



Investing in rural people

Executive Board

President's report on a proposed grant to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) for strengthening capacities for delivering data- and evidence-driven advice in-country through but not exclusively from impact assessments and other data sources

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in paragraph 11.

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President’s report on a proposed grant to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) for strengthening capacities for delivering data- and evidence-driven advice in-country through but not exclusively from impact assessments and other data sources

I. Background and compliance with the IFAD Regular Grants Policy

1. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level entails aligning pathways that are driven by data and analytics. Rigorous impact assessments (IAs) generate findings that enhance data- and evidence-driven transitions by incorporating learning into food systems transformation pathways. They enable a better understanding of how development projects can inform a country’s investment decisions. IAs promote IFAD’s credibility among development partners and Member States, thereby allowing IFAD to measure impact and learn what works where and incorporate these data into its decision-making. IAs offer a statistically robust way to measure attributable development outcomes, promote evidence-based global and national policy engagement, inform new country operations, and support IFAD’s resource mobilization efforts.
2. The proposed grant will focus on delivering three IAs in selected countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia and China), while strengthening the capacity of partners, namely project management units (PMUs) and service providers, in each country. It will be implemented along with PMUs and other stakeholders to provide cost-effective and time-saving data collection and evidence-based lessons for future rural development projects. The capacity development activities will be open to other project teams to support data collection and data use needs to facilitate evidence-based implementation and policy widely across IFAD’s portfolio. Implementation will be undertaken in close collaboration with country-level partners to strengthen local capacities and ensure sustainability of impacts.
3. The proposed project is in line with the goal and objectives of the IFAD Regular Grants Policy (2021).¹ It aims to strengthen capacity for delivering data- and evidence-driven advice and decision-making in relation to SDG1 and SDG2 in rural areas worldwide. Outputs and capacities developed through this grant will be made readily available as public goods for use by governments, national and local institutions, producer organizations, international organizations, and the public in general. The persistence of rural poverty and hunger and the problems that stem from it call for a sharp strategy that incorporates the key theme of delivering data, knowledge and evidence into programming and strengthening the stakeholders’ capacity, especially in developing countries, to promote data use for impact. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has been identified as the recipient of this grant through direct selection. IFPRI and IFAD have a long-standing partnership spanning more than 30 years. Both organizations were created in response to the food crisis in the 1970s. The direct selection was approved by the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee on 31 July 2023.

II. The proposed project

4. The overall goal of the project is to generate reliable and timely data and evidence on IFAD’s contribution to the SDGs and fulfilment of the commitments made for the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources, and to provide data- and evidence-driven advice to governments. The objectives include:

¹ See EB 2021/132/R.3.

- Providing evidence and lessons to improve the quality, effectiveness and results of IFAD operations
 - Using evidence-based policy engagement at the global and national levels
 - Improving capacity of local partners to gather, analyse and use data
 - Increasing the use of data for IFAD's resource mobilization
 - Improving how researchers use data for conducting high-quality analysis
 - Providing decision makers with researcher-produced analytic reports to facilitate and improve policy development and programme design
 - Supporting sustainable agriculture data ecosystems connecting researchers producing high-quality analysis with decision makers
5. The target group will be composed of PMUs, governments, project implementation partners, universities and researchers in IFAD partner countries including, but not limited to, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Thailand.
 6. The project will be implemented over two years and will have the following components:
 - i. Component 1: Data collection and knowledge. This will use three ex-post quasi-experimental IAs to inform investments and advise governments. This work involves: design of survey questionnaires; data collection in three countries; data analysis and reporting. The specific activities will also include setting up a data safety and quality protocol using an encrypted server for the data collection and harmonizing the coding of all data based on the methodology and coding standards used by the Research and Impact Assessment Division (RIA).
 - ii. Component 2: Data analysis and dissemination. This component will consist of activities related to empirical data analysis, technical report writing, results validation with country teams and other stakeholders, and dissemination. Specific knowledge products will be developed for communication purposes through various means.
 - iii. Component 3: Capacity-building. The component will strengthen local capacity to complement the activities implemented by the Data Use Component of the 50x2030 Initiative. The activities will include: (i) capacity strengthening to support the sustainable creation, utilization and retention of capacity to reduce poverty, enhance self-reliance and improve people's lives; (ii) communication to facilitate awareness and ease of access to data by sharing of knowledge of data and data systems among different stakeholders in the data ecosystem. This communication advocates for and generates demand for decisions supported by good data; and (iii) collaboration to facilitate interactions, synergies and partnerships among the community of data users and producers with the aim of creating a demand for high quality data and ethical data sharing.

III. Expected outcomes/outputs

7. The project is expected to have the following outcomes/outputs:
 - i. Rural development investments will be informed by data and evidence by means of an improved data collection management system in a timely and cost-effective manner, with resulting data being harmonized and highly comparable with other IFAD data.
 - ii. Selected rural development investments will rigorously report on outcomes and impacts as well as lessons learned from implementation to improve future investments.
 - iii. Capacity of local partners to gather, analyse and use data collected from rural development projects will improve to ensure continued data analysis activities in the future.

- iv. Governments, development partners, researchers and other stakeholders will have more evidence and lessons to improve the quality, effectiveness and results of IFAD operations.
- v. Successful models to carry out impact assessments in-country with the potential for scaling up.

IV. Implementation arrangements

- 8. RIA staff, along with relevant country/regional teams (country directors and project officers, both at HQ and in the field) will be represented in a supervision team to provide direct supervision and technical backstopping support to the grant recipient throughout the course of the project. This team will respond to any needs or requirements from the grant recipient to ensure that the project activities progress smoothly and in a timely manner. The supervision team will hold quarterly meetings with the grant recipient (either in person or virtually) to track the progress of the project, and provide any feedback or suggestions as required.
- 9. There are no deviations from the standard procedures for financial reporting and audits.

V. Indicative project costs and financing

- 10. Tables 1 and 2 below presents the total project costs, which are divided by the portion funded by the grant and the portion cofinanced by IFPRI. Table 1 presents costs by component and financier. Table 2 presents costs by expenditure category and financier.

Table 1

Costs by component and financier

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Components</i> | <i>IFAD</i> | <i>IFPRI</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Data collection and knowledge | 576 | 83 | 659 |
| 2. Data analysis and dissemination | 182 | 83 | 265 |
| 3. Capacity-building | 413 | 73 | 486 |
| 4. Cost-sharing percentage (CSP) 2% | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| Total | 1,195 | 239 | 1,434 |

Table 2

Costs by expenditure category and financier

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Expenditure category</i> | <i>IFAD</i> | <i>IFPRI</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Salaries and benefits | 311 | 142 | 453 |
| 2. Subcontractors | 430 | 0 | 430 |
| 3. Consultancy | 128 | 0 | 128 |
| 4. Dissemination and communication | 77 | 0 | 77 |
| 5. Travel and allowances | 63 | 0 | 63 |
| 6. Operating costs (service charge centers) | 113 | 60 | 173 |
| 7. Overheads and management fees | 49 | 37 | 86 |
| 8. CSP 2% | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| Total | 1,195 | 239 | 1,434 |

VI. Recommendation

11. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed grant in terms of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, strengthening capacities for delivering data- and evidence-driven advice in-country from impact assessments and other data sources, shall provide a grant of one million, one hundred ninety-five thousand United States dollars (US\$1,195,000) to the International Food Policy Research Institute for two years upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Alvaro Lario
President

Results-based logical framework

| | Objectives hierarchy | Objectively verifiable indicators | Means of verification | Assumptions |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Goal | Strengthen capacities for delivering data and evidence driven advice in countries | Number of countries with improved capacity to deliver data and evidence driven advice | Tracking of number countries with improved capacity to deliver data and evidence driven advice | Training materials and hands-on participation in the impact assessment activities suitable to project staff and are taken up for future project design and implementation |
| Objectives | <p>1. Generate evidence about agricultural and rural development which will contribute to the global knowledge on what works in rural development and what does not, strengthened by the conduction of impact assessments, which will feed into future policies and project designs and scale up successful interventions and best practices</p> <p>2. Strengthen the in-country capacity to deliver data and evidence driven advice, which would facilitate evidence-based design of projects and programs in the future</p> | <p>1. Results and findings from three rural development projects assessed generated on outcomes related to economic mobility, productive capacity, market access, resilience, and food security shared with relevant stakeholders</p> <p>2. Findings as well as lessons learned and best practices from the impact assessments of three projects are consolidated, and are taken up by development practitioners and policy makers for project design and implementation as well as policy dialogue disseminated in workshops, conferences, publications</p> <p>3. Number of people trained to improve capacity to deliver data and evidence driven projects in the future</p> | <p>1. Ability of trained people to deliver data and evidence driven advice</p> <p>2. Synthesis report and dataset available</p> <p>2. Report of each Impact Assessment</p> <p>3. Knowledge products</p> | <p>1. Project participants continue to adapt and deepen their acquired knowledge on delivering data and evidence driven advice.</p> <p>2. The impact assessments can be conducted within the given timeline. Delays due to external circumstances can be avoided.</p> <p>3. Findings of the impact assessments and evidence driven advice give new insights of the effectiveness of rural development projects.</p> |
| Outcomes/ outputs | <p>1. Project participants increase their knowledge on how to deliver data and evidence driven advice</p> <p>2. Sustainable data ecosystem is created since researchers will have knowledge to produce high quality analysis, useful for decision makers</p> <p>3. The selected three projects are rigorously assessed, and results are reported</p> <p>4. Governments and other stakeholders of the projects have more evidence available helping them to make informed decisions on the projects</p> <p>5. The generated evidence increases the evidence base of rural development projects</p> | <p>1. Three rural development projects are assessed by project participants and reports are written (with technical guidance and under supervision of IFPRI)</p> <p>2. New project designs and scale up of previous projects reflects the results of IA reports</p> <p>3. Trainings delivered</p> <p>4. Attendance during trainings is high (30-40 participants per country)</p> | <p>1. Cleaned data sets</p> <p>2. Country reports and synthesis report</p> <p>3. Knowledge products</p> <p>4. Presentations at final workshop</p> <p>5. Attendance lists</p> | <p>1. Project staff are not prevented to attend local workshops due to unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>2. The rural development projects have measurable impact and can be assessed ex post.</p> |
| Key activities by component | | <p>Component 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of impact assessment plans - Development of tools and instruments | The project is implemented according to the developed timeline, | Project staff as well as other local stakeholders are interested in having their |

| Objectives hierarchy | Objectively verifiable indicators | Means of verification | Assumptions |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of data collection - Data collection Component 2 - Data cleaning and data analysis - Elaboration of reports - Dissemination and communication strategy - Development of infographics, blog posts, social media entries, documentaries - Final workshop Component 3 - Selection of countries to conduct training - Selection of participants - Preparation of training, desk review - Training on data use for policy advisory services | <p>work plan and carried out within the given budget.</p> | <p>rural development projects undergo rigorous impact assessment.</p> <p>Government officials and other local stakeholders are interested and committed to delivering data and evidence advisory services.</p> <p>The grant project can be carried out within the previously defined timeframe and budget.</p> |