



# Evaluation Synthesis on Country-level Policy Dialogue

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Independent Office  
of Evaluation



Investing in rural people

# Background

Latest definition (2013 Action Plan for Country-level Policy Dialogue)

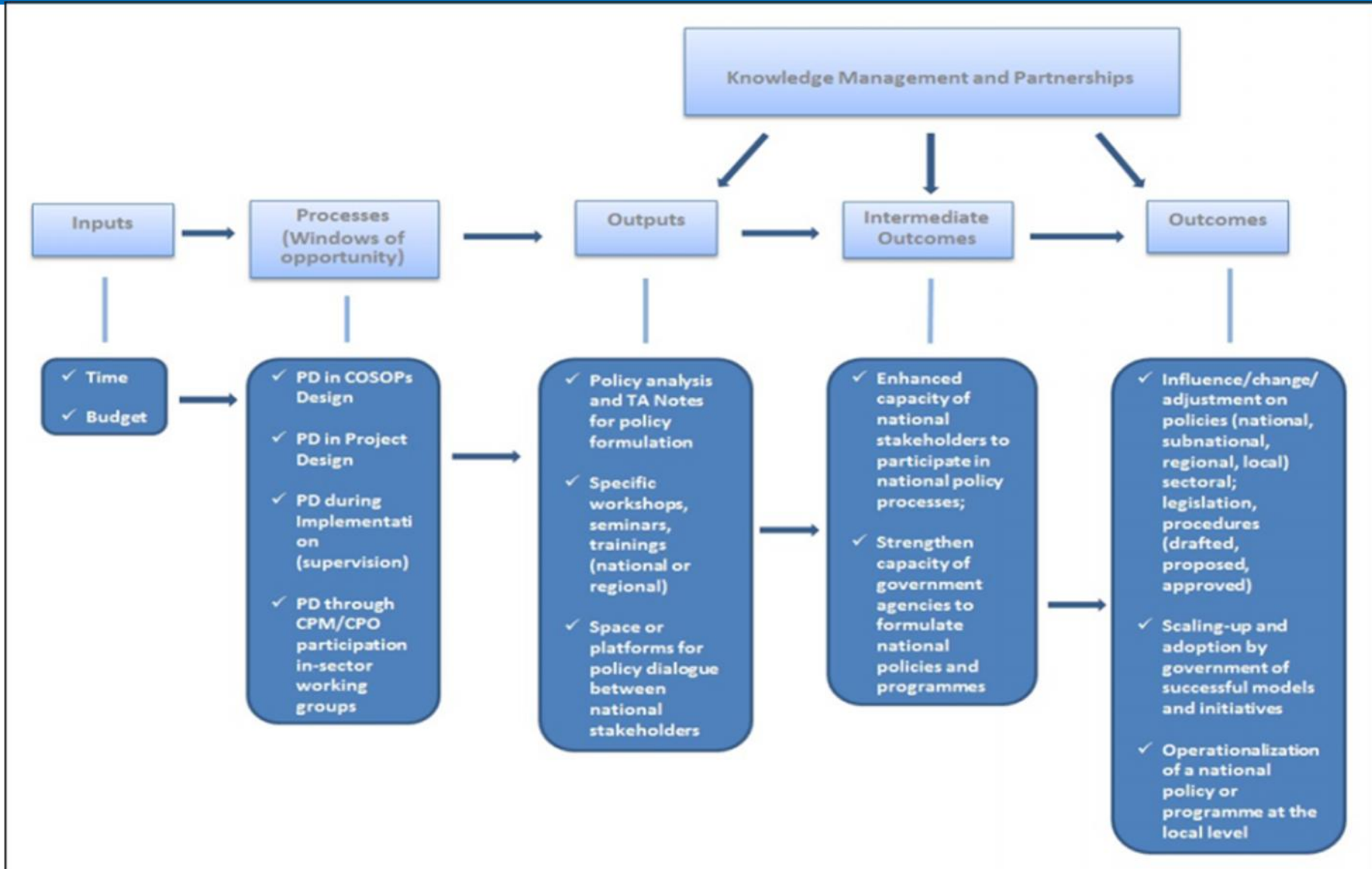
*“[...] a process to engage, directly and indirectly, with its partner governments and other country-level stakeholders, to influence policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions (e.g. laws, administrative rules), policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities **for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty.**”*

- Policy Dialogue part of Strategic Frameworks since 2002-06
- Growing commitments in IFAD-9 and IFAD-10
- Since 2016, new terminology: “Policy Engagement”

# Key Features of the Evaluation Synthesis

- Time frame: 2010-2015, special emphasis after 2013 Action plan.
- Focus on country-level
- Theory of change approach, articulating: inputs → processes → outputs → outcomes of policy dialogue
- Review of all CPEs (27), ARRIIs (6) and CLEs (10) published since 2010 (before and after 2013)
- Interviews with IFAD Management and staff

# Country-Level Policy Dialogue - Theory of Change



# Corporate Instruments and Tools

- 1) **Grants.** Major funding source. Ex. MERCOSUR. Regional farmer federations, E-W Africa. But problems of alignment with loan portfolio
- 2) **Performance-based Allocation System.** *Rural Sector Performance* scoring process offers entry point opportunity but under-utilized
- 3) **Country presence.** Builds trust, understanding of local actors and priorities, participation in sector working groups. But shortage of human resources and variation in skills and interest among staff
- 4) **Policy elements in the lending activities.**
  - Policy dialogue objectives in COSOPs. However, sometimes over-ambitious, resource requirements not identified
  - Components in loan-funded projects
  - Inputs at project design, implementation support.

# Policy dialogue Outputs

- Most common output (52% of cases): **supporting policy dialogue spaces** and platforms for stakeholders
  - Development of the organizations of the rural poor to participate in policy discussions
  - REAF Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay
  - Mozambique, Focal Area Reference Groups
- Second in frequency (41%): CPM/CPO contribution to **sectoral working groups**
- Lower frequency (20%) undertaking **policy analysis**

# Outcomes

A. In 55% of CPEs, some form of contribution to **change or to adjust policies, legislation** (national and sub-national)

- Nepal, new, pro-poor approach to forestry (leasehold forestry)
- Kenya, roll-out of the national irrigation policy
- India, input into Maharashtra Women's Policy

B. 48% CPEs (overlapping) **scaling up and adoption by the government of successful models, approaches.**

- Vietnam, Brazil: participatory planning and resource allocation
- Ghana: SME sub-committees established in district assemblies

- Common characteristic in successful cases: IFAD was able to draw from project experiences to inform policy making (linkage with lending portfolio)

# Conclusions

- IFAD has increased its focus and efforts to promote institutional and policy transformation at the country level and to scale up results
- Policy dialogue: main driver for creating the conditions for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty
- Synergistic relationship among the three non-lending activities: knowledge management, partnership-building and policy dialogue are mutually reinforcing actions to complement IFAD's investment projects
- Limitations in both the capacity and the mechanisms available to manage policy dialogue effectively
  - (i) under-documentation of informal and technical policy work;
  - (ii) absence of policy dialogue indicators;
  - (iii) limitation in experience, tools, incentives, staff time



# Recommendations

## **1. Strengthen attention to policy dialogue in the COSOP**

Identify objectives and resources, partners, and indicators (outputs, intermediate outcomes and outcome levels)

## **2. Strengthen the capacity and incentives of staff.**

Information and training; feedback and accountability through performance assessment

## **3. Strengthen monitoring and reporting of policy dialogue activities**

Make policy dialogue activities more visible and preserve institutional memory

## **4. Strengthen the approach to self and independent evaluation of policy dialogue**

Assess policy advisory initiatives within projects and the links between 'policy engagement' and 'impact on institutions and policies'