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Investing in rural people

IFAD Management's response: Republic of Maldives Post-Tsunami Agriculture and Fisheries Rehabilitation Programme – Programme performance evaluation

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For: Review

IFAD Management's response: Republic of Maldives Post-Tsunami Agriculture and Fisheries Rehabilitation Programme – Programme performance evaluation

1. Management welcomes the programme performance evaluation (PPE) of the Post-Tsunami Agriculture and Fisheries Rehabilitation Programme (PT-AFReP) in the Republic of Maldives, and wishes to express its appreciation for the candidness of the report.
2. Overall, Management agrees with the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD's (IOE's) assessment of the programme's performance and notes that the PPE recognizes the particular achievement of PT-AFReP in the area of policy and the overall environment of the fisheries sector, with a positive contribution to the long-term sustainability of the sector.
3. Despite IFAD's commitment to act quickly in the face of an unprecedented disaster, Management recognizes that the haste and the changing nature of the post-tsunami situation served to limit the quality of the initial design, particularly for longer-term relevancy in a rapidly changing environment. Management also acknowledges the shortcomings in defining a solid targeting strategy, which hampered the design and ultimate effectiveness of the programme.
4. Management appreciates the PPE recommendations, which are generally already being internalized and acted upon. Management's detailed view on the proposed recommendations follows:

- Post-disaster situations. In post-disaster situations, IFAD should not focus on immediate disaster relief, but rather on "initiatives that help bridge the gap between emergency relief and the restoration of the development process".

Response from Management: Agreed. This recommendation is aligned with the IFAD Policy on Crisis Prevention and Recovery (2006), which emphasizes IFAD's role in supporting interventions that promote the process of transitioning from relief to recovery. With inter-agency collaboration and partnerships, this position is also reinforced. Moreover, since 2011, the IFAD Guidelines for Early Disaster Recovery provide for a rigorous internal process, ensuring the quality of project design also in cases of disaster response, as well as the inclusion of activities that IFAD should implement to support the transition from recovery to longer-term development.

- Long-term goals. In the recovery process, the design should address long-term goals rather than short-term needs, with a demand-driven participatory approach and technical assessment to prevent underuse and inefficient investments.

Response from Management: Agreed. The design approach and model under which IFAD operates in Maldives has changed considerably since PT-AFReP was designed. Today, IFAD maintains a rigorous process to ensure the quality and relevance of design through regular review by the Country Programme Management Team and quality enhancement and quality assurance reviews. Among other things, the review system in place ensures that participatory and demand-driven approaches are adopted at design, which has been the case for the current portfolio. Moreover, throughout programme implementation, IFAD's supervision and implementation support allow for remedial actions to ensure the longer-term relevance of programme interventions.

- Targeting. A targeting strategy must be developed and implemented in a systematic way based on sound technical justifications.

Response from Management: Agreed. Management again wishes to draw attention to the vastly changed context and design approach adopted by IFAD today, where targeting and good understanding of the poverty context are fundamental premises of project design.

- Effective monitoring and evaluation systems. There must be sufficient investment and support to capacity-building to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, analytical studies and documentation.

Response from Management: Agreed. This message has been communicated extensively to national stakeholders and counterparts, and has been realized through investment in updating the M&E systems of ongoing projects in Maldives and in dedicated M&E staff.

Moreover, the following ongoing corporate actions, as part of the Development Effectiveness Framework, will contribute to implementation of the recommendation: (i) upgrading of the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS); (ii) improvement of key tools to measure and manage for results, including logical frameworks; (iii) establishment of processes to track results in real time through information technology systems; and (iv) use of broader impact assessments of IFAD activities to maximize learning.

Moreover, through the US\$3.5 million Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR) grant, approved by the Executive Board in September 2016, Management will sponsor systematic training and certification of project staff across IFAD's operations on M&E and impact assessment. A customized, modular curriculum will be taught within a wider project management approach, as opposed to a purely technical competency, and training will be delivered in regional locations (including three in the Asia and the Pacific region).

- Gender and women's empowerment. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be supported with a more systematic approach.

Response from Management: Agreed. Future investments will undertake gender-sensitive poverty and livelihoods analysis at design. For ongoing investments, gender action plans have been initiated to better mainstream gender issues and their monitoring during implementation.

5. Management thanks IOE for this productive process and is committed to internalizing lessons learned and outcomes of the exercise to further improve the performance of IFAD-funded programmes in Maldives and elsewhere.