



Nicaragua Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation 2016-17

Main findings and recommendations

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Independent Office
of Evaluation



Investing in rural people

Cooperation IFAD-Nicaragua: basic facts

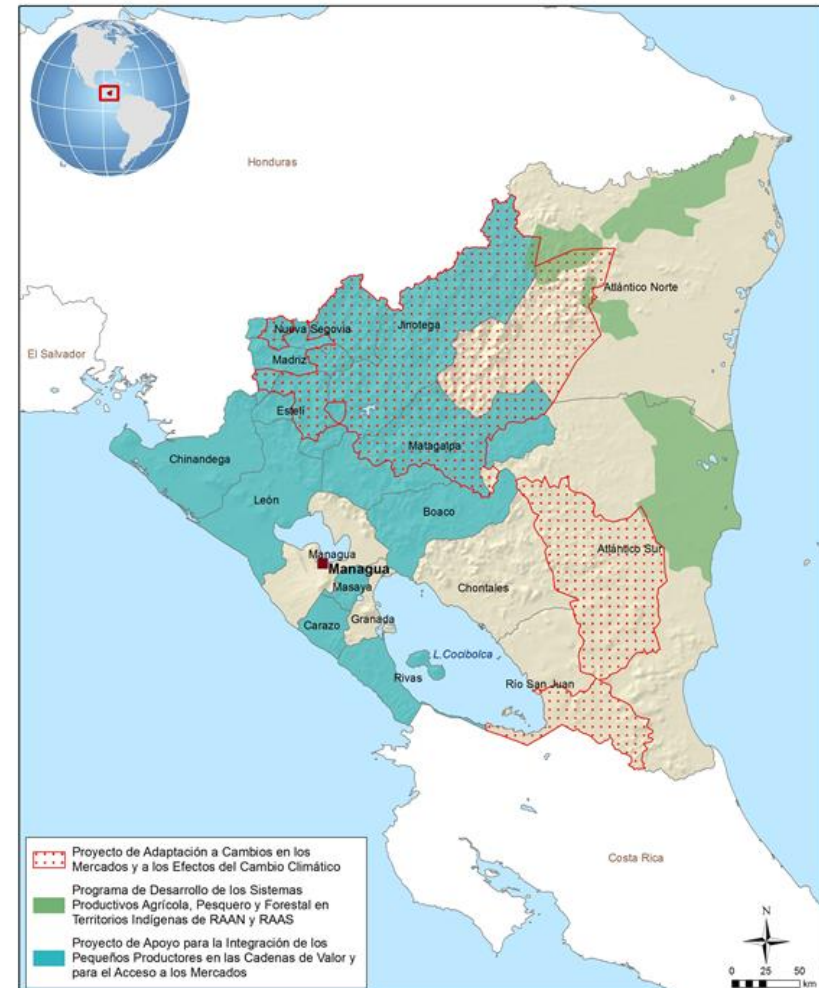
- **10 projects** since 1979 (3 ongoing)
- Total IFAD loans for US\$ 148m; total project costs US\$ 336m (of which US\$ 56m Gov counterpart funding and beneficiaries' contribution)
- Two COSOPs: 2005 and 2012
- No country presence
- CSPE Coverage (1999 – 2016): 5 loan-projects, 6 regional grants (US\$ 8.8 m), COSOP 2005 and 2012.

Completed IFAD projects



Las denominaciones empleadas y la forma en que aparecen presentados los datos en este mapa no suponen juicio alguno del Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA) respecto de la demarcación de las fronteras o límites que figuran en él ni acerca de las autoridades competentes.
 Mapa elaborado por el FIDA | 27-05-2017

Ongoing IFAD projects



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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)

Findings - Strategy

- 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**