and private sector engagement with value chains (KOICA, JICA, GIZ). However, complementarities were not sufficiently strategic regarding whether development partners offer loan-financed or grant-financed assistance. ODA regulations and the difficulty of IFIs to get loan-financed projects approved mean there is competition for grant-financed resources that some bilateral partners offer (the EU, JICA, KOICA), as well as global climate finance mechanisms (AF, GCF and GEF). Nonetheless, formal mechanisms for coordination and co-investment are limited. The development partners group functions to discuss common issues and advocate on ODA rather than coordinate activities. Many synergies depended on personal relationships between staff across organizations.
74. **Development partners adopted IFAD approaches after project completion, allowing continuity across former project geographies.** While coordination amongst partners was not explicit at the national level, IFAD projects were oftentimes continued by other development partners, ensuring continuity along thematic areas. For example, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) worked on climate planning in Tra Vinh province, while KOICA is offering value chain co-financing in the Mekong Delta, and ADB is doing the same with tea value chain initiatives in Ha Giang and Tuyen Quang provinces. KOICA is also replicating support to cooperatives in the northern provinces. The World Bank is setting up health infrastructure complementarity. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and Helvetas have continued supporting local Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and building their capacities and scale. Finally, IFAD organised the only joint UN field mission—bringing together the Resident Coordinator and agencies like FAO and UN Women⁸⁴—to explore continued collaboration of post-project implementation in

⁸⁴ UNIDO was also invited but could not participate

provinces like Cao Bang.

75. **Increased engagement and focus on high-level partnerships misses lower-level opportunities.** The recent focus on engaging with funds such as GEF and the Climate Adaptation Fund (AF) to mobilize necessary grant financing to provide technical assistance and capacity building can represent an opportunity cost to engage with other partners at lower levels, even if this may still be ambitious given limited human resources and finance in the ICO. There is room for more detail on how coordination is operationalized at the implementation level, such as joint activities, shared monitoring, or co-financing mechanisms.

Internal coherence

76. **The strategic objectives of the COSOPs were implemented in a coordinated way that reinforced and complemented one another.** This was already evident in the reconstructed ToC, but the 2019 COSOP's in particular had its three strategic objectives - integration into VCs, inclusive rural finance and increased resilience - complementing one another through interconnected development pathways. The focus on climate-resilient value chains is also a sound development of combatting uncertainty and potential disaster with grounded, environmentally friendly income-generating activities and improved market access.
77. **Project sequencing reinforced lessons learnt and contributed to more impactful activities and capacity building in provinces.** The portfolio demonstrated strong internal coherence whereby projects continuously built on past successes, across the evaluation period and even beyond (TNSP built on the Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang province which closed in 2010). While these were not technically phased projects, key elements carried across the projects even when the projects differed in approaches, demonstrating lesson learning. For example, consistent and continuous participatory planning continued across projects, evolving from SEDPs to MOP-SEDPs, or including Value Chain Action Plans in more recent project approaches. Continued engagement with local governments for implementation of activities and processes also reinforced the implementation capacity of government through constant experience building, whether across different levels of local government or with mass organizations such as VWUs in their implementation of rural finance.
78. **IFAD's participatory planning processes aligned with national policies, served as proof of concept, and were utilized by new projects and programmes.** The SEDPs and application of NTPs allowed for government ownership of the IFAD programme, utilizing it as a roll-out of its own priorities. This included national and provincial initiatives such as NTPs on NRD, on sustainable poverty reduction, and on climate change. Examples of actions such as the incorporation of MOP-SEDP manuals into province protocol and policy, or the inclusion of SEDP-identified and IFAD-financed infrastructure into annual planning and provincial development plans are examples of this. With the establishment of RECAF and CRWIS in new project areas and with new foci (RECAF focusing on forestry and CRWIS in irrigation), the portfolio will enter new thematic areas and geographies that will test internal coherence.
79. **Non-lending activities reinforced project approaches.** Knowledge generated through projects was documented and shared, informing government planning processes and strengthening the policy environment in which projects operated. Partnerships with global climate funds brought in co-financing that expanded project scope and relevance, particularly in areas like climate resilience and environmental management. Drawing on field experience, IFAD also contributed to policy discussions in areas including participatory planning, microfinance, and climate adaptation. These efforts helped ensure that project innovations were aligned with government priorities and embedded within national and provincial frameworks.

80. **While internal coherence within projects when implemented in one province was strong, project implementation across multiple project provinces had some challenges.** PPCs spoke positively of learning across projects and provinces, involving regular meetings, visits (before COVID) and exchanges on social media. However, there were limitations to coordination since IFAD's approach is highly province centric, in line with Government preference to empower local governments (with contracts with individual provinces). This is seen in approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), coordination and information sharing, supervision modalities, and PCR generation, where each province was essentially implementing its own project (even if a multi-province project). This approach will be tested with the implementation of projects such as RECAF in 5 provinces (for now), and it is still unknown what impact provincial reform will have in this regard.
81. **The government shift to an ODA-restricted model dependent on external grant financing in the 2019 COSOP projects constrained technical assistance funding.** This delayed activities like training and extension services in some provinces. Reliance on AF grants introduced further bottlenecks due to approval delays, particularly impacting CSAT through its AF grant financing.

Knowledge management

82. **Both COSOPs progressively recognized knowledge management (KM) as a critical enabler for scaling impact, policy engagement, and cross-institutional learning.** The 2012 COSOP expanded the KM country framework by introducing structured arrangements.⁸⁵ It emphasized KM in order to consolidate lessons learned, institutionalize participatory planning and support replication. However, this COSOP links KM strongly with communications activities and it proposes grants as a source of funding; this risks narrowing KM to outreach efforts and making it dependent on external and non predictable funding While some efforts showed progress at the project level,⁸⁶ their impact remained limited in scope, with little evidence of broader portfolio-wide benefits from KM activities.
83. **The 2019 COSOP affirmed KM as a key learning function.** The country followed a strategy based in the Mekong hub for the period of 2019-2020.⁸⁷ The KM strategy and Action Plan for the hub introduced a three-tier structure (project, country-programme, hub) – with the hub acting as the coordinating body. Strong collaboration with regional specialists at headquarters led to the identification of KM priorities for the region. The appointment of KM focal points was also foreseen at both the hub and country levels to support KM implementation in IFAD-funded projects. Each project aims to have a designated KM focal point - a goal that has been largely achieved.⁸⁸ As Viet Nam transitioned to a middle-income country with a growing emphasis on infrastructure, existing KM practices have proven insufficient, highlighting the need for broader and more innovative approaches to sustain and scale successful initiatives.
84. **Lessons and knowledge have been extensively gathered, documented, and disseminated through IFAD-supported projects in Viet Nam.** However, gaps persist in ensuring systematic dissemination and tracking of knowledge uptake. At national and international level, KM has significantly benefited from regional grants, notably the South-South Cooperation for Scaling up Climate Resilient Value Chain Initiatives (SSCVC) and NARDT grants. These grants collected and documented best

⁸⁵ Such as the appointment of a Knowledge-Management Officer (doubling as Country Presence Officer) and the launch of a country-portfolio website in April 2010.

⁸⁶ Key outputs included MOP-SEDP manuals in several provinces, learning exchanges on infrastructure and CIG models, and farmer-to-farmer extension pilots targeting ethnic minorities; this last activity was held in Ha Giang and Cao Bang provinces under CPRP and DBRP projects.

⁸⁷ IFAD.2023a. It focuses on aligning the KM approach with the Asia and the Pacific Region (APR) strategy and ultimately the IFAD corporate strategy. Since the completion of this action plan in 2021, there has not been another developed, but the country office instead follows the APR KM Strategy and incorporates an annual workplan through missions.

⁸⁸ Usually, the Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) or the M&E officer.

practices related to climate-resilient and pro-poor value chains, creating knowledge products such as technical notes, policy briefs, videos, and catalogues showcasing successful models across multiple languages. Ultimately, these grants remained standalone initiatives, and their outputs had limited broader impact beyond the specific policy niches in which they were conceived (as in many countries).

85. At project level, diverse knowledge materials were produced⁸⁹ and disseminated through media channels,⁹⁰ social media,⁹¹ and provincial workshops. The use of mass media effectively enhanced local dissemination, for example, SRDP effectively used regular TV broadcasts to share project lessons. Furthermore, knowledge products from the projects were also integrated into government initiatives, contributing to policy implementation and institutional learning at both national and provincial levels.⁹² International dissemination occurred through study tours and cross-country exchanges.⁹³ For instance, knowledge from Peru related to slope protection, eco-tourism and community grants was directly implemented in subsequent projects, showcasing effective international knowledge sharing.

Box 3

Experiences with the Mekong Knowledge and Learning Fair (MKLF)

The Mekong Knowledge and Learning Fair (MKLF), held in 2018 and 2019 became the main platform for sharing innovations and lessons. It brought together a wide range of actors—including high-level government representatives, private sector actors, producer organizations, research institutions, and development partners—facilitating cross-sectoral dialogue. The event featured knowledge-sharing booths for projects and facilitated site visits, enabling direct exchanges with farmers. These activities provided a dynamic platform that connected diverse stakeholders leading to sustained interactions and greater visibility of IFAD-supported innovations internationally and nationally. However, it was cancelled due to COVID-19, reducing knowledge exchange.

Source: CSPE Team

86. However, despite these successes, challenges remain. As also highlighted in the findings of the Corporate Level Evaluation (CLE) on KM, there is a lack of systematic approaches or platforms to ensure that studies and knowledge products are consistently integrated into project portfolios or made readily accessible across different IFAD programs. Additionally, capacity limitations within PMUs often constrain their ability to independently initiate and sustain KM activities, underscoring the need for more targeted capacity-building efforts.
87. **Knowledge flowed between provinces in multi-province projects, driven by regular interactions, exchanges, and joint learning activities.** Provincial interactions were notably successful in projects like CSSP, TNSP and CSAT where regular meetings, joint field visits, telephone discussions, and shared experiences enhanced mutual learning. This worked best within provinces of the same project.⁹⁴ At the same time, documentation was often siloed within individual PMUs, with limited digital archiving or use of national platforms.⁹⁵ The use of social media (e.g.,

⁸⁹ Including newsletters, catalogues, brochures, posters, video clips, and open-air advert boards.

⁹⁰ TV, radio and newspapers.

⁹¹ YouTube and Facebook.

⁹² Knowledge products from SRDP were effectively utilized by national and provincial institutions, through integration into Viet Nam's NTP-NRD and Agricultural Restructuring Program (ARP), demonstrating significant national impact. Additionally, provinces like Tuyen Quang, Tra Vinh, and Cao Bang integrated MOP-SEDP into provincial training institutions (e.g., political schools, extension centers), facilitating broader institutional learning. The manuals were used beyond IFAD-funded communes.

⁹³ Lao teams visiting Viet Nam for value chain studies, and Vietnamese teams visiting Peru, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, and the Philippines for practical knowledge exchanges.

⁹⁴ CSSP provinces, Cao Bang and Bac Kan, maintained regular meetings (2-3 times annually) with joint field visits. Similar interactions occurred between CSAT provinces through online meetings, providing valuable opportunities to address common challenges and share innovative solutions. In TNSP, provinces exchanged field visits, sent experts to the other provinces, organised joint gender workshops, and promoted cross-learning through MOP-SEDP training-of-trainers exchanges, all supported by frequent communication that bridged geographical boundaries. PMU staff in Ben Tre visited Tra Vinh to observe APIF-funded enterprises and discuss grant management challenges.

⁹⁵ Though the CSPE team did find project materials from other provinces displayed in entrances of some PMU offices.

Facebook and ZALO) for reporting and communication was noted in some provinces where they facilitated real-time updates for farmers and stakeholders and in projects with multiple provinces to communicate between PMUs;⁹⁶ nevertheless, these tools were not standardized across all provinces limiting broader consistency and scalability of knowledge-sharing practices. However, feedback from PMUs emphasized that proximity and similarity between provinces - culturally, geographically, and economically - significantly increased the quality and applicability of the knowledge shared. Logistical challenges at times constrained the regularity and depth of interactions.

88. **Knowledge and lessons learned contained in the KM materials produced were used to inform newer strategy and projects.** The 2019 COSOP reflected key lessons from the 2012–2017 COSOP cycle and incorporated experience from upland and delta contexts. Notably, it adopted a clearer focus on climate-smart value chains, provincial ownership, and integrated service delivery, echoing successful models.⁹⁷ MOP-SEDP manuals and gender-inclusive planning tools informed the design of CSAT and RECAF. Several PMUs⁹⁸ confirmed that earlier tools and procedures were directly reused in developing Value Chain Action Plans (VCAPs), grant selection, and farmer extension systems. Manuals and KM materials on infrastructure (roads, irrigation), WDF procedures, and CIG-to-coop transition were also drawn upon to design newer Agribusiness Promotion Investment Fund (APIF) guidelines and training programmes. For example, the business planning and cost-sharing methods under CSAT were adapted from AMD manuals.
89. **The knowledge materials produced by IFAD were relevant to their target audience when delivered in accessible local languages and tailored formats.** The ICO stated that provinces actively participated in producing and translating documents. Given the considerable costs that direct translation by the ICO would entail, reliance on provincial authorities and PMUs has been deemed a practical and necessary measure.⁹⁹ This local engagement ensured that the materials aligned closely with provincial realities, thereby increasing relevance and usability. Moreover, the mission to northern provinces showed that the government utilized accessible dissemination methods, including TV and radio broadcasts, to reach broader audiences. Such strategies ensured that at least some relevant information reached intended beneficiaries effectively. However, language and reliance on written materials remained a substantial barrier, particularly among ethnic minorities and illiterate populations, notably EM women. The inability for the ICO to publish materials in local languages directly was highlighted as problematic. Although some projects occasionally translated materials into Tay and Dao languages through agricultural extension staff, these efforts were limited. Often, families relied on children to interpret written information, risking reducing the clarity and accuracy of knowledge transfer (though this is a practical solution).
90. **IFAD's support to SSTC has facilitated knowledge sharing and supported climate-resilient value chain initiatives, but implementation has remained limited due to resource limitations and external disruptions.** The 2019 COSOP recognized SSTC as a strategic priority for sharing Viet Nam's innovation experience with other countries in Asia and beyond. However, there is no dedicated SSTC strategy or funding stream under the current programme. SSTC activities in Viet Nam contributed through targeted regional exchanges, fostering direct knowledge sharing among developing countries mainly thanks to grant resources. For example, the SSCVC grant project implemented by the Center for Agrarian Systems Research and Development (CASRAD), funded under the SSTC-China, facilitated valuable regional collaboration between Laos, Cambodia, Viet Nam, and

⁹⁶ For instance, seen during CSPE field visits to Tra Vinh, Ben Tre, Cao Bang, Bac Kan and Tuyen Quang.

⁹⁷ Of past projects such as from DBRP, AMD, and TNSP.

⁹⁸ e.g., Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Ben Tre

⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the translation of documents did not occur on a regular basis, but rather based on need

China, promoting exchanges of innovative practices in value chains and climate adaptation.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the Country Office highlighted specific successes such as the Learning Routes initiative, exemplified by Tra Vinh province's practical learning exchange with the Philippines, resulting in the direct transfer of value chain innovations. Similarly, an SSTC grant managed through the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) produced globally shared Vietnamese solutions published on IFAD's Rural Solutions Portal.¹⁰¹ However, SSTC activities faced key challenges, including resource constraints (both in budget and staffing), disruptions caused by COVID-19, and limited post-grant follow-up and sustainability. Grant outputs were often too technical for broad use, resulting in minimal uptake beyond narrow policy circles.

91. **The Government of Viet Nam is prioritizing SSTC as a strategic tool for boosting Viet Nam international visibility**, enhancing agricultural cooperation, and sharing its expertise internationally. In this context, IFAD has played a role in facilitating SSTC relationships. This is exemplified by the Government's interest in collaboration with Cuba, for example, leveraging SSTC as a diplomatic instrument. Additionally, the Government expressed particular interest in showcasing successful Vietnamese agricultural practices, such as rice production, in Africa through SSTC channels. Despite this strategic prioritization, practical implementation remained challenged by internal constraints such as limited capacity and uncertainties regarding sufficient resources to actively sustain broader SSTC engagements.

Partnership building

92. **IFAD maintained a strong relationship with the Government and is considered a key player in the agricultural sector**. While not a large financier compared to the other IFIs or bilateral agencies, IFAD's alignment with government systems and focus on grassroots implementation have made it a valued technical partner.¹⁰² IFAD is widely seen by government stakeholders (especially by MARD and MPI at national level and also by People's Committees at provincial level) as a trusted, aligned development partner, particularly effective in smallholder-targeted investment and willing to operate in poorer provinces and remote areas, where fewer partners invest. PPCs appreciate IFAD's alignment with national systems, use of local procedures, alignment with provincial capacities for project implementation and decentralized implementation model. Moreover, the Government of Viet Nam views IFAD positively due to its flexible procedures and appropriate project scale, facilitating the approval of IFAD loans despite procedural complexities that have delayed similar agreements with other donors like ADB and WB.
93. **IFAD's limited partnerships with UN organizations and other development partners were primarily focused on policy dialogues and information sharing**. Over the CSPE period, IFAD has been involved in the One UN approach via the UN Coordination Team with the other UN agencies, and has actively supported the Mekong Delta (MKD) Forum.¹⁰³ IFAD collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), leading preparation of a strategy paper¹⁰⁴ for the Development Partners Group and the Government and making joint contributions to the five year planning process. IFAD also organized a joint field mission of UN agencies to Cao Bang (CSSP), in order to share experiences within the UN family on rural development, agriculture, VCs and women-led enterprises. Further, FAO and

¹⁰⁰ Successful outcomes included developing diverse climate adaptation models and high-quality communication materials (films, videos, and brochures) across multiple languages, significantly enhancing knowledge dissemination.

¹⁰¹ Including Rice Export Practices and an Integrated Straw Management Model.

¹⁰² The government's direct request for IFAD to manage a project originally planned to be led by FAO (\$30 million GCF REDD+) exemplifies the government's trust and IFAD's effectiveness as a partner.

¹⁰³ IFAD participated in regular meetings among MKD group members, and engaged with Government at the MKD forum and related conferences, as well as drafting papers and providing inputs to these conferences and communications

¹⁰⁴ Development Partners Group Working Group, September 2019. *Restructuring Vietnam's Agriculture and Rural Economy during the Period 2021 - 2030*

IFAD signed in October 2024 the Food Systems Transformation Partnership, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), joining over 30 national and international partners to support the rollout of Viet Nam’s national food systems action plan. Despite some instances of collaboration, partnerships with other key IFIs such as the WB and ADB have remained limited with minimal engagement beyond participation in the Development Partners Working Group, with no joint financing or active collaboration. Similarly, IFAD has maintained good coordination with certain bilateral partners, such as KOICA; however, these engagements were largely limited to information-sharing rather than the implementation of joint initiatives. Resource and time constraints within IFAD’s country office, including a comparatively smaller staff size relative to other UN agencies, have constrained its ability to engage more actively in broader donor coordination meetings and UN-led initiatives.

94. **Partnership with UNIDO produced small but positive technical results.** IFAD has accessed the UN Viet Nam COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, together with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).¹⁰⁵ They jointly mobilized grant funding to examine the pandemic’s impact on tropical fruit value chains in the Mekong Delta and broader food systems and promote ICT solutions. Despite the short, emergency-driven timeline—around 15 months—implementation was successful, and the experience was seen as highly positive.¹⁰⁶
95. **Financially, IFAD has mobilized considerable resources beyond traditional lending mechanisms.** In recent years, co-financing has been instrumental in sustaining IFAD’s added value—particularly in capacity building and technical assistance—while reducing the financial burden on provincial budgets. To this end, IFAD has established strategic partnerships with key global climate finance mechanisms, including GEF, GCF, and AF. GEF provided a grant of approximately USD 650,000 to support 3PAD in Bac Kan province.¹⁰⁷ This funding aimed to broaden the project’s focus to include environmental management, land degradation, and biodiversity conservation, complementing IFAD’s efforts to promote pro-poor growth in the region. In collaboration with GCF, IFAD will implement the RECAF project¹⁰⁸ and with AF, the CRWIS implementation is planned.¹⁰⁹ AF has also committed a USD 5 million grant to CSAT. This funding is designed to complement IFAD’s investment by supporting innovation, pilot activities, and knowledge management (however the disbursement of the fund has been delayed).¹¹⁰ Additional resources have been leveraged through IFAD regional and country grants, particularly targeting inclusive value chain development, climate-smart agriculture, gender equality, nutrition, and policy capacity building.
96. **IFAD also strengthened partnerships with research institutions and community-based organizations.** The VFU and VWU served as key grassroots implementation partners. The VFU supported farmer training, app development (for digital agricultural extension), and farmer-to-farmer exchanges. Meanwhile, the VWU scaled up WDF operations using resources from IFAD and provincial authorities. Both organizations contributed staff time, community mobilization efforts, and inputs to monitoring and evaluation. In terms of research partnerships, IFAD has cultivated relationships with key Vietnamese agricultural research institutes, notably CASRAD and IPSARD. These relationships were strengthened

¹⁰⁵ UN COVID-19 Response Recovery Fund, 2020. *Building Forward Better. An ICT-based, COVID-19 resilient women and youth centred value chain in Vietnam*

¹⁰⁶ UNIDO proposed partnering with IFAD as a technical expert in a project in Cao Bang and Bac Kan. However, they recognized challenges in securing funding, as the government is reluctant to use loan resources for other UN agencies.

¹⁰⁷ GEF is in discussion to fund soft components of CSSP II (NBSP) in Bac Kan and Cao Bang (USD 8–9 million) in 2026, topping up IFAD loan financing for environmental, climate, and watershed management activities.

¹⁰⁸ The GCF has committed USD 35 million to this initiative, which seeks to reduce emissions through climate-smart agroforestry practices across 21 districts in five provinces.

¹⁰⁹ AF will provide a USD 9 million grant to support climate adaptation components of CRWIS.

¹¹⁰ This grant has been delayed due to administrative issues between MoNRE and provincial authorities. An agreement was reached in April 2025.

through grant-based cooperation, significantly enhancing IFAD's technical capabilities and evidence-based policy contributions.¹¹¹ IFAD also collaborated with the Climate Change Research Centre (CCRC), Deltares and the Viet Nam Academy of Water Resources to develop hydrological models, salinity forecasting systems, and community-based adaptation solutions, particularly under CSAT and AMD.

97. **In recent years, IFAD's engagement with private sector in Viet Nam has increased, reflecting a strategic shift aimed at scaling up investment and creating more inclusive opportunities for smallholders within commercial value chains.** This transition reflects both IFAD's evolving strategy towards a Non-Sovereign Operations (NSO) approach and the Vietnamese Government's strong support for involving the private sector to drive economic development and achieve its ambition of attaining upper-middle-income status. IFAD has focused on identifying and mobilizing diverse sources of finance—including private investment—particularly to support value chain development. Although initiatives like CSSP previously demonstrated success in leveraging matching grants for WDFs, recent policy shifts by the Government have restricted such mechanisms. The new NSO approach emphasizes channeling credit through commercial banks, such as the Agribank and potentially other private institutions, to benefit smallholders. IFAD has progressively increased its focus on private sector engagement in the country; the COSOPs prior to 2012 included limited references to private sector involvement, but this has become increasingly prominent in the two most recent COSOPs. Notably, the 2019 COSOP included private sector engagement under SO1, highlighting a renewed approach to public-private partnerships and value chain development.¹¹² Instruments such as competitive grants and co-investment schemes have been tested, but implementation barriers persist, including limited legal frameworks and targeting constraints, and these have limited impact. Engaging private sector in remote or economically marginal areas remains difficult. Nonetheless, private companies such as BEINCO and RYNAN played a key role in helping farmers meet certification requirements for high-value export markets, including the EU and Korea. In Ben Tre province, support from AMD and CSAT enabled BEINCO and other coconut enterprises to scale up production, adopt organic standards, and integrate smallholders into formal supply chains through contract farming.¹¹³ Moreover, efforts continue with projects like CSAT¹¹⁴ and partnerships such as the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) to support RECAF, for exploring innovative climate finance and landscape approaches to link private enterprises with smallholders.

Policy engagement

98. **The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs identified several priorities for policy engagement, with mixed results.** In the 2012 COSOP, policy engagement was explicitly structured around its strategic objectives, resulting in tangible impacts on government policies. Notable successes related to SO1 include the institutionalization of MOP-SEDP, MPI's issuance of guidelines institutionalizing participatory planning nationwide, IFAD's leadership in influencing Viet Nam's NTP-NRD, and contributions to national Public-Private Partnership (PPP) policies through successful provincial-level pilots. While, related to SO2, IFAD also facilitated dialogues leading to a revised decree CIGs, actively supported policy discussions

¹¹¹ IFAD also engaged with CIRAD in the design discussions for RECAF on agroecology, food systems transformation, and ecosystem services.

¹¹² IFAD. 2022a. The 2019 COSOP MTR reported that the KP17 —targeting 3,000 contracts between rural producers' organizations and private companies—was achieved at 127%.

¹¹³ BEINCO reported scaling from 165 ha to 3,000 ha of coconut supply and now exports to over 40 countries.

¹¹⁴ CSAT has negotiated two grants. One with DFCD, focusing on the Ben Tre and Tra Vinh provinces. DFCD will invest in commercially viable and bankable business proposals that promote climate adaptation. It will engage with private enterprises and farmer groups working under CSAT. The second with the AF under its innovation window, the Innovative Financial Incentives for Adaptation in Wetland Livelihoods (IFIA) project which aims to incentivize private sector engagement with small-scale coastal producers through joint innovation processes in adaptation technologies.

leading to the Decision 20 (2017) on microfinance,¹¹⁵ and significantly influenced climate change adaptation policies, exemplified by Decree 120 (2017) for sustainable development in the Mekong Delta. Instead, for what concerns SO3, the key policy issue is the integration of pro-poor climate change considerations into the SEDP. While the COSOP progress for Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) integration to MOP-SEDP has been initiated in five provinces, however the results are still limited. The 2019 COSOP continued this policy engagement strategy, with priorities closely aligned with strategic objectives, emphasizing knowledge partnerships and scaling innovations for smallholder agriculture. However, the 2022 mid-term review shows mixed results: policy engagement related to SO3 and to value chain governance and contract farming (SO1) progressed effectively. Conversely, intended policy engagements related to innovative financial products and strategies with the State Bank of Viet Nam (SBV), microfinance networking through SSTC and support to MFI strategy and policy development were explicitly planned but reported as not possible according to the 2022 MTR.

99. **IFAD has played a role as a trusted partner in operationalizing national policies at the provincial, district, and commune levels**, recognizing that in Viet Nam, national and provincial policies are generally well institutionalized and embedded within established processes. Evidence of IFAD's successful role includes the widespread institutionalisation of the commune-level MOP-SEDP, based on IFAD's participatory and bottom-up planning practices.¹¹⁶ IFAD was also a first mover in supporting OCOP strategies at the local level, building cooperatives' capacity for branding, packaging, certification, and market access.¹¹⁷ It helped integrate pro-poor value chain and PPP approaches into provincial plans and promoted participatory land allocation to improve land rights and natural resource management. IFAD also operationalized PPP and pro-poor value chain policies at subnational levels, with pilots being adopted into provincial annual plans, influencing provincial policy implementation. IFAD also strengthened implementation of the three NTPs¹¹⁸ by enhancing local capacity for integrated planning, aligning CDF and APIF co-financing with NTP funds, and promoting inclusive approaches through EM targeting and collaboration with VWU and VFU. It also supported subnational implementation of climate adaptation frameworks such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP-Plan, Decision 1422, 2024).¹¹⁹
100. **IFAD informed policy discussions by drawing on evidence and lessons from its programme experience** in areas such as microfinance, climate adaptation private sector engagement, and participatory planning. It contributed to reforms such as the legal recognition of CIGs and strengthened microfinance frameworks through engagement with the SBV and women's unions. IFAD's support for the WDF model¹²⁰, replicated in over 140 communes,¹²¹ helped shape Viet Nam's dialogue on inclusive rural finance. Pilots like matching grants and APIF mechanisms¹²² informed early OCOP practices and Public-Private-Producer-Partnerships (4P) models for rural value chains. IFAD also influenced policy through active participation in the Mekong Delta Working Group, contributing to Decree 120

¹¹⁵The Decision establishes the regulatory framework for the operation of microfinance programs and projects run by political organizations, socio-political organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

¹¹⁶ These tools were institutionalized and used to guide annual commune and district investment planning in all of the 11 provinces where IFAD worked during the CSPE period. MOP-SEDP processes helped provincial authorities integrate multiple policy objectives (e.g. poverty reduction, climate resilience, gender, infrastructure priorities) into a single, inclusive planning cycle.

¹¹⁷ In provinces such as Ben Tre, Cao Bang, and Tuyen Quang, IFAD supported the development of OCOP action plans tailored to local value chains like turmeric, tea, coconut, and vermicelli.

¹¹⁸ New Rural Development (NRD), Sustainable Poverty Reduction, and Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas.

¹¹⁹ In provinces like Ninh Thuan, Tra Vinh and Ben Tre implement CCA Action Plans in line with national frameworks.

¹²⁰ It started with DBRP and continued with TNSP.

¹²¹ Including through central government budget support in Ben Tre and Tuyen Quang.

¹²² Established to support private sector investment in rural value chains from 2010 to 2017.

(2017) on sustainable development. Partnerships with IPSARD supported high-level dialogues on agricultural insurance¹²³ and cooperative law reform. At the subnational level,¹²⁴ IFAD supported participatory land planning processes to improve land access for poor households, while also facilitating land use policy dialogues with MARD and VFU.

101. **While IFAD contributed meaningfully to policy dialogue, direct attribution of national policy shifts remains limited.** IFAD has provided field experience and lessons learned to the Government, to support it to take policy decisions. For instance, IFAD's documented experience in pro-poor value chain development influenced the NTP-NRD (2016-2020). Additionally, IFAD projects have also successfully assisted the provinces in pilot implementation of the Government policies for promotion of private investment and services by the private enterprises to the farmers. Guidelines from this support are useful references for nation-wide replication of the new government PPP policies in agriculture sector. Moreover, IFAD's introduction and scaling of MOP-SEDP planning was cited as a model for bottom-up investment planning.¹²⁵ VFU and VWU confirmed that their staff were trained using MOP-SEDP manuals and facilitated SEDPs aligned with IFAD guidance in at least 8 provinces. Also, IFAD's support to cooperatives and CIGs informed the structure of OCOP support at commune level. In Cao Bang, Bac Kan and Tuyen Quang, IFAD supported 60 OCOP-linked enterprises¹²⁶ contributing to Viet Nam's 2022 OCOP expansion strategy.¹²⁷
102. On a broader level, IFAD also contributed to the formulation and issuance of Decree 120 (2017), guiding sustainable development in the Mekong Delta, illustrating a direct policy attribution linked to IFAD's active participation and technical contributions in the Mekong Delta Working Group. IFAD's partnership with IPSARD generated influential policy documents directly endorsed by MARD (around 30 documents), including key policies such as agricultural cooperatives and agricultural insurance. As the Government begins revising key legislation governing ODA and concessional loans—specifically Decrees 144 and 80—UN agencies are invited, including IFAD, to contribute to the legal review process. The objective is to improve alignment with national laws, reduce administrative burdens, and make project implementation more efficient. As the government reviews its public investment performance and prepares for the next five-year cycle, IFAD is also proactively contributing with technical expertise and financial commitments.

Summary coherence

103. IFAD's COSOPs showed a strong internal logic with synergies between strategic objectives and along thematic lines, where value chains, rural finance and resilience were well integrated. MOP-SEDP processes aligned with national policies, and continuity of projects in the same areas consolidated capacities and impact. These approaches were often adopted by other partners. Coherence was nonetheless partly constrained by some issues in coordination across provinces within a province-centric model. The changes in ODA regulations weakened coherence by delaying technical assistance and overburdening local staff capacity. **Coherence is rated moderately satisfactory (4).**
104. **Overall knowledge management.** Both COSOPs – particularly the last one – identified KM as a key enabler for scaling impact, informing policy engagement, and promoting cross-institutional learning. IFAD did not adopt a stand-alone national KM strategy, and although projects gathered and disseminated lessons, efforts

¹²³ To be integrated into the National Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy 2021-2030.

¹²⁴ In Bac Kan, Quang Binh and Ha Tinh provinces.

¹²⁵ In Tuyen Quang, 141 communes adopted the MOP-SEDP approach by the end of TNSP, with the provincial PPC formally approving it for annual use.

¹²⁶ many of which received provincial OCOP certification (3–4 stars)

¹²⁷ MoF and CEMA credited IFAD's early matching grant models (e.g., APIF) for helping design the participatory and branding components of OCOP.

were fragmented and often lacked strategic coordination. KM benefited from regional grant support, notably through the SSCVC and NARDT initiatives but uptake was uneven, and many outputs remained limited to specific policy areas with little integration into broader national systems. Knowledge exchange between provinces was facilitated through joint learning activities, though effectiveness was sometimes limited by logistical constraints and the lack of geographic proximity. While many KM products informed new strategies and projects and were found relevant when tailored and delivered in local languages, challenges with accessibility and language reduced their overall impact. Similarly, SSTC contributed to knowledge sharing and value chain development, but its scope remained narrow due to capacity and funding limitations. The CSPE rates knowledge management as **satisfactory (5)**.

105. **Overall partnership-building.** Partnerships were leveraged for different purposes, including resource mobilization, technical assistance, grassroots activities and brokering knowledge and expertise. While the partnership with the Government remained strong and IFAD successfully mobilized resources through strategic engagement with global climate finance mechanisms, collaboration with UN organizations and other development partners was more limited (partly due to the small team size). These relationships focused mainly on policy dialogue and information sharing, with few joint initiatives implemented. Partnerships with the private sector increased during the period, but their scale and depth remained modest. The CSPE rates partnership-building as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.
106. **Overall policy engagement.** Both COSOPs outlined clear policy engagement priorities with mixed results. The 2012 COSOP achieved positive outcomes for the first two strategic objectives, but progress on SO3 was limited. The 2019 COSOP mid-term review also reported uneven results across activities. IFAD has served as a trusted partner in operationalizing national policies at provincial, district and commune levels. It has also contributed to policy discussions and supported implementation at the local level, drawing on its experience in microfinance, climate adaptation, private sector development and participatory planning. While IFAD's direct influence on national policy shifts has remained limited, its engagement is increasingly extending to the broader national level via higher-level policy forums and sharing of lessons from the field. The CSPE rates policy engagement as **satisfactory (5)**.

C. Effectiveness

The effectiveness criterion assesses the extent to which the country strategy and programme achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes at the time of the evaluation, including any unplanned achievements. This section starts with an assessment of outreach. It is followed by a discussion of the achievements of the country programme in terms of outputs and outcomes in each of its three pathways of change, as defined in the ToC of the CSPE (Annex III): Build pro-poor and stable value chains leveraging significant investments from the private sector; Enhance and expand financial inclusion for climate-resilient rural livelihoods; and Foster environmental sustainability and climate resilience of ethnic minorities' smallholder economic activities. The CSPE then reviews the achievement of the 2012 and 2019 COSOP objectives through contributions from closed projects and the on-going CSAT project (Table 6)¹²⁸ and summarises the achievements and challenges overall.

Outreach

107. **Overall, targets have been met or over-achieved, however measurement of**

¹²⁸ This section is structured along the ToC (presented in the Approach paper and in Annex III) reconstructed for the CSPE, that combines the 2012 and 2019 COSOP intervention logics. Evidence mobilized for contribution to programme effectiveness includes: the CSPE's outcome and output indicator analysis based on PCRs, PCRVs and one PPE, plus the most recent supervision report for CSAT, and the findings from interviews and direct observation of projects.

outreach is hindered by weak data. Targets for the outreach indicators were not always set, and disaggregation is variable, making comparison of achievement across projects difficult. In addition, there were often different figures quoted in the PCR, PCRV and Operational Results Management System (ORMS), as well as in the 2012 COSOP Completion Review. Despite this, most (though not all) project indicators were met or exceeded. From the five projects included in the 2012 COSOP, by completion, IFAD had reached about 367,000 households, mainly from the 'poor' and 'near poor' households, equivalent to an estimated 1.628 million individuals, among which, 45 per cent are women and 49 per cent from EM groups.¹²⁹

Table 7

Outreach – persons receiving services promoted or supported by the project

Project	Achieved direct beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries	Outreach vs target	Share of women	Share of youth	Share of EMs
DBRP	184,300	N/A	N/A	59 % ^a	N/A	
3PAD	39,300	N/A	N/A	56 %	N/A	N/A ^p
3EM	118,828	N/A	>120 % ^c	40 % ^d	N/A	64 %
TNSP	547,285	340,956	161 %	37 %	N/A	54 % ^e
SRDP	352,236	314,020	112 %	49 % ^f	24% ^g	9 % ^h
CPRP	170,170	91,489	185 %	41 % ⁱ	N/A ^j	96 % ^k
AMD	386,123	125,000	309 %	44 %	N/A	16 %
CSSP	66,734	60,000	109 %	59 %	N/A	95 %
CSAT	81,347 ^l	120,000	103 %	48 %	20 %	8 %

^a Ranging from a maximum of 73.7% women in job training activities to a minimum of 40.5% women in CIGs

^b 94% of the HHs that were allocated forest land are EMs

^c According to the PCR and PCRV, when considering both direct and indirect beneficiaries

^d Ranging from a maximum of 100% women in the Women's Economic Opportunity Fund to a minimum of 36% women in CIGs

^e ranging from 22-55% in Ninh Thuan, 49-80% in Tuyen Quang and 33-89% in Gia Lai

^f The PCR mentions that 44,000 women received services or 49% of the total, including 100% women in WDF, 60.7% in CSA, 57% in PPP & capacity building activities

^g The PCR mentions 22,000 young people receiving services, or 24% of the total

^h The PCR mentions 8000 EMs received services, or 9% of the total – mainly in Quang Binh

ⁱ The PCR reports 26 494 women receiving services from a total of 64 750, or 41% of the total

^j The PCR records 3179 youth receiving training. However, the 2019 COSOP Achievements Excel file referred to a total of 10 164 youth receiving services – however the source is unclear.

^k The PCR reports 62 320 EMs received services, or 96%

^l Project still being implemented. Latest data from ORMS 2025

Source: CSPE data analysis, including project PCRs, PCRVs, PPE and ORMS. Where there is a contradiction, the PCR/PPE figure is used. It is noted that the 2012 COSOP review had different figures.

108. **Inclusion of ethnic minorities overall was significant but remained limited in digitalization and higher-value market segments, despite efforts.**

Language and literacy hindered some women's access to mobile apps and formal markets, although the CSPE saw several examples of EM women using digital tools for logistics and group coordination (interviews during field visit in Ha Giang). One exception was the grant project with UNIDO, which successfully promoted ICT links

¹²⁹ There has been an average targeting and outreach rating of 4.2 across all project PCRs, with an improvement across projects since 2018.

to markets for women and youth.¹³⁰ It would have been important to give more attention to ICT training for EM women in general.

109. **Targeting of activities to people with disabilities and youth is limited to date.** The IFAD strategy regarding inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD) is quite recent, and there were no significant actions observed in existing projects. Vocational training offered in TNSP provided some off-farm jobs to youth, though this was limited by outmigration. CPRP provided some vocational and business training to youth and collaborated with the Youth Union to support youth to start businesses and link to VCs. CSAT does have youth action plans incorporated in the VCAP and set targets for youth participation, in line with the Vietnamese youth development priorities, and the IFAD Youth Strategy. Otherwise, if young people have been involved in IFAD activities to date, it is more often by coincidence – i.e. there are younger people among the targeted farmers or entrepreneurs.¹³¹ For instance, some VCs (e.g. digital agriculture, vermicelli, tea) attracted youth-led enterprises.¹³² In Cao Bang and Bac Kan, the CSPE witnessed youth participating in cooperative leadership and training in use of digital tools. The RECAF design does include some targeted activities for youth, reflecting the aim to support off-farm employment for youth under the COSOP 2019. However, it is unlikely that future projects will include activities for PWD.¹³³

Development of pro-poor value chains

110. **IFAD projects have successfully connected many smallholders to markets within specific value chains in line with the COSOPs, though reaching remote areas is still difficult.** The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs emphasized pro-poor value chains and leveraging private sector investments in order to improve incomes. Outcome targets by projects in this topic were almost all met or exceeded. For instance, by the mid term review of the 2019 COSOP, 38,052 farming households - at least 40 per cent from poor communities - reported increased sales value, leading to a 30 per cent rise in income; and smallholder producers from targeted value chains had achieved income increases of more than 30 per cent.¹³⁴ ¹³⁵ However, experience in IFAD projects (reported by most stakeholders) has shown that linkages to markets from remote locations and working with ethnic minority populations can be more difficult and imply higher transaction costs, making it particularly difficult to encourage private sector investments.
111. **MOP-SEDP development and institutionalisation provided a framework for pro-poor value chains.** During the CSPE period, the IFAD-supported participatory process of SEDP development included identifying market link gaps, and community members prioritizing activities and investments that IFAD projects could fund, reflecting a bottom-up approach to community development. The contribution to the NTP-NRD through investments was the entry point. Respondents reported that the MOP-SEDP improves planning capacities of Commune, District and Province government staff and helps mobilise resources for prioritised investments. It ensures participation of all stakeholders at village, commune and district level, and results in better ownership. MOP-SEDP participatory planning manuals, first piloted

¹³⁰ Although it was located in a less remote area in the Mekong Delta with mainly ethnic majority participants

¹³¹ A rare exception seen during the CSPE in Tuyen Quang was some vocational training for youth conducted within TNSP in a vocational school that was constructed in 2005 in the Rural Income Diversification Project and is still being used now.

¹³² CSSP PCR - 18.3% of CIG/CG leaders were youths (18-30 years old) and were very active in the CIGs, SCGs, and APIF enterprises. The PCR team considered that this was because they are often more educated and dynamic.

¹³³ An IFAD respondent commented that this is partly a structural issue, as countries usually prefer to not include more than two social inclusion themes per design. Given that the Vietnam projects mainly focus on gender and EMs there is limited bandwidth to include more issues, as the project would need many 'soft activities', which are already difficult to finance.

¹³⁴ IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review reported about 25,607 people trained, and 53% (13,660 people) in employment, of which 29% were from PPP-funded enterprises

¹³⁵ IFAD, 2022. Mid-term COSOP Review. Report no: 6428-VN

in the Rural Income Diversification Project (RIDP) and expanded under TNSP and DBRP, were adopted as official planning guidance by PPCs. These manuals were used to guide district and commune-level investment planning beyond IFAD-supported communes. Areas where MOP-SEDP complements and improves the earlier Government development planning practices include (i) a better integration of local resources for poverty reduction and economic development targets (including the NTPs and government budget, along with project and local contributions); (ii) more active participation of enterprises in the planning and implementation; (iii) integration of market information and value chain analysis; and (iv) a strong linkage between planning and implementation processes at the Commune and District level. CCA and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) were incorporated into the later MOP-SEDPs, and a climate informed SEDP manual was developed in each province based on lessons learned (see Box 2 in Relevance, and Box A1 in Annex X).

112. **Common Interest Groups (CIGs) have been developed as an effective method to organize producers and link them to markets.** CIGs brought together farmers with a focus product (although not in all project villages).¹³⁶ Every month they meet and share experiences and market information and agree the selling price amongst themselves. Respondents noted that earlier, farmers were passive and tended to wait for government grants. Via the CIGs they have become more active and learned about taking loans (often via the WDF). Over time, the CIG concept has moved on to collaborative groups (CGs) and cooperatives (working with more than one product) and larger scale production.¹³⁷ They received funds and support from the VFU and Commune PPC. While the CIGs have not had legal standing, the CGs and cooperatives are aligned with NTP-NRD and now recognized under the Law of Cooperatives.¹³⁸ Diversified and commercialized value chains helped rural households stabilize income and reduce reliance on single crops, improving resilience via food production and cash flow.¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ However, remoteness from markets continued to limit effectiveness of groups.
113. **IFAD successfully implemented a Public-Private-Producer-Partnerships approach (4Ps)** during the CSPE period (see Box 4). This was a new concept in Viet Nam and took considerable policy work to allow it to be trialed in a government setting that was more focused on the public sector. The idea was that more structured and efficient connections between individual producers, traders and agroindustry, could result from IFAD's support to organization, infrastructure, training and finance inputs. This was backed with competitive small grants and competitive business grants, government incentive policies for rural agribusiness (Government Decrees 210 and 62), guidelines and investment proposal templates. SRDP noted that the PPP instrument had been rolled out to all IFAD projects in Vietnam and mainstreamed in the Government Decree 57 on engagement of enterprises in agriculture.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ CIGs are formed by producers (normally neighbors) who join together to take collective actions for agricultural production and trade. The groups agree upon and formalize amongst themselves their internal "statutes", which articulate member's rights and responsibilities. These were initially an informal group but now have legal recognition. The 2016 COSOP Completion Review reported that by the end of 2017, 4,312 Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and Collaborative Groups (COs) from 10 target provinces had been formed with 61,382 member HHs, 58.3% of them (35,780 HHs) from poor and near poor HHs

¹³⁷ IFAD. 2019a. *COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review* reported that by 2017, 2,147 CIGs (49.8%) had established business links directly with input dealers and off-takers. 747 CIGs/Cos had connected with 4P-lead enterprises. 33 CIGs had transformed into cooperatives.

¹³⁸ No.17/2023/QH15 June 20, 2023. Law on Cooperatives

¹³⁹ 3PAD PCR; CSSP PCR

¹⁴⁰ For instance, in **Cao Bang**, DBRP and CSSP contributed to income increases of 25–40% in targeted CIGs and coops, with 70% of beneficiaries from EM backgrounds. 3,248 CSSP beneficiaries reported income increases averaging 25–40% through livestock and vermicelli enterprises.¹⁴⁰ In Ben Tre, CSAT-supported coconut and shrimp producers saw household income rise by 30–50% due to infrastructure access, processing support, and group selling arrangements.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴¹ Government of Viet Nam, 2018. Government Decree no. 57/2018/ND-CP April 17, 2018 on Policies on Encouragement of Enterprises' Investment in Agriculture and Rural Areas

Box 4

Development of the PPPs and 4 P process

IFAD and government staff scoped potential VCs for support in all the provinces and mapped potential links. Via the MOP-SEDPs, the necessary-market linked infrastructure was identified and sometimes funded via the Commune Investment/Development Fund (CIF/CDF). Using commodity chain analysis and subsequent Value Chain Action Planning (VCAP), the VCs were selected. Matching grant programs for smallholder farmer groups (CIGs) and enterprises were developed, and interest raised via commodity workshops and trade fairs. Business development officers assisted with proposal preparation, and capacities and profitability were assessed following small grant competitions. Although the idea of the Government providing loan funds to private sector in the agriculture sector was new (rather than PPPs in public construction works), IFAD argued that this would help the enterprises to pay wages, buy products from farmers while supporting them with inputs and services, and eventually paying taxes. The 4Ps resulted in significant contributions from the private sector and increased private sector employment). By the end of the 2012-2019 COSOP period, IFAD calculated that the total investment of almost 19 M USD and the 4P/CBG investment of 7.3 M USD had benefited 30,578 beneficiary farm HHS, with 4,755 new jobs created in 10 provinces.

Source: Interviews, and various presentations, including *IFAD Viet Nam Private Sector Investments presentation*. IFAD. 2022. *Mid-Term COSOP Review 2019-2025, Viet Nam*; IFAD. 2019. *COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review, Viet Nam*

114. **A wide variety of project-supported grants were used to promote market links and encourage enterprises to work in remote areas.** The **Agri-business Promotion Investment Fund (APIF)** supported farmers, cooperatives and enterprises in value chains and PPPs/4Ps with competitive grants, contributing to increased productivity, efficiency and product quality to meet the demands of enterprises and consumers.¹⁴² APIF support was used to leverage co-investment from processors (e.g. BEINCO, RYNAN), and upgrade production, processing and branding. The **Community Development Fund** was used to support market-linked infrastructure. **Competitive Business Grants and Competitive Small Grants for farmer groups** supported enterprises and farmers respectively. **Climate change adaptation (CCA) co-financing funds** were applied in five provinces, offering up to 50 per cent of the costs for CIGs and cooperatives to adopt CCA production systems. **Climate Smart Adaptation (CSA)** funds and others supported households and farmers.¹⁴³ Government departments also provided some grants (for instance, the Dept Industry and Trade gave grants for machines and equipment to cooperatives visited by the CSPE team). Respondents reported that government representatives were initially reluctant at the idea of giving finance to private sector. ICO staff and Technical Assistance (TA) worked with them (sharing experiences from eastern Europe and the Caucasus), explaining the concept of a challenge grant and documenting the experiences, and the results convinced many PPCs. Access to market information for poor people is still limited due to technical infrastructure constraints and their capacity to access information.
115. **IFAD focused on the provincial-level key products (often identified within the MOP-SEDPs and VC action plans) and the speciality products at smaller scale (OCOP products).**¹⁴⁴ The 2019 COSOP noted that IFAD's operations were in line with the Government's OCOP Programme that was launched at the end of 2018. The projects aligned with and improved linkages to support the OCOP and NTP activities by forming CIGs (which can take next step to apply for OCOP certification), funding roads to markets, training government and community members. During field visits, the CSPE could observe development of broader

¹⁴² The CSPE did notice that the term 'cooperative' was applied flexibly. On several occasions, evaluators met cooperatives that would normally be considered private businesses but registered as cooperatives in order to access funds.

¹⁴³ IFAD. 2019a. *COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review*. 2,096 CIGs were financed through CSA/CSG facilities with 20.2 M USD

¹⁴⁴ Three groups of agricultural commodities have been prioritised by the Government (export, provincial and local).

collaborative groups from the CIGs (and for instance, in Bac Kan, even long after the closure of DBRP, CIGs formed under it were functioning independently).

Table 8

Value chains supported by IFAD projects in provinces visited by the CSPE

<i>Province and project</i>	<i>Value chains supported</i>
Tuyen Quang, TNSP	Pig (hybrid local pig, fattening pig), buffalo, canna, orange, peanut, acacia, goat, tea, fish, chicken, alcohol
Bac Kan 3PAD	Ginger, potatoes, chicken fattening, canna, red chilli, rabbit, plum, banana, pig, maize
Bac Kan & Cao Bang, CSSP	Pumpkin, turmeric, banana, pig, chicken, buffalo and cattle, rice, maize, peanuts, chestnut, alcohol, ginger, black jelly, orange, arrowroot
Cao Bang DBRP	White pigs, black pigs, vegetables, peanut, tobacco, arrowroot and sugarcane
Ha Giang CPRP	Tea, cardamom, timber, orange, honey, cattle, pigs, peanuts, high-quality rice, specialty fish
Ninh Thuan TNSP	Cow, goat, sheep, apple, grape, garlic, chicken, onion, maize, banana, asparagus
Tra Vinh AMD	Chicken, goat, hot chilli, peanut, mixed vegetables, shrimp, sea crab, black tiger – tilapia model, duck – snakehead catfish model, rice
Ben Tre, AMD	Chicken, goat, pig, seedling/ bonsai, coconut, woven handicraft, fruit, garment processing, rice, shrimp

Sources: TNSP, Tuyen Quang PCR, DBRP PCR, 3PAD PCR, CSSP PCR, CPRP PCR, data from Cao Bang PMU

116. **Certification of CIG/VC products (beyond OCOP) was reported to result in better prices and access to markets.** Certification systems supported within the projects and discussed during CSPE field visits included organic certification, VietGAP, Geographic Indications (GI), food safety, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certificates, certification from Japan and China (using the Rainforest Alliance (RA) system, which is almost the same as organic). The 2019 COSOP promoted harmonization of food safety standards, the design of certification schemes, and the development of quality standards that would facilitate the export of farmers' produce. Examples of this were seen during all the field visits. With the UN COVID-19 Multi Person Trust Fund (MPTF) project,¹⁴⁵ 2500 pomelo and mango VC members were linked to the digital OCOP platform and digital supply chain ecosystem platform, and the VCs were upgraded via application of good practices (SOPs, VietGAP/GlobalGAP). This has resulted in development of e-commerce, branding and promotion for producers, and establishment of 14 farmer-enterprises contracts.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN COVID-19 MPTF) project: *Building Forward Better: A Resilient Women and Youth Centred and Digitally Enhanced Value Chain Development in Vietnam*. This was designed and implemented by IFAD and UNIDO in Dong Thap and Ben Tre 2021-22.

¹⁴⁶ 2019 COSOP Mid Term Review.

Box 5

Examples of market activities and types of organization supported

- **Caobo Organic Tea Company**, Ha Giang (CPRP) received a competitive grant to enlarge their processing facility and buy equipment. They work with 780 HHs producing high quality organic, Shan tea. They also received some agricultural and business training from the project. They provide training to the farmers and their processing/packing workers to ensure quality products. Initially the farmers didn't follow the technical guidance but now they are convinced as they receive a higher price for the quality tea. The tea is mostly sold to Europe. **Organic certification** is repeated annually (by Thailand) and is costly, but worthwhile as the company has achieved higher profits. They also have **RA system certification for China**.
- **Tan Viet A Cooperative**, Cao Bang (CSSP) is now producing vermicelli from canna. The coop received APIF support for infrastructure, equipment, training, fertilizer and seedlings. The vermicelli is now certified as an **OCOP 4 Star product** (with IFAD's help) and sells nationally and to the US. The coop team received IFAD training in business management, production, food safety; while the farmers were trained in soil preparation, crop production, harvest techniques and processing. The coop provides equipment to groups of farmers to produce starch, then the coop does the final processing, drying and packaging. The OCOP program and the province has given support in trade promotion and packaging. The coop provides local jobs and decent prices for producers.
- **Xien Peng Cooperative**, Cao Bang (CSSP) is a small, Dao ethnicity CIG working on pigs and VH6 pear production. The group run their own credit scheme, with initial finance from CSSP, but don't have bank accounts. The pears have **GI registration** and a good market, but take time to reach full production, and are vulnerable to hail. Pigs are a diversification strategy. The group received training from project for pig raising, pear growing and care, branding and packaging, as well as infrastructure and inputs.

Source: CSPE interviews

117. **Participatory infrastructure development approaches have been introduced and increased community ownership and maintenance.** As part of the MOP-SEDPs, IFAD has also supported the introduction of bottom-up infrastructure development approaches, with a focus on links to markets. Districts utilise their own and NTP funds as counterpart for IFAD (also with contributions from communities of labour and land (and sometimes cash)). This involved establishment of a District Development Board, and later Commune Investment Supervision Boards and community level participation. Communities were involved from the start in selection of infrastructure, making local contributions and then carrying out operation and maintenance (with allocated responsibilities to, for instance, the local VWU or Youth Union representatives). The "bidding with community participation" method (for instance, seen in CSSP¹⁴⁷) created jobs during construction for local residents (rather than all labor coming from outside of the commune).

Box 6

Some of the infrastructure built by evaluated projects:

- 1801 roads, dykes and /or bridges built, rehabilitated, or upgraded – farm to market linkages strengthened
- 26 water supply & waste schemes built, improving health
- 599 different irrigation works; supporting production
- 4175 elements of **productive** infrastructure built, including 37 drying grounds, 6 rural markets, 6 electricity schemes, supporting value chains

Source: CSPE data collection from PCRs and PPE

118. Transportation infrastructure projects reduce the time taken and transportation costs of input materials and output products for farmers (as well as improving access to schools, health posts and jobs). Dykes and salinity prevention projects

¹⁴⁷ With some inspiration from the IFAD community grants in Peru, seen on an IFAD Learning Route visit.

help protect crops, and irrigation can increase production yields (eg. AMD, CSAT). However, the Government reported that some market and storage facilities are underperforming¹⁴⁸ and it plans to concentrate in future on larger scale interventions, particularly roads and irrigation.¹⁴⁹

119. CSPE field visits illustrated positive developments of value chains via infrastructure development (particularly roads), certification (including organic production), PPP and 4P arrangements (e.g. BEINCO), group formation (HH-CIG/Cooperative /Enterprise linkages), and use of e-commerce and Facebook for cooperative sales. It is likely that these linkages are making strong contributions to sustainably improved incomes of smallholders and the rural poor, as envisaged in the ToC.

Financial inclusion for climate-resilient rural livelihoods

120. **IFAD has provided several pathways for project participants to access rural finance**, through the introduction of Savings and Credit Groups, establishment of funds (such as Women’s Development Funds, the provision of competitive grants to groups and enterprises via other funds (discussed under Pro-Poor VCs) and access to bank loans. Rural finance has benefitted women in rural areas above all, given the lack of alternative small scale credit opportunities in many remote areas. This objective was successful under the 2012 COSOP, however during the time of the 2019 COSOP, policy constraints have limited outcomes. The 2019 COSOP MTR (in 2022) reported that 32,476 persons were accessing financial services (81 per cent of the total).
121. **The Savings and Credit Groups (SCG) linked to the Women’s Development Fund (WDF) scheme have been successful in improving access to small-scale credit, particularly for women.** WDFs were created and supported by IFAD, operating in cooperation with the provincial VWUs in 11 provinces, and are dedicated to lending to women from low-income households and enterprises in rural areas. Previously women reported borrowing from family or loan sharks.¹⁵⁰ The SCGs use a common group savings and lending methodology, offering small loans (less than 50,000 mVND – though in most cases, as small as 10,000) and require modest compulsory savings and no collateral. Over 97% of WDF members are women. IFAD and the VWU supported capacity building, monitoring and institutional strengthening of WDFs (including training and field agents), managing the institution and building creditworthiness of clients. The SCGs give women (and some men) convenient credit and strengthen their confidence and financial literacy.

¹⁴⁸ For instance, community storehouses constructed in the Mekong Delta were underutilized (feedback from the ICO and Government representatives).

¹⁴⁹ IFAD Viet Nam NBSP Design Mission - Discussion between IFAD & DOF, MAE, 7.5.2025.

¹⁵⁰ In addition, Ha Giang VWU recalled an earlier experience where the VBSP gave them funds to issue zero-interest loans. This was not successful, as beneficiaries tended to treat the money as a grant and no repay the loan. By applying interest, the mindset of beneficiaries has changed.

Box 7

Some collected field data regarding WDFs and SCGs

During the field visits, the CSPE team collected data in each province visited from the VWUs on their WDF implementation. From the seven provinces visited, there were a total of 350,426 borrowers. The fund portfolios (in those seven) varied enormously, partly due to the economic status of the province. For instance, in 2024, the total funds in Ben Tre's WDF portfolio were 215.8 bn VND (40 per cent provided by IFAD) and outstanding loans of 197 bn VND; while in Ha Giang the capital in 2024 was only 14.5 bn VND (70 per cent from IFAD) and the outstanding loans were 22 bn VND. The number of loans issued by each provincial WDF per year ranged from 1,045 in Ha Giang to 13,609 in Ben Tre. An MFI study by IFAD noted that membership in WDFs had grown 10 per cent from 2015-2018, or 5.6 per cent faster than client growth the microfinance sector, indicating their acceptance. In April 2018 in 10 provinces there were 11,159 SCGs, with 93,316 members (of which 38 per cent were poor or near poor). In Ben Tre WDF, a range of financial products were offered, tailored to the borrower's needs, including production loans, environment loans, zero interest loans, etc. For instance, in Ben Tre and Ninh Thuan, over 3,000 EM women accessed credit and used it to invest in livestock, irrigation, and processing equipment (AMD PCR).

Sources: Field visits by the CSPE team.

Marc de Sousa Shields, December 2019. *Microfinance Sector and the Women Development Funds in Vietnam: A scoping paper for the development of an IFAD technical assistance concept*.
IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review

122. **CSPE visits to SCGs and WDFs demonstrated that members were highly satisfied and the schemes demonstrate sustainability.** Group members met on a monthly basis to deposit savings and make repayments of loans, as well as to receive financial literacy training from the leader and discuss their experiences. Through regular meetings, women gain confidence and social support, and many had escaped poverty (according to anecdotal evidence from group members, and commune records). Most used the loans for agricultural purchases – for instance to buy piglets. With experience, the size of the loan can increase (see Box 8 below). A notable factor is that although the IFAD projects that had supported the WDFs in most provinces had already closed (and the 2012 COSOP Completion Review expressed concerns regarding their financial sustainability), the WDFs and respective SCGs were continuing to operate via the VWUs – a remarkable indication of their sustainability, and according to the data collected, their operational self-sufficiency was strong.¹⁵¹ While the WDFs were initiated with IFAD funds, in almost all provinces visited, the VWU had contributed their own funds to expand the reach and sustainability of the fund.

Box 8

Savings and Credit beneficiary, Ha Giang

Ms. Hoàng Thị Thơm - Lũa village (Bản Lũa), Linh Hồ commune, Ha Giang has been a member of the village savings and credit group for some years (with CPRP). The first two loans were for 10 million VND each. She has now graduated to have a loan for 20 million VND, as she has proved her credit worthiness. She is middle aged and a member of the Tay ethnic minority group. Hoàng raises pigs - normally local breeds, but she recently has bought a young white (improved) pig to assess its productivity. She keeps the pigs in good quality concrete pens and maintains cleanliness and disease control (which may have contributed to her avoiding African Swine Fever in recent years). The pigs are fed rice meal and banana trunks. In 2020 she started a shop in front of her house, with the profits from the pigs. By 2024, she was able to extend the shop and diversify her income. She has her own bank account and considers that women should control finances in the household. She has a husband and two children, who all work together with her in the businesses. Her and husband greatly appreciates her business skills, and she feels very confident now.

¹⁵¹ In six of the WDFs for which the CSPE received information, the share of IFAD's fund in 2024 was 62% of the total, ranging from 99% in Bac Kan (and possibly 100% in Ninh Thuan) to 40% in Ben Tre. The average Operational Self-Sufficiency (OSS) of seven WDFs was 132% in 2024 (ranging from 103% to 166%) and the Financial Self-Sufficiency of the four WDFs reporting data was 120% in 2024 (ranging from 85% to 166%). Only Bac Kan WDF (at 103% in 2024) falls a little under the recommended OSS of 110%, to ensure sustainability.

Source: CSPE interview

123. **However, WDFs face problems in the future due to changes in Government policy.** The Prime Minister's Decision number 20/QĐ – TT G dated 12/6/2017 (promulgated February 2018) regulated formal/licenced and informal/ unlicensed MFIs.¹⁵² The ODA framework prohibits the use of loans and even grants for microfinance,¹⁵³ and the national framework also caps the expansion of funds such as WDFs. Only Ben Tre might have become eligible for graduation to a microfinance institution.¹⁵⁴ IFAD had planned non-lending work to support microfinance strategy and policy development during the 2019 COSOP, but this hasn't been possible. Hence the future for financial inclusion activities is more limited.
124. **For smallholders in some provinces, the options for rural loans are limited outside of projects.**¹⁵⁵ IFAD financed the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) to conduct a study on rural finance options and lessons learned research report on best practices and innovations at the macro, meso and micro levels of rural finance and its delivery approach.¹⁵⁶ The Bank for Social Policy (VBSP) is regularly mentioned as a partner for poor people to take loans. However, they cannot serve as partners to international financiers, such as IFAD, as they don't meet the criteria in the ODA regulations. In most areas of IFAD projects, there were no other credit opportunities for poor people other than the VBSP, however respondents always reported that even within VBSP, the loan size was too large, and they didn't wish to run the risk of becoming indebted. VBARD is the other preferred partner, however, their loans are too large for women and smallholders and require collateral. The Cooperative Alliance provided loans to some cooperatives; some CIGs, cooperatives and enterprises visited took loans from VBARD and the Bank for Industry and Trade. 3EM trialled collateral free agricultural loans for poor ethnic households in Joint Liability Groups (JLBs) via VBARD, however the paperwork and approvals proved challenging.

Environmental sustainability and climate resilience of ethnic minorities' smallholder economic activities

125. **Work on forestland was facilitated but remains minor in scale.** GEF financing was used in 3PAD to support sustainable forestland management, including a small trial of a Payment for Environmental Services (PES) scheme linked to tourism, and preparation of participatory forest protection and management plans. Value chains require people to have land or some type of asset to participate as producers (though the very poor can benefit from jobs created). Some projects supported participatory allocation of forest land use rights certificates, in order to allow them to participate in agroforestry production, such as chestnuts, fruit trees, pine or acacia (with the added value of decreasing conflicts regarding access).¹⁵⁷ In addition, allocation of community rights to protected forests was piloted (in 3PAD

¹⁵² Apart from financial requirements, the Decision promotes transfer of informal funds to MFIs. However, it also notes that mass organizations such as the VWU do not easily satisfy the MFI ownership regulations, partly due to their legal status.

¹⁵³ As advised in the clarifications in IFAD Viet Nam NBSP Design Mission - Discussion between IFAD & DOF, MAE, 7.5.2025

¹⁵⁴ IFAD. 2022a. The COSOP 2019-2025 MTR reported that five WDFs in the target provinces had registered with the SBV as microfinance projects, but none of them qualified as MFI yet. AMD, CSSP and CSAT make mention of the MFI graduation process, however it appears that the process is too challenging. The CSPE visited one WDF (Ben Tre) aiming to graduate, but they had missed the window.

¹⁵⁵ This is not the case in some provinces in dynamic financial markets such as the Mekong Delta and Central Highlands, there are abundant options from both state and commercial banks, including VBSP, VBARD, VietinBank, Sacombank, Cooperative Bank, and LP banks

¹⁵⁶ INARI, June 2019. *Best practices and innovations in financing agri-SMEs & rural cooperatives with special references agricultural value chains development in Vietnam (PruFBeP Project)*. The research in Viet Nam was carried out by the Innovative Agribusiness Research and Investment Joint Stock Company (INARI) as part of a grant from IFAD to the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agriculture Credit Association.

¹⁵⁷ In 3PAD, 9,262 households were provided with 30,143.9 ha forestland allocation and issuance of forestland-use certificates, including 3,712 poor and near-poor households (94% being ethnic minorities). However, the 3PAD PPE noted "due to the fragmented approach, the synergy between LURCs issuance, CIGs and small loans from the CDF was only partially achieved, and only a small portion of respondents have benefitted all three activities." (p.v)

Bac Kan, implementing the national legal framework). In the upcoming RECAF, work on forestlands is planned based on these earlier experiences, with continuation of the forest-based value chains, community forest management, forest protection activities and REDD+/Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services (PFES).

126. **IFAD has supported an increasing emphasis on climate-resilient infrastructure with positive results.** CCA and DRM concepts have been included in the MOP-SEDP and planned infrastructure, such as appropriate siting of roads, sea water barriers (including dams and culverts), roads combined with storm surge prevention, and water supply canals and drainage, etc., however given the enormous scale of climate-related threats, more work is needed. The 2019 COSOP MTR reported 22,897 EM persons had adopted climate smart sustainable techniques, and 302 km of last mile, roads, markets and storage had been constructed in EM areas. However, delays in approvals, start-up of projects and fund disbursement limited performance under this objective.¹⁵⁸
127. **Climate smart agricultural techniques, technologies or new breeds and seeds were introduced in all project areas to reduce environmental damage and better cope with climate change - and generally achieved positive results.** These included land management techniques, improved cooking stoves and biogas, compost production, fodder production and storage, and integrated pest management; and generally resulted in improved incomes.¹⁵⁹ Environmentally sustainable and improved drip-irrigation created water savings. Efficient water use knowledge and skills are still required (as in many countries) and further training is needed (in all communities). Introduction of drought tolerant crops and livestock achieved good results.¹⁶⁰ Some projects (e.g. CSSP) supported the development of Climate Change Adaptation Action Plans for Agriculture and Rural Development, Disaster Risk Mapping, and production of technical manuals on CCA for various crops and livestock species.¹⁶¹ Organic and other certification processes (discussed under Pro-Poor VCs) have also improved environmentally-sensitive natural resources management. Other activities for more remote or mountainous areas have included a focus on niche markets, such as high-quality teas or medicinal barks. Agrotourism in EM areas piggybacked on government policy (community homestays in TNSP), however it remains a minor activity.

Achievement of the 2012 and 2019 COSOP objectives

128. **Overall, there were strong contributions made under the three pathways of the ToC.** There was some overlap between all the pathways – especially between SO1 (Pro-poor, stable VCs leverage investment from the private sector) and SO3 (Environmental sustainability and climate resilience for ethnic minorities' smallholder activities). For instance, improved infrastructure and access to finance supports both SO1 and SO3. The one 'under-performing' indicator in the table below ('local planning policies incorporate and upgrade pro-poor VCs'), is a limitation of the M&E framework. Despite significant work with SEDPs in all projects, only TNSP had recorded work with planning policies and VCs as an

¹⁵⁸ IFAD. 2022a. In addition, as noted in the COSOP 2019-2025 MTR, the objective is tied to work with EMs, yet CSAT is working in provinces with few EMs.

¹⁵⁹ For instance, in Ben Tre AMD and CSAT implemented climate-adaptive production models such as: shrimp-rice rotation, shrimp-forest rotation, lotus-fish farming, organic coconut cultivation, low-emission rice farming; installed saline-freshwater control gates operated with community participation; used agricultural waste treatment models (biogas pits, composting from by-products); and encouraged use of organic fertilizers, biological products instead of agricultural chemicals. In AMD, incomes of households participating in the ecological shrimp model increased by 25-30%, and the shrimp-rice rotation model brought 15-20% higher profits, reduced input costs by limiting chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

¹⁶⁰ TNSP Ninh Thuan PCR 2017. In Ninh Thuan, selection of drought-resilient crops, breeds and improved soil-water management (e.g., cow manure compost, mulching, piped irrigation) led to significant increases in productivity – for instance, between 2011-16, there were increased yields of 14% in cassava, 31% in grapes and 119% in apple yields/ha

¹⁶¹ Results of the CSSP endline survey showed 31,261 project households reported adopting at least two environmentally sustainable and climate resilient technologies/practices.

outcome indicator (and didn't achieve it). The CSPE team noted that there were no outcome level indicators for improved infrastructure, therefore output level indicators were assessed for this topic (Table 6). An explanation of the process is given in the footnote below.¹⁶² A fuller presentation is presented in Annex X, Table A5. Ratings by the Project Management Division (PMD)¹⁶³ and IOE have been consistently strong (Table A6 in Annex X).¹⁶⁴

Table 6

Reported achievements of projects within the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs in line with the Theory of Change

<i>ToC Objectives</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>No. of indicators</i>	<i>Status average</i>	<i>Contributing projects</i>	<i>Status Indicators</i>
SO 1 – pro-poor, stable VCs leverage investment from private sector	Improved marketing and certification	3	MET	3EM, DBRP	2 MET, 1 UNDER
	Private sector invests in farmer groups and coops	1	OVER	TNSP	OVER
	Farmers and groups increasing sales to private sector	4	OVER	AMD, DBRP, SRDP, TNSP	2 OVER, 1 MET, 1 UNDER
	Smallholders access markets	4	OVER	3EM, DBRP, TNSP	4 OVER
	Local planning policies incorporate and upgrade pro-poor VCs	1	UNDER	TNSP	UNDER
	Adoption of farm production models, techniques and technologies	1	OVER	3EM	OVER
SO2 – financial inclusion for climate resilient livelihoods	Smallholders and rural households access financial services	7	MET	AMD, CSAT, CSSP, DBRP, SRDP	3 OVER, 2 MET, 2 UNDER
	Smallholders and rural households take out and repay loans	4	MET	3EM, AMD	2 OVER 2 UNDER
	Sustainable financial services	4	OVER	CSSP, SRDP	3 OVER, 1 UNDER
SO3 – environmental sustainability and climate resilience for ethnic minorities' smallholder activities	New production processes lead to reduced emissions	1*	OVER	TNSP	OVER
	Growth and diversification of Income	12	OVER	3PAD, AMD, CSSP, SRDP, TNSP	7 OVER, 1 MET, 4 UNDER
	Sufficient food production for home consumption and nutritional diversity	1	OVER	TNSP	OVER
	Climate-resilient infrastructure	4*	OVER	AMD	2 OVER, 2 MET

¹⁶² Indicators from evaluated projects were assembled from PCRs for completed projects, and the latest supervision mission logframes from ongoing projects. Indicators were classified as output, outcome or impact and assigned a specific pathway as per the Viet Nam CSPE ToC. Indicators that were very similar were grouped together. Those that had target and achievement were included in the table, and colour coded red as underachieved (below 90 per cent), yellow as target met (90 to 110 per cent), and green as overachieved (over 110 per cent).

¹⁶³ The name of the Department changed in July 2024 to Department of Country Operations (DCO).

¹⁶⁴ Considering all completed projects, the effectiveness rating was 4.57 by IOE and 4.75 by PMD (see table A6 in Annex X). The majority of projects (DBRP, 3PAD, 3EM, TNSP) have received scores of 5 for effectiveness at completion by both IOE and PMD.

	Climate-smart practices and knowledge increases resilience	5	OVER	3EM, AMD, CSSP	4 OVER, 1 UNDER
	Community based infrastructure	15*	MET	3EM, 3PAD, DBRP, TNSP, CSSP	7 OVER, 8 MET

* Based on output indicator data. **In practice, almost all of the projects were leading to a positive result in this outcome.

Legend: green=over-achievement; yellow=targets met; red=under-achievement of targets

Source: CSPE Team analysis of reported under-achievement, meeting targets or under-achievement of the project indicators implemented under the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs

129. **Pro-poor value chain development has been a strength of the portfolio,**¹⁶⁵ including supportive activities such as Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs), district-level VCAPs, infrastructure connections, product certification, PPP and 4P arrangements, and digitalization (even if these activities required beneficiaries to have labor and/or assets). Productivity improvements emerged via group formation (such as CIGs, collaborative groups and cooperatives) and various modalities of training and extension services provided to these (cropping models, Farmer Field Schools, Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F), Enterprise-to-Farmer (E2F), vocational training,¹⁶⁶ study tours and trade fairs), through certification processes, and by the construction of climate-resilient infrastructure and irrigation practices. These activities benefitted ethnic minorities by geographic targeting and by mobilising funds from the NTP-SEDEMA. F2F learning exchanges were particularly effective for EM inclusion, especially in low-literacy contexts (e.g. Ha Giang, Cao Bang).
130. **Implementation faced challenges, especially in the later years of the CSPE period.** Effectiveness of the individual projects has been impacted by COVID-19 (including damage to cross-border trade) and the war in Ukraine; and by changing environmental conditions (eg. a historic drought and increasing salinity impacted AMD; Typhoon Yagi impacted CSSP; the African Swine Fever outbreak beginning in 2019 decimated the pig population in various projects). In addition, changes in ODA regulations¹⁶⁷ led to delays in CSSP and CSAT, and difficulties with capacity building and use of funds for microfinance.¹⁶⁸ The earlier projects have all been implemented under the models developed by IFAD and applied relatively successfully. However, the changing environment has delayed the start-up of new projects and limited achievement of the 2019 COSOP to date.¹⁶⁹

Innovation

131. Innovation is defined as the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction. Many of IFAD approaches were new in their local setting, even though they may have been applied elsewhere (technological, financial, social and institutional innovations). A summary table is included in Annex X, table A7.
132. **Institutional innovations** were a key part of IFAD's success. **Work in a decentralised manner**, with the main focus on work with provinces has been an

¹⁶⁵ Closely aligned with the NTP-NRD

¹⁶⁶ For example, AMD PCR notes the links between vocational training and VC and enterprise needs. In Ben Tre, the training was mainly for non-agricultural production skills, including handicraft weaving, broom making, and garment processing; and in Tra Vinh, in applicable agricultural production skills in the project-invested VCs, non-agricultural skills, including construction, cashew processing and handicraft production.

¹⁶⁷ Government Decree 114/2021/ND-CP (Decree 114) as well as the annual debt ceiling stemming from Resolution No: 25/2016/QH14, 9 November 2016 regarding the national 5-yr financial plan for 2016-2020 period

¹⁶⁸ However, the Cao Bang PMU noted that the PPC had stepped in in the face of restrictions on using ODA loans for capacity building. The PPC provided 10.2 bVND (5 bVND in 2017 and 5.2 bVND in 2018) for soft activities including establishment and training of district/commune project management boards, propaganda for establishment of CIGs, SCGs, project manual development, training on MOP-SEDP processes, SIP/VCAP development, and communication activities.

¹⁶⁹ IFAD. 2022a.

innovative working method, already piloted by IFAD earlier. This is only recently being replicated by other donors, which previously focused on the national level, even if implementing projects locally.¹⁷⁰ As IFAD projects are working within the local government system, the successful examples were then scaled up to national level. In addition, the '**hitting the nail until it sticks**' approach meant innovations that were piloted in one project, could be replicated and further developed in subsequent projects in the same province or elsewhere (see discussion in Scaling Up).¹⁷¹

133. **MOP-SEDPs development and institutionalisation.** The MOP-SEDPs were piloted in the Programme for Improving Market Participation of the Poor in Ha Tinh and Tra Vinh Provinces (IMPP) in 2009 (as a continuation of the evolution from earlier projects – see Text Box 2),¹⁷² then replicated and eventually adopted in 11 provinces during the CSPE period. A Circular issued in 2017, guided their use at commune level nationally (though it is not enforced).¹⁷³ MPI guided provinces to use this process for developing medium-term and annual commune-level investment plans for the NTPs (drawing heavily on the MOP-SEDP experiences). In 2016, MPI issued a circular instructing all provinces and sectoral agencies to integrate CC and DRM into their SEDPs.¹⁷⁴ As a result, more CC and DRM aspects have been incorporated into the later MOP-SEDPs, and a climate informed SEDP manual was developed in each province based on lessons learned. During CSPE visits, the team could see the institutionalization of MOP-SEDP in many provinces, including in non-project communes.¹⁷⁵ However, although elements of the MOP-SEDP process were cited by MARD and the NTP Steering Committee as good practices for participatory rural development, formal national adoption remained limited to province-level uptake. **Participatory infrastructure development approaches** were piloted and replicated, with a focus on links to markets, and community operation and maintenance and an increasing focus on CCA and DRM.
134. **Social innovations: Common Interest Groups** were piloted by IFAD and linked to VCs. The further development of **Collaborative Groups** has been officially recognized by the Government in the Cooperative Law,¹⁷⁶ supporting their scaling up and sustainability. **The strategic investment plan (SIP)/value chain action plan (VCAP)** planning process was introduced first by IFAD in 2012, then replicated in all later IFAD projects, linked to grants for farmers, cooperatives and enterprises (and integrated to NTP-NRD). Many developed into PPPs/ 4Ps.
135. **Innovative Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) and Enterprise-to-Farmer (E2F) training methods** were rolled out successfully during the projects and were particularly successful when training EMs, and the semi-literate, in a culturally-appropriate manner. In particular, enterprise-led services are considered sustainable, as it is in the interest of the value chain lead firms to equip farmers

¹⁷⁰ ADB. 2022b. *Viet Nam, 2023–2026 —Fostering Inclusive, Green, and Private Sector-Led Growth*. Country Partnership Strategy.

¹⁷¹ Considering all completed projects, the innovation rating was 4.86 by IOE (except CSSP) and 4.88 by the PMD (including CSSP). The majority of projects (DBRP, 3PAD, 3EM, TNSP, CPRP and AMD) have received scores of 5 for innovation at completion by both IOE and PMD.

¹⁷² Programme for Improving Market Participation of the Poor in Ha Tinh and Tra Vinh Provinces (2007-2012)

¹⁷³ 01/2017/ TT-BKHĐT Thông Tư Hướng Dẫn Quy Trình Lập Kế Hoạch Đầu Tư Cấp Xã Thực Hiện Các Chương Trình Mục Tiêu Quốc Gia (Circular Guiding the Process of Developing Commune-Level Investment Plans for the Implementation of National Target Programs).

¹⁷⁴ 05/2016/TT- BKHĐT - Thông Tư - Hướng Dẫn Lồng Ghép Nội Dung Phòng, Chống Thiên Tai Vào Quy Hoạch, Kế Hoạch Phát Triển Ngành, Kinh Tế-Xã Hội (Circular - Provide Guidance on the Integration of Natural Disaster Preparedness Contents into Socio-Economic Development Plans and Industry Distribution and Development Plans)

¹⁷⁵ For instance, in Bac Kan the MOP-SEDP toolkit developed by the project has been institutionalized across the province and applied to 100% of communes and districts during the annual SEDP process. Hoang Dinh Giong Political School, Cao Bang, was integrating content into teaching materials for political cadre. This is important as the leaders being trained then rotate and can use these capacities in new communes and replicate with their staff. The COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review found that beyond the original 180 communes supported to integrate CC concerns into their MOP-SEDPs, an additional 673 “non-project” communes in 5 provinces adopted the “climate-informed” MOP-SEDP (in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Ha Giang, Ben Tre and Tra Vinh provinces).

¹⁷⁶ No.17/2023/QH15 June 20, 2023. Law on Cooperatives

with the necessary knowledge and skills in order to produce quality products meeting market demand. IFAD's regional Medium-term Cooperation Programme (MTCP) grant supported the VFU to replicate the F2F extension throughout their national organizational structure.¹⁷⁷ However, the Government lacks a supportive policy and funds to pay lead farmers to provide training in F2F beyond the projects, although the VFU is supportive. Many lead trainers have been certified, and some are continuing to sell services in the market. E2F is continuing with medium to large enterprises, who provide their own staff to coach farmers, in order to meet the required production standards.¹⁷⁸ Provinces also integrated IFAD-funded training materials on climate-smart agriculture and value chain planning into their regular extension packages.¹⁷⁹

136. **Financial innovations: A range of rural finance instruments were piloted and replicated successfully, however scaling up is more difficult.** For example, the APIF was piloted in Bac Kan starting in 2012 (3PAD) and expanded to 10 provinces by 2015.¹⁸⁰ The WDF was rolled out by VWU via community level savings and credit groups to all the provinces where IFAD worked and received financial contributions from PPCs and other development partners. However, its further scaling up is prevented by the changed policy and need to convert to an MFI.
137. **Technical innovations included PES and PFES** (Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services), which were trialed in Ba Be Lake area, Bac Kan (3PAD and CSSP), but at a very small scale. They are unlikely to be replicated or scaled up locally. However, RECAF is anticipated to introduce PES/PFES.
138. **Piloting a range of climate change adaptation solutions**, developed via participatory action research, testing new methods to deal with water-saving or dealing with agricultural waste, documenting the results and providing cofinancing methodologies has led to replication in some provinces.¹⁸¹ The Cao Bang provincial government used IFAD-developed infrastructure design standards for roads and irrigation in its broader NTP-supported investments. DBRP manuals on road layout, community procurement, and maintenance were applied by DoC and DARD.
139. **Environmental monitoring and digital technologies** have been piloted (though with some teething problems). Salinity and pest measurement systems were coupled with satellite monitoring (RYLAN). Digital tools such as the **ZALO extension app** and salinity forecasting mobile platforms improved farmers' ability to receive real-time updates and adapt production decisions. Youth and women were key adopters of digital technology in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh, via the grant project supported with UNIDO. This included application of digital technology to meet organic standards and VietGAP/GlobalGAP; and using a pest and disease monitoring system on fruit trees integrated with edge computing cameras, a smart water quality monitoring system and smart water pumping system. However, there were practical difficulties with launching the system initially (legal, administrative, financial), discussed in Box 10.

Summary: effectiveness including innovation

140. **Overall effectiveness** is rated as **satisfactory (5)**. Positive results were achieved in the work with SCGs/WDF, CIG and other community groups, and value chain development (including PPP/4Ps). Changes to the ODA regulations meant progress slowed in 2019 COSOP, while the ICO worked to identify alternative grant sources. Strategies for outreach to ethnic minorities, rural poor, and remote areas were

¹⁷⁷ IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review

¹⁷⁸ For instance, organic certification of tea production requires regular training of farmers by the enterprise (Ha Giang)

¹⁷⁹ For example, In Ben Tre and Tra Vinh, provincial departments integrated soil conservation, saline-tolerant cropping, and agro-enterprise development strategies into their training programmes.

¹⁸⁰ IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review

¹⁸¹ For example, in Tra Vinh, AMD-tested CCA solutions were adopted by an additional 22,685 HHs in 31 non-project communes.

highly effective. However, despite efforts, value chain development in remote areas and with ethnic minorities was still difficult, due to the reluctance of private sector enterprises to take on the risks and barriers that still exist. The continued evolution and replication of the MOP-SEDP, with increasing consideration of CCA and DRM has been a valuable contribution to improving participation and sustainability of local government planning processes. One negative point has been the unreliability of the monitoring data.

141. **Overall innovation** is rated as *satisfactory (5)*. During the 2012 COSOP, IFAD was successful in piloting and replicating several innovations, some of which were scaled up – within provinces and beyond. Particularly successful has been the focus on value chain work, the scale up of the MOP-SEDP and participatory infrastructure development. However, the changes to the ODA regulations during the 2019 COSOP have limited potential for even piloting innovations, let alone scaling up.

D. Efficiency

142. The efficiency assessment looks at the extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely manner. It involves two areas: operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed, including timeliness, business processes) and economic efficiency (conversion of inputs into results as cost-effectively as possible).

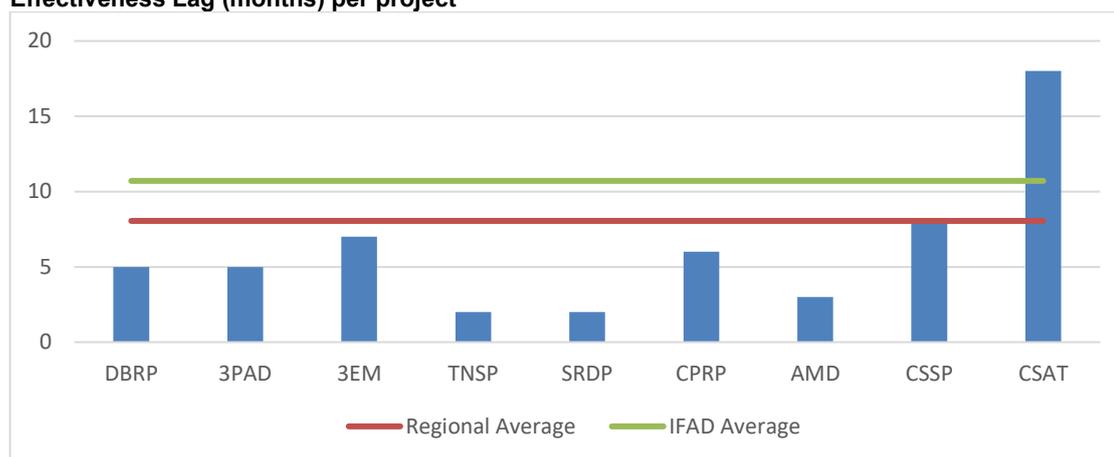
Operational Efficiency

143. **Most of the projects became effective faster than IFAD's global average of approximately 11 months and regional average of eight months**, however recent challenges negatively impacted the efficiency of the portfolio. Figure 1 shows most of the projects became effective within a few months with several completing on schedule despite implementation delays or redesign phases; the three extensions¹⁸² were generally justified, often due to external factors like COVID-19, government budget regulations and ODA disbursement issues. CSAT faced the longest effectiveness delay (18 months), higher than the regional and IFAD averages, primarily due to the significant challenges related to Viet Nam's regulatory environment, the context of ODA budget limitations and the COVID-19 pandemic which affected implementation logistics. Moreover, the two newly approved projects — RECAF and CRWIS — are experiencing significant delays due to the ODA limitations and restructuring. Both projects were approved by the EB in December 2024 and are expected to face effectiveness lags of 10 and 11 months, respectively.¹⁸³ These delays are above the regional average for APR and are much closer to the IFAD average than previous projects.

¹⁸² TNSP and CSSP had a one-year extensions while AMD experienced a six-month extension.

¹⁸³ IFAD's ORMS

Figure 1
Effectiveness Lag (months) per project



Source: IFAD's ORMS

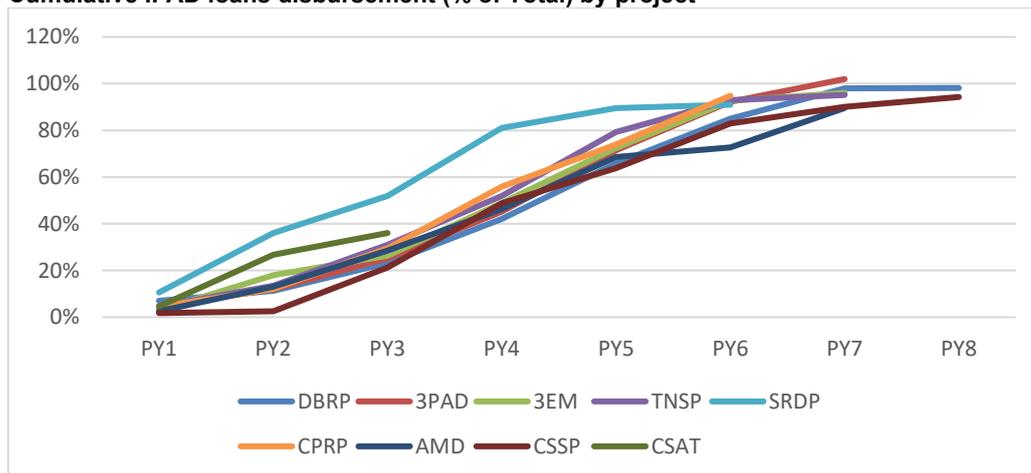
Table 9
Time lapse between key milestone dates (in months)

Project	Approval to signing	Signing to effectiveness	Approval to effectiveness	Effectiveness to first disbursement	Approval to first disbursement
DBRP	1	3	4	4	9
3PAD	1	3	5	1	6
3EM	6	0	6	7	14
TNSP	2	0	2	6	8
SRDP	2	0	2	5	7
CPRP	2	4	6	3	10
AMD	3	0	3	6	10
CSSP	3	4	7	14	22
CSAT	13	4	17	4	21
RECAF	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CRWIS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Viet Nam	3.7	2.0	5.8	5.6	11.9
APR	3.3	3.7	7.3	6.5	14.6
IFAD	4.2	5.9	10.5	6.1	17.8

Source: CSPE analysis based on IFAD data (Oracle Business Intelligence).

144. **Most projects faced initial disbursement delays, but adjustments during implementation ultimately secured sufficient resources to achieve planned results** (see Figure 2 below). SRDP displayed the fastest start-up, moving from roughly 15 per cent in PY1 to nearly 50 per cent by PY3 and topping 90 per cent by PY6. On the other hand, CSSP released less than 5 per cent in PY1 and only about 20 per cent by PY3, but steadily accelerated to reach 100 per cent by PY8. CSAT and AMD followed a similar slow-start pattern (around 5 per cent in PY1 and below 20 per cent in PY2) before converging with the rest of the portfolio after PY5. The remaining projects—DBRP, 3PAD, 3EM, TNSP and CPRP—showed more even trajectories, disbursing between 20 and 30 per cent by PY2, 60-75 per cent by PY5, and clustering in the 90-100 per cent range by PY6-PY7(see Annex X, Figures A8 and A9).

Figure 2
Cumulative IFAD loans disbursement (% of Total) by project



Source: CSPE analysis based on IFAD data (Oracle Business Intelligence).

145. **The overall disbursement was affected by various challenges.** Limited local capacity and cumbersome procedures slowed progress in several cases. 3PAD, for example, experienced delays due to late agreement signing, slow enterprise reimbursements, limited commune-level capacities, and complicated government procurement procedures. With assistance provided during audit and supervision missions these constraints were overcome, resulting in full IFAD and GEF grant disbursement and higher-than-planned beneficiary contributions (117.7 per cent). AMD also encountered financial management challenges, including prolonged withdrawal processes, high staff turnover and procurement delays, exacerbated by COVID-19. However, robust beneficiary contributions (182 per cent of the anticipated budget) reflect strong local resource mobilisation, compensating for some financing gaps. In fact, beneficiary participation emerged as a systemic strength in the overall portfolio; every project - except for 3EM (9 per cent) - surpassed its target (see Figure A10 in Annex X).
146. Restrictive government ODA budget regulations and Viet Nam's evolving financing landscape have introduced volatility in counterpart and co-financing flows. The most recent operations - CSSP and CSAT - were hit hardest by policy shifts. CSSP lost access to loan financing for soft components¹⁸⁴, forcing substantial budget reallocations and a project extension. CSAT, meanwhile, had to wait more than three years for its AF grant while the originally envisaged USD 40 million DFCD materialized very slowly. This illustrates the risk of over-reliance on third-party co-financing, which can undermine project stability. This was the case, for instance, with the GIZ contribution planned for DBRP, which ultimately never materialised (see Figure A10 in Annex X).
147. Government funding itself has remained comparatively robust (see Figure A10 in Annex X) and its relative weight at design is increasing. Projects approved before the 2012 COSOP relied on government budgets for about 11 per cent of total costs; those designed under the 2012 COSOP average 21 per cent, and the 2019 COSOP portfolio is programmed at roughly 20 per cent. This upward trend suggests that, as soft loan conditions tighten, the Vietnamese government is choosing to commit more domestic resources to maintain investments and reduce exposure to more expensive loans.
148. Furthermore, the efficiency of the portfolio also suffered from the cancellation of the \$45.5 million SAP project following the new restrictions, with the loss of IFAD and Government time and financial resources invested in the design. Additionally, Viet

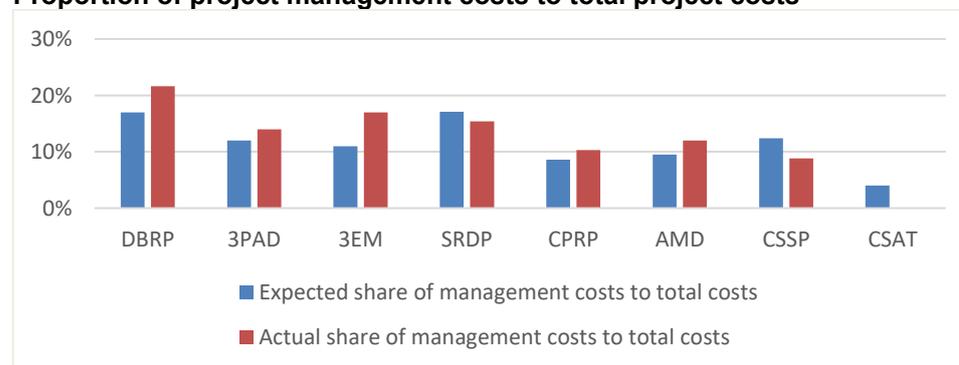
¹⁸⁴ Under Directive 18/CT-TTg and later Decree 114/2021/NĐ-CP

Nam's graduation¹⁸⁵ to ordinary lending terms increased borrowing costs and led the government to prioritise infrastructure-only investments, further excluding non-infrastructure components. These policy and financial shifts have constrained the effectiveness, timeliness, and scope of IFAD's portfolio.

149. **Actual project management costs across COSOP periods varied, but stayed on par with IFAD's standard,**¹⁸⁶ except for DBRP and 3EM. Although management costs were not always close to design estimates, as shown in Figure 3, these were justified by the project complexity, geographical and operational context, and the intensity of participatory approaches. Projects designed under the 2003 COSOP exhibited management costs generally higher than expected. DBRP, for example, reported actual management costs of 21.6 per cent of total project costs compare to its design estimate of 17 per cent. These costs could be driven by the project's broad geographic reach and the resulting need for extensive coordination and field-level support. 3PAD recorded actual costs of 14 per cent—slightly above the expected 12 per cent—due to the use of intensive participatory methods. On the other side, the 3EM project experienced a more pronounced increase in project management costs, rising from a projected 11 per cent to an actual 17 per cent. This increase can be attributed to delayed implementation and a late start in key project components, which raised administrative and operational overheads.¹⁸⁷
150. Project management costs under the 2012 COSOP continued to vary but generally corresponded to project-specific demands. SRDP's management costs stood at 15.4 per cent, below the expected 17 per cent, and were warranted by the high level of technical and logistical support required for engagement with remote rural populations. By contrast, CPRP maintained relatively lower costs, with an actual rate of 10.3 per cent, though higher than the estimate of 8.6 per cent. The AMD project showed a similar pattern, with management costs rising from 9.5 per cent at design to 12 per cent at completion, driven by the need for strong field coordination. Lastly, CSSP demonstrated cost efficiency, with management costs decreasing from the expected 12.5 per cent to an actual 8.7 per cent.¹⁸⁸ Despite some cost overruns, the operational costs of the portfolio generally reflected efficient and contextually appropriate resource allocation.

Figure 3

Proportion of project management costs to total project costs



Source: Project design reports, project completion reports, PCRVs

151. **Some projects faced delays and inefficiencies due to limited staff capacity, complex procurement procedures, and financial management constraints,**

¹⁸⁵ Transition from LIC to LMIC and soon to UMIC.

¹⁸⁶ IFAD's Financial Management and Administration Manual states that recurrent costs (salaries and operating costs) should not exceed 15 per cent of total project costs. IFAD Financial Management and Administration Manual 2019: <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38711624/39804719/Financial+Management+and+Administration+Manual.pdf/a382f28a-f633-437a-a685-fd48d04c0482>

¹⁸⁷ TNSP project management costs are not included as no data was available.

¹⁸⁸ CSSP project management costs at completion are collected from the PCR as the project was recently completed and a PCRv is not yet available.

with progress often occurring after mid-term adjustments. Staff turnover and limited capacity at the commune or district levels undermined implementation efficiency. Projects like 3PAD, CPRP, and CSSP reported that insufficient experience and high rotation of local staff delayed planning, disbursement, and investment groups formation. Procurement was hindered by new or complex procedures, such as in AMD or CSAT, where unfamiliarity with international bidding or changes in national laws¹⁸⁹ significantly delayed processes. Financial management challenges included prolonged withdrawal procedures, untimely counterpart fund transfers (TNSP), and inefficient commune fund handling (DBRP), often requiring advance financing or causing activity delays. In several cases, improvements followed mid-term reviews that triggered staff training, system revisions, or decentralized management structures.

152. **The geographic spread of IFAD programmes in Viet Nam has an impact on their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and implementation complexity.**¹⁹⁰ IFAD operates across a diverse set of regions and while this wide geographic coverage reflects a comprehensive and inclusive development approach, it also introduces increased coordination challenges, higher operational costs, and the need for region-specific implementation strategies. Moreover, projects involving multiple provinces, while offering advantages such as scalability, cost-efficiency through shared resources, and stronger institutional learning, face significant challenges. These include administrative burdens from managing separate PMUs in each province, heightened coordination demands, and uneven implementation due to varying local capacities. Recent political reforms (2025), such as provincial mergers and boundary changes, have further added to these difficulties, creating administrative delays and risks to timely project delivery.¹⁹¹ This challenge is particularly evident in large-scale projects such as RECAF, which spans five provinces, and could encounter considerable management difficulties. Moreover, disparities in institutional capacity across provinces may lead to uneven implementation quality and progress, thereby undermining the consistency of outcomes across project locations.

Economic Efficiency

153. **Project costs per beneficiary are generally lower at completion than estimated at design, primarily due to a higher-than-anticipated number of direct beneficiaries reached during implementation** (see Table 10). (see Table 10). This reduction is largely attributable to the increased number of direct beneficiaries reached during project implementation. However, in the cases of 3PAD and 3EM, the cost per beneficiary increased at completion. This is explained by the fact that calculations were based on the total number of beneficiaries rather than disaggregated data on direct beneficiaries, which were not available. A notable increase in cost per beneficiary is observed in the most recent projects, particularly CSSP and CSAT (see Box A2 in Annex X). The rising cost per beneficiary in recent projects may also be explained by changes in Viet Nam's ODA regulatory environment. Under current regulations, loan financing is restricted to hard infrastructure investments. As a result, overall project costs - and consequently, the cost per beneficiary - have increased. Furthermore, the requirement to finance soft components through additional sources, such as grants, has further raised the total financial envelope of the projects.

¹⁸⁹ Public Investment Law 2016 and Procurement Law 2023

¹⁹⁰ Three or more provinces covered by TNSP and RECAF; two provinces covered by DBRP, SRDP, AMD, CSSP, CSAT and CRWIS; only one province covered by 3PAD, 3EM and CPRP.

¹⁹¹ This will affect the provinces covered by CSAT, RECAF, and CSSP II/NBSP.

Table 10
Project costs per beneficiary, planned versus actual

<i>Project</i>	<i>Cost per beneficiary at design</i>	<i>Cost per beneficiary at completion</i>
DBRP	\$447 ^a	\$246
3PAD	\$456 ^b	\$655
3EM	\$172 ^b	\$194
TNSP	\$197	\$130
SRDP	\$145	\$117 ^c
CPRP	\$368	\$180 ^c
AMD	\$396	\$132
CSSP	\$1 239	\$1 037 ^d
CSAT	\$1 137	N/A
RECAF	\$489	N/A
CRWIS	\$298	N/A

^a This was calculated using the number of direct beneficiaries reported in the PCRV (102 938) which most probably refers only to Cao Bang province. No other data regarding Ben Tre were found.

^b This was calculated using the total number of beneficiaries, as data on direct and indirect beneficiaries were unavailable.

^c Some discrepancies were found between ORMS and PCRVs data.

^d The PCR estimated a cost per beneficiary of \$338 considering both direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Source: Calculated by the CSPE Team using data from project design reports, project completion reports, PPE 3PAD and PCRVs.

154. **Projects consistently demonstrate positive economic performance exceeding original appraisal benchmarks.** Projects conceptualized during the 2003 COSOP period demonstrated high economic returns. For example, DBRP reported exceptionally high economic internal rates of return (EIRR) for various rural infrastructure investments,¹⁹² far surpassing the conservative appraisal benchmark of 10 per cent. Agricultural value-chain investments also produced high returns for beneficiaries.¹⁹³ Similarly, 3PAD achieved an International Rate of Return (IRR) of 48 per cent for irrigation and 24 per cent for road schemes. Positive returns were recorded for households producing ginger, potato, chicken, and canna, with the lowest-performing crop, maize, yielding a 16 per cent Return on Investment (ROI).¹⁹⁴ In 3EM, the project remained economically viable with a completion EIRR of 59.06, slightly below the projected 65 per cent, mainly caused by delayed implementation.¹⁹⁵ The TNSP project also exceeded its IRR targets across provinces. The IRR of the whole project in 20 years was estimated at 23 per cent, 24 per cent and 31 per cent for Tuyen Quang, Ninh Thuan and Gia Lai respectively, exceeding the targeted IRR of 20 per cent at design.¹⁹⁶
155. **Projects formulated within the framework of the 2012 COSOP continued the trend of positive economic returns, consistently exceeding their economic targets.** SRDP achieved an aggregate EIRR of 20.1 per cent, surpassing

¹⁹² In the case of Ben Tre, the EIRR for the inter-villages roads was 76 per cent and the irrigation and rural markets was at 30 per cent. Similarly, in Cao Bang, rural transportation schemes brought in high an EIRR of 71.52 per cent and an EIRR of 50.26 per cent for irrigation schemes.

¹⁹³ In Ben Tre 54.85 per cent for reproductive cattle breeding, and 24.58 per cent for ornamental plants. In Cao Bang, cow rearing (6 time higher than before), white pigs (155.99 per cent), black pigs (108.9 per cent), vegetables (251.54 per cent), peanut (139.52 per cent), tobacco (134.62 per cent), arrowroot (123.74 per cent) and sugarcane (118.89 per cent).

¹⁹⁴ The PMU commissioned a thorough economic analysis for the PCR at the scale of individual activities, not for the overall project.

¹⁹⁵ This is linked to implementing direct investment for groups and households quite late, mostly in the last 3 years of the project. Due to the late investment, actual costs increase, and income generation results are significantly slowed, resulting in higher costs and lower income than the baseline estimate in the project design.

¹⁹⁶ The IRR target set at design may be conservative for Ninh Thuan and Gia Lai provinces, as it was based solely on Tuyen Quang data and did not account for their more developed commodity markets.

its target of 17 per cent.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, the CPRP project demonstrated strong performance, with economic and financial IRRs of approximately 19 per cent, exceeding the appraisal estimates (16.4 per cent), despite experiencing initial delays. AMD also exceeded its projected outcomes with a net present value (NPV) of US\$20,622 and an EIRR of 21 per cent, significantly surpassing original targets by 20 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively. CSSP surpassed its design target (14.8 per cent), with a cumulative EIRR of around 20 per cent (Bac Kan [20.9 per cent] and Cao Bang [19 per cent]), and notably high returns in specific interventions such as APIF (up to 28.1 per cent in Bac Kan and 24.4 per cent in Cao Bang). Finally, under the COSOP 2019, the economic viability of CSAT was appraised at the design stage, with an estimated Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) of 32.1 percent; however, no updated data are currently available to confirm or reassess this estimate.

156. **Efficiency – summary.** There has been efficient use of IFAD resources, reflected in relatively swift project start-ups and strong economic performance. Disbursement rates have generally been high, although initial delays were observed in the early phases of several projects. Management costs have remained largely within acceptable limits and are consistent with IFAD requirements. However, more recent interventions have faced delays and challenges, primarily due to shifts in Viet Nam’s policy environment. These changes have not only slowed the implementation of newer projects but also led to the cancellation of a planned project, thereby affecting the overall efficiency of the portfolio. **Efficiency** is rated as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

E. Rural poverty impact

157. This section analyses the contribution of the country programme according to the following impact dimensions: (i) incomes, assets and productive capacity; (ii) household food security and nutrition; (iii) human and social capital; and (iv) institutions and policies. The overall impact of the ToC was expected to be “sustainably improved incomes of smallholders and rural poor people through market participation and reduced climate vulnerability”.
158. As in many countries, the quantitative contribution of the IFAD programme to impact is difficult to measure. There was only one independent impact analysis¹⁹⁸ and often project baselines (and provinces) did not collect data with sufficient disaggregation and robustness to be able to demonstrate impacts, nor did they include controls.¹⁹⁹ Where they did include controls, the credibility of the data was doubtful (as noted in most PCRVsProjects and this report make do with the data available. However, in most of the project areas (particularly in the north) change can be attributed to IFAD (and GoV) activities, as there are few other projects operating.²⁰⁰

Household income, assets and productive capacities

159. **Poverty was reduced in project communes, but this cannot be confidently attributed to IFAD interventions.** From data available (bearing in mind the caveat regarding data quality and availability) there have been significant differences between project and non-project communes, and there is anecdotal

¹⁹⁷Notably high returns were documented for climate-smart agriculture (41 per cent) and public-private partnerships (44 per cent).

¹⁹⁸ IFAD.2023b. *Incorporating the Impact of Climate and Weather Variables in Impact Assessments: An Application to an IFAD Climate Change Adaptation Project in Viet Nam*

¹⁹⁹ Data is mainly taken from PCRs, PCRVs and one PPE, as well as RIMS data. In multi-province projects, there are sometimes different interventions and indicators in the provinces under the same (sub) components. Where there was non-project area data available the matching was very unclear.

²⁰⁰ Considering all completed projects (except CSSP²⁰⁰), the rural impact rating was 4.86 by IOE and 5.00 by the Project Management Division (PMD). All projects scored, except for AMD, have received scores of 5 for impact at completion by both IOE and PMD.

evidence of households moving out of poverty.²⁰¹ However, it is notable that there have also been significant reductions in multi-dimensional poverty nationally, including the project provinces. Income and asset growth is likely to be both via improved access to rural finance and jobs, and via improved production and value chain participation.

160. **Incomes in participating households increased.** Projects made effective contributions to income generation through enterprise linkages, trade promotion, market expansion and market information dissemination, and improved vocational training, labor market and job opportunities (except in some processing plants that have decreased staff numbers due to automation supported by IFAD²⁰²). In CPRP's PCR, the number of income sources of households increased, improving diversity and resilience. In Tuyen Quang, TNSP PCR reported participating household incomes increased by 49.6 per cent over the baseline (2011–2015), particularly from pig, tea, and orange value chains. In CSSP, there was an increase of 124 per cent in the average income of project households in Bac Kan compared to a 69 per cent increase of non-project household incomes. Similarly, in Cao Bang, CSSP project households experienced a 127 per cent increase in average income compared to a 66 per cent increase for non-project households.²⁰³

Box 9

Impact of AMD on market access.

In Tra Vinh and Ben Tre, investments in transportation infrastructure, including road, bridges, and hybrid roads and dykes, have helped facilitate goods exchange, save inputs and outputs transport costs, improve selling prices, develop services and promote investment in rural areas. RIMS+ surveys in Tra Vinh and M&E data in both provinces showed increased sales volume and value of key products. For example, in Tra Vinh 23 – 80% of HHs had increased sales volume and selling price of rice, peanut, vegetables, livestock and aquatic products by more than 30% after roads and bridges were constructed, other HHs experienced an increase at a lower level. Similar figures were reported from Ben Tre roads related to coconuts, fruits, poultry, goats, and shrimps. To a lesser extent, saline barriers and irrigation infrastructure in Ben Tre, including dykes, culverts, and damps, contributed to improve market access by ensuring the marketable quality and volume of saline-sensitive farm products and stabilizing materials supply to collectors and processing enterprises. The marketed output of acceptable quality coconuts and fruits increased by 10% on average, and that of shrimps increased by 3%. To confirm the same direction of impact, the IFAD impact assessment reported a few aspects of better market access for the treated households than that of the control ones, such as lower distances to various sellers or services. Moreover, compared to the mean value of crop and livestock sales in the non-treated sample, the nearly USD 300 higher sales of crop and USD 240 higher sales of livestock depicted an improvement of nearly 140%.

Source: AMD PCR and IFAD RIA Study, 2023

161. **Asset ownership expanded in project households, especially among poor and EM households.** This can also be considered a proxy indicator for improving household incomes. In some cases, there is insufficient evidence of the asset increases being due to the project, and partly due to the general increase in availability of mobile phones, motorbikes and household equipment in the area.

²⁰¹For example: In Tuyen Quang, poverty rates in project areas dropped from 61.7% (2011) to 20.1% (2015)(TNSP PCR). In Ha Giang, project communes reduced in the rate of poor and near-poor households from 77% to 58%, while the whole province reduced from 55% to 41% (CPRP PCR). In AMD there was a 61% reduction in poor HHs in project communes (16%-6%), while in non-project communes the reduction was 56% (AMD PCR). In SRDP, there was a 46% reduction in poor and non-poor HHs, with many escaping poverty altogether compared with slower progress in non-project communes (SRDP PCR). 3EM had significant decreases in poorest (29.5-10.6%) and poor HHs (24.2 – 15.8%), with many richer HHs (3EM PCR)

²⁰² Observed during CSPE field visits. Providing new machines improves quality and efficiency but may decrease labor needs.

²⁰³ CSSP endline survey report, 2024. There was an increase of 124% in the average income of project households (from VND 34 million to VND 76.2 million) in Bac Kan compared to a 69% increase (from VND 33.7 million to VND 57 million) of non-project households (endline survey report, 2024). Similarly, in Cao Bang, the project households experienced a 127% increase in average income (from VND 25 million to VND 56.6 million) compared to a 66% increase (from VND 33.0 million to VND 51.5 million) for non-project households

However, in general, there were positive impacts. For instance, DBRP PCR reported that project households having tractors increased from 10.4 per cent (2009) to 23 per cent (2014), more than in households outside the project (5 per cent). AMD reported that households supported by IFAD in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh exhibited greater asset accumulation rates compared to non-beneficiaries.²⁰⁴ TNSP reported that although households in the project area generally started with less assets than in neighbouring non-project communes, they have enjoyed more improvements from project interventions (eg. ownership of motorbikes, bikes, cell phones, TV and radios).

Human and social capital and empowerment²⁰⁵

162. **Projects contributed to improved individual skills and knowledge of beneficiaries in diverse ways.** Skills were developed in technical issues (farming, animal husbandry, forest management, vocational training), financial literacy and management, business skills, leadership and organizational management, which were applied to improve livelihoods. Membership of SCGs and other community organizations (CIGs, forest management groups, CGs, etc.) provided access to capacity building opportunities, as well as potential links to value chains, information and access to grants. See footnotes for some examples of trainee numbers from 2012 COSOP (only one indicator followed training in 2019 COSOP).²⁰⁶
163. Individuals (including women and EMs) have a much stronger voice in participatory MOP-SEDPs (reported in many projects during field visits and in reports), reinforced through participation in community groups and interaction with government services. Women also have taken a stronger role in community and household decision-making. The CSPE met SCG/WDF borrowers who had moved from being informal group members to become cooperative managers or trainers.
164. **Training methods are appropriate for smallholders, especially EMs, resulting in better understanding and application.** F2F and E2F methods can use local languages and provide practical training on the farm site. This is particularly useful for women and EM women and appreciated by farmers.²⁰⁷ The CSPE even heard of some examples where some trainings were run in schools, to encourage children to be interested in agriculture (e.g. CSSP in Bac Kan, teaching about fodder grass production). An indirect impact of improved roads was that they allowed better community access to schools, health posts and jobs – as well as markets.
165. **Community organizations such as SCGs-WDFs, CIGs, forest management groups and cooperatives have played an important role in building social capital.** IFAD has supported them to carrying out social mobilization and provide training, building trust between members and links to line agencies and the PPCs, and improving social cohesion.
166. **Learning and networking have occurred within and across provinces (and internationally), thus building capacities** (though more so in the 2012 COSOP period and before COVID-19). Networking has included within and between government agencies and mass organizations; as well as between enterprises and cooperatives, and community groups. Methods included weekly experience sharing

²⁰⁴ Findings from the AMD 2014-2020 RIMS survey. The project directly benefited 46,079 poor and near-poor households, with 26,260 households experiencing at least a 25% improvement in asset ownership index.

²⁰⁵ Human capital development refers to the process of enhancing individuals' skills, knowledge, health and overall capacity to contribute to economic and social development; while social capital development is focused on working to strengthen community.

²⁰⁶ The 2012 COSOP Completion Review, 2019, reported 314,336 persons who received agricultural extension services and trainings by the end of 2017 (52 per cent women, 41 per cent poor and near poor, 48 per cent EMs). 25,879 persons participated in vocational training in 2012, and 76 per cent of those were in waged employment. By the end of 2017, 86,808 persons (39 per cent women) were trained in climate adaptation approaches and technologies. In the 2019 COSOP MTR, 31,771 persons had received training on climate smart agriculture.

²⁰⁷ CSPE interviews, including with VFU and enterprise representatives at provincial level

via social media groups, learning on the job, training from visiting IFAD consultants, study tours and local trade fairs. Learning opportunities were also at national level, in the Mekong region and further afield – for instance, via the Learning routes²⁰⁸ and the Mekong Knowledge & Learning Fair.

Food security and nutrition

167. **While there is certainly improvement, the results on food security and nutrition are mixed.** There has been general improvement in food security and nutrition overall in Viet Nam over the CSPE period, linked to increasing incomes (see Chapter IIA). For instance, the AMD PCRV (2021) from Tra Vinh province reported AMD communes began with more severe food security and achieved improved food security in all indicators compared with non-project areas (no project households experienced food shortages by project end, while at baseline, 10 per cent had experienced a first period of food shortage of 4.3 months on average, and 1 per cent had experienced a second food shortage of 2 months on average). The CSPE heard anecdotal evidence on improvements in some project areas linked to the projects. Interviews in Cao Bang and Bac Kan confirmed that diversification of crops and livestock improved year-round food availability and reduced reliance on maize and cassava. In Tra Vinh and Ben Tre, respondents reported improved access to irrigation and roads led to multiple cropping and better dietary diversity. WDF borrowers reported spending increased income on fish, eggs, milk, and school meals. 3PAD exceeded its targets to reduce child malnutrition and food security.²⁰⁹ Some project reports also demonstrated positive results. TNSP in Ninh Thuan and Gia Lai helped reduce seasonal food shortages and childhood undernutrition.²¹⁰ However, while CPRP achieved significant improvements in food security, it didn't achieve the target on child stunting (perhaps due to many of the contributing factors being outside the scope of project activities).²¹¹ Similarly in AMD's PCR, Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) data showed a mixed picture, with acute malnutrition reducing but chronic malnutrition increasing in Tra Vinh, and underweight increasing in Ben Tre (perhaps also due to the intervention activities not specifically targeting this). Productivity and yields increased in most projects, however, this may not automatically result in improved nutrition. For instance, in 3PAD, cash crops and timber plantations may have had a negative impact on food security for some.²¹²
168. **While increased production, incomes and water safety have contributed to improved nutrition, there were few targeted activities.** Improved and more diverse production associated with CIGs has improved diets, and households with increased incomes were better able to purchase nutritious food. It is likely that provision of wells and piped water, increasing water safety, have also contributed to reductions in child malnutrition (via decreased diarrhea incidents). However, the expectation in the 2019 COSOP that there would be training in nutrition and measurement of improved quality of diets has not eventuated - nutrition training for EM communities fell significantly below targets.²¹³ This is likely linked to the ODA rule changes, meaning that loan funds cannot be used to finance nutrition training. IFAD produced a cookbook under the knowledge management budget. It was launched with a nutritionist and an ethnic minority expert to promote better

²⁰⁸ For instance, Bac Kan provincial staff recalled learning about community grants competitions and management in Peru.

²⁰⁹ The AMD project areas had much higher levels of child malnutrition at the start of the project, and by the end were better than non-project areas in all but chronic malnutrition (though that had decreased).

²¹⁰ TNSP Ninh Thuan and Gia Lai PCRs – In Ninh Thuan, food-deficit households declined dramatically from 23.3% in 2011 to 2.1% in 2015. TNSP in Gia Lai reported that child chronic malnutrition and underweight were decreased by 18% and 42% respectively (exceeding the targeted 10%); and the rate of hungry households was reduced by 47%

²¹¹ CPRP PCR. The proportion of starving households fell from 18.1% in 2015 to 5.0% in 2019, and there were 2.7 hungry months in 2015 in project communes, falling to one month by 2019.

²¹² 3PAD 2014 Supervision Report reported that ginger and canna were partly grown on rice paddies. The final RIMS survey found that 6 % of HHs had worse food security that at the start.

²¹³ The 2019 COSOP included nutrition targets, but it appears that these have not received attention, given the inability to access loan funds for TA and the low priority of the government.

diets(though it is perhaps targeted at an international audience, as it is produced in English).²¹⁴

Institutions and policies

169. **Projects have had important institutional impacts in developing the processes for planning and budgeting at local levels.** Work with commune, district and provincial authorities mutually supports the NTPs and government programmes and facilitates the replication and scaling up of approaches. This gives an enlarged menu of options for local governments, combining the three NTPs, state funding and IFAD funds, and synergising and reinforcing foci of the different state-led projects and programmes.²¹⁵ This was reinforced by the often long institutional memory of staff in PMUs, learning from sequential projects in same province.
170. **Planning systems improved:** MOP-SEDP participatory planning was utilized in all IFAD provinces, integrating gender, climate, DRM, market needs and transparency into commune and district SEDPs. It was incorporated into PPC planning in many provinces. Approaches were replicated locally (including via inclusion in curricula of provincial political schools) and scaled up to provincial and national policies.
171. **IFAD contributed to policy development at national and decentralized levels:** Working closely with commune, district and provincial governments meant that IFAD was well placed to contribute to local policies and decisions and roll them out. IFAD also contributed to the development of various national government decisions, for instance: Decision 20 (2018) on microfinance, expanding credit access to rural women and EMs; and Decree 120 (2018) on Sustainable Development in the Mekong Delta, incorporating IFAD's work on climate adaptation strategies. IFAD and FAO contributed to the Government Socio-Economic Development Strategy and Plan (SEDP 2021-2030) on behalf of the DP Group. IFAD-supported models influenced OCOP design and NTP implementation guidance. MAE and MoF acknowledged IFAD's role in integrating participatory planning into broader reform agendas.
172. **IFAD has also developed the capacity of mass organizations** that support this work (VWU, VFU) and small and medium enterprises. The work of government has become less top-down and there is a growing appreciation for the work of community organisations and participation. At the same time, the success of the 4Ps has facilitated growing interest from government in the potential of the private sector.
173. **Government staff capacities were developed.** All levels of government staff have received training, and the CSPE mission met some who have moved to higher level posts as a result. The projects built the capacity of some community members, leading them to become first group leaders, and then to move to government posts. The Ministry of Finance noted that many provincial political leaders have been trained in IFAD-supported projects – a unique example of IFAD's influence in Viet Nam. In several provinces, the CSPE was informed that IFAD-trained commune staff led local responses to COVID-19 and African Swine Fever outbreaks, leveraging planning and coordination skills developed through project training. However, the current restructuring will have totally changed institutions at all levels, and many staff will have retired. Therefore, sustainability of these impacts at government is unclear.
174. However, despite the significant impacts achieved, progress was slowed in the recent years due to the significant constraints on use of loan funds due to the ODA

²¹⁴ IFAD, 2024. *The Food of Viet Nam 34 easy-to-follow traditional dishes cooked by the rural people and ethnic minority groups of Viet Nam.*

²¹⁵ For instance, in the design of RECAF, Dak Nong decided to use NTP funds to finance RECAF, rather than borrowing from IFAD – but will use full design and participate in RECAF in order to get the GCF grant. (CSPE interviews)

regulation changes.

175. **Summary: impact.** Overall, the interventions supported by IFAD have made a strong contribution to social and human capital and strengthening institutions of and for the rural poor and ethnic minorities. Operating closely in line with the provincial government and NTPs plans ensured project planning was participatory and market oriented. It also meant that the project learning could be used to influence the planning and implementation of government schemes and provide budgetary flexibility. Incomes and assets of participating households have increased via improved access to rural finance and jobs, and improved production and value chain participation. Project activities are assumed to have contributed to food security and nutrition, though monitoring data is not strong enough in some cases to provide evidence. The CSPE rated **impact as satisfactory (5)**.

F. Gender equality and women's empowerment

176. This section assesses: (i) the relevance of overall gender-related strategies; (ii) the contribution of the country programme relative to the three main objectives of the IFAD policy on gender equality (2012) - namely, women's economic empowerment, enabling women and men to have equal voice and influence, and equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits; and (iii) capacities and conditions for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.
177. **IFAD's designs in Viet Nam generally mainstream gender, aiming to empower women and address gender disparities.** All the projects have developed gender mainstreaming manuals, recognizing intersectionality, such as the barriers specifically faced by ethnic minority women, or the differential impacts of climate change activities on women.²¹⁶ The manuals are reviewed during the supervisory missions. All projects used sex and ethnicity disaggregation in data collection. The PMUs all nominated a staff member responsible for gender in the projects (though usually shared with other tasks). The provincial VWU is actively involved in project implementation and supervision (though there is room for further involvement). Technical advisors and the ICO provided gender mainstreaming training for Provincial and District Project Management Boards. However, PMUs noted that financial constraints often led to gender budget cuts.
178. Outreach of the projects to women was good in general. Women's inclusion targets were usually exceeded (only 30 per cent women as a minimum in some projects, following Government targets, but reaching 50 per cent in CSSP following earlier success). By the end of 2017, 45 per cent of project beneficiaries under the 2012 COSOP (five projects) were women. Analysis of the PCRs found the share of women ranged from 37 per cent in TNSP to 59 per cent in CSSP.²¹⁷ In AMD, women's participation exceeded men's in most activities (AMD PCR). However, data is collected differently in the separate projects, making comparisons difficult.²¹⁸ There is significant participation of women in all project activities (including Female Headed Households (FHHs), EM women and young women).
179. **Projects emphasize the need to promote equal access and opportunities; however, they have not addressed systemic gender inequalities.** This is partly because women's position is relatively strong in Viet Nam,²¹⁹ but improvements could still be made, including continuing the strengthening of women's voice at community and household level, and further expanding the inclusion of women's names on land use rights certificates. Innovative tools, such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) used by IFAD in many other

²¹⁶ Considering all completed projects, the rating for GEWE was 4.57 by IOE (except CSSP, which doesn't yet have a PCR) and 4.88 by the PMD (including CSSP). In particular, the more recent projects have scored well.

²¹⁷ The CSSP Cao Bang self-assessment reports that women accounted for 60.04% of the total FHHs accounted for 12.66% of the total households supported by the project, significantly higher than the target of 5%

²¹⁸ Some projects set targets for participation overall and in individual activities at the start, and others didn't. The 3PAD PPE notes flaws in design, with a lack of quantitative indicators

²¹⁹ As seen in the Gender Development Index ratings, and reported by female respondents

countries, and trialed by Oxfam in Viet Nam, has not been used by IFAD in Viet Nam.²²⁰ Despite being very effective at strengthening the position of women and engaging men, household methodologies such as GALS are quite labour intensive and expensive, and would require alternative sources of grant funds. However, the planning team for the Nature Based Solutions for Inclusive Rural Development Project (NBSP) is aiming for more transformative activities, such as use of a modified GALS process using grant funds and setting quotas for men's participation in some typically female activities.²²¹

Economic empowerment of women

180. **SCGs have been a powerful instrument of economic empowerment**, often in communities where there was no previous credit access. These were then linked to the WDFs, enabling SCGs to have adequate credit, and thousands of women to benefit from improved access to finance and training for production or small-scale processing and sales.²²² Many women went on to join CIGs/CGs/cooperatives²²³ – sometimes women-led²²⁴ – and focused on different production and marketing activities. Proportionally more of the women-led CIG, cooperatives and enterprises perform better than those led by men.²²⁵
181. **The projects achieved changes in the economic status of women in the project areas.** For instance, according to the end-of-project household survey results in CSSP Bac Kan (PCR), female-headed households (FHHs) had an average income increase from economic activities of 186 per cent by the end of the project, higher than the increase for male-headed households (MHHs) (116 per cent) and also higher than the increase for FHHs outside the project area (115 per cent). Despite slow gender progress initially, CPRP in Ha Giang had strong results by completion, with FHHs recording average incomes in 2019 that were 1.64 times higher than MHHs.²²⁶
182. **Job creation in processing plants has been mainly for women** (majority in north, half in south).²²⁷ Following vocational training in AMD, “75 per cent of the trained persons, 74 per cent of poor and near-poor, 78 per cent of women and 65 per cent of EM persons found a stable paid job (at least six months per year)”.²²⁸ Respondents commented in interviews (for instance, with enterprises and cooperatives) that women are harder working. However, it may also be linked to the greater likelihood that women stay in the commune, rather than migrate for work.
183. **Women's ownership or access to resources has extended to land titles** (residential, agricultural and forestland), giving collateral and means of production. Government policy is to include both the woman and man's names on land titles; however, this is more easily facilitated with project support (e.g. CSSP, 3PAD, SRDP).²²⁹

²²⁰ Oxfam trialed GALS in four provinces in 2015, but it doesn't appear to have been replicated. Oxfam 2020. WEMAN GALS <https://empoweratscale.org/resource-centre/changing-gender-relations-in-vietnam-gals-in-4-provinces/>

²²¹ Direct correspondence

²²² CPRP PCR - The percentage of wives who own family's small business increased from 0% to 31%

²²³ More than 60% of CIG members in 3PAD were women (3PAD PCR). In DBRP, only 41% of CIG members were women (DBRP PCR) In CSSP, 52% of CIG members were women (CSSP PCR)

²²⁴ 40% of CIG leaders in AMD were women. AMD PCR

²²⁵ CRDP PCR, CSSP PCR

²²⁶ CPRP PCR - FHHs' income increased more than that of men-headed HHs (MHHs). In 2019, FHHs earned on average VND 1,330,000 per person per month, 5.4 times higher than in 2015. Meanwhile, income of MHHs increased by only 3.3 times to reach VND 990,000 per person per month, while it was the same as FHHs in 2015 (VND 300,000 per person per month). The average income of FHHs in 2019 was 1.64 times higher than that of MHHs.(p.42)

²²⁷ For example, in AMD, 91% (Ben Tre) & 52% (Tra Vinh) of participants in vocational training were women (AMD PCR)

²²⁸ AMD PCR p.19.

²²⁹ CSSP PCR. In Bac Kan, 9,616 households were granted LURCs with joint titling (18.6% for FHH) - an increase of 17-18% project households changed from LURCs solely signed by husband to those signed by both husband and wife. 3PAD PPE reported that all LURCs were issued jointly to husband and wife. In SRDP PCR, land use right certificates with names of both husband and wife increased the baseline to the endline surveys (from 38% to 57% in Quang Binh and from 16%

Enabling women's voice and influence

184. **Women in all project areas reported that they have become more actively involved at community level via project participation** – gaining confidence through SCG membership, income generation and community group and leadership activities. However, the link to individual projects was not consistent. Gender norms still constrained women's leadership in some communes, though the CSPE met with several dynamic leaders. For instance, while in AMD (Tra Vinh), participation of women in decision-making processes was greater in project areas (40-50 per cent) than in non-project areas (32 per cent-43 per cent), there was not a significant improvement recorded in decision-making from the start to the end of the project.²³⁰ On the other hand, in CSSP, women participated actively in MOP-SEDP meetings (more than 50 per cent), and those commodity-based CIGs/collaborative groups with women as leaders performed better than those led by men.²³¹
185. 3PAD, with a focus on very poor communes, worked with the VWU to create 155 livelihoods and rights clubs for women with the aim to improve women's livelihoods and address women's rights and empowerment (the SCGs and WDF, which took a similar role in other projects, began only late in the 3PAD period). Naturally numerical participation in community level meetings and meeting outcomes do not necessarily tally with qualitatively active participation. The 3PAD PPE field work (2018) noted that results tended to still be more in participation than empowerment, with EM women still struggling to voice their opinions (also observed in CSPE visits in the southern provinces).²³² The focus on EM women in Bac Kan then was intensified under CSSP, and visits by the CSPE team demonstrated much more active participation in 2025.
186. Men continue to have a dominant role in the household decision-making, though there have been some improvements.²³³ In addition, field interviews indicated that when women have access to finance (e.g. SCG) and income generating opportunities (CIG/CGs/cooperatives), they are empowered at both community and household level. The VWUs visited reported significant improvements in women's confidence. Gender-based violence has been positively addressed in some projects (e.g. 3PAD), however the results are anecdotal.

Equitable workload and sharing of economic benefits

187. **Women working in the projects usually had an increase in the number of working hours spent on income generating activities** (more than for men in the project area or women outside the project area).²³⁴ This appears to be balanced by a decrease in non-income generating work (especially at home), when compared with men and with women outside the project area. This supports the statement from women interviewed that their families have been supportive and share the workload. However, traditional views on gender roles are ingrained, as in most countries, and gender stereotypes and discrimination against women still exist despite project efforts.
188. **Women spent increased time in community and CIG/cooperative meetings**

to 67% in Ha Tinh for residential land, from 43% to 56% in Quang Binh and from 14% to 53% in Ha Tinh for farmland), as opposed to those bearing the name of husband only.

²³⁰ Self-assessment Tra Vinh AMD PMI

²³¹ SSP PCR - 37.6% CIGs/CGs under the 'good category' had women leaders, which is higher than those led by men with 32.62%. Meanwhile, poor CIG/CGs led by women accounted for only 10.94% compared to 13.85% led by men.

²³² 3PAD PPE

²³³ For instance, the Cao Bang CSSP PCR Noted that "the proportion of women who make important decisions in the households (signing contracts, making decision on new investments, determining selling prices, applying climate adaptation measures) improved over time, but was still 10% lower than that of men. A notable positive trend is that 50-60% of the important decisions mentioned above were made by both women and men." (p.17)

²³⁴ For instance, CSSP Bac Kan reported that the increase in the number of working hours per day to generate income for women in the project area was 7.2%, higher than the corresponding increase for men in the project area (4.2%) and for women outside the project area (1%). Meanwhile, the number of non-income-generating household work hours for women in the project area decreased the most (33.8%), higher than the decrease for men in the project area (14.6%) and for women outside the project area (14.6%).

however they considered this to be a worthwhile investment. Balancing this, activities such as fodder grass plantations reduce time expenditure and drudgery of women and children previously collecting grass or herding free-grazing livestock.

Capacities and conditions to support gender equality and women's empowerment

189. Agricultural extension and training have been provided to women and men, though with some provincial variation.²³⁵ CSAT Ben Tre reported that they especially encountered challenges in support for vulnerable women regarding climate change. They made efforts in this topic using resources from the department at district level, as well as via the IFAD ICO to give technical training to youth and women and develop alternative livelihoods. The MPTF²³⁶ (post-COVID recovery grant) provided training to women and youth specifically to use a digital platform and environmental monitoring tools for the pomelo and mango value chains, improving management and profits in the face of environmental and climate challenges.
190. Bearing in mind the different barriers faced by women from different ethnic minorities, FHHs or living in remote and poor areas, some projects introduced some tailored activities such as literacy and numeracy training, and used EM languages where possible (though ideally, with sufficient grant funding, more attention would be given to translation of materials). Respondents noted that F2F training and localized TA improved accessibility. In Ha Giang (CPRP), low-literacy EM women received pictorial guides, oral facilitation, and peer mentoring through the VWU. However, the TNSP PCR noted that extension training focused less on EM women and girls due to the fact that they have lower literacy and less proficiency in Vietnamese, and few EM women were in leadership positions. In some projects women have benefitted from improved access to health care and to nutrition issues.
191. PMU staff and project participants have been linked to other ODA-funded projects with gender elements in Viet Nam and Southeast Asia. They have had possibilities to exchange experiences in many fora and learn many good practices and creative solutions from other projects, which they can flexibly apply to local contexts.²³⁷
192. **Summary: gender equality and women's empowerment.** PMUs have received good support from IFAD, worked closely with the provincial VWUs and collected sex disaggregated data. Outreach to women was generally good, and women claim to be more active in community and household decision-making, though active participation is difficult to assess. Development of SCGs and WDFs has been a particular success and served as an entry point for many women to improved economic status and confidence. EM women face particular barriers regarding literacy and language, which may inhibit their capacity to benefit fully from project interventions. In general, work on Gender Equality and Women 's Empowerment (GEWE) in Viet Nam has been gender sensitive, while not reaching a rating of transformative. The CSPE rates **GEWE** as **satisfactory (5)**.

G. Sustainability of benefits

193. The sustainability criterion assesses the extent to which the net benefits induced by the strategy and programme continue over time and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and scale-up) by the government or other partners. It includes issues of institutional, technical, social and financial sustainability. Other specific aspects are: (i) scaling-up; and (ii) environment and natural resources management, and climate change adaptation.

²³⁵ IFAD. 2019a. COSOP 2012-2019 Completion Review reported that by the end of 2017, 52% of recipients were women, 41% were from poor and near poor HHs and 48% from different ethnic minority groups. In Tuyen Quang the proportion of female trainees was 71%, while in Gia Lai and Tra Vinh the proportion was only 33%.

²³⁶ MPTF Ben Tre PCR June 2022 - *Resilient Women and Youth Centred and Digitally Enhanced Value Chain Development in Ben Tre province*. IFAD and UNIDO.

²³⁷ Ben Tre self-assessment (DBRP and AMD).

194. **The COSOPs and related programmes in Viet Nam demonstrate a commitment to long-term sustainability across institutional, environmental, and social dimensions.** There is a clear progression in addressing these aspects, with increased emphasis on climate change adaptation and social inclusion in more recent strategies and projects. Nonetheless institutional and governmental reforms in 2025 will challenge some of the factors that have created sustainability in the portfolio.
195. **Both COSOPs emphasize institutional capacity building at local levels which pays off dividends.** COSOPs emphasized institutional capacity building through the promotion of participatory and decentralized planning via SEDPs and scaled up by districts and provinces. Similarly, institutions benefitted from continued programmes which had long-term involvement of staff to develop institutional memory and continuity, including promotion of PMU staff into local government positions. Institutions such as the VWUs expanded beyond project areas via WDFs, but resource constraints and regulations have limited the formalisation of WDFs into fully fledged MFIs. Finally, institutional memory and capacity will most likely be lost with the elimination of district-level government, which may impact IFAD approaches in the future.
196. **The portfolio successfully engendered social sustainability, though there are limits to what could persist.** COSOPs continued IFAD's thematic thrust of poverty reduction and social inclusion, where sustained livelihood activities and infrastructure positively support social sustainability. Infrastructure maintenance is conducted as a group process, including CIGs and mass organizations. Similarly, project participatory infrastructure methods have been observed to be replicated by mass organizations such as the VWU and Youth Union. Market linkages and strengthened cooperatives have also ensured longer-term benefits for farmers. Nonetheless, CIGs did not expand beyond project-supported areas, and those in remote areas sometimes collapsed after projects ended. While CIGs may access other sources of finance, this indicates challenges for CIGs in remote areas and of autonomy beyond project support.
197. **There is ample evidence to suggest community institutions can continue with less funding and support.** For example, WDFs maintained their operations or expanded sustainably, with the Ben Tre WDF aiming to become an MFI. Similarly, CIGs have expanded, and some have become formal cooperatives, with an asparagus cooperative in Ninh Thuan as an example. In the north, some CIGs have become multi-product collaborative groups under national program influence, but they remain largely project-dependent outside these areas. Factors supporting these trends include close alignment with government programmes and planning processes, staff continuity across projects, and market demand and member ownership of groups driving motivation and group formalization, as well as follow-up support in some cases, from other DPs.
198. **Restrictions and risks to community institution sustainability.** WDFs face barriers to continued expansion. Regulations limit the capitalization, and requirements to become MFIs are complex. There is broad demand for continued financial services, particularly from women, so a gap emerges between what WDFs offer and what commercial banks can offer. For other groups, there is mounting uncertainty about institutional arrangements of local government with current restructuring, which may impact support measures for existing groups and processes. This heightens vulnerability of groups in remote areas or far away from markets and services.
199. **All projects implemented exit strategies which are by and large successful, though technically and legally demanding arrangements have yet to reached.** The success of these is attributable to the institutionalization of SEDP processes, the establishment of development funds (foremost amongst them

WDFs), and the establishment of cooperatives (such as in DBRP and AMD). The upgrading of SEDPs to be market oriented and climate-informed further strengthened participatory institutionalization. This institutionalization was successful and scaled across districts and communes through manuals and government training. The continued use of infrastructure such as roads or continued functional CIGs is also a testament to well-established exit strategies. However, certain approaches such as business development services, value chain tools, or group-based models lacked long-term support planning. More complex arrangements such as PPPs and co-financing mechanisms require more planning. Legally complex arrangements such as those required for a functional Automated Salinity and Water Quality Monitoring System (ASWQMS) in AMD is an example of this (see box 10 below).

Box 10

The challenges of establishing publicly run monitoring systems

Smallholder farmers in the Mekong delta have coexisted with the seasonal alternation of fresh and salt water. Climate change and human impacts on water use in the Mekong are impacting this alternation, with reduced freshwater flow in the dry season leading to saline intrusions inland. AMD project design in 2014 proposed a real-time salinity monitoring and forecasting system comprising physical stations, farmer monitoring points, and a central data storage, processing and dissemination platform. Events quickly proved the relevance and need for such a system: severe drought conditions in 2016 and 2019 lowered freshwater levels in the Mekong delta, and led to saline intrusion deep inland, devastating crops and plantations.

A salinity monitoring system was designed in 2016 (ASWQMS) but suffered from significant implementation issues that were never resolved. Procurement was complex. An international consultancy firm was used, and there were coordination issues between the firm, the provincial PCUs, and DONRE, the latter two having little experience in this type of procurement. While ASWQMS monitoring stations were built, there was insufficient consideration at design of the coordination of data flows across different departments, proprietary ownership of the data (which was sent to data processors outside of Viet Nam), and the O&M cost of the system by both the PPC and central government. At the time of the evaluation, aspects of ASWQMS were being decided in court.

To find a partial alternative to the ASWQMS, AMD piloted forecasting technologies using the locally based RYNAN Technologies Company for a real-time water quality measuring system, and subsequently a pest monitoring system. A privately based system, the PPC pays an annual fee for the forecasting service that farmers can access on smartphones.

Source: AMD PDR, supervision missions, PCR and PCRV; CSAT PDR; interviews with PCU

200. **Multiple project phasing is a successful approach for sustainability.** This is clear in the phasing of DBRP, AMD and CSAT in the Mekong Delta, and 3PAD and DBRP followed by CSSP in the north. Institutional continuity was strengthened through sequential use and scaling of SEDPs, and the establishment of WDFs in earlier phases which expanded through project support thereafter. Adaptive agricultural models (intercropping, drought-resistant crops) piloted under AMD were replicated and scaled with local resources, and some CIGs evolved into cooperatives. Part of the reason for this success was having CSAT being explicitly designed to capitalize on AMD, embedding mechanisms and roles into local agencies, the private sector in CIGs. Nonetheless, sustainability is uneven. There are still policy barriers faced by WDFs for further expansion. Uncertainties linked to administrative restructuring, market fluctuations, and external risks such as climate change, or economic shifts pose current challenges.
201. **Infrastructure sustainability is positive, with clear community-led arrangements for enhanced sustainability.** SEDP-led and community identified needs establish strong local ownership of IFAD-financed infrastructure that generally provide tangible economic benefits, alongside local government-financed maintenance (often involving mass organizations). Local ownership includes water user groups or local governments. These are maintained by local boards and Operations & Maintenance (O&M) groups who receive training. Risks to infrastructure are increasing, due to climate shocks (drought and salinity intrusion), budget constraints, changes in ODA policies limiting soft funding, and turnover of trained staff, which can hinder continuity in qualified maintenance.

Scaling up

202. **There is evidence that IFAD-supported interventions in Viet Nam have achieved some degree of scaling up.** This has occurred both through building on past project successes and through deliberate mechanisms embedded in project designs. CSAT built on lessons from AMD thereby scaling up CCA practices and climate-smart agriculture. Community infrastructure and SEDPs and MOP-SEDPs

have been replicated to other areas and provinces through the adoption of SEDP manuals, reflecting tangible replication and extension beyond original project sites. Some community-level groups, such as CIGs, have not scaled up as entities but often evolved into cooperatives or collaborative groups. Nonetheless, the 2019 COSOP MTR points out that current scaling-up strategies require improvement and adaptation. The review suggests shifting focus from microfinance alone toward broader financial inclusion, climate-resilient rural household strategies, and leveraging technology 4.0 for smart agriculture and value chains to enhance future scaling potential.

203. **Provincial ownership of projects ensured strong scaling up within these.** The strongest example is the scaling up of climate-informed SEDPs from the commune to provincial level. As seen in AMD, SEDP planning is now widely applied at different administrative levels for development planning. Community infrastructure investments and climate-resilient practices have been expanded within provinces. Collaborative groups have evolved from CIGs into coops or collaborative entities, supporting ongoing rural development. Finally, knowledge-sharing platforms, including Zalo messaging groups, facilitate experience exchange and peer learning within provinces.
204. **The flipside is that scaling up across provinces is a greater challenge.** Some positive examples abound. Study tours, Learning Routes (such as Bac Kan's participation), trade fairs, and workshops organized or supported by IFAD foster cross-provincial learning and adaptation of innovations, particularly when there is demand from other provinces to learn from IFAD project examples. While market development support across provinces is limited due to different product types, there is some scaling through common product groups and collaborative marketing efforts. At a programmatic level, provincial stakeholders actively engage in knowledge exchange and support through IFAD's country team and PMUs. Overall, scaling mechanisms, such as formal institutionalization of CIGs and market scaling remain limited, and systematic and strategic scaling-up frameworks could be strengthened to maximize impact across provinces.
205. **Other DPs, such as KOICA, have picked up IFAD supported projects** (CSSP and CSAT) and continued to use the same approaches, thus replicating the innovations. For instance, respondents mentioned that in Cao Bang KOICA was able to pick up the already-developed MOP-SEDP, VC action plans and feasibility studies and continue to work with them. As it provides grant funding, KOICA can continue to support the WDFs/CDFs. In another example, KOICA has taken the experiences in Quang Binh with IFAD in SRDP to design a new Korean-funded project, also with private sector development and WDF support. Innovations from grant activities have been limited, though some SSTC activities incorporate new solutions (as well as the MPTF project mentioned earlier).
206. **There is financial commitment and interest by government to continue scaling up IFAD initiatives, though human resources present a limitation.** Institutional support and policy alignment allow for national processes such as SEDPs and MOP-SEDPs to be actively adopted and scaled up, and this also encourages increased government cofinancing and commitment as seen in co-financing ratios (e.g. Provinces directing funds to technical assistance and capacity building while IFAD financing remains dedicated to infrastructure). Nonetheless due to the ODA regulations, there is increased uncertainty in accessing grant funds, as seen in AF grant funding in CSAT, which places challenges on scaling up activities. Institutional frameworks and policies supporting pro-poor approaches also encounters limits in terms of the availability of sufficiently qualified human resources, especially in financial management. Despite this, continued support from IFAD and project partners, including capacity building for local governments and community groups, has helped maintain momentum and foster learning networks that reinforce stakeholder engagement.

Environment and natural resources management, and climate change

Environment and natural resource management

207. **Environmental sustainability was an important thematic area for both COSOPs, where climate resilience was prioritized.** Climate smart agriculture and climate-informed planning was also a feature in recent projects like AMD and CSAT. Natural Resources Management (NRM) was also noted by the COSOP performance review as satisfactory. However, the same review raised the warning of risks to both the environment and climate which requires continued action. Likewise, climate initiatives remain very much linked to projects when these would have broader impact if institutionalized in policy processes and embedded in regional and national early warning systems.
208. **IFAD programmes have contributed significantly to improved and sustainable natural resource management.** This has been clear in upland and coastal provinces where challenges include soil erosion, drought, and salinity intrusion. Contributions cover a number of areas. Soil and water conservation improved through soil erosion prevention techniques including mulching, composting, better manure and waste management, and introduction of drought-resilient crops and fodder species. IFAD promoted agroecological approaches benefitting agroforestry and forest Protection practices through intercropping, sustainable harvesting, and forest-based value chains, and widespread community training on sustainable resource use and composting, which supported forest conservation and livelihoods. In the Mekong Delta, investments in infrastructure such as dykes, salinity gates, and canals helped protect large land areas from saline intrusion and supported year-round irrigation, while salinity monitoring systems enhanced adaptive water management. There were also efforts to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and increase organic farming practices, even if continued use of chemical fertilizers was observed.
209. **Current challenges in natural resource management remain in various areas.** There are observed coordination gaps across different sectors due to a lack of integrated land use planning between departments (crop, livestock, forestry) which limited coordinated landscape management. This coordination may improve with the recent merger between MARD and MoNRE, though there could be initial coordination issues at central, provincial and commune levels. In some upland provinces, community forests lacked legal recognition or enforcement, limiting the impact of forest-based value chains. Finally, long-term sustainability of digital monitoring systems (such as salinity stations) was uncertain due to unclear budget lines, maintenance responsibilities, and overall data ownership.

Climate change adaptation

210. **Resilience increased.** Some project activities have improved resilience to drought or impacts of disasters, by changing crop types or patterns, and management methods, community involvement in disaster risk management and strengthened forecasting (while increased incomes allow households to bounce back). The Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) concluded that AMD built resilience through increased access to credit, participation in self-employment, saline-resilient rice production practices, adoption of shrimp farming, and on-farm and income diversification (although the benefits may not be seen in normal years).²³⁸ CSSP overachieved its target for project households reporting adopting at least two environmentally sustainable and climate resilient technologies/practice (31,261 HHs adopted at least two measures versus 20,000 HHs as the target), demonstrating the enthusiasm of beneficiaries. It didn't fully achieve the targets for climate resilient HHs (87per cent), however considering implementation was impacted by

²³⁸ IFAD RIA Study, 2023. p.25

COVID and war in Ukraine, this was reasonable.²³⁹

211. **IFAD-supported programmes in Viet Nam likely enhanced the capacity of rural populations—particularly smallholders and ethnic minorities—to adapt to climate change and minimize damage from climate-related hazards.** Evidence from multiple provinces confirms that IFAD interventions contributed to practical adaptation, risk reduction, and long-term resilience. This was achieved through several measures. Infrastructure and water management activities in CSAT and AMD protect 155,000 ha of agricultural land from saline intrusion and flooding. Climate-smart agricultural practices focusing on combatting soil erosion and drought resistance introduced soil conservation, mulching, composting, integrated pest management, crop diversification and water-saving practices. MOP-SEDP and CCA action plans were combined to incorporate climate risk assessments and adaptation priorities. EMs and women were also targeted to increase their resilience to climate change by stabilizing income using adaptive crops, encouraging communal pasture improvements to reduce shifting cultivation, and using salinity forecasts to anticipate losses. While the above likely contributed to improved CCA, formal monitoring of adaptation outcomes (crop survival rates, yield stability, risk exposure) was limited, reducing the visibility of impact for policy dialogue.
212. **IFAD has commenced activities and systems to prepare smallholders for disasters, but these lacked sufficient support.** Community-level climate action plans and DRM maps were developed, updated annually, and publicly shared. These tools inform adaptive practices such as shifting cropping patterns (rice to peanut in Ha Giang), livestock changes, and disaster preparedness such as cold spell protection. CCA principles have been integrated into MOP-SEDPs. Planning included infrastructure and risk-resilient investments. Other practices and actions such as climate-smart agricultural practices, early warning systems and community training in these, and social protection and financial resilience (such as WDFs providing concessional loans post-disaster) have also been important contributions.
213. Nonetheless, digital tools involving DRM often did not have public funding, and formal disaster insurance and coordinated emergency response protocols remain absent in IFAD projects. Disaster risk reduction is likewise limited to infrastructure, not to other activities (technical assistance or extension services). The piloted early warning systems are not fully institutionalized or linked to national hydrometeorological agencies, and community-level alert systems suffer from funding and operational challenges.²⁴⁰ Despite demand, there are no pilots or mechanisms for crop/livestock insurance or formalized social safety nets. No coordinated protocols, reserve funds, or rapid assessment mechanisms exist within project management units or across provinces. Finally, while there are increasing innovations like biogas, these are small, require long-term maintenance and proof of concept has yet to be scaled.
214. **With regard to climate change mitigation, while the portfolio likely indirectly contributed to decreased GhG emissions, lack of data cannot confirm it.** IFAD-supported projects did not formally calculate GHG emissions reduction or use it as an indicator, limiting attribution and the possibility to feed into Government targets. RECAF is aiming to do so, which could test future methods of measuring and attributing interventions. With this in mind, the portfolio did introduce activities with GhG reduction potential. These include water and fertilizer management via water-saving irrigation, organic composting and improved

²³⁹ CSSP defines the climate resilience score based on 5 criteria including; (i) Diversification of household income and livelihood resources; (ii) Household capacity to access essential resources for living in case of natural disasters; (iii) Household capacity to access information on climate change and natural disasters and adaptation knowledge; (iv) Household capacity to access material and financial support to restore production and livelihoods after natural disasters; and (v) Household participation in local policy making processes in the community (CSSP PCR)

²⁴⁰ The design for CRWIS includes activities on early warning system replication and linkage to the national hydrometeorological system.

shrimp-rice rotations to reduce methane emissions. Agro-ecological practices such as intercropping, organic tea cultivation, and forest-based value chains promoted low-input farming, reducing pressure on forests and avoiding emissions from land-use change. Forest protection and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) encouraged forest conservation and avoided deforestation emissions (though very small scale), and RECAF plans to replicate this carbon market readiness, pilot solar power systems, household practices, and crop changes also likely made contributions to lowered GhG.

215. **Overall sustainability.** The programme covered by both COSOPs demonstrates solid grounds for sustainability, both institutional, social and infrastructural. Institutional capacity building through MOP-SEDPs and continuous implementation of different projects in the same area fostered institutional memory and effectiveness. Community institutions such as WDFs and cooperatives have continued or evolved, aligning with and being supported by government policies. Exit strategies were generally sound and in place, and O&M modalities ensured financing and community ownership of assets. The CSPE rates sustainability as **satisfactory (5)**.
216. **Overall scaling up.** There were a number of processes and activities that have been scaled up by provinces. climate-informed MOP-SEDPs, climate-smart agriculture practices, and community infrastructure have been expanded through strong provincial ownership and adoption. Some CIGs have evolved into cooperatives or collaborative groups, and knowledge-sharing platforms have supported peer learning. Nonetheless scaling up across provinces remains limited and ad hoc, with institutionalization and market linkages necessitating further support. Limited human resources and ODA regulations further constrain potential for scaling up, despite government commitment. The CSPE rates scaling up as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.
217. **Overall environment and natural resources management, and climate change.** The portfolio has made important contributions to natural resource management and climate change adaptation such as through agroecological practices, climate-smart agriculture, and protective infrastructure in vulnerable areas. Initiatives such as soil and water conservation, salinity control, and integration of climate risk into planning processes show promising results. However, many achievements remain project-dependent, with limited institutionalization or integration into national systems. Natural resource management can improve with coordinated landscape management techniques. The portfolio has contributed to nascent coordination mechanisms for disaster preparedness, but these remain small-scale and require further integration with other measures such as insurance or national systems. The CSPE rates environment and natural resources management, and climate change as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

H. Overall country strategy achievement

218. The IFAD country strategies and programmes (both 2012 and 2019 COSOPs) have operated closely in line with key government strategies, policies and priorities; as well as the corporate policies of IFAD.
219. The 2012 CPE recommendations were generally incorporated into the design of the COSOPs. It recommended further support to markets and credit, strengthened KM, non-lending activities and partnerships, and scaling up of work on natural resources management and climate change. The CPE also recommended working with contiguous provinces or a thematic model, to improve design, implementation and monitoring of projects (see Annex VII).
220. The 2012 COSOP increased work on market-based production, continuing work with ethnic minorities rural poor and microfinance. The pro-poor value chain approach was defined and implemented, linking CIGs and collaborative groups and incorporating financial grants and challenge funds to attract enterprises. The work

with MOP-SEDPs was replicated and scaled up, and climate change and disaster risk management aspects were included. With regard to the recommendation of geographic focusing, the projects implemented under the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs to date have worked in continuous provinces, thus easing monitoring and KM.

221. The overall goal of the ToC - 'Sustainably improved incomes of smallholders and rural poor people through market participation and reduced climate vulnerability' – was achieved, as were the strategic objectives of building pro-poor value chains, expanding financial inclusion and improvements in environmental sustainability and climate resilience. IFAD has maintained a strong focus on work with ethnic minorities and rural poor people (though with some better-off provinces included more recently). There were some gaps regarding nutrition activities, ecotourism and progression of WDFs to microfinance institutions. The monitoring data was not always sufficient to demonstrate positive changes attributed to project activities, rather than the general reduction in poverty nationally. However, it can be inferred that achievements have been positive.
222. New risks emerged during the CSPE period, including COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, livestock disease outbreaks, and increasing impacts of climate change (including typhoons and saline intrusion). The changes in the ODA regulatory environment, starting in 2017 but tightening during the 2019 COSOP, decreasing concessionality of loans and focusing loan funds on use for infrastructure (and not on TA, capacity building and finance), and slow approval processes, have slowed progress. Significant efforts have been made by the ICO to identify new grant funds and continue IFAD's added value. The government restructuring will have as yet unclear implications for the work of IFAD. The most immediate is that the start up of the two new projects will be delayed, and the planning for the new COSOP will be postponed.

Table 11
CSPE ratings

Evaluation Criteria	Rating 2012	Rating 2025
○ Relevance	5	5
○ Coherence	N/A	4
○ Knowledge management	N/A	5
○ Partnership development	N/A	4
○ Policy engagement	N/A	5
○ Effectiveness	4	5
○ Innovation	N/A	5
○ Efficiency	5	4
○ Rural poverty impact	5	5
○ Sustainability	4	5
○ Natural resource management and climate change adaptation	4	4
○ Scaling up	N/A	4
○ Gender equality and women's empowerment	5	5
OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT	5	4.62

Source: 2012 CPE and the current CSPE

Note: There have been some modifications since the last CPE based on the 2022 evaluation manual: (i) coherence criterion was added; (ii) innovation and scaling up criteria were separated (as opposed to integrated rating provided earlier); (iii) natural resource management and climate change was part of the impact criterion, but now rated separately; and (iv) overall achievement is now an arithmetic average, as opposed to a whole number given before.

Key points

- The IFAD country strategies and programmes have operated closely in line with key government strategies, policies and priorities, as well as IFAD's corporate policies.
- IFAD's comparative advantage is its work at sub-national level to develop smallholder value chains (including 4Ps), which is recognized by the government and other development partners.
- IFAD has worked closely with provincial, district and commune authorities to introduce participatory, market oriented and climate change oriented SEDPs. This has increased ownership and permitted local government to flexibly use different budget lines for maximum benefit.
- Projects and grants implemented under the COSOPs gathered, documented and shared lessons effectively (though key events such as the Mekong Knowledge and Learning Fair have not re-emerged since COVID-19). However, the lessons from the grants were not always well connected.
- IFAD has had a target of work with ethnic minorities and remote communities and successfully used repeated projects in the same provinces to build capacity and achieve results, particularly in the areas of community infrastructure development, value chain development and rural finance.
- Economic performance and efficiency of IFAD projects was strong in general during the 2012 COSOP period. However, the increasing costs of loans as Viet Nam has achieved middle income status, and changes in the policy environment, have slowed progress in the 2019 COSOP period, while IFAD has tried to identify solutions. Despite this, IFAD has been more successful than other IFIs in preparing new projects.
- Value chain development and access to markets has been a particular focus of the work, developing community commodity groups, using a range of grants and challenge funds to attract private sector to work with more inaccessible communities, and constructing community managed infrastructure to support the connections. However, barriers still remain, and the changing ODA regulations remove the instrument of grants.
- Overall, the interventions supported by IFAD have made a strong contribution to social and human capital and strengthening institutions of and for the rural poor and ethnic minorities. There also has been positive impacts on income generation, poverty reduction and food security, though stronger data collection would be needed to confirm this.
- Sustainable natural resources management and climate change adaptation has received increasing attention, in line with the increasing risks of climate change and government policy.
- Various innovations have been scaled up by government, particularly within provinces. Some development partners have followed up IFAD projects, utilizing the same approaches.

IV. Performance of partners

223. This section assesses the extent to which IFAD and the Government (including at central, provincial and local level and executing agencies) supported design, implementation and the achievement of results, a conducive policy environment and impact and the sustainability of the intervention/country programme.

A. IFAD

224. **The 2012 and 2019 COSOPs and project designs have provided strong support to alignment with national strategies, promoting participatory approaches, and addressing key development issues.** They have aligned with the government's pro-poor policies and SEDPs and improved them further by introducing more focus on market orientation and climate change adaptation. This alignment is crucial for project sustainability and government ownership and has facilitated flexible use of funds. Both Government and development partners have recognized IFAD's comparative advantage in working with smallholders (especially with EMs and those in remote areas).²⁴¹
225. **IFAD has aligned with the decentralization process, taking the lead to work directly with provinces and strengthen their capacities.** The ICO (a small team but with long institutional memory) has provided strong backstopping to projects and identified appropriate ways to respond to the policy changes. The Government has appreciated this flexibility (mentioned in many interviews), and IFAD has been able to find workarounds better than many other DPs (especially IFIs).²⁴² IFAD has made efforts to share experiences between provinces and projects (as well as in the Mekong region). Project designs reflect lessons learned, building on previous projects to improve effectiveness and introduce new approaches. The practical move to having a country director in Ha Noi since 2012 has been beneficial, allowing closer relationships with Government and other DPs. The first two locally placed CDs were senior staff who were in their posts for four years each. This allowed them to build relationships and introduce strong processes and innovations. More recently there has been faster turnover in CDs combined with the significant changes in recent years on the Government side. Having an ICO in Ha Noi that also acted as MCO in the region was also valuable, especially for knowledge management between countries (such as supporting the MKLF and SSTC activities). Supervision missions were regular and geographically covered regions and districts, with relevant participation of experts. However, the relatively small office size (compared with the other UN organizations in Viet Nam and other DP offices) limits the opportunities for regular meetings with DPs.
226. **IFAD has maintained a strong focus on smallholder farmers and disadvantaged groups.** IFAD's targeting strategy consistently prioritizes ethnic minorities and people in remote areas. This is a positive aspect, as these groups often face significant challenges in accessing resources and opportunities. In addition, IFAD's programs generally incorporate a gender-sensitive approach, aiming to empower women and address gender disparities. There has not yet been a focus on activities with people with disabilities.
227. **IFAD has emphasized participatory approaches in project design, involving stakeholders at various levels, to ensure better relevance, ownership and sustainability.** IFAD has also been flexible at dealing with implementation issues. If an activity wasn't working, project teams were able to change targets or contents, after discussions with the ICO, during supervision missions or MTRs. During recent years, IFAD staff have worked effectively to identify alternative grant funding sources, such as GCF, GEF and AF, in efforts to support continuation of the

²⁴¹ In many interviews with government and DPs

²⁴² It is notable that IFAD has managed to continue implementation of loan projects during the 2019 COSOP period, and two new projects were approved in late 2024, while the other IFIs have found progress to be much more difficult.

key added value of IFAD (capacity building and technical assistance) and reduce the financial burden on provinces. However, the move to larger multi-province projects may constrain IFAD's capacity to provide hands-on support (for instance, supervision missions to many provinces within the one project).

228. There are areas for improvement, particularly in simplifying project design, strengthening sustainability considerations, and ensuring robust risk management and operational efficiency. However, considering the financing constraints regarding use of loan funds, the small number of staff resources, and the difficulties to identify suitable grant funds, these are difficult to influence.
229. **Overall, IFAD has performed well**, working closely with the Government at national and provincial levels, navigating the bureaucracy and policy changes, and is supporting its future progression to UMIC status. Having country presence via the ICO throughout the CSPE period has been a significant advantage, when building trust with the Government. It is recognized as a responsive partner and has a comparative advantage regarding work with ethnic minorities and smallholders in remote areas. The CSPE rates IFAD's performance as **satisfactory (5)**.

B. Government

230. **The Government has demonstrated strong ownership of the country programme**, including development of pro-poor policies, national targeted programmes and decentralizing implementation. All levels of government have been active and supportive in design and implementation. At a structural level, provinces worked alongside central government and IFAD management to request loan-financed projects.²⁴³ While a burden for public finances as well as an investment in time to negotiate loans, it does generate ownership of the project by local authorities. Government at all levels has scaled up many of the innovations that were piloted in IFAD financed projects, including the MOP-SEDPs. At the start of the CSPE period (2012 COSOP), Government (including PPCs) accepted the need to move towards private sector and market-driven approaches. Despite some misgivings regarding providing government loan funds to private enterprises, they successfully piloted the various types of challenge grant finance. They also issued supportive decrees regarding involvement of the private sector.
231. **The PMUs are offering good support to the projects at provincial level, though improvements in M&E are needed.** As PMUs are established under the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) executive, they have built up close relationships in provinces where one project was succeeded by another. This also allowed positive connection with key departments such as DARD, DoF, or Women's Unions that aided implementation. The PMUs have reasonable staffing, with sufficient numbers and experience, a good gender balance, and with representation of many EMs. These are long term posts, and many staff have participated in PMUs of more than one project, providing excellent institutional memory. They appear to have good understanding of the policies and the IFAD approaches (having participated in many interactions and KM opportunities, as well as regular backstopping from the ICO) and were observed to deal well with all stakeholders of the project.²⁴⁴ In general, monthly and quarterly activity and results progress reports have been provided. A more serious gap has been inconsistent baseline information collection, with unclear explanation of how control groups have been selected, and variation in indicators between provinces in the one project, making impact assessments impossible. Performance of M&E systems and fiduciary management has worsened between the 2012 COSOP and 2019 COSOP, seemingly impacted by the ODA regulation changes and decreased funding availability for soft activities, and restrictions on the use of loan funds. This has led to delays and

²⁴³ This has been a modality throughout the evaluation period. All financing agreements have special or designated accounts based in the provinces.

²⁴⁴ CSPE self-assessments with the recent PMUs demonstrated high satisfaction levels with the work of IFAD

weakened performance while both Government and IFAD try to find a workaround.

232. **Financial management has worsened during the CSPE period.** There were delays in the start of some projects (particularly CSSP and CSAT, where the period of approval to effectiveness and then disbursement was extended to 21 months, compared with less than 10 months for AMD, SRDP and CPRP), and to spend all funds (eg. TNSP had to delay closure by a year to complete disbursement). However, Viet Nam has performed better than the regional APR average. The recent slow approval processes (due to recent changes in ODA policies and the intensified anti-corruption campaign, many government officials have become hesitant in their decision-making) and the restructuring process of 2025, have led to further delays. Financial management has been the weakest element of government performance, particularly regarding slow disbursement in CSSP and CSAT (with an average score of 3.76 over the full CSPE period – source ORMS reports). In addition, timeliness of counterpart funding has also scored poorly (3.89 over the full CSPE period).
233. **Summary:** The government has shown strong ownership of the country programme, and provincial management of loans and implementation has been successful, but weaknesses in financial management and M&E have led to delays and difficulties in demonstrating impacts. More recently the changes in the ODA law and delays in decision making have worsened outcomes. Government performance is rated as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

234. **IFAD's country programme in Viet Nam draws a storyline of sustainable results, institution building and sustained change**, thanks to a constant quest for the right-sized mix of investments and human expertise, thus enhancing IFAD's contribution to national development and poverty reduction plans. Such contribution was maximized through a set of elements, including, among others: (i) IFAD's focus on local development, at the Provincial level and below; (ii) its persistence in local interventions, wherever local authorities would best respond and cooperate, until capacities were built for decentralized planning and investment to be internalised and institutionalised; (iii) successfully targeting ethnic minorities in remote areas; (iv) finding the right mix of hardware (investments in infrastructure) and software (investments in people) to give rural transformation a high chance of sustainability and replicability to scale.
235. **Using experienced and skilled country teams and services, IFAD and national authorities have successfully cooperated to build and refine IFAD's niche in-country**, facilitating a substantial and sustainable contribution to rural transformation, poverty reduction and the creation of vibrant local economies and societies, even in remote areas. This was supported by strong Government ownership and hard-working local stakeholders.
236. **This mostly successful storyline is nevertheless based on increasingly fragile grounds, and its results are far from being secured.** The period under review by this CSPE can be divided into three phases: two historic ones, broadly corresponding to the two COSOP periods under review (2012 and 2019); and a prospective one, that poses unprecedented challenges to both IFAD and the Government of Viet Nam, in their quest for a new balance and mix of investments and services to guarantee sustainable results in a rapidly changing global and national context.
237. **During the early period of the CSPE (under the 2012 COSOP), IFAD performed very strongly**, building on progressive efforts since 1993. IFAD's value added has been institutionalization of various approaches – participatory development plans (MOP-SEDPs), infrastructure, development of pro-poor VCs, focusing the work on poorer provinces with high populations of ethnic minorities, etc. The programme has supported resilient, self-reliant and sustainable rural transformation, exploring ways to introduce the private sector and infrastructure to remote areas. IFAD supported decentralized implementation very early on, with loans taken by provinces and implemented at commune and district level under the guidance of MOP-SEDPs. While IFAD's loans are not large at a national level, they are strategic at provincial level. IFAD's close links to government facilitated implementation for local governments, which could use NTP or government funding interchangeably with IFAD loan funds. IFAD's programming has had a particular focus on EMs and smallholder producers, with a gradual increase in CCA, innovative climate sensitive agriculture and DRM. Microfinance schemes and a range of grants and challenge funds have been successfully rolled out to support VCs.
238. **The 2019 COSOP period faced more practical difficulties, especially due to changes in potential use of loan funds, and the way forward is still unclear.** With the graduation of Viet Nam to MIC, loans became more expensive, and the new ODA regulation of 2017 gradually was tightened (eventually to Decree 114 in 2021) and constrained use of loan funds to infrastructure (a problem faced by all IFIs). IFAD's core expertise has been capacity building, technical assistance and rural microfinance, which can no longer be financed with loans, and ICO staff have been nimble in identifying workarounds. At times, the PPC has stepped in to flexibly cover soft investments from the NTP or provincial budget. IFAD has had to identify

alternative sources of grant funds, which takes time, and this has inhibited some activities under the existing projects.²⁴⁵ This was combined with a period in the 2020s of slow decision making by the Government (which have negatively impacted all DPs), as well as the COVID-19 slowdown. The ODA Regulation is currently under review, and the 2025 government restructure will take time to settle. The COSOP period will be extended until the way forward is clearer.

239. **IFAD's modalities have proven successful to date, with its focus on work with local levels (particularly in provinces with high poverty levels and large populations of ethnic minorities).** IFAD has been successful in repeating its investments in a province, and in working in one or two provinces per project. In line with the 2012 CPE recommendations, the projects under the 2012 COSOP (SRDP, CPRP, AMD and CSSP) were implemented in contiguous provinces (with a maximum of two provinces each), as was CSAT (under the 2019 COSOP).²⁴⁶ Working in neighboring provinces improved efficiency of visits and maximized opportunities for KM and sharing lessons learned – especially when working on value chain issues that don't follow boundaries. However, RECAF breaks away from this approach, by working in five provinces (potentially reduced to three with the restructuring).
240. **IFAD has continued to pilot and replicate innovative approaches during the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs,** though the changes in ODA regulations have limited options in recent years. The evolution of the participatory MOP-SEDP to include CCA & DRM aspects has been appreciated by government and scaled up in many communes beyond the projects. The SIP/VCAP planning process and linkage of CIGs/CGs/cooperatives to enterprises was adopted also by the NRP-NRD and OCOP programmes for the government. A range of certification standards have improved profits for VC participants. Community groups that began as small CIGs and SCGs have expanded, providing sustainable incomes and opportunities for their members.
241. **IFAD has played an important role in strengthening mass organizations (such as VWU and VFU) and community-based organisations (including CIGs/CGs/cooperatives and SHGs), and supporting the private sector,** particularly via capacity building and competitive grants. IFAD has provided significant added value via participatory planning and work to strengthen these organisations and their links to the rural poor and to local governments via the MOP-SEDPs. Enterprises are improving farm livelihoods and providing jobs for rural poor and offer a potential for sustainability beyond the work of IFAD. The WDFs and SHGs are continuing to operate, despite the regulatory restrictions, and independent of continuing financing from IFAD.
242. **Digital inclusion and more technically complex systems that are in line with Government priorities have been piloted by IFAD but are at an early stage in many projects.** Due to limitations of literacy and language there are risks of EMs and women potentially being excluded, however there have been some early successes. It is possible that the VC digitalization will develop at community level without the need for IFAD's inputs, however, IFAD is well-placed to ensure that the benefits are shared in an equitable fashion (such as among EM and remote communities).
243. **Activities on CCA and DRM have been fully in line with Government priorities and reflect growing risks.** Development of community-based disaster risk maps, smart agricultural models and climate resilient infrastructure have supported communities to better cope with climate change and attendant environmental risks.

²⁴⁵ Including GEF, GCF, AF, SNV, WWF and DFCD

²⁴⁶ SAP was planned for three non-contiguous provinces but was dropped.

244. **IFAD's non-lending activities were successful early in the CSPE period but were constrained by the tightening regulations on use of loan finance.** IFAD contributed to policy discussions in areas including participatory planning, microfinance, and climate adaptation. These efforts helped ensure that project innovations were aligned with government priorities and embedded within national and provincial frameworks. Knowledge management was recognized as a critical enabler for scaling impact, policy engagement, and cross-institutional learning; however, it was more successful at project and local level than more broadly. IFAD has also played a role in facilitating SSTC relationships and promoting Viet Nam's expertise internationally.
245. **As in many countries, project baselines (and provinces) did not collect data with sufficient disaggregation and robustness to be able to demonstrate impacts,** nor did they include control groups. Better M&E would allow both IFAD and provinces to provide evidence of the advantages of different approaches and justify further investments. This applies to elements of growing interest to the government, such as measurement of changes in GhG emissions; but also to more fundamental issues of the impacts of the projects on rural poverty reduction and improving livelihoods.
246. **Government has demonstrated strong ownership and leadership of processes introduced by the IFAD portfolio.** In the progress toward UMIC (and eventually HIC) status, changes in concessionality of loans led the government to take a strong position on taking debt. However, the restrictions placed on the use of ODA loans and grants have negatively impacted IFAD's key strengths, including provision of TA and capacity building. Notwithstanding, the strong relationships with PPCs have permitted continuing implementation, often with increased contributions from the local governments.
247. **Much of IFAD's success has been based on the ICO (and its dual role as MCO) and the strong team with significant institutional memory.** Projects and local government respondents praised the excellent technical backstopping, flexibility regarding implementation processes, and knowledge management. However, that is likely to change in the future. Cambodia has now established its own ICO, and IFAD has reorganized its presence in the sub-region and launched the new regional office in Bangkok. The future role of the MCO is still uncertain at the time of writing this report.

B. Recommendations

248. Based on the findings and conclusions drawn and looking forward to the formulation of a new country strategy, this CSPE offers the following recommendations.
249. **Recommendation 1: IFAD needs to strengthen its work in resource mobilization, attracting grant funds and increasing counterpart funding.** Work is underway with the climate funds (GCF, GEF, AF), in an effort to prioritise adaptation to climate change, while also improving financial blending and ensuring that IFAD's added value is not lost. These funds require considerable work by the ICO but can be channeled via PPCs and used more flexibly, in combination with Borrowed Resource Access Mechanism (BRAM) funds. In addition, the UN SDG funds can become a valuable source of funding for innovations, among others. In order to identify ways in which the ICO could continue to support microfinance (which has played such an important role in the programme to date), IFAD could explore possibilities through non-sovereign loans, lending to financial institutions at the local level.
250. **Recommendation 2: IFAD should maintain its focus on local development, prioritizing poor/vulnerable smallholders and ethnic minorities.** This is in line with Government policy and the NTPs. If IFAD provides finance to a pool for large scale infrastructure or commercial agriculture projects, there is a risk of

diluting both its limited financial inputs and its mandate in topics where IFAD has proven added value. IFAD's core mission is to support poor/vulnerable smallholder farmers, and its added value lies there, supporting pro-poor value chains with a climate change focus. Given its proven experience working with EMs and poor people, it makes sense for IFAD to focus its work in regions where these groups are concentrated and continuing the collaboration at communal and provincial levels. Prioritising poor/vulnerable areas and communities, however, should not prevent IFAD to also engage with better-off local development agents, to maximize chances of job creation as well as economic and social sustainability along inclusive value chains.

251. **Recommendation 3:** During preparation of the next COSOP, **IFAD should consider how best to work within the strengthening economic context of Viet Nam, assessing the prospective role of non-lending activities in reshaping its unique value proposition and in expanding its capacities in policy engagement, replicability and scaling up** of the innovations it supports. As a country aiming for UMIC status, Viet Nam is interested to share its knowledge and expertise in rural transformation internationally, and IFAD is well-placed to showcase Viet Nam to global partners. SSTC activities and improved knowledge management are potential tools for this. Non-financial additions such as technical assistance (including facilitation of international value chains and commercial linkages), capacity building and knowledge management are critical to IFAD's ability to support Viet Nam in the future. In this way, Viet Nam could serve as a model for other countries, while it grows towards higher income status.
252. **Recommendation 4:** In the context of significant institutional transformations and restructuring both in Government and IFAD's Operations, **IFAD will need to reposition itself and redefine its niche and value added in Viet Nam**, in order to maintain its comparative advantage and subsequently the strong support it has obtained through decades of increasing performance, in-country and beyond. This may involve deep changes in its staffing and modus operandi in the country office, as driven and defined by a much closer regional presence. IFAD will need to match its ambitions within new scenarios, including the significant monitoring and backstopping needs by the new projects. This may also require leaner administrative and financial procedures, as well as broader partnership networks and a new mix of lending and non-lending activities, adjusting to the evolving national rules and regulations on the use of ODA.
253. **Recommendation 5: IFAD should collaborate with Government to identify means to strengthen local level M&E capabilities** in order to better report on results and outcomes of its country programme. This, in turn, would contribute to better direct limited and increasingly expensive resources. However, this may require use of loan funds for activities beyond infrastructure. The current government restructuring offers the opportunity to establish new M&E systems within MoF and MAE (potentially utilizing digital systems, such as phone-based apps), and enhanced provincial and communal government. This would further enhance the already successful decentralized planning (MOP-SEDPs) model. Improving data collection mechanisms would enhance the reliability of impact assessments, providing stronger evidence on what works and what needs improvement. Knowledge management will be critical for learning from both successes and challenges.

Annexes

I. Definition of the evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria

Relevance

The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the /country strategy and programme are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies; (ii) the design of the strategy, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the adaptation of the strategy to address changes in the context.

Coherence

This comprises two notions (internal and external coherence). Internal coherence is the synergy of the intervention/country strategy with other IFAD-supported interventions in a country, sector or institution. The external coherence is the consistency of the intervention/strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context.

Non-lending activities are specific domains to assess coherence.

Knowledge management

The extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge.

Partnership building

The extent to which IFAD is building timely, effective and sustainable partnerships with government institutions, private sector, organizations representing marginalized groups and other development partners to cooperate, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage the scaling up of recognized good practices and innovations in support of small-holder agriculture.

Policy engagement

The extent to which IFAD and its country-level stakeholders engage to support dialogue on policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions, policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty.

Effectiveness

The extent to which the country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups.

A specific sub-domain of effectiveness relates to:

Innovation, the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product, or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction.²⁴⁷

Efficiency

The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

"Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).

²⁴⁷ Conditions that qualify an innovation: newness to the context, to the intended users and the intended purpose of improving performance. Furthermore, the 2020 Corporate-level Evaluation on IFAD's support to Innovation defined transformational innovations as "those that are able to lift poor farmers above a threshold, where they cannot easily fall back after a shock". Those innovations tackle simultaneously multiple challenges faced by smallholder farmers. In IFAD operation contexts, this happens by packaging/bundling together several small innovations. They are most of the time holistic solutions or approaches applied of implemented by IFAD supported operations.

Evaluation criteria

Impact

The extent to which the country strategy has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

The criterion includes the following domains:

- changes in incomes, assets and productive capacities
- changes in social/human capital
- changes in household food security and nutrition
- changes in institution and policies

The analysis of impact will seek to determine whether changes have been transformational, generating changes that can lead societies onto fundamentally different development pathways (e.g., due to the size or distributional effects of changes to poor and marginalized groups).

Sustainability and scaling up

The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and scaled-up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.

Note: This entails an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. It involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs.

Specific domain of sustainability:

Environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation. The extent to which the development interventions/strategy contribute to enhancing the environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change in small-scale agriculture.

Scaling-up* takes place when: (i) other bi- and multi laterals partners, private sector, etc.) adopted and generalized the solution tested/implemented by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invested resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested/implemented by IFAD (from practice to a policy).

*Note that scaling up does not only relate to innovations.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making; work load balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods; and in promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs underpinning gender inequality.

Evaluations will assess to what extent interventions and strategies have been gender transformational, relative to the context, by: (i) addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (ii) acting upon gender roles, norms and power relations; (iii) promoting broader processes of social change (beyond the immediate intervention).

Evaluators will consider differential impacts by gender and the way they interact with other forms of discrimination (such as age, race, ethnicity, social status and disability), also known as gender intersectionality.²⁴⁸

Partner performance (assessed separately for IFAD and the Government)

The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) ensured good design, smooth implementation and the achievement of results and impact and the sustainability of the country programme.

The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government, implementing agency, and project company performance in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.

²⁴⁸ Evaluation Cooperation Group (2017) Gender. Main messages and findings from the ECG Gender practitioners' workshops. Washington, DC. <https://www.ecgnet.org/document/main-messages-and-findings-ieq-gender-practitioners-workshop>

II. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Sources of data and data collection methods
<p>Relevance: The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the intervention/ strategy are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies; (ii) the design of the interventions / strategy, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the intervention / strategy has been (re-) adapted to address changes in the context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent and in what ways was the country strategy and programme relevant and aligned to: (a) the country's development needs and challenges, national policies and strategies in the evolving context (including climate change and agricultural value chains); (b) IFAD's relevant strategies and priorities; (c) the needs of the target groups, such as ethnic minorities and remote areas? How appropriate was the targeting strategy, with attention to gender, youth and ethnic minorities? Was the recent attention to people with disabilities in IFAD corporate strategies reflected in the pipeline project designs? Was the design quality in line with available knowledge? Were lessons from previous programmes been adequately taken into consideration in the design? To what extent and how were the institutional arrangements appropriate to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation – including the move to multi-province projects and the need for individual provinces to take on debt? To what extent and how well was the implementation of the COSOP re-adapted to changes in the context - including the effects of COVID-19, the Ukraine war, the move of Viet Nam to UMIC? 	<p>All completed projects (PCRs) Six PCRVs One Project Performance Evaluation (PPE) In-depth desk review of national policies, concept notes, IFAD design reports, supervision mission reports, impact assessment reports, etc. Interviews with IFAD staff, and national and provincial stakeholders Interviews with other development partners and non-government actors Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits</p>
<p>Coherence: This criterion comprises the notions of external and internal coherence. The external coherence is the consistency of the strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context. Internal coherence looks at the internal logic of the strategy, including the complementarity of lending and non-lending objectives within the country programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were there synergies and interlinkages between different elements of the country strategy/programme (i.e. between the strategic objectives – and between projects, non-lending activities)? To what extent and how did the country strategy and programme take into consideration other development initiatives to maximize the investments and efficiency and added value? Were the (human and financial) resources for critical activities such as technical assistance or non-lending activities sufficient to achieve the COSOP objectives? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation (e.g. 2012 CPE, 2012 COSOP, 2019 COSOP) as well as information about projects supported by other development partners Interviews with IFAD staff, national stakeholders and representatives of other development partners Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge management: The extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there a KM strategy in the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs? If so, were there any results? To what extent have lessons and knowledge been gathered, documented and disseminated (nationally and internationally)? How did knowledge flow between provinces in multi-province projects? Have these informed the 2019 COSOP and the newer project designs? How relevant were these knowledge materials to the target audience? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation (e.g. studies, knowledge products, information on knowledge sharing activities, communication materials, other IOE evaluations) Interviews with IFAD staff, national stakeholders and other development partners Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits</p>

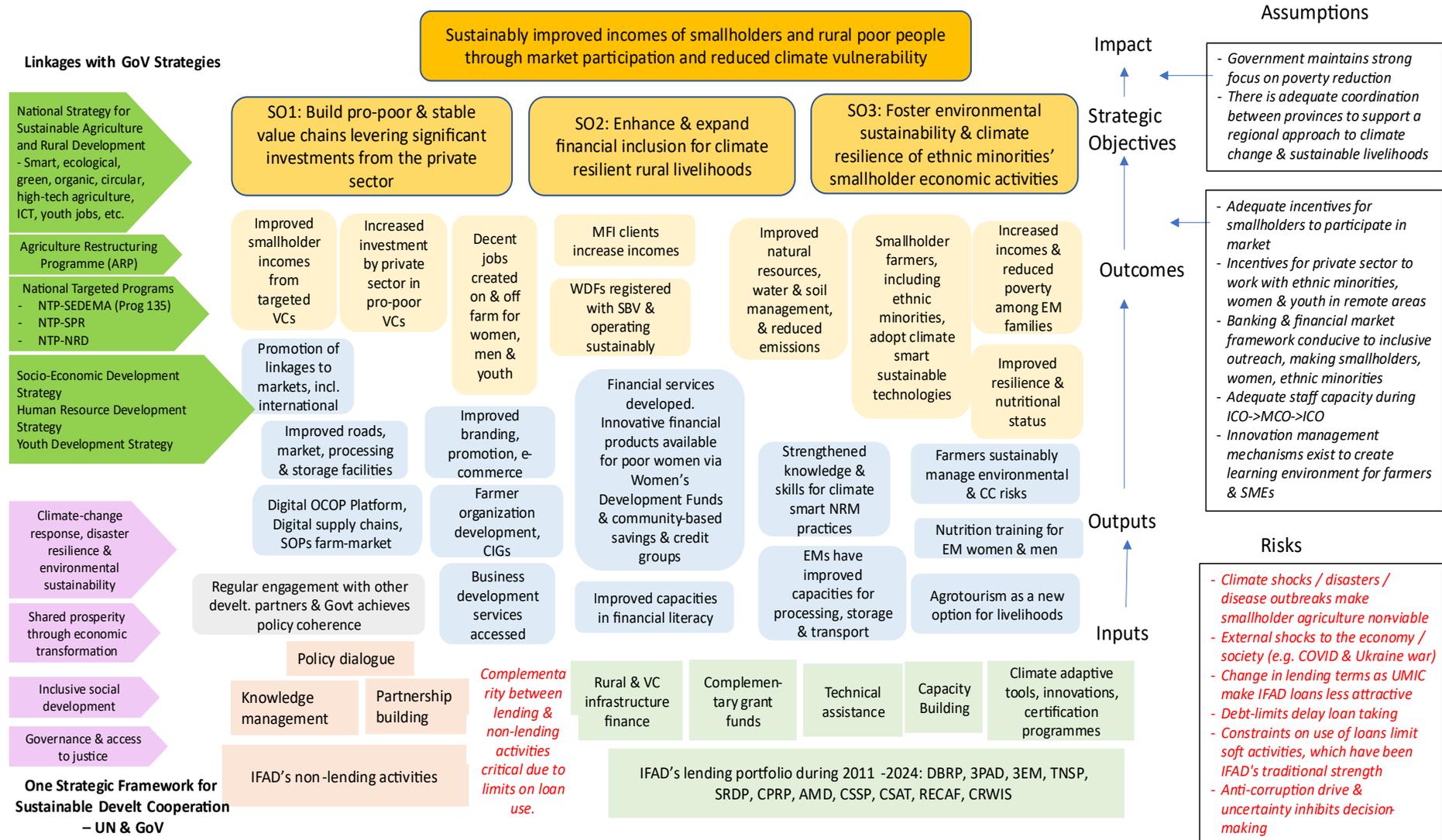
Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Sources of data and data collection methods
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did Government scale up knowledge from the projects or research? • What was the role and contribution of IFAD SSTC within the country programme? What were Government's priorities for SSTC? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership development: The extent to which IFAD is building timely, effective and sustainable partnerships with government institutions, international organizations, private sector, organizations representing marginalized groups and other development partners to cooperate, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage the scaling up of recognized good practices and innovations in support of small-holder agriculture and rural development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did IFAD position itself and its work in partnership with other development partners? To what extent and how did IFAD foster what types of partnerships with other partners and for what end? • What evidence is there of effective partnerships with government and research organisations? What resources (financial and otherwise) were mobilised to support these partnerships? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation (e.g. COSOP-related documents, knowledge products, documentation on joint initiatives/ programmes)</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews with other development partners (past and current partners, partners active in agriculture/rural development)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy engagement: The extent to which IFAD and its country-level stakeholders engage, and the progress made, to support dialogue on policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions, policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there an explicit strategy on policy engagement in the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs? • What has been IFAD's role in operationalising national policies with the provinces, districts and communes? • To what extent and how did IFAD contribute to policy discussions drawing from its programme experience (for example, including but not limited to microfinance for women, grant funds for private sector, climate change adaptation, etc.) • Is there evidence of attribution of IFAD's work to policy development? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation (e.g. documentation on policy discussions/policy development, COSOP-related documents, supported policy briefs, etc.)</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews with other development partners</p>
<p>Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention/country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were the objectives of the country strategy and programme (outcome-level) achieved or are likely to be achieved at the time of the evaluation? • Did the programmes / strategy achieve other objectives/ outcomes, or did they have any unexpected consequence? • What factors had positive or negative impact on the achievement of the intended results? How effectively were the implementation issues addressed (eg. changes in use of loan funds, decision-making, debt limits, etc.)? • How effective were the means mobilized to include ethnic minorities and the rural poor and to reach out to remote areas? • What are main results achieved by the programme in relation to ethnic minorities? Please elaborate in terms of their productive capacities (ii), knowledge and skills to undertake / engage in economic activities (iii) and access to markets. Are ethnic minorities facing particular barriers? • Has IFAD made specific efforts to work with youth (male and female), or with people with disabilities? If so, what have been the results? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation (PPE, PCR, PCR/V; supervision mission reports; analysis of M&E data)</p> <p>Secondary data for benchmarking</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews and focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits</p>

Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Sources of data and data collection methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation: the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product, or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the programme or project support / promote innovations, aligned with stakeholders' needs or challenges they faced? In what ways were these innovative in the country/local context? Were they unique to IFAD? Were these innovations scaled up to other provinces, or beyond Viet Nam? Were the innovations inclusive and accessible to different groups (in terms of gender, youths, ethnic minorities, and diversity of socio-economic groups)? To what extent and how have those innovations led to positive outcomes? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders Interviews and focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits</p>
<p>Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way</p> <p>"Economic" is the conversion of inputs (e.g., funds, expertise, natural resources, time) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the relation between benefits and costs (e.g., net present value, internal rate of return)? Are programme management cost ratios justifiable in terms of objectives, results achieved, considering contextual aspects and unforeseeable events? Is the timeframe of the programme development and implementation justifiable, taking into account the results achieved, the specific context and unforeseeable events? Were the financial, human and technical resources adequate and mobilised in a timely manner? Are unit costs of specific activities in line with recognised practices and congruent with the results achieved (e.g. infrastructure related project activities)? What factors affected efficiency of IFAD programmes? Does the geographic spread have an impact? What are the advantages and disadvantages of involvement of more than one province in a project? What are the impacts of the move of Viet Nam from LIC to LMIC, and then UMIC, as well as the directives regarding use of loan funds, and budget ceilings? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation and database (e.g. Oracle Business Intelligence), including: historical project status reports, disbursement data, project financing data, economic and financial analyses, information on project timelines, etc.</p> <p>M&E data Cost and benefit data from other similar projects Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders Interviews and focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits, spot validation of reported costs, benefits</p>
<p>Impact: The extent to which an intervention/country strategy has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.</p> <p>The criterion includes the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -changes in incomes, assets and productive capacities -changes in social / human capital -changes in household food security and nutrition -changes in institution and policies <p>The analysis of impact will seek to determine whether changes have been transformational, generating changes that can lead societies onto fundamentally different development pathways (e.g., due to the size or distributional effects of changes to poor and marginalized groups)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the observed changes in household incomes, assets, food security and nutrition, human and social capital for the target group? And in terms of institutions at different levels and policies? How did the programme result in or contribute to those changes? To what extent did IFAD programmes contribute to increased resilience of rural communities? From an equity perspective, to what extent have the programmes had positive impact on the very poor / marginalized groups (especially ethnic minorities), and how? Were there any unintended impacts, both negative and positive? Did any projects carry out impact surveys? If not, why not? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation, including baseline and end line impact surveys Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders Interviews and focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits Secondary statistical data on poverty, household incomes and nutrition where available and relevant (possible benchmark) Assessment of GIS data (available in two projects?)</p>

Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Sources of data and data collection methods
<p>Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and be scaled-up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies.</p> <p>Note: This entails an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. It involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the country strategy and programme contribute to long-term institutional, environmental and social sustainability? Did/would community level institutions (producer groups, self help groups, etc.) continue operation without external funding? What are the explaining factors? Did the projects include exit strategies and were they implemented? Is there any evidence of improved sustainability following multiple phases of project implementation in a province? Is the infrastructure financed by the projects likely to be maintained? And what about the outcomes of other types of projects? Did/would national level institutions continue activities they initiated with IFAD support? What are the explaining factors? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews and focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries during field visits</p> <p>M&E data.</p> <p>Interviews with other development partners with similar/relevant support</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation. The extent to which the development interventions/strategy contribute to enhancing the environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change in small-scale agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did IFAD programmes contribute to more sustainable natural resource management? To what extent and how did IFAD-supported programmes contribute to a decrease in emissions? To what extent and how did IFAD-supported programmes contribute to adaptation by the target group rural population to climate change and minimizing the damage linked to climate change? Is there evidence of improved resilience of smallholders and ethnic minorities? What has IFAD done to prepare smallholders for disasters? Are there gaps that IFAD should work to fill? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaling up: takes place when: (i) bi- and multi laterals partners, private sector, communities) adopt and diffuse the solution tested by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invested resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested by IFAD (from practice to policy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were results scaled up or likely to be scaled up in the future? What evidence is there of scaling up within provinces and to other provinces? Is there an indication of commitment of the government and key stakeholders in scaling-up activities and approaches, for example, in terms of provision of funds for selected activities, human resources availability, continuity of pro-poor policies and participatory development approaches, and institutional support? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff, national stakeholders and other development partners</p>
<p>Gender equality and women's empowerment: The extent to which IFAD interventions have contributed to better gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, in terms of women's access to and ownership of assets, resources and services; participation in decision making; workload balance and impact on women's incomes, nutrition and livelihoods; and in promoting sustainable, inclusive and far-reaching changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs underpinning gender inequality.</p> <p>Evaluations will assess to what extent interventions and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the contributions of IFAD-supported programmes to changes in: (i) women's access to resources, income sources, assets (including land) and services; (ii) women's influence in decision-making within the household and community; (iii) workload distribution (including domestic chores); (iv) women's health, skills, nutrition? Were there notable changes in social norms, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs and policies / laws relating to gender equality? Have COSOP and project strategies, and targeted activities, been 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews with other partners</p> <p>Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries during field visits</p>

Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Sources of data and data collection methods
<p>strategies have been gender transformational, relative to the context, by: (i) addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination; (ii) acting upon gender roles, norms and power relations; (iii) promoting broader processes of social change (beyond the immediate intervention).</p> <p>Evaluators will consider differential impacts by gender and the way they interact with other forms of discrimination (such as age, race, ethnicity, social status and disability), also known as gender intersectionality</p>	<p>developed to support women facing multiple disadvantages (eg. ethnicity, age, language, culture, remoteness)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was attention given to programme implementation resources (financial and technical) and disaggregated monitoring with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment goals? 	
<p>Performance of partners (IFAD & Government): The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) supported design, implementation and the achievement of results, conducive policy environment, and impact and the sustainability of the intervention/country programme</p> <p>The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including government and implementing agency, in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, supporting a conducive policy environment and establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.</p>	<p>IFAD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effectively did IFAD support the overall quality of design, including aspects related to project approach, compliance, and operational aspects? How proactively did IFAD identify and address threats to the achievement of project development objectives? How effectively did IFAD support the executing agency on the aspects of project management, financial management, and setting-up project level M&E systems? How did the decentralization process support or hinder the work in Viet Nam? Has the work as MCO, working across the region, provided synergies or been a distraction for the work of the Viet Nam office? <p>Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How tangible was the commitment of the national Government and Provincial People's Committees to achieving development objectives and ownership of the strategy / project? Did the governments adequately involve and consult beneficiaries/stakeholders at design and during implementation? How did the governments position themselves and their work in partnership with other development partners? How well did the projects manage the approvals, start-up process, staff recruitment, resource allocation, implementation arrangements and coordination with other partners? How timely was the identification and resolution of implementation issues? Was project management responsive to context changes or the recommendations by supervision missions or by the Project Steering Committee? How adequate were project planning and budgeting, management information system/M&E? Were these tools properly used by project management? How well did the PMUs fulfil fiduciary responsibilities (procurement, financial management)? 	<p>In-depth desk review of IFAD documentation, including the quality of design, frequency and quality of supervision and implementation support mission reports, project status reports, PCRs, key correspondences (IFAD-Government), COSOP, PPEs and PCRvs</p> <p>Interviews with IFAD staff and national stakeholders</p> <p>IFAD and Government self assessments</p> <p>Project self-assessments</p> <p>Project M&E data</p>

III. Theory of Change



IV. List of IFAD-supported operations in Viet Nam since 1993

ID	Name	Type	Status	Approval	Effective	Completion	Closing	Domestic	IFAD	International	Total Cost
110000328	Participatory Resource Management Project - Tuyen Quang Province	AGRIC	Financial Closure	06/04/1993	06/08/1993	30/09/2001	31/12/2001	3.1	18.3	3.5	25
1100001007	Agricultural Resources Conservation and Development Project in Quang Binh Province	AGRIC	Financial Closure	04/12/1996	25/03/1997	30/09/2002	31/12/2002	1.9	14.4	1.4	17.8
1100001025	Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities	RURAL	Financial Closure	04/12/1997	27/04/1998	31/12/2003	30/06/2004	2.7	12.5	3.1	18.4
1100001091	Ha Tinh Rural Development Project	AGRIC	Financial Closure	29/04/1999	17/09/1999	30/09/2005	31/03/2006	3.6	15.4	-	19.1
1100001202	Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province	RURAL	Financial Closure	06/12/2001	21/08/2002	30/09/2009	31/03/2010	4.4	20.9	5	30.4
1100001272	Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction in Ha Giang and Quang Binh Provinces	RURAL	Financial Closure	02/12/2004	17/08/2005	30/09/2011	31/03/2012	14	24.7	-	38.7
1100001374	Programme for Improving Market Participation of the Poor in Ha Tinh and Tra Vinh Provinces	RURAL	Financial Closure	14/09/2006	18/04/2007	30/06/2012	31/12/2012	6.4	26.3	4.5	37.3
1100001422	Developing Business with the Rural Poor Programme	RURAL	Financial Closure	13/12/2007	06/05/2008	30/06/2014	31/12/2014	9.1	35.5	5.7	50.5
1100001477	Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development Project	RURAL	Financial Closure	17/12/2008	27/05/2009	30/06/2015	31/12/2015	3.6	20.9	0.6	25.3
1100001483	Project for the Economic Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities in Poor Communes of Dak Nong Province	MRKTG	Financial Closure	22/04/2010	09/11/2010	31/12/2016	30/06/2017	3.8	19.8	-	23.6
1100001552	Agriculture, Farmers and Rural Areas Support Project in Gia Lai, Ninh Thuan and Tuyen Quang Provinces	RURAL	Financial Closure	15/12/2010	25/02/2011	31/03/2017	30/09/2017	17	48.3	-	65.3
1100001662	Sustainable Rural Development for the Poor Project in Ha Tinh and Quang Binh Provinces	RURAL	Financial Closure	19/09/2013	27/11/2013	31/12/2018	30/06/2019	13.2	23	10	46.2
1100001663	Commodity-oriented Poverty Reduction	RURAL	Financial	01/09/2014	30/03/2015	31/03/2020	30/09/2020	13.7	9.9	10	33.7

ID	Name	Type	Status	Approval	Effective	Completion	Closing	Domestic	IFAD	International	Total Cost
Programme in Ha Giang Province			Closure								
1100001664	Project for Adaption to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces	RURAL	Financial Closure	11/12/2013	28/03/2014	30/09/2020	31/12/2020	15.3	34	-	49.3
2000000968	Commercial Smallholder Support Project in Bac Kan and Cao Bang	RURAL	Available for Disbursement	14/12/2016	07/08/2017	30/09/2024	31/03/2025	31.3	43	-	74.3
2000002335	Climate Smart Agricultural Value Chain Development in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh Provinces	CREDI	Available for Disbursement	30/12/2021	09/06/2023	31/12/2026	30/06/2027	53.3	42.9	40	136.3
2000002336	Reduced Emissions through Climate Smart Agroforestry	-	Pipeline	1/12/2024				35	32.4	40	102.5
2000004024	Climate Resilient and Inclusive Water Infrastructure for Rural Smallholders	-	Pipeline	12/12/2024				17.1	42.2	-	78.9

V. List of IFAD-financed and managed grants in Viet Nam since 2012

Project ID	Grant Name	Recipient Type	Window	Approval Date	Entry into Force	Current Completion Date	Closing Date	Financier Type	Project Status	Total financing
1000003120	Pilot project for poverty reduction in La Pa district, Gia Lai province, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Governments	CSPC	03/03/2008	17/09/2008	05/12/2013	12/12/2014	INT	Financial Closure	1 355 900
1000003212	Building pro-poor market orientation skills	Governments	CSPC	08/10/2008	20/05/2009	31/12/2012	30/09/2013	IFA	Financial Closure	200 000
1000003585	Knowledge networking for participatory feedback in rural development policy - Viet Nam	Governments	CSPC	19/11/2009	14/12/2010	01/06/2013	28/10/2014	IFA	Financial Closure	200 000
1000004008	Pro-poor policy approaches to address risk and vulnerability at the country level	United Nations Agencies	GLRG	04/05/2011	13/02/2012	30/06/2016	31/12/2016	DOM	Financial Closure	2 400 000
1000004071	Improved forage-based livestock feeding systems for smallholder livelihoods in the Cambodia-Laos-Viet Nam development triangle	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	29/08/2011	16/09/2011	30/09/2015	31/03/2016	INT	Financial Closure	2 000 000
1000004070	Strengthening knowledge-sharing on innovative solutions using the learning routes methodology in Asia and the Pacific	Not for profit organisation	GLRG	29/08/2011	27/10/2011	27/07/2015	28/07/2015	DOM	Financial Closure	1 400 000
1000004067	Disseminating challenge program on water and food innovations and adoption processes for water and food and piloting their	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	29/08/2011	07/05/2012	30/06/2014	31/12/2014	INT	Financial Closure	2 874 000

Project ID	Grant Name	Recipient Type	Window	Approval Date	Entry into Force	Current Completion Date	Closing Date	Financier Type	Project Status	Total financing
	mainstreaming in the IFAD portfolio (CPWF)									
1000004229	Sustainable management of crop-based production systems for raising agricultural productivity in rainfed Asia	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	07/04/2012	07/05/2012	31/03/2017	30/09/2017	DOM	Financial Closure	2 500 000
1000004256	Development of access to remittance services through postal networks in underserved areas in the Asia-Pacific regions (FFR)	United Nations Agencies	GLRG	17/05/2012	22/05/2012	31/07/2013	30/01/2014	INT	Financial Closure	537 039
1000004356	Inclusive business models to promote sustainable smallholder cassava production	Non-Governmental Organisations	GLRG	14/10/2012	13/12/2012	30/06/2015	31/12/2015	INT	Financial Closure	1 449 000
2000000094	Reducing Risks and Improving Rice Livelihoods in South-East Asia through the Consortium for Unfavorable Rice Environments	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	07/07/2013	13/03/2014	31/03/2018	30/09/2018	DOM	Financial Closure	2 400 000
2000000074	Medium Term Cooperation Programme with Farmer's Organizations in Asia and the Pacific Region - phase II	Umbrella Organisation	GLRG	07/07/2013	04/09/2013	30/06/2019	31/12/2019	IFA	Financial Closure	2 000 000
2000000099	Climate-smart, tree-based co-investment in climate change adaptation and mitigation in Asia.	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	07/07/2013	13/03/2014	31/03/2017	30/09/2017	IFA	Financial Closure	2 250 000
2000000760	MTCP-II – SDC	Umbrella Organisation	GLRG	07/07/2013	25/08/2014	30/09/2018	31/03/2019	INT	Financial Closure	3 071 647

Project ID	Grant Name	Recipient Type	Window	Approval Date	Entry into Force	Current Completion Date	Closing Date	Financier Type	Project Status	Total financing
2000000270	Strengthening Knowledge Sharing on innovation using the learning route methodology	Non-Governmental Organisations	GLRG	16/06/2014	23/06/2014	30/06/2016	31/12/2016	IFA	Financial Closure	1 000 000
2000000503	Promoting Public-Private Producers Partnerships in IFAD-funded Value Chain Development projects (SNV)	Non-Governmental Organisations	GLRG	08/12/2014	05/02/2015	31/03/2018	31/12/2018	IFA	Financial Closure	2 300 000
2000001235	ASEAN Farmers' Organizations Support Programme and Medium-Term Cooperation Programme. Phase II (AFOSP/MTCP) and regional policy dialogue in ASEAN region	Umbrella Organisation	GLRG	14/10/2015	14/10/2015	11/12/2020	30/04/2021	INT	Financial Closure	6 910 000
2000001137	Direct Support to Farmers and Rural Producers Organisations - AGRICORD	Umbrella Organisation	GLRG	23/11/2015	03/02/2016	31/03/2019	23/10/2019	IFA	Financial Closure	250 000
2000001022	Asia Training Programme for Scaling Up Pro-Poor Value Chains	Bilateral Organisations	GLRG	28/11/2015	21/01/2016	31/03/2021	30/09/2021	INT	Financial Closure	2 238 000
2000000986	Food Resilience through root and tuber crops in upland and coastal communities of the Asia Pacific	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	01/12/2015	03/06/2016	31/07/2019	31/12/2019	INT	Financial Closure	2 271 000
2000000361	Agricultural Transformation and Market Integration in ASEAN Region: Responding to Food Security and Inclusiveness Concerns	CGIAR Organizations	GLRG	04/12/2015	17/05/2016	30/06/2022	31/12/2022	IFA	Financial Closure	2 901 135

Project ID	Grant Name	Recipient Type	Window	Approval Date	Entry into Force	Current Completion Date	Closing Date	Financier Type	Project Status	Total financing
2000001310	Strengthening capacity for assessing the impact of tenure security measures on outcomes of IFAD supported & other projects in SDGs	United Nations Agencies	GLRG	12/08/2016	20/01/2017	31/12/2019	30/06/2020	IFA	Financial Closure	220 000
2000001650	Measurable Action for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia	Regional Organisation	GLRG	23/12/2017	29/04/2019	31/03/2025	30/06/2025	DOM	Available for Disbursement	4 000 000
2000002380	Leveraging South-South and Triangular Cooperation to share rural dev solutions for private sector engagement	Non-Governmental Organisations	GLRG	29/11/2018	22/01/2019	31/03/2022	30/09/2022	INT	Financial Closure	1 099 750
2000001967	Network for Agriculture and Rural Development Think Tanks for Countries in Mekong Subregion	Governments	GLRG	22/12/2018	05/07/2019	30/06/2024	31/12/2024	DOM	Project Completed	2 610 000
2000002365	Sustainable Rural Development for the Asian Pacific Farmers' Programme	Not for profit organisation	GLRG	22/12/2018	05/07/2019	30/06/2025	31/10/2025	DOM	Available for Disbursement	33 700 000
2000002467	Enhancing Access to Markets for Rural Poor through ICT-based Market Information Network	Governments	CSPC	21/02/2019	04/09/2019	30/09/2021	31/03/2022	INT	Financial Closure	500 000
2000002680	South-South Cooperation for Scaling-up Climate Resilient Value Chain Initiatives	Research Institution	GLRG	11/03/2019	10/04/2019	31/12/2021	30/06/2022	INT	Financial Closure	500 000
2000002846	Dairy for Social Impact: Enhanced knowledge and sustainability	Non-Governmental Organisations	GLRG	10/12/2019	30/12/2019	31/12/2022	30/06/2023	IFA	Financial Closure	955 000

Project ID	Grant Name	Recipient Type	Window	Approval Date	Entry into Force	Current Completion Date	Closing Date	Financier Type	Project Status	Total financing
2000003720	An ICT Based, Covid 19 Resilient Women and Youth Centered Value Chain in Viet Nam (Dong Thap Province)	Governments	CSPC	26/02/2021	08/07/2021	30/06/2022	31/12/2022	INT	Financial Closure	395 250
2000003811	An ICT-based, Covid-19 Resilient Women and Youth Centered Value Chain in Viet Nam (Ben Tre)	Governments	CSPC	26/02/2021	08/07/2021	30/06/2022	31/12/2022	INT	Financial Closure	197 625
2000004443	Assessing the socio-economic impacts of the Ukraine war on the agriculture and rural development sector of Viet Nam	Governments	CSPC	15/12/2022	10/02/2023	30/09/2023	31/03/2024	DOM	Financial Closure	191 000
2000004310	Innovative Financial Incentives for Adaptation in wetland livelihoods	Governments	CSPC	23/11/2023				INT	Board/ President Approved	4 608 295
2000000272	FAO - World Agriculture Watch (WAW)	United Nations Agencies	GLRG	18/09/2014	03/12/2014	10/12/2017	30/06/2018	IFA	Financial Closure	400 000
2000000866	Rural Regional Transformation: Pathways, Policy Sequencing and Development Outcomes in China, Myanmar and Viet Nam (RRT)	Non-Governmental Organisations	GLRG	14/12/2014	08/08/2017	31/03/2021	30/09/2021	IFA	Financial Closure	500 000
2000001678	Impact Assessment of technological innovation and dissemination under Consortium for Unfavorable Rice Environments	Academic Organisations	GLRG	13/11/2017	08/01/2018	31/12/2019	15/08/2020	INT	Financial Closure	696 409

VI. Timeline of IFAD-supported project portfolio, 2012–2025

Country: Viet Nam															
Timeline	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
IFAD events (CDs, Office set ups/closures, COSOP events, etc)	CD: Atsuko Toda														
	CD: Henning Pedersen														
	CD: Thomas Rath														
	CD: Francisco Pichon														
	CD: Ambrosio Barros														
IFAD programmes	COSOP 2012-2017						COSOP 2019-2025						New COSOP		
Enter into Force to Project completion															
DBRP	Color Key: Completed														
3PAD	Available for disbursement														
3EM	Dropped from pipeline														
TNSP	Pipeline														
SRDP	Concept approved														
CPRP															
AMD															
CSSP															
SAP															
CSAT															
RECAF															
CRWIS															
CSSP II															
National policies	UN One Strategic Plan (OSP) 2017-2021								UN One Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development Cooperation						
	Socio-Economic development Strategy 2011-2020								Socio-Economic Development Strategy, 2021–2030						
	NTP Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR) 2021-2020								NTP-SPR 2021-2025						
	NTP-NRD 2011-2015				NTP-NRD 2016-2020				NTP-NRD 2021-2025						
	Program 135 2012-2020								NTP-SEDEMA 2021-2030						
	NTP for Climate Change Response and Green Growth 2016-2020								National Strategy for Climate Change 2025; National Action Plan Green Growth 2021-2030						

The table shows project dates starting from entry into force year.
 Source: IOE elaboration based on IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence

VII. Recommendations from 2012 CPE

A strengthened market-oriented approach. The programme's shift from an area-based multisector approach to supporting value chains has brought more benefits to vulnerable groups such as landless labourers, farmers with very limited land and unemployed youth. As the limited but evolving public-private partnerships developed thus far show potential for achieving better results on the ground, the CPE recommends that this approach be strengthened in the next COSOP. However, because the value chain approach is still relatively new and unknown in many of the areas covered by IFAD-funded operations, a thorough analysis of selected value chains (e.g. rice and coffee) will be needed before new small-scale agriculture programmes are designed for rural areas. Ways and means of bringing ethnic minorities into the development process, at different stages of the value chain, will also need to be explored. Moreover, given the somewhat limited investments in business development services and limited partnerships with the small- and medium-scale private sector, the CPE recommends that IFAD and the Government encourage the strategic engagement of the private sector in supporting this building block in the next COSOP.

More comprehensive geographic coverage. The CPE recommends that the Government and IFAD should move towards a model that combines, for example, three to five contiguous provinces as part of a single IFAD-funded operation. This would facilitate a move from the current area-based development activities to a more thematic model covering wider geographic areas and more poor people, and allow IFAD to focus on issues such as forestry development in upland areas, environmental protection in coastal zones, and private-sector development in provinces with large ethnic minority populations.

A more favourable credit environment for smallholders. Microfinance and the role of the banking system are features of the current programme that will need to be strengthened to support the market-oriented approach. Current solutions mainly involve funding subsistence-level production. Overall, the programme has had a very limited impact on bank operations and lending policies for supporting farmers and the rural poor. The CPE recommends that IFAD should make every effort to address this major gap in rural finance in any future policy dialogue with the Government.

A more strategic knowledge management programme. There is a growing realization – particularly as Viet Nam moves further into middle-income country status – that IFAD's knowledge, and its ability to impart that knowledge on a wide scale, will be a significant aspect of its future contribution to Viet Nam's development. Efforts as a result of the knowledge management component of the 2008 COSOP were a step in the right direction, and IFAD should build on those 4 efforts in the years ahead. With regard to the next COSOP, IFAD and the Government will need to concentrate on the programme's non-lending activities and grant capacity in order to fill specific knowledge gaps, such as the need for a holistic approach to the development of ethnic minorities in upland areas, better understanding of youth migration and opportunities for rural youth. The CPE also recommends that knowledge-sharing be strengthened by establishing a standardized, countrywide M&E system, which would make it possible to follow up progress in implementing the results-based COSOP and fine-tune the evolving country strategy.

Strengthening partnerships. IFAD will need to rethink its approach to partnerships with the private sector and donor community in Viet Nam. It is recommended that IFAD should continue to participate in the One UN Initiative, but more selectively, concentrating on agenda items that are in line with its resources and comparative advantage. On the other hand, enhanced partnering with the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, major bilateral donors and NGOs could contribute to more effective synergies and/or to the scaling up of the successful models supported by IFAD over the last 18 years. The analytic capacity of the larger international financial institutions and their role in supporting the Government's donor coordination mechanisms could provide significant leverage, both for IFAD's lending programme and for its nonlending activities.

Increased counterpart funding from the Government. During formulation of the next COSOP, IFAD should reach agreement with the Government on increased levels of counterpart funding, especially in view of the country's status as a middle-income country and the number of its poor rural people. The COSOP might also include broad criteria for determining the proportion of such counterpart funding (e.g. minimum percentage of total projects costs) in future IFAD-supported projects in Viet Nam. The CPE recognizes, however, that counterpart

funding is a matter for IFAD Management to consider at the global level, including the establishment of related guidelines (currently missing).

A strategic approach to the conservation of natural resources and the response to the impact of climate change. IFAD should scale up its involvement in issues relating to the environment, natural resources management and climate change. While it is true that other donors are heavily engaged in these areas, IFAD is in a unique position to explore the impact of potential environmental damage and the effects of climate change on the rural poor. It is also well placed to introduce measures against erosion or saltwater intrusion or in support of forest cover rehabilitation. This should be an important feature of the next COSOP and, possibly, one of the key pillars of IFAD's future engagement in Viet Nam. While these issues are largely peripheral to current programme design in Viet Nam and are not commensurate with the priority given to such concerns, they are important features of government policy and programmes. IFAD could make a valuable contribution to developing local-level approaches that support the efforts of both the Government and the international community.

A strengthened IFAD country office. The CPE believes that IFAD's country office in Viet Nam has made an important contribution to the overall success of its country programme. Looking forward, policy dialogue at the central level and the scaling up of successful innovations will need to be more systematic, anchored in IFAD's operational field experience, and in line with the structures and processes of the Ha Noi Core Statement (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness). IFAD will need to provide its country office with clear guidelines on prioritizing this agenda, in line with IFAD's new business model and an enabling work environment, i.e. appropriate human and financial resources.

VIII. List of key persons met

IFAD

Hanoi ICO

Ambrosio Barros, Country director
 Khánh Nguyễn, Country programme assistant
 Ngọc Anh Trần, Intern
 Quang Nguyễn, National consultant
 Rachele Arcese, Programme Officer, Task Manager for Laos
 Thanh Tú Nguyễn, Administrative Assistant
 Thân Lâm Đỗ, Consultant – Institutions and Value Chains
 Thu Hoài Nguyễn, Country programme analyst

IFAD HQ and Former Staff

Thanh Tùng Nguyễn, Former Country programme coordinator
 Thomas Rath, Former Country Programme Manager (2017–2021)
 Francisco Pichon, Former Country director (2021–2022)
 Mattia Prayer Galletti, Former Country Programme Manager (1996–2004)
 Henning Pedersen, Former Country Programme Manager (2012–2017)
 Pierre Yves Guedez, Lead Climate and Environmental Funds, ECG
 Sauli Hurri, Lead Regional Technical Specialist, Rural Institutions, PMI
 Tshering Choden, Regional Office – Gender Advisor

Government

Central Government

Trọng Nghĩa Nguyễn, MOF, Head of Planning and Risk Management Department of Debt Management and External Finance
 Ngọc Khuê Nguyễn, MOF, Official of MC Division
 Minh Tuấn Nguyễn, MAE, Official of International Cooperation Dept.
 Thị Diệu Trinh Nguyễn, MOF, Department of Debt Management and Foreign Economic Relations, Deputy Director General
 Lan Anh Nguyễn, MOF, Department of Debt Management and Foreign Economic Relations, Deputy Head of Multilateral Division
 Minh Tuấn Lê, MAE/ICD, Official of International Cooperation Dept.
 Cư Nhân Phan, VBSP, Director of Communication & International Co-operation Dept.

Project Management Units

Bac Kan

Minh Quang Hà, PMU - Bac Kan, Vice director
 Văn Giáp Hoàng, DOF - Bac Kan, Vice director/ director of PMU

Ben Tre

Khắc Hân Nguyễn, CSAT (former AMD) PMU, CSAT Ben Tre
 Khắc Hân Nguyễn, CSAT Project Management Board, Director
 Hoài Nam Nguyễn, CSAT Project Management Board, Vice Director
 Diễm Thúy Trần, CSAT Project Management Board, Vice Director

Cao Bang

Thị Hồng Thủy Vũ, CSSP PMU, CSSP Cao Bang
 Thị Hồng Thủy Vũ, PCU CSSP - Cao Bang, Director
 Văn Giáp Hoàng, DOF - Bac Kan, Vice director/ director of PMU

Dak Nong

Tuấn Anh Phạm, IFAD RECAF and 3EM, and SAP projects in Dak Nong, Former Director of 3EM project, Member of RECAF Project Preparation Board, Director, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Gia Lai

Anh Thiên Lê, IFAD PMU TNSP, Former project director PMU TNSP (and RECAF)

Ha Giang

Duy Tăng Lâm, CPRP PMU, Deputy Project director Ha Giang

Đình Huy Đỗ, PCO of Ha Giang CPRP, Vice director

Ha Tinh

Quỳnh Hoa Dương, IFAD PMU SRDP, Former project director PMU SRDP Ha Tinh

Dai (Unknown), IFAD PMU SRDP, Former project director PMU SRDP Ha Tinh

Quang Binh

Thị Vân Hồng Lê, IFAD PMU SRDP, Former project director PMU SRDP Quang Binh

Thanh Hoa

Văn Tùng Nguyễn, CRWIS PMU, Head of project (CRWIS) preparation board in Thanh Hoa province, Deputy Head of Planning Department, PMU of Infrastructural Investment in Agriculture and Rural Development of Thanh Hoa province

Tra Vinh

Ngọc Hùng Hồng, CSAT (former AMD) PMU, CSAT Tra Vinh

Ngọc Hùng Hồng, PMU of CSAT, Director

Local Government**Bac Kan**

Quang Nhật Nong, Bac Kan PPC, Vice chairman

Văn Giáp Hoàng, DOF - Bac Kan, Vice director/ director of PMU

Văn Hoan Dương, Department of Industry and Trade/ Bac Kan, Vice director

Mỹ Hải Nguyễn, DAE, Vice director

Văn Tổ Phan, Ngan Son District people committee, Bac Kan, Vice chairman

Văn Luận Lương, Ngan Son District farmer union, Bac Kan, Chairman

Ngọc Thịnh Phạm, Ba Be District people committee, Bac Kan, Vice chairman

Văn Quý Hà, Yen Duong Commune people committee, Bac Kan, Chairman

Xuân Hùng Địch, Duc Van commune people committee, Bac Kan, Chairman

Thị Hằng Mông, Duc Van commune people committee, Bac Kan, Chairwoman of Women's Union

Ben Tre

Trúc Sơn Nguyễn, Provincial People's Committee, Standing Vice Chairman

Thị Trương Thị Phạm, Provincial People's Committee Office, Deputy Head of Foreign Affairs

Thị Như Thảo Đình, Department of Finance, Vice Director

Quang Đức Huỳnh, Department of Agriculture and Environment, Vice Director

Văn Tân Lâm, Department of Science and Technology, Director

Đình Nhã Nguyễn, Department of Industry and Trade, Official

Văn Thành Nguyễn, Department of Finance, Deputy Head of Business Development and Collective Economy Department

Thị Đào Chi Nguyễn, Department of Finance, Head of Planning and Synthesis Management Department

Ngọc Yến Bùi, Department of Finance, Deputy Director of Investment Promotion and Startup Center

Thị Hồng Thắm Phan, Financial Planning Department, Deputy Head of Department

Văn Máy Bay Võ, Environmental Management and Climate Change Dept, Deputy Head of Department

Thị Thảo Lê, Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, Deputy Head of Department

Hữu Trí Châu, Agricultural Extension Center, Director

Văn Linh Lâm, Department of Cultivation and Plant Protection, Official

Thị Hồng Lê Phạm, Department of Rural Development & Quality Management, Deputy Head of Department
 Thị Kim Cương Trần, Department of Fisheries, Official
 Thị Lê Quân Châu, District Agriculture Department, Official
 Minh Hiếu Cao, People's Committee of Thua Duc commune, Official
 Thị Huyền Trân Nguyễn, People's Committee of Dinh Trung Commune, Vice Chairperson of the Commune
 Thị Thanh Nhân Hồ, People's Committee of Dinh Trung Commune, Head of the Commune Women's Union
 Văn Dũng Lê, People's Committee of Tan Trung commune, Commune Chairman
 Thị Liên Lê, People's Committee of Tan Trung commune, Chairperson of Women's Union
 Văn Đoàn Nguyễn, People's Committee of Ngai Dang commune, Vice Chairperson of the Commune
 Thị Cẩm Hồng Nguyễn, People's Committee of Ngai Dang commune, Chairperson of the Commune Women's Union

Cao Bang

Duy Tăng Lâm, PCU- Cao Bang, Vice director
 Văn Thành Đàm, Department of Agriculture and Rural development in Trung Khanh, Cao Bang, Deputy head of department
 Mạnh Thắng Đinh, Financial and planning department of Trung Khanh, Head of department
 Thị Hoa Hoàng, District department of Agriculture and rural development, Cao Bang (ex DBRP staffer), Head of department
 Thị Vinh Chu, Trung Khanh district People's committee, Cao Bang, Vice chairman
 Thị Phương Trần, Thanh Cong commune committee - Cao Bang, Chairman
 Văn Điền Hoàng, Quang Trung commune People's committee, Cao Bang, Vice chairman

Ha Giang

Tấn Sơn Đỗ, DAE_ Ha Giang, Vice director
 Đức Hiệp Giang, Department of crop and plant protection _ Ha Giang, Head of department
 Văn Ánh Phạm, Linh Ho commune people's committee, Ha Giang, Chairman
 Văn Hè Hoàng, Linh Ho commune people's committee - Fatherland Front, Ha Giang, Chairman
 Thị Lành Vĩ, Linh Ho commune people's committee - Women's Union - Ha Giang, Chairman

Ninh Thuan

Do Oanh Trần, Department of Home Affairs, Vice Director
 Văn Dương Bạch, Department of Ethnic and Religious Affairs, Vice Director
 Quốc Sanh Trần, Department of Industry and Trade, Vice Director
 Ngọc Minh Nguyễn, Department of Finance, Vice Director
 Ngọc Hiếu Trần, Department of Agriculture and Environment, Vice Director
 Chấn Pi Năng, Department of Ethnicity & Religion, Head of Department
 Phụng Bảo Châu Phạm, Department of Agriculture and Environment of Bac Ai district, Deputy Head of Department
 Đức Hòa Nguyễn, Ninh Son District People's Committee, Vice Director
 Thị Gái Kator, People's Committee of Phuoc Binh Commune, Vice Chairperson of the Commune
 Lộc Pi Năng, Phuoc Binh Commune Fatherland Front Committee, Chairperson of the Central Committee
 Thu Cúc Huỳnh, People's Committee of My Son Commune, Official

Tra Vinh

Văn Hòa Châu, Tra Vinh PPC, Vice chairperon

Thị Viên Trần, IMPP, Former Director of IMPP
 Phước Trãi Phạm, DOIT, Vice Director
 Minh Hùng Trịnh, Department of Home Affairs, Vice Director
 Kim Nhân Huỳnh, DAE, Vice Director
 Văn Khá Phạm, Hamlet III, Phong Phu Commune, Deputy Head of District DEA
 Văn Thừa Nguyễn, Hamlet III, Phong Phu Commune, Vice Chairperson of the CPC

Tuyen Quang

Thị Phương Vũ, PCU- Tuyen Quang, Acting Director

International and donor institutions

Hoài Nam Nguyễn, Australian Embassy, Senior Programme Manager
 Cathy McWilliam, Australian Embassy, 1st Secretary
 Roger Oakeley, Aus4Equality, Team Leader - Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT)
 Thanh Hoàng, EU Delegation, Senior officer of Cooperation
 Gonzalo Serrano, EU Delegation, Deputy Head of Cooperation, 1st Counsellor
 Diego Naziri, CIP, Value Chain and Postharvest Specialist
 Đức Thuận Nguyễn, GEF/VEPF, Focal point for GEF
 Hà Giang Hoàng, GEF/VEPF, International Cooperation Division
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 Quang Linh Lê, GEF/VEPF, GEF Office
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 Dũng Việt Đỗ, World Bank, Senior Country Officer
 Hùng Nguyễn, ADB, Principal Country Economist and programming head
 Mikiō Miyazoe, JICA, Project Formulation Advisor
 Thị Thu Hằng Nguyễn, JICA, Agricultural sectors mainly, Technical cooperation and Grant project
 Thị Minh Anh Trần, JICA, Yen Loan Project at Lam Dong province
 Antoine Le Bihan, AFD, Head of the Public Policy and Partnerships Section
 Gunwoo Lee, KOICA, Deputy Country Director
 Hang Lee, KOICA, ODA Specialist
 Ruedi Luethi, Helvetas, Head of Department, Water, Food and Climate / Senior Advisor Sustainable Food Systems
 Song Hà Nguyễn, FAO, Assistant to FAOR Programme
 Pauline Temesi, UN, Resident Coordinator (Viet Nam 2022-, Cambodia previously)
 Rémi Nono Womdim, FAO, FAO Representative
 Song Hà Nguyễn, FAO, Assistant to FAO Rep (Programme)
 Ramla Al Khalidi, UNDP, Resident Representative
 Thái Trường Vũ, UNDP, National Technical Specialist
 Văn Minh Bùi, UNDP, Agriculture Specialist
 Mai Vân Anh Hoàng, UNIDO, Programme Officer

Non-governmental organizations and associations

Thị Việt Hà Nguyễn, VNFU, Vice-Director of External Affairs and International Cooperation Dept. (EAICD)
 Thị Mỹ Linh Hà, VNFU, Official of EAICD
 Lany Rebagay, AFA, AFA Regional Program Manager

Private Sector

Ben Tre

Trường Thọ Bùi, Seed & Ornamental Flower Center, Vice Director
Hoàng Nam Nguyễn, Beinco, Deputy General Director of the company

Ha Giang

Thị Hoàn Nguyễn, Cao Boi Organic Tea, Ha Giang, Head of business office
Thị Minh Hải Phạm, Thanh Sơn Tea Company, Ha Giang, Vice director

Tra Vinh

Quốc Cường Hồng, Rynan, Technical director
Thị Kim Thủy Nguyễn, Ut Mung Company, Director

Bac Kan

Hoàng Thị Lạp, Vietnam MISAKI Co. Ltd, Cho Moi District, Director

Tuyen Quang

Vu Duc Trang, Song Lo Team Company, Yen Son district, Dep Director General

Research and training institutions

Xuân Trường Hoàng, CASRAD, Deputy Director
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Ánh Ngọc Lê, CCCR/IMHEN, International Cooperation Division
Hoài Thư Nguyễn, CCCR/IMHEN, CC expert under CC Division
Thị Quỳnh Nga Nguyễn, CCCR/IMHEN, CC expert under CC Division
Brice Even, CIAT, Research Team leader, Food Environment Specialist
Estelle Biénabe, CIRAD, ASSET scientific coordinator/ V-SCOPE project lead
Phương Trang Đình, Deltares, Country Coordinator-Indochina
Công Thắng Trần, IPSARD, Director of IPSARD

Beneficiaries²⁴⁹

Bac Kan

Thị Hồng Thu Vũ, Farmer Union, Vice chairman
Thị Ngân Ban, Phien Duong village/ Duc Van commune/ Ngan Son District/ Bac Kan, Leader, Hop Phat Cooperative chestnut group
Thị Thúy Triệu, Women's Union - Bac Kan, Chairwoman
Thị Ninh Ma, Yen Duong cooperative, Bac Kan, Director
Nguyễn Thị Hồng Minh, Tan Thanh Agricultural Cooperative, Thanh Bing commune, Director

Ben Tre

Thị Kim Thoa Nguyễn, Provincial Women's Union, Chairperson
Đặng Khoa Nguyễn, Farmers Association, Official
Bích Hạnh Hồ, Women's Economic Development Support Fund, Chairperson
Ái Hòa Võ, Provincial Women's Union, Vice Director
Thị Thúy Duy Bùi, Women's Economic Development Support Fund, Vice Director

Cao Bang

Thanh Tú Trịnh, Women's Development fund_ Cao Bang, Vice director
Thị Lê An Đoàn, Women's Union - Cao Bang, Chairwoman
Diệu Quang Hoàng, Cooperative alliance - Cao bang, Chairman
Đức Hiếu Trần, Tan Viet A – vermicelli cooperative - Cao Bang, Director
Trung Hiếu Nguyễn, Trung Hieu - arrowroot vermicelli cooperative - Cao Bang, Director
Phù Phìn Lý, Xien Peng collaborative group, Vu Nong, Cao Bang, Vice leader
Văn Nhiên Nông, Trung Khanh Fatherland Front, Cao Bang, Chairman
Thị Bé Vi, Quang Trung CIG, Cao Bang, Leader

Ha Giang

Ngọc Bích Hoàng, Ha Giang Women's Union, head of division

²⁴⁹ Members of cooperatives, CIGs, and unions were also met during the mission. For brevity, only the names of group leaders are included in the list.

Thị Thủy Nguyễn, Farmers' Union, Ha Giang, Vice chairman
 Thị Hà Lữ, Women's Union - Ha Giang, Vice chairman
 Văn Phương Nguyễn, Na Chuong village, Linh Ho, Ha Giang, Village head

Ninh Thuan

Thị Lan Đậu, Provincial Women's Union, Deputy Head
 Thanh Hùng Lê, Provincial Farmers' Association, Chairperson
 Công Ý Từ, Tuan Tu Cooperative, Member, Cooperative Accountant - Vice Chairman of
 Commune Farmers' Association
 Ký Hùng (likely given), Tuan Tu Cooperative, Director of the Cooperative
 Thị Ái Kator, Phuoc Binh Commune Women's Union, Deputy Head of the Commune
 Women's Union
 Thị Loan Nguyễn, Hanh Rac 2 Village, Village Leader
 Huy Nhật Bồ Bồ, Phuoc Binh Commune Veterans Association, Chairperson of the
 Association
 Thị Thu Phương Nguyễn, My Son Cooperative, Manager
 Thị Nạo Trần, WDF Common Interest Group, Team Leader

Tra Vinh

Thị Phương Trịnh, WU, Vice Chairperson
 Thị Thu Hương Võ, WDF, Director

Tuyen Quang

Thị Minh Châu Ban, Women's Development fund_ Tuyen Quang, Deputy director
 Văn Chung Hoàng, Chiem Hoa vocational training school, Tuyen Quang, rector
 Văn Dương Ban, 186 Tea cooperative, Director
 Đình Thắng Phạm, Thang Loi cooperative, Director
 Phan Dinh Thanh, Thanh Loi Coop, Luc Hanh commune, Director

IX. Mission Itinerary

Dates (2025)	Times	Itinerary	Note
Hanoi			
23 March Sunday	Late afternoon	Initial team meeting in Hanoi	
24 March Monday	8.30-10.00	Meeting with ICO	#205-205, building 2G. Van Phuc Diplomatic compound, No. 294 Kim Ma street
	14.30-16.30	Meeting with MOF	Address: 06-08 Phan Huy Chu street, Hanoi Interpreter required.
	17:30-18:45	Mr Quang – consultant with IFAD	ICO
25 March Tuesday	9.00-10.15	Vietnamese Farmers' Union	
	10.45-12.00	Meeting with MAE	
	15.30-17.00	Australian DFAT – GREAT project	
Team 1: Visit Projects in the North			
26 March Wednesday	Hanoi – Ha Giang Province		
	8.30-14.30	Travel to Ha Giang province (CPRP Ha Giang)	It takes 6hrs from Hanoi to Ha Giang province (Car rental)
Afternoon	3:30 PM – 5:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provincial People's Committee - IFAD Evaluation Delegation - Department of Finance - Department of Agriculture and Environment - Department of Industry and Trade - Department of Science and Technology - Women's Union, Women's Support Fund - Farmers' Association - CSAT Project 	Provincial People's Committee
27 March Thursday	Ha Giang Province		
	7.00-8.30	Travel to Linh Ho commune, Vi Xuyen District	

	8.30-9.00	Visit the Savings & Credit group in Na Kha village	
	9.15-10.00	Visit the infrastructure scheme (IFAD supported in 2015-2020): road and irrigation schemes	Linh Ho village
	10.15-11.00	Visit the Savings & Credit group in Ban Lua village	
	14.00-16.00	Visit the Cao Bo organic tea company, Cao Bo commune, Vi Xuyen District	
28 March Friday	Ha Giang Province to Cao Bang Province		
	8.00-9.30	Visit Thanh Son tea company, Ha Giang city	
	9.45-11.00	Meeting with WU and WDF	
	12:00-18:00	Travel to Cao Bang province (DBRP/CSSP Cao Bang)	Travel to Cao Bang province (DBRP/CSSP Cao Bang to pick up)
	19.00	Dinner with PMU	
29 March Sat	Cao Bang Province		
	08:00 – 09:00	Working session with Tân Việt Á Cooperative (vermicelli production and processing)	Cooperative received APIF funding from the project Location: Đồng Tâm Hamlet, Minh Tâm Commune, Nguyễn Bình District
	9.00-12.00	Visit Pu Vai cooperatives, Thanh Cong commune, Nguyen Binh district and Trung Hieu vermicelli cooperatives (CSSP)	
	13:30 -15:30	Visit Xien Peng cooperatives, Vu Nong commune, Nguyen Binh district	
	15.30-16.30	Visit the CSSP infrastructure scheme (road), Lung Bang-Lung Than and Trieu Nguyen, Vu Nong, Nguyen Binh district	
30 March Sunday	Cao Bang Province		
	9.00-11.00	Visit Quang Trung commune, Trung Khanh district (DBRP project)	To meet members of common interest group, Ga village, Quang Trung commune
	11.00-12.00	Visit the infrastructure scheme (Irrigation canal), Quang Trung commune, Trung Khanh district (supported by DBRP)	

	13.30-16.00	Visit the DBRP community tourism model at Khuoi Ky Stone Village and Ban Gioc Waterfall, Dam Thuy Commune, Trung Khanh District	
31 st March Monday	Cao Bang Province		
	08:00 – 12:00	Delegation internal working session	
	14.00-17.00	Delegation meets with leaders of the Provincial People's Committee and relevant units: - Departments of Finance, Agriculture, and Environment. - Farmers' Association, Cooperative Alliance, Hoang Dinh Giong Political School, and the CSSP Project Coordination Board. - Location: 3rd-floor conference hall, Provincial People's Committee.	Venue: 3rd Floor Hall, CSSP Project Coordination Unit
	18:00 – 20:00	Provincial People's Committee hosts dinner for the delegation	Venue: Guest House – Provincial Government Office
1 April Tuesday	Cao Bang Province to Bac Kan Province		
	7:00-10:00	Travel to Bac Kan province (3PAD/CSSP Bac Kan)	It takes 2.5-3hrs to travel from Cao Bang to Bac Kan province. CSSP Bac Kan vehicle to pick up in Cao Bang province.
	10:00-11:30	Meeting with Bac Kan CSSP PPCO	- CSPE team; - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO
	14:00-16:00	Meeting with Bac Kan PPC	- CSPE team; - Leader of Bac Kan PPC; - Leader of Bac Kan PPC Office; - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO; - Leaders of Department of Planning and Investment, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Industry and Trade, Provincial Farmer's Union;

	16:00 – 17:30	Meeting with Provincial Women’s Union	- CSPE team; - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO; - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan Provincial Women’s Union
	19.00	Reception	- CSPE team - Leader of Bac Kan PPC; - Leader of Bac Kan PPC Office; - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO; - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan Provincial Women’s Union;
2 April	Bac Kan Province		
Wednesday	8.30-11.30	Ngan Son district: - Meeting with District People’s Committee; - Visit the Commercial Chestnut Production and Intensive Cultivation cooperative group in Phieng Duong village in association with Hop Phat Cooperative; visit the infrastructure construction funded by IFAD in Duc Van commune (under CSSP).	- CSPE team - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO; - Leader and Officers of District People’s Committee - Leader and Officers of Commune People’s Committee; - Representatives of Cooperative Groups and Cooperative;
	14:00-17:00	Ba Be district: - Meeting with District People’s Committee; - Visit the winter melon growing cooperative group associated with Yen Duong Cooperative, Na Giao village; visit the infrastructure construction funded by IFAD in Yen Duong commune (under 3PAD).	- CSPE team - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO; - Leader and Officers of District People’s Committee - Leader and Officers of Commune People’s Committee; - Representatives of Cooperative Groups and Cooperative;
3 April	Bac Kan Province to Tuyen Quang Province		
Thursday	8.00-11.30	Bac Kan city – Thanh Binh commune, Cho Moi district (CSSP): - Visit Tan Thanh Agricultural Cooperative; - Visit Vietnam MISAKI Company Limited.	- CSPE team - Leader and Officer of Bac Kan CSSP PPCO; - Representatives of cooperative and company;
	15:00-18:00	Travel to Tuyen Quang province (TNSP Tuyen Quang)	It takes 3hrs to travel from Bac Kan to Tuyen Quang province. Car rental from Bac Kan to Tuyen Quang

	19.00	Dinner with PMU	
4 April Friday	Tuyen Quang Province		
	8.30-9.00	Meeting with PCU	PCU, Car rental
	10.30-11.30	Visit the vocational training school in Chiem Hoa District Meet with Women's Development Fund, Tuyen Quang	Chiem Hoa district
	11.30-14.30	Lunch in Chiem Hoa District	
	15.00-16.30	Visit the 186 Tea Cooperative, Tan Thanh commune, Ham Yen District	Car rental
5 April Saturday	Tuyen Quang Province		
	9.30-11.00	Visit Thanh Loi cooperative, Luc Hanh commune, Yen Son district	Car rental, Yen Son district
	11.30-12.30	Lunch in Tuyen Quang City	
	14.30-16.30	Visit the Song Lo Tea company, Yen Son district	
6 April Sunday	Tuyen Quang Province to Hanoi		
	8:00-17:00	Return to Hanoi	Car rental

Team 2: Visit Projects in the South			
26 March Wednesday	Hanoi to Ben Tre Province		
		Departure from hotel to airport	Car rental
	9.00-11.10	Flight to Ho Chi Minh)	
	11.10-15.00	Travel to Ben Tre province (DBRP/AMD/CSAT Ben Tre)	It takes 2-3hrs from HCM to Ben Tre province. CSAT Ben Tre vehicle to pick up at TSN airport
	15.30-17.00	Meeting with PPC and DOF, DONRE, WU,FU, CSAT PMU	PPC office
27 March	Ben Tre Province		

Thursday	8.00-9.30	Meeting with DOF	DOF and CSAT PMU (DOF office)
	10.00-11.30	Meeting with WDF and FU	WU office
	13.30-15.00	Meeting with DONRE	DONRE office
	15.30-17.00	Visit BEINCO company (got supported from AMD)	BEINCO
28 March	Ben Tre Province - Field visit to Binh Dai district		
Friday	8.00-11.30	Visit the vegetable group using a water-saving irrigation system in Thua Tien hamlet	DPC, CPC,WDF, CSAT
		Visit the clam group at Thừa Thạch hamlet (AMD supported in 2017)	
		Visit the crab group at Thua Long hamlet (AMD supported in 2018)	
	13.30-15.00	Visit the WDF in Dinh Trung commune (CSAT supported in 2023)	DPC, CPC,WDF, CSAT
15.30-17.00	Visit the infrastructure (under CSAT)		
29 March	Ben Tre Province - Field visit Mo Cay Nam district		
Saturday	Morning (8.00-11.30)	Visit HHs/enterprises who got funded by CFAF from AMD in Tan Trung commune	
		Visit the household engaged in garment outsourcing to create jobs for rural workers in Tan Le 2 hamlet (supported by AMD in 2015)	
		Visit the household engaged in plastic basket weaving to create jobs for local workers in Tan Ngai hamlet	
		Visit the household engaged in coconut trading in Tan Hau 2 hamlet (supported by the AMD in 2018)	
	13.30-15.00	Visit the infrastructure scheme (dyke) in Tan An-Tan Hau 1 hamlet, Tan Trung commune (under AMD)	
15.30-17.00	Visit the HHs who got the loan from WDF in Ngai Dang commune		

30 March Sunday	Ben Tre Province to Tra Vinh Province		
	9:00-12:00	Travel to Tra Vinh province (AMD/CSAT Tra Vinh)	It takes 2-3hrs from Ben Tre to Tra Vinh province. CSAT Tra Vinh vehicle to pick up
	18.00	Dinner with PMU	
31 March Monday	Tra Vinh Province		
	8:30-10:00	Meeting with PPC, Provincial Departments (Department of Finance, Department of Agricultural and Environment, Department of Industry and Trade, Department of Home Affairs); WU, WDF and PMU	PPC
	10.30-12.00	Meeting with CSAT PMU	PMU staff and Mr Huynh Nghia Tho (PD of CSAT) and Ms Tran Thi Vien (PD of AMD)
	14.00-16.30	Visit RYNAN Technologies Vietnam and the salinity monitoring system in Long Tri hamlet, Long Duc commune, Tra Vinh city	
1 April Tuesday	Tra Vinh Province		
	8.00-9.30	Visit Ut Mung company (produces and trading products related to coconut) (Dai Duc hamlet, Duc My commune, Can Long district)	
	10.00-11.30	Visit the vegetable farming cooperative Phu Phong 2 and Phu Phong 3, Binh Phu commune, Cang Long district	
	14.00-16.30	Visit infrastructure scheme (road) and Dan Tien cooperative in Phong Phu commune, Cau Ke district.	
2 April Wednesday	Tra Vinh Province to Ninh Thuan Province		
	7.00-11.00	Travel from Tra Vinh to Ho Chi Minh city (3-3.5hrs)	CSAT Tra Vinh vehicle.
	13:10-14:15	Flight from Ho Chi Minh (Tan Son Nhat airport) to Nha Trang (Cam Ranh airport; VN 1344)	
	15.25-17.00	Travel from Cam Ranh airport to Ninh Thuan province (TNSP/RECAF Ninh Thuan)	Province vehicle to pick up at airport
3 April	Ninh Thuan Province		

Thursday	8.00-10.00	Meeting with PPC, Provincial Departments (Deaprtment of Finance, Department of Agricultural and Environment, Department of Industry and Trade, Department of Home Affairs) WU, WDF, FU	PPC
	10.15-11.30	Meeting with WDF	WDF
	14.00-16.00	Visit Tuan Tu cooperative, An Hai commune, Ninh Phuoc district	
4 April	Ninh Thuan Province		
Friday	8.00-11.30	Visit banana growing group, corn growing group, and cow farming group and two saving credit groups in Phuoc Binh commune, Bac Ai district	Phuoc Binh commune
	14.00-17.00	Visit My Son cooperatives group	My Son commune, Bac Ai district
5 April	Ninh Thuan Province to Hanoi		
Saturday	8.00-11.00	Travel from Ninh Thuan to Cam Ranh airport (2hrs)	
	12:45-14:45	Flight to Hanoi	Flight from Nha Trang to Hanoi
	16:00-17:00	CSPE relax and write up notes	

Hanoi			
Dates	Times	Itinerary	Note
7 April Monday	09:00-12:00	CSPE team meeting	IFAD ICO
	10.00 - 11.00	CIRAD	Online; "Leader of SC Policy Dialogue - ASSET Project Senior Agricultural Economist"
	14:00-17:00	CSPE team meeting	IFAD ICO
8 April Tuesday	9.00 -10.00	GEF (Vietnam Environmental Protection Fund)	Nguyen Chi Thanh Street (15 minutes by car from IFAD office). Interpreter required.
	10.30 - 11.30	CRWIS Project	Zoom

	12.00 - 13.00	Climate Change Research Centre, Vietnam Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change	23/62 Nguyen Chi Thanh Road, Dong Da District, Ha Noi capital, Vietnam
	15.00 - 16.00	Australian Embassy	# 8 Dao Tan
9 April Wednesday	09:00 - 10:00	FAO	"Conf. room M3, ground floor m Green One UN House Building 304 Kim Ma St.
	10.30 -11.30	World Bank	63 Ly Thai To Street
	14.00 - 14.45	EU Delegation	Tháp Đông/54 P. Liễu Giai, Cống Vị, Ba Đình, Hà Nội 100000, Vietnam
10 April Thursday	9:00-10:00	Deltared	Số 6 ngõ 31 Nguyễn Chí Thanh
11 April Friday	9:00-11:00	Wrap up meeting with Govt and ICO	MoF

X. Additional information

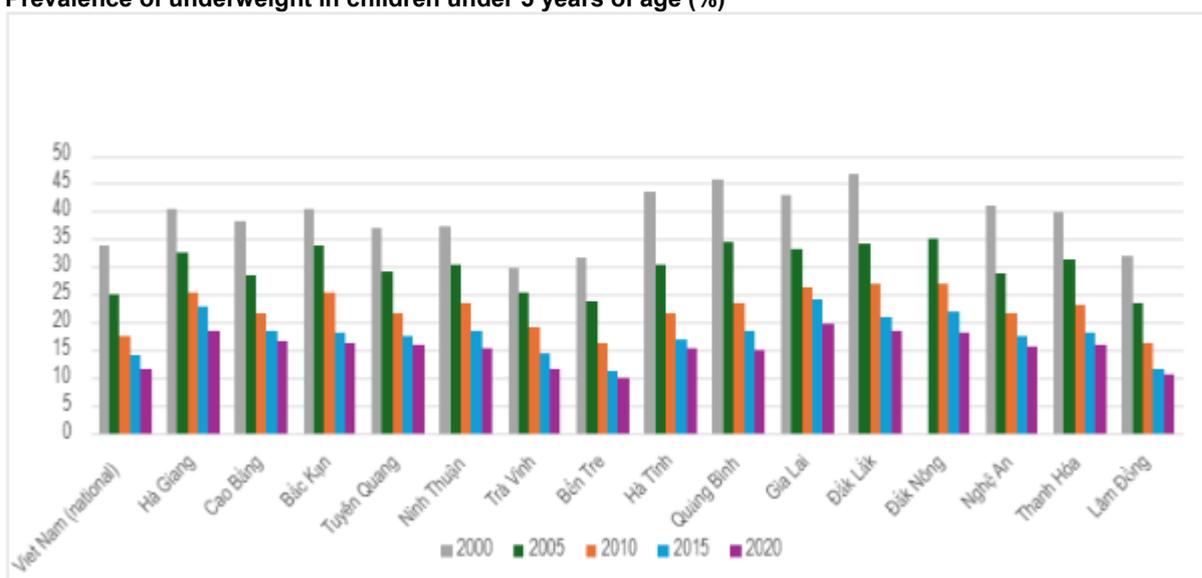
Table A1

Policy dialogue, partnership building and knowledge management actions in the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs

Non-lending activity	2012 COSOP	2019 COSOP
Policy dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, provide policy feedback at province, region, and national levels by COSOP strategic objective, based on identification of relevant policy reference. • IFAD to proactively engage with MPO to consolidate decree on local SEDP. • IFAD to support public/private dialogue platforms to scale up PPP models. • Participate and promote regional discussions on improving business environment and market-oriented governance and promoting value chains. • Strengthen facilitation of collective groups and cooperatives, consolidate collective action promotion policies. • Assist local governments in land planning, land allocation, and consolidation for poor people and women. • Encourage further land use policy dialogue with provinces. • Diversify rural financial services and support people's credit funds and provincial women's and farmers' unions in becoming microfinance institutions. • Contribute to pro-poor climate change considerations by encouraging partnerships, providing technical assistance to enhance MARD capacity to formulate climate change policies, and establish MARD climate change platform for adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy engagement to follow COSOP strategic objectives via knowledge partnerships at national and international levels that foster and scale up innovations for smallholders. • Partnership with State Bank of Viet Nam for microfinance policy contributions (i.e. Financial Inclusion Strategy) • Grants supporting Mekong Delta working group engagement to address climate change issues and farmer organizations involved in inclusive value chains. • SSTC grant facility to provide further opportunities in policies to enhance regulatory and institutional frameworks.
Knowledge management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate, synthesize, and disseminate project-level knowledge to appropriate clients, events, and venues via knowledge management officers. Knowledge products to be developed on client needs. • Build alliances with select national research institutes and universities to conduct deeper policy and technical analysis. • Grants to fill specific knowledge gaps (i.e. holistic approaches to EM development in upland areas, youth migration and rural youth opportunities, PPPs and pro-poor value chain analysis, climate change adaptation research and capacity building). • Grant financing for policy-related research and technical assistance to the NTP-NRD and NTP-RCC and with national research institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICO organizing yearly Mekong Learning and Knowledge Fair. • Produce knowledge products (policy briefs, policy analytical papers, technical reports, media articles ready for dissemination through social media networks, events, television, and other media. • SSTC engaging with private sector engagement with pro-poor value chains, promote policy exchanges, and sharing and adopting rural development solutions for climate change adaptation and resilience.
Partnership building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships to focus on policy options for enhanced market orientation and private sector partnerships, rural finance, and climate change. • Support and work with MARD in lesson learning to develop strong partnership with NTP-NRD, and for climate change issues to identify policy options for agricultural adaptation and mitigation. • Collaborate with FAO for donor coordination in the agriculture sector and policy dialogue on agriculture and rural development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim of mobilize resources and capacity building of government and civic institutions. Private sector a focus (i.e. Sustainable Trade initiative) for PPPs • State Bank of Viet Nam partnership for fostering the formalisation and sustainability of microfinance institutions (i.e., WDF). • Scaling up policy interventions on EMs through partnership with Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs. • Farmers Union for extending technical support

- Continued partnerships with VFU, VWU and other mass organizations to enhance policy dialogue on farmers' organizations and obtain policy feedback from the provinces.
- IFI and bilateral partnerships to be proactively explored when working in the same provinces.
- Continue participation in NGO working groups for agriculture and pursue further partnerships with NGOs in knowledge-sharing and implementation.
- Private sector and bilateral partnerships for PPPs, particularly through the World Economic Forum Group of PPPs.
- Insufficient human resources to fully participate in One UN initiative, to be limited to representation on rural development issue and for strategic documents (i.e. One Plan).
- and business development services.
- Deepen policy and knowledge generation partnerships with Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, and International Rice Research Institute.
- Inclusive value chain development partnerships to focus on the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), Helvetas and the Regional Value Chain Capacity Building Network.

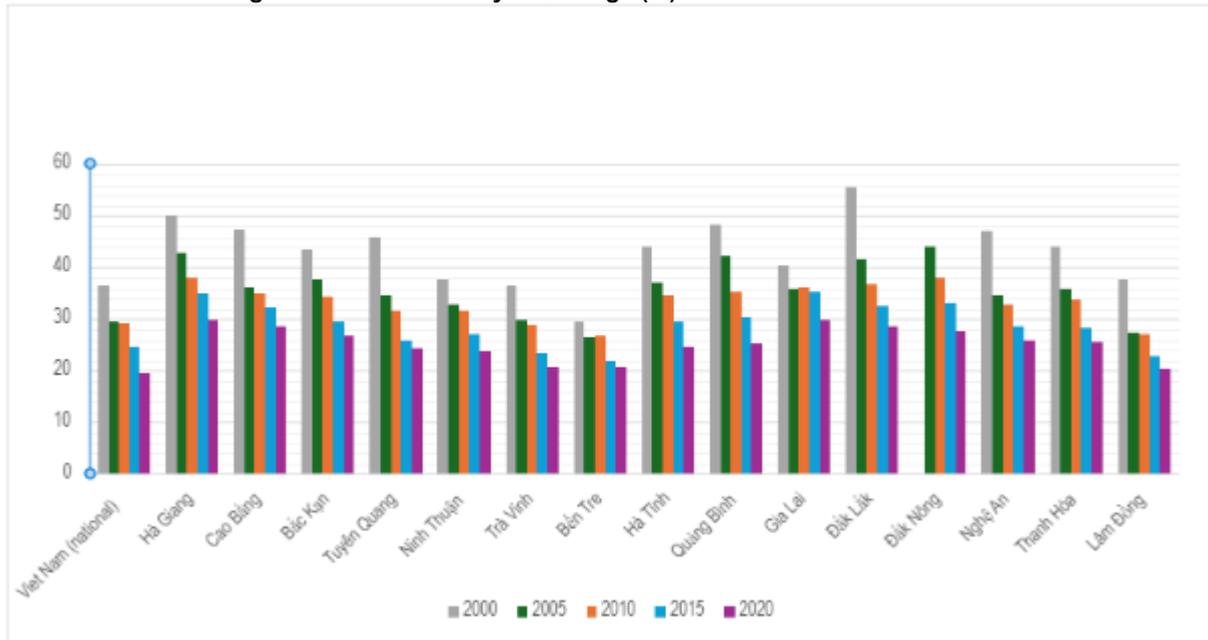
Figure A1
Prevalence of underweight in children under 5 years of age (%)



Source: National Institute of Nutrition

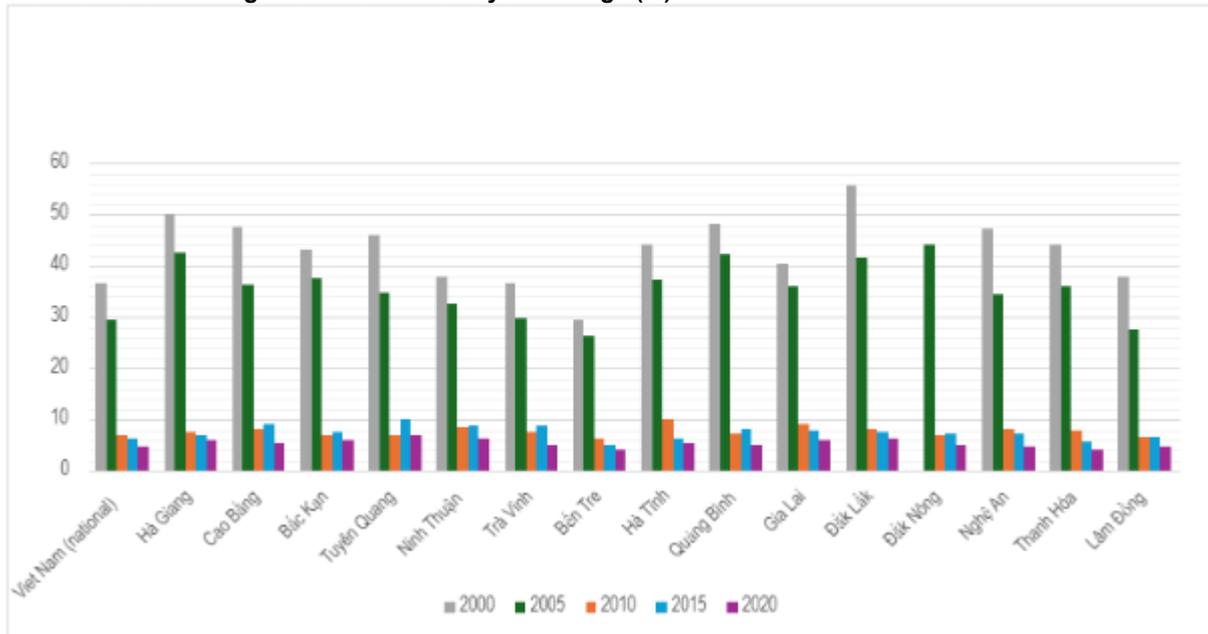
The rates of underweight, stunting and wasting in children under five are clearly higher than the national average in almost all of the provinces where IFAD has worked during the CSPE period. Only Ben Tre and Lam Dong are better than the national average by 2020. This indicates that targeting of the majority provinces has been appropriate in terms of poverty and food insecurity. While there were improvements during the CSPE period, there are clearly still problems regarding child nutrition.

Figure A2
Prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age (%)



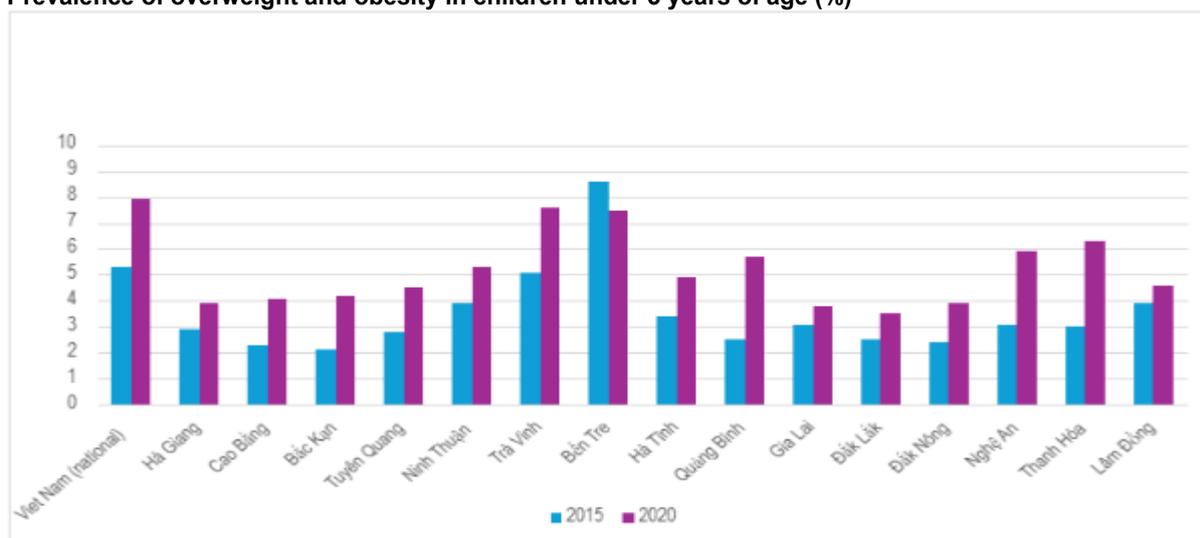
Source: National Institute of Nutrition

Figure A3
Prevalence of wasting in children under 5 years of age (%)



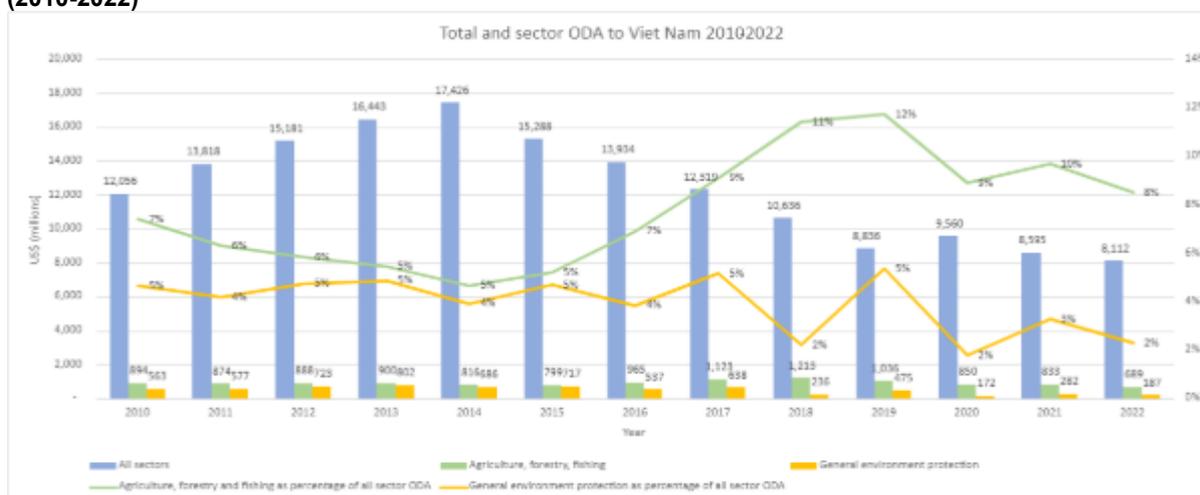
Source: National Institute of Nutrition

Figure A4
Prevalence of overweight and obesity in children under 5 years of age (%)



Source: National Institute of Nutrition

Figure A5
Total ODA (all sectors) and ODA to Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Protection sectors (2010-2022)



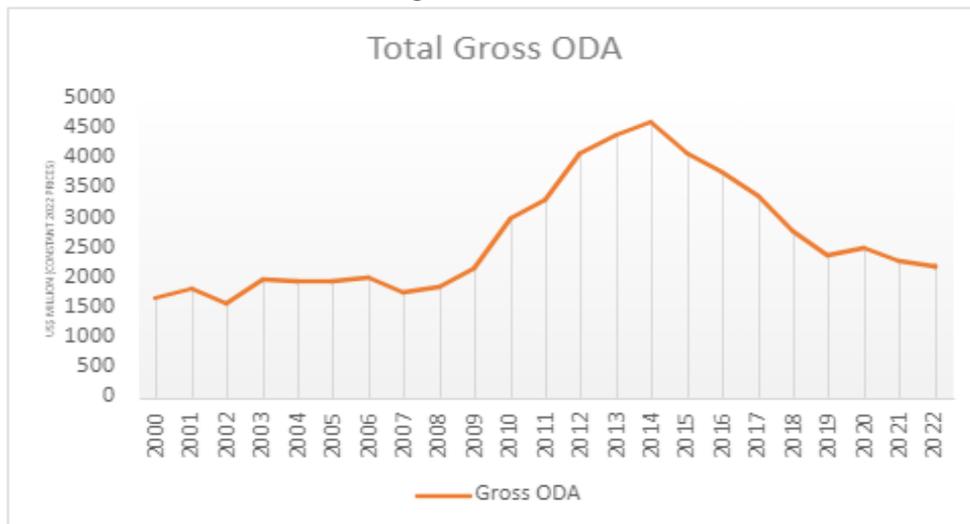
Source: IOE analysis based on Development Assistant Committee (DAC) data from OECD. Period covered: 2010-2022.

Table A2
Top 10 Donor Countries 2012-2022

Gross ODA US\$ Million (Constant 2022 Prices)	
Japan	10455.21
WBG	9899.10
Asian Development Bank	3495.91
Germany	2093.28
France	1920.11
Korea	1779.89
United States	1501.82
Australia	919.28
EU Institutions	626.40
Global Fund	482.73

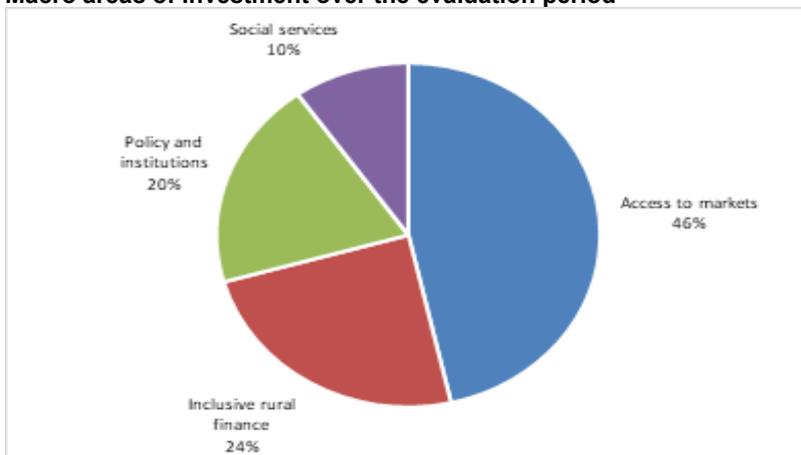
Source: IOE analysis based on Development Assistant Committee (DAC) data from OECD. Period covered: 2012-2022.

Figure A6
Gross ODA flows to Viet Nam during 2000-2022



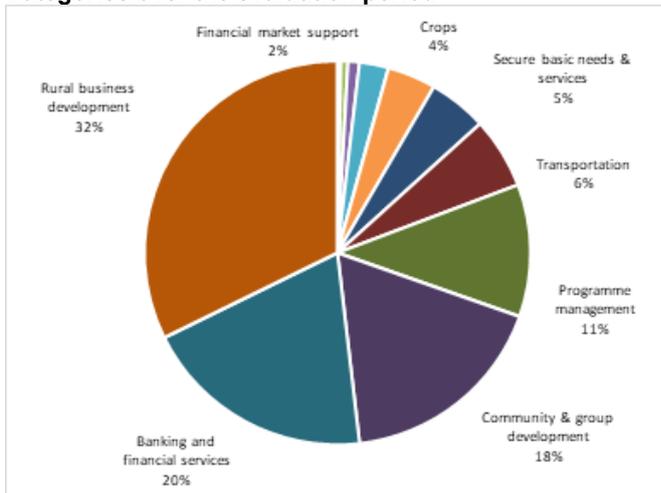
Source: IOE analysis based on Development Assistant Committee (DAC) data from OECD. Period covered: 2000-2022.

Figure A7
Macro areas of Investment over the evaluation period



Source: IOE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data. Period covered: 2013-2024 (not including RECAF and CRWIS).

Figure A8
Categories over the evaluation period



Source: IOE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data. Period covered: 2013-2024 (not incl. RECAF & CRWIS)

Table A3

Evolution of programmatic approaches in the 2003, 2012 and 2019 COSOPs

COSOP	Approaches
2003	The Developing Business with the Rural Poor Programme (DBRP), active from 2008 to 2014, laid the foundation by connecting rural farmers in Cao Bang and Ben Tre to market opportunities. Following this, the Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development Project (3PAD) focused on sustainable forest and land management, while the Economic Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities Project (3EM) supported ethnic minorities in Dak Nong. The Agriculture, Farmers, and Rural Areas Support Project (TNSP) in Gia Lai, Ninh Thuan, and Tuyen Quang further promoted economic inclusion for ethnic minorities and rural households in these regions. Infrastructure has received sizable investments – either as small roads to market, storage or basic drinking water supplies. In addition, inclusive finance has been a significant part of the investments. IFAD has introduced an innovative matching grant Public-Private Producers Partnerships (4P) initiative to attract investments from agribusinesses into potential value chains (for instance, within 3PAD). IFAD also gradually moved from supporting revolving savings and credit funds at community level, to establishing women’s development social funds (in association with the local VWUs), and planning to facilitate these to form Microfinance Institutions (MFIs).
2012	The Sustainable Rural Development for the Poor Project (SRDP) and the Commodity-oriented Poverty Reduction Programme (CPRP) promoted market-based production, inclusive finance, climate-smart, market-oriented development in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, and Ha Giang. Building on the DBRP, the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta (AMD) project in Ben Tre and Tra Vinh advanced climate resilience, paving the way for the Commercial Smallholder Support Project (CSSP). The concept note for one project was approved in 2017 (the Smallholder Adaptation Programme) but it was cancelled in 2023, as the Decree 114/2021/ND-CP on the use of investment loans, issued during its preparation, made it non-viable.
2019	The Climate Smart Agricultural Value Chain Development (CSAT) project is fostering climate-resilient transformation in the Mekong Delta. These programmes have supported Provincial Climate Change Action Plans, including updating master plans for priority CC adaptation subsectors, and supporting Provincial Agricultural Sector Climate Change Action Plans. Looking ahead, there are two projects expected to be approved in December 2024. The upcoming Reduced Emissions through Climate Smart Agroforestry (RECAF) aims to reduce agricultural emissions while supporting sustainable livelihoods. The project Climate Resilient and Inclusive Water Infrastructure for Smallholders in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces (CRWIS) will work to improve water availability and management via climate-resilient infrastructure development and agriculture, linked with flood control and resilience of smallholder agricultural businesses.

Government scorecards

The government scorecard questionnaire was administered to government staff participants of PPC meetings during field visits conducted to the 7 provinces. The survey was anonymous. Overall, 60 responses were collected.

Table A4

Government scorecard results – summary

Questions and sub-questions	Average response
1. In your opinion, how do IFAD projects respond to development needs in the project areas? Do you agree with the following statements?	4.4
1.1 IFAD projects are responsive to government priorities	4.5
1.2 IFAD projects respond to the needs of small farmers	4.5
1.3 IFAD projects support women's stronger decision-making in the family and community	4.3
1.4 IFAD projects support livelihoods of ethnic minority communities	4.6
1.5 IFAD projects pay attention to both crop/livestock production and nutrition	4.6
1.6 IFAD projects support climate change adaptation	4.5
1.7 IFAD projects support households' access to markets for crop/animal produce	4.5
1.8 IFAD projects support work with the private sector for value chain development	4.4
1.9 IFAD projects support households' access to rural finance	4.5
1.10 IFAD pays sufficient attention to environmental sustainability	4.5
Average of sub-questions 1	
2. Do IFAD projects provide technical advice to the government of Vietnam, in which fields?	4.5
2.1 The technical capacity of IFAD projects is strong on agricultural production	4.6
2.2 The technical capacity of IFAD projects is strong on small rural infrastructure	4.4
2.3 The technical capacity of IFAD projects is strong on nutrition	4.4
2.4 The technical capacity of IFAD projects is strong on farmers' access to markets	4.4
Average of sub-questions 2	
3. What is your personal assessment about the interaction between IFAD and government offices?	4.3
3.1 IFAD projects provide resources to government staff to work in project villages	4.5
3.2 IFAD is interested in the knowledge generated in project districts	4.5
3.3 IFAD projects provide opportunities to share knowledge between provinces, districts	4.5
3.4 IFAD projects provide opportunities to share on project management with other projects	4.5
3.5 IFAD supervision missions allow project implementation to improve	4.4
3.6 IFAD projects have a specific role that doesn't duplicate other donor projects	4.5
3.7 IFAD projects use innovative approaches to agriculture and rural development in the project area	4.4
Average of sub-questions 3	4.4

Box A1

The evolution of MOP-SEDPs

Participatory appraisal and planning processes at commune level were used first in Tuyen Quang with PRMP in the 1990s, and these were replicated and gradually developed. (ref CPE 2012)

The standard SEDP process tended to be relatively top-down from national and provincial levels. New ideas were gradually introduced. For instance, in Ha Tinh Rural Develt Project, secret voting was used in the selection process for rural infra and other activities, to avoid elite capture. (ref CPE 2012) – but this was more focused on IFAD infra selection and wasn't well articulated to the commune level SEDPs yet.

RIDP and DPRPR introduced participatory approaches to the commune level SEDPs.

- RIDP's bottom up planning, participatory assessment and decentralization of activities to commune authorities were scaled up into local govt and also to NTPs. The process built social capital and strengthened empowerment, with local persons able to set their own priorities for investments. (RIDP PCR).
- DPRPR aimed to pilot market orientation to the SEDPs but was didn't build sufficient capacities. It was successful in implementing participatory socio-economic planning at the commune level in 15 communes (in line with provincial decisions)

In the Programme for Improving Market Participation of the Poor (IMPP), IFAD introduced and piloted the market-oriented participatory SEDP planning process in 2009 in target communes. The innovation was introducing market information and value chain analyses; as well as ensuring participation and ownership of stakeholders at village, commune and district level. It promoted commune-level market opportunities to be integrated into the five-year SEDP process in 30 project communes.

The MOP-SEDP approach has been replicated in the subsequent projects – such as DBRP and 3PAD, and onwards (as well as in non-project communes), as well as being expanded for use at district level.

CCA and DRM were incorporated into the later MOP-SEDPs. A GoV circular in 2016 guided local governments to include CC and DRM into their SEDPs. In AMD, a participatory, climate-adaptive, market-oriented SEDP process at commune and district levels was tested in 30 project communes. The SEDP Handbook was approved by the PPC and applied to all 106 communes and wards in Tra Vinh province from 2018. This climate informed SEDP manual was developed in each province based on lessons learned. There were some difficulties initially, due to limited capacities

MOP-SEDP has been replicated in all of the 11 provinces where IFAD worked during the CSPE period. It was particularly valued over the traditional process for achieving better integration of local resources for poverty reduction and economic development targets (including the NTPs and government budget, along with project and local contributions). In some provinces, it was replicated in all communes, with- or without IFAD funding.

MPI institutionalized the approach with Circular No. 01/2017/TT-BKHĐT on February 14, 2017, providing official guidance on the commune-level investment planning process for medium-term and annual NTPs. The Circular outlines a seven-step process, which reflects IFAD's experiences and lessons learned.

Source: CPE 2012; 2012 COSOP; COSOP 2012-19 Completion Review; 2019 COSOP; AMD Self-Assessment; plus various PCRs (including IMPP, DPRPR, RIDP) and interviews.

Table A5

Project – level effectiveness – a fuller breakdown

ToC Objectives	Proposed sub-pathway (refer to ToC)	Principal indicators from project logframes	Achievement status (number of indicators)			Contributing projects
			Underachieved	Met	Overachieved	
SO 1 – pro-poor, stable VCs leverage investment from private sector	Improved marketing and certification	At least 3 collective brands are registered monopoly.	1			3EM
		Number of departments/agencies in the province awarded with ISO 9001:2000		1		DBRP
		No. of agro-processing enterprises implemented national food safety standards		1		DBRP
	Private sector invests in farmer groups and coops	25% increase in the number of agribusiness related private sector investment in project areas			1	TNSP (Tuyen Quang)
	Farmers and groups increasing sales to private sector	Number of supported rural enterprises reporting an increase in profit			1	AMD
		Number of poor farmer have stable jobs after the trainings		1		DBRP
		20000 poor HHs engaged in profitable enterprises supported by the project.	1			SRDP
		20% increase in value of targeted value chain commodities marketed annually per district			1	TNSP (Tuyen Quang)
	Smallholders access markets	At least 75% of group members can apply knowledge from training courses, study tours			1	3EM
		Number of family enterprises and MSMEs in the province accessing BDS			1	DBRP
		Rate of CIGs group accessed market			1	TNSP (Ninh Thuan)
		60% of the project communes in districts of Son Duong, Yen Son, Ham Yen, Chiem Hoa and 30% from districts of Na Hang and Lam Binh			1	TNSP (Tuyen Quang)

		fall into the market ready category (better access to services, market information, market orientation of the commune officials, poor households participating in profitable market opportunities and local decision making), 20% potential products sold in markets annually)					
	Local planning policies incorporate and upgrade pro-poor VCs	PCI: 72.47 point at the end of the Project	1			TNSP (Tuyen Quang)	
	Adoption of farm production models, techniques and technologies	At least 1500 households are applied new innovations			1	3EM	
S02 – financial inclusion for climate resilient livelihoods	Smallholders and rural households access financial services	50% of HHs in project communes accessing credit for farming activities	1			AMD	
		Persons in rural areas accessing financial services	1	1		CSAT, CSSP	
		Number of households, CIGs and MSMEs in the province accessed to long-, medium-, short-term loans			1		DBRP
		100% of communes in 7 pilot districts preparing holistic, annual MoSEDPs.		1	1		DBRP, SRDP
		At least 355 new women’s SCGs			1		SRDP
	Smallholders and rural households take out and repay loans	Number of SCGs can get loans			1		3EM
		Number of household make repayment over 95% of total loans	1				3EM
		People use loans efficiently and for right purposes			1		3EM
		Less than 5% non-performing loans in WU SCG portfolios	1				AMD

	Funds established by projects graduate to MFIs (microfinance institutions)	Capacities improved to provide micro-finance services in the long term to at least 2,000 women, including 40% poor and near-poor		1		TNSP (Ninh Thuan)
	Sustainable financial services	SCGs maintain a minimum annual saving rate growth of at least 15% over base-year savings and <5% non-performing loans in their portfolios	1		1	CSSP
		Of US\$20,5 million invested in commodity-targeted, climate-adapted infrastructure, commodity production and enterprises development in Project communes, at least 70% of investments show an IRR > 10%. investments			1	CSSP
		At least 1500 poor households undertaking profitable CSA investments			1	SRDP
SO3 – environmental sustainability and climate resilience for ethnic minorities’ smallholder activities	New production processes lead to reduced emissions	At least 12 provincial and 100 commune level climate smart pro-poor value chains			1	SRDP*
	Growth and diversification of Income	Number of households with forestland LURCs	1			3PAD
		HHs with at least 20-25% improvement in household assets ownership index	3			AMD, CSSP, TNSP
		New jobs and increased employment in project communes		1	1	AMD, SRDP
		Reduction in the multi-dimensional poverty rate and prevalence of people below the poverty line			3	CSSP, SRDP, TNSP
		increase in income of (rural) poor HHs having wage, non-farm sector employment and from targeted value chain sources			3	AMD, SRDP, TNSP
	Sufficient food production for home	Annual agricultural production improvement rate is of at least 4% since Y3 of the project			1	TNP (Tuyen Quang)

	consumption and nutritional diversity					
	Climate-resilient infrastructure	At least \$30 million invested in profitable climate resilient infrastructure, farming			1	AMD*
		100% of project communes have infrastructure supervision boards capable of supervising, inspecting and maintaining infrastructure projects in their communes by end-PY2		1		AMD*
		New or existing rural infrastructure protected from climate events (US\$' 000/Km)		1	1	AMD*
	Climate-smart practices and knowledge increases resilience	Individuals and households can apply science and technology in production, environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices from training courses and study tours	1		1	3EM, CSSP
		At least 80% of provincial communes and districts have adopted a community-based disaster risk management plan and community adaptation plan			1	AMD
		Individuals and poor smallholder HHs whose climate resilience score has been increased by 30%	1		1	CSSP, AMD
	Community based infrastructure	At least 80% of people are satisfied with the local infrastructure projects.			1	3EM*
		Communes with commune development fund		1		3PAD*
		Small infrastructure works, road built, irrigation schemes built, water supplies schemes built, electricity scheme built, rural markets built		4	5	3PAD, DBRP, TNSP (Ninh Thuan, Tuyen Quang)*
		33 project communes have Commune Infrastructure Supervision Boards capable of supervising,		1		CSSP*

		inspecting and maintaining infrastructure activities in their communes by end-PY2. Communes - Number				
		Results from use and maintenance of CDF-invested schemes		1		TNSP (Gia Lai)*
		Funding for training for improving people capacity		1		TNSP (Ninh Thuan)*
		Total of HHs benefited from supported inputs and productive infrastructure			1	TNSP (Ninh Thuan)*

Sources: CSPE Team analysis of reported under-achievement, meeting targets or under-achievement of the project indicators implemented under the 2012 and 2019 COSOPs - Project PCRs
Indicators with an * were taken from output level indicators, as there were not outcome level indicators regarding this issue

Table A6

Summary of ratings of the IFAD projects in Viet Nam during the CSPE period

Evaluation criteria	IOE	PMD	DBRP		3PAD		3EM		TNSP		SRDP		CPRP		AMD		CSSP	
			IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR	IOE	PCR
Relevance	4.57	4.75	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4		4
Effectiveness	4.57	4.75	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5		4
Efficiency	4.57	4.63	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5		4
Sustainability	4.29	4.50	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	5		4
Rural Poverty Impact	4.86	5.00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5		
Innovation	4.86	4.88	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5		4
Scaling-up	4.43	4.75	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4		4
GEWE	4.57	4.88	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		4
ENRM	4.71	5.00	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5		5
CCA	4.00	4.63	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	5	4	4		5
IFAD performance	4.71	4.88	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5		5
Government performance	4.86	4.75	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5		4

Source: PCRs and PCRVs/PPE (in the case of 3PAD)

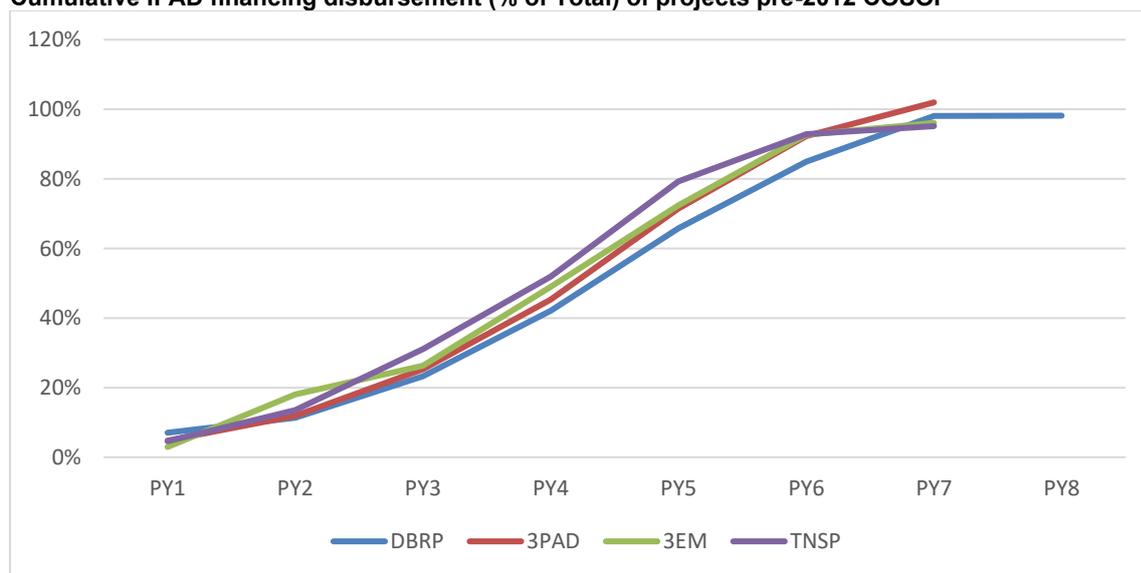
Note – for CSSP – there has been no PCR/V or evaluation conducted at the time of writing. There is no PCR rating for Rural Impact, as the IFAD Guidelines now recommend that no rating is given unless there has been an impact assessment carried out.

Table A7
Innovations

Innovation Domain	Piloted	Replicated	Scaled up
Institutional			
Decentralization to provincial level	IFAD has led in this	Govt policy is supporting	Other DPs need to now work at provincial level also
Participatory Market Oriented Socio-Economic Development Plan (MOP-SEDP)	Piloted in the IMPP in 2009	Replicated in all projects	Applied by PPCs at commune level (issued guidelines)
Participatory Infrastructure Development	Piloted in all projects	Replicated in all projects	NTP-NRD included recommendation to incorporate community contributions of cash and labor. Is being applied nationally – perhaps independent of the IFAD experience
Strategic investment plan (SIP)/value chain action plan (VCAP) planning process	Developed during 2012 COSOP period	Replicated in IFAD provinces and adopted by Government programmes (NTP-NRD and OCOP)	
PPPs/4Ps (incl. Agri-business Promotion Investment Fund (APIF) and other competitive grants)	Piloted in 3PAD in Bac Kan 2012	Replicated in all IFAD projects / provinces-KOICA is continuing to support VCs, linking to some Korean companies & grant funds. Many enterprises sustainably linked to producers.	Grants can't be scaled up further with IFAD as not supported by Govt decrees. ²⁰⁹
Social			
Common Interest Groups /Collaborative Groups	Piloted in many projects	Replicated – however, CIGs are not legally recognized, so they are generally replicated as Coops or CGs	Learning nationally was incorporated into the Cooperatives Law via a broad range of policy discussions A revised Decree on organization and operation of CGs was drafted in 2017 by MPI to support legalizing the existing CIGs/CGs/ Cooperatives supported by IFAD. It became Law in 2023. ²¹⁰
Farmer-to-Farmer and Enterprise-to-Farmer training methods	Piloted in many projects	E2F training is continuing in many places. F2F lead trainers are certified and able to continuing training but usually lack finance	Nat Extension Centre under MARD have encouraged F2F training – but link to IFAD?
Financial			
Women's Development Fund (WDF)	In all projects	Replicated in all projects, continued by VWU	Can't be scaled up further as not supported by Govt decrees

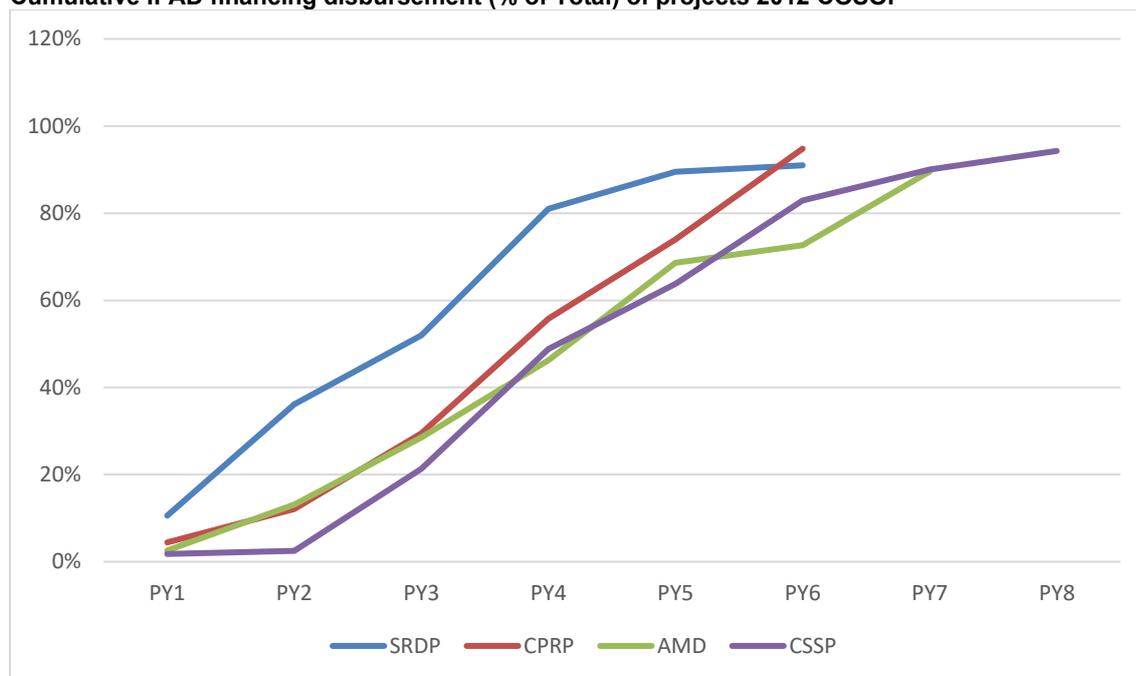
Pro-poor VC development, incl. competitive matching grants /other rural finance instruments	Developed during 2012 COSOP period	Replicated in IFAD provinces and adopted by Government programmes (NTP-NRD and OCOP) and mass organizations.	
Technological			
Piloting of PES (Payment for Environmental Services) and PFES (Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services)	Piloted in CSSP at small scale	Planned for RECAF – but not yet replicated	
Environmental monitoring techniques – eg. Salinity and pest measurement systems coupled with satellite monitoring (RYLAN) ; smart water quality and smart water pumping system	Piloted in AMD, CSAT & MPTF grant	Replication? Seems to be expanding in Mekong Delta under the enterprise, but unclear if supporting IFAD’s target groups. Currently not linked to the national network.	
Digitally enhanced VC platform for women & youth	Piloted in MPTF grant		
New crop / livestock types or raising methods eg. shrimp/crab; bitter melon; cucumber; fodder grasses, etc	New in that province - piloted in many projects	Replication is unclear. If there is a market it is assumed that the pilots will be replicated	
Use of certification standards – eg. OCOP, VietGAP, organic, EU export standards	Piloted in many projects with IFAD support	Enterprises are continuing to expand the use of the certification systems – beyond the target groups	

Figure A8
Cumulative IFAD financing disbursement (% of Total) of projects pre-2012 COSOP



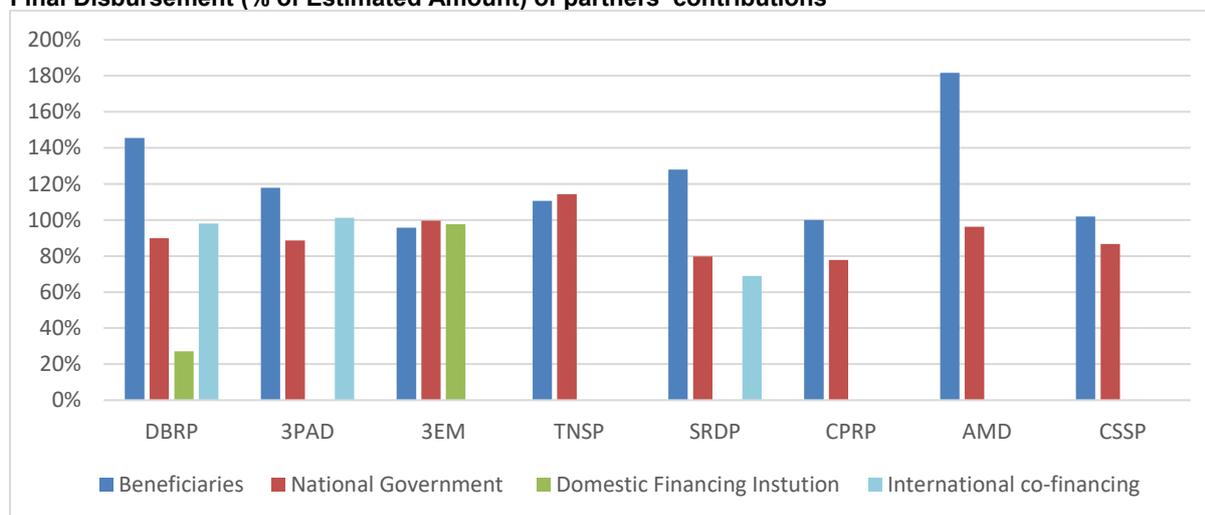
Source: CSPE analysis based on IFAD data (Oracle Business Intelligence).

Figure A9
Cumulative IFAD financing disbursement (% of Total) of projects 2012 COSOP



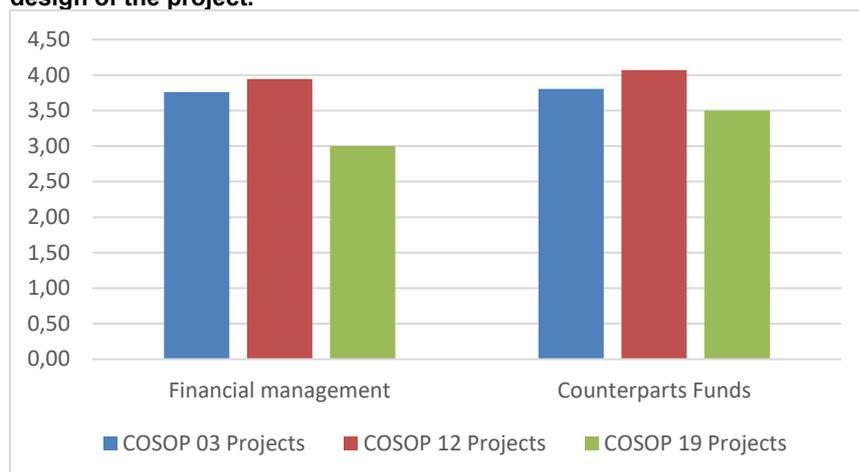
Source: CSPE analysis based on IFAD data (Oracle Business Intelligence).

Figure A10
Final Disbursement (% of Estimated Amount) of partners' contributions



*CSAT was not included as no updated data for partners disbursements are available
 Source: CSPE analysis based on OBI and PCRs data.

Figure A11
Financial Management and Counterpart Funds scores from IOE, on average arranged by the COSOP of design of the project.



Source: IOE

Box A2

CSSP and CSAT both presented significantly higher estimated and actual costs per beneficiary compared to earlier interventions. For instance, CSSP recorded a final cost of US\$1,037 per beneficiary. This is primarily due to the project's high total cost, comparable only to TNSP among completed projects, coupled with a relatively modest target for direct beneficiaries. The latter can be attributed to the project's implementation in Cao Bang and Bac Kan, both mountainous provinces with a high concentration of ethnic minority populations. CSAT also presents a high estimated cost per beneficiary at design—calculated at US\$1,137—although completion data are not yet available as the project remains ongoing. This figure is justified by CSAT being the most expensive project in the portfolio, with a total budget of US\$136.38 million, supported by additional financing such as DFCD and AF. Despite a relatively high target of 120,000 direct beneficiaries, the cost per beneficiary remains elevated due to the overall scale of the investment. RECAF similarly shows a higher estimated cost per beneficiary compared to previous projects. This is largely a result of its broader geographical coverage, spanning five provinces—the largest coverage area within the portfolio—which naturally increases implementation costs.

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