



Bangladesh Country Programme Evaluation

**Evaluation Committee – 89th Session
9 October 2015**

Country programme

- **30 projects** since 1979 (5 on-going).
- **Total project costs** US\$ 1,7 billion ; IFAD loans US\$ 673.9 million; US\$ 366 million in national counterpart funding.
- Programme focus: Pro-poor rural infrastructure, microcredit, agricultural development, access to natural resources, value chains, access to markets, and gender.
- The current COSOP (2012-2018) focuses on the adaptation of rural livelihoods to climate change, improving market access, and on scaling up of successful approaches.
- Country Office was formally set up in Dhaka in 2011- hosted by WFP and staffed by a Country Programme Officer (CPO).

Key Findings

Portfolio performance is satisfactory

- Strong relevance to national priorities and to rural poverty reduction.
- Coverage of remote, and environmentally fragile rural areas inhabited by the poorest in the country.
- **Important results in several areas:** rural infrastructure development, community natural resource management and in enhancing access to markets.

Key findings (cont)

Agriculture

- Highly relevant to national priorities; contribution to increasing agriculture productivity and production (crops, livestock fisheries).
- Limited investment: cost-sharing partner in NATP+ relatively smaller components in various projects.
- No direct work with Ministry of Agriculture; Limited policy engagement (not active partner).

Microfinance

- Substantial contribution to the expansion of the microfinance sector across Bangladesh -reached aprox. 600,000 poor farmers.
- Evolution of support in line of emergence of new types of credit.
- Despite maturity of MFI sector pockets of locations and target groups still do not have access to credit.

Key Findings (cont.)

Environment and climate change

- Important and highly relevant efforts on sustainable natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation (mainly through infrastructure).
- Weak awareness of environmental implications of new activities (e.g livestock, off-farm enterprises) and of intensification.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

- Significant contribution. Advances in: economic empowerment, increased mobility, enhanced awareness of women's rights, and increased participation in decision-making process.
- Gender considerations mainstreamed into all IFAD operations.

Key Findings (cont.)

Prospects of sustainability are mixed

- Strong ownership by government and stakeholders. On the other hand there is limited revenue budget for Operation and Maintenance of infrastructure and the sustainability of Beel User Groups is not guaranteed. Institutional support not strong for MSMEs.

Innovations

- Introduced in several areas (agriculture technologies, microfinance, community-based resource management, infrastructure) and many examples of **scaling up**.

Key Findings (cont.)

Non-lending activities are moderately satisfactory

- **Knowledge Management.** One weak link of the programme- despite recent efforts. Knowledge not systematically captured and shared in the programme.
- Good **partnership** with government implementing partners as well as other donors and NGOs at the operational level. Strong co-financing in more recent years. Weak partnerships at strategic policy level.
- **Policy Dialogue.** Relevant policy issues identified in COSOP. Focus of IFAD-GoB relationship remains operations based , with limited repercussion at policy level.
- **Grants.** Substantial support to the programme - directly linked to the portfolio and positive results (research and development, and knowledge management). Some missed opportunities in the utilization of findings.

Conclusions

1. Overall IFAD-GOB partnership satisfactory. Strong, fruitful and long standing collaboration.
2. Significant contribution to rural poverty reduction & substantial value to the country.
3. Areas of priority attention and future investment:
 - Agriculture
 - Rural credit
 - Environmental management and climate change
4. Requirements for long term sustainability and scaling up not sufficiently in place.
 - Insufficient broad-based institutional partnerships
 - Knowledge generation and sharing potential has not been untapped. Low IFAD visibility
 - Limited country presence

Recommendations

1. **Stronger focus on agriculture.** Strengthening investment in extension and research, supply chain development, intensification, diversification, livestock, and inland fisheries.
2. **Access to credit should remain a priority** for the IFAD portfolio in Bangladesh. Ensure access to the poor & support capacity development and more specific products and services (debt management, technology, business and marketing capacity development).
3. **Environmental protection as a priority in the face of emerging challenges.** Careful assessment of the potentials and risks through environmental assessment processes. Pursuit of environmental objectives and risks mitigation.

Recommendations (cont).

4. **Broadening policy and institutional support for the programme.**
Engage more proactively with the Ministries at the central level.
Opportunity to be a partner in wider national policy processes.
5. **Further investment in Knowledge Management.** Develop thorough KM strategy including plan for specific knowledge products.
6. **Enhancing IFAD presence and capacity in the country** including out-posting the Bangladesh CPM.

Thank you for your attention