Nicaragua Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation 2016-17
Main findings and recommendations

97th session of the Evaluation Committee
12 July 2017
Cooperation IFAD-Nicaragua: basic facts

- **10 projects** since 1979 (3 ongoing)
- Total IFAD loans for US$ 148m; total project costs US$ 336m (of which US$ 56m Gov counterpart funding and beneficiaries’ contribution)
- Two COSOPs: 2005 and 2012
- No country presence
Findings: Portfolio Performance

• **Relevance.** Project objectives aligned with government strategies and priorities. NICARIBE, first intervention supporting indigenous and afro-descendants along the Caribbean coast

• **Effectiveness:** in many projects targets surpassed (100% +) for population outreach, infrastructure (feeder roads). Important technology transfer (post-harvest management, certified seeds, drip irrigation)

  - But limited progress in access to rural credit (21-87% of funds disbursed); low outreach to indigenous populations in the Caribbean Coast (25%)

• **Efficiency.** Slow project start up and implementation, largely due to restructuring of public institutions in charge of them
Findings: Impact

• Gross margin increase (+25% to +82%) among farmers and livestock producers assisted by FAT, PRODESEC and PROCAVAL, thanks to productivity improvements and linkages with markets and value chains (e.g., coffee, cacao, rice, grains, meat, fruits and vegetables, dairy products)

• Cooperatives have been strengthened and linked to value chains

• The impact on institutions and policies is less evident but project experience has informed the preparation of sectoral programmes (e.g., Programa Nacional de Agroindustria Rural)
Findings: Other criteria

- **Sustainability** prospects linked to integration of primary production and inclusion in value chains. Threats: limited permanent technical assistance, access to credit and institutional empowerment

- **Gender equality.** Large participation and leadership of women in production activities and organisations. However, gender equality objectives poorly reflected in M&E systems

- **Innovations** in participatory approaches to contracting and assessing technical assistance services; agricultural technical packages generated. Examples of **scaling up** by WB and SDC

- Attention to **natural resource management** and to **climate change adaptation** started late (from 2011: MTR PROCAVAL; COSOP preparation)
Non-lending activities

- **Knowledge Management.** Publications, regional workshops. But limited progress compared to ambitious objectives of COSOP 2012. Difficult to access technical information accumulated through projects. Weak M&E

- **Solid partnerships** with governmental institutions. Limited partnership with non-governmental actors (private sector)

- **Progress on the rural policy dialogue** was mainly through COSOP preparation, project design and implementation

  ➢ Some influence on public programmes: support to small and medium producers, new development opportunities to promote women as active economic actors (FAT and PROCAVAL)
• IFAD’s strategy consistent with national and sectoral policies

• More recent geographic targeting of indigenous and Afro-descendants on Caribbean coast

• IFAD’s strategy evolved from focus on production support to access to markets and value chain integration

• At the sub-national level, IFAD-funded projects not yet fully adapted to territorial and local development plans

• Natural resource management and climate change adaptation came late as strategic concerns
Conclusions

• Significant contribution to rural development in Nicaragua: productivity increase, access to markets and work on value chains

➢ Limitations due to continuous institutional changes, restructuring and turn-over in project teams

• Thematic and methodological specialisation: family farming in dry areas

• High appreciation as cooperating partner and “advisor” of the government for rural development

• Opportunities exist to improve non-lending activities: limitations in knowledge management and analysis of the experiences
Five Strategic Recommendations

1. Consolidate a territorial approach in the country programme. Integration with development processes taking place in regions and areas of intervention.

2. Strengthen the programme’s effectiveness and efficiency. Make better use of experience and approaches developed by past projects.

3. Strengthen actions to provide market access to family farmers and indigenous peoples. Requires partnerships with agribusiness companies and producers’ organizations.

4. Strengthen IFAD support to the Government’s climate change adaptation efforts.

5. Strengthen and improve the programme’s M&E system.