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Corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment

Executive Board – 101st Session
Rome, 14-16 December 2010

For: **Review**

Annotation

Document EB 2010/101/R.9 contains the full report of the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment. The IFAD Management's written response will be shared with the Executive Board as an addendum, prior to the Board's consideration of the evaluation report on 14-16 December 2010.

**Document of the
International Fund for Agricultural Development**

Corporate-level evaluation on

IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment

Final evaluation report

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*Available on request from IOE evaluation@ifad.org

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARRI	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
CPE	country programme evaluation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COSOP	country strategic opportunity programme
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HRD	Human Resources Division
IOE	IFAD Office of Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMD	Programme Management Department
PTA	Policy and Technical Advisory Division
RIDE	Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment

Corporate-level evaluation

Executive summary

1.   **Background and objectives**. The Consultation on the Eight Replenishment of IFAD's Resources decided in 2008 that the IFAD Office of Evaluation (IOE) would undertake this corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment. The objectives of the evaluation are to: (i) assess the relevance of IFAD's strategy in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; (ii) learn from the experiences and good practices of other development organizations; (iii) assess the results of activities funded by IFAD related to gender equality and women's empowerment in its country programmes and corporate processes; and (iv) generate a series of findings and recommendations that will assist IFAD's Executive Board and Management in guiding the Fund's future activities in this area.

2.   **Process**. Four building blocks form the basis of the evaluation: (i) an analysis of the evolution of gender-related concepts and development approaches, and a comprehensive documentary review of the policy and evaluation documents prepared by other development organizations; (ii) an assessment of key IFAD corporate policy and strategy documents; (iii) a meta-evaluation of past operations based on existing evaluative evidence, a review of recent country strategic opportunity programmes (COSOPs) and ongoing projects, and five country visits to gain insight into the perspectives of partners in these countries and collect evidence from the field about the evolving approaches and results of IFAD-funded projects; and (iv) a review of selected corporate business processes that have implications for IFAD's performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries. Section C in chapter I of the main report gives a more detailed account of the objectives and processes related to the evaluation's four building blocks.

3.   **Main findings.** There has been an evolution globally in approaches to building gender equality and women's empowerment. Pre-1975 efforts were mainly addressed to men as producers and women as homemakers, which ignored the important role of women as farmers and food producers. Subsequently, there was a shift to women-focused approaches and approaches focusing on changing the relations between women and men. A recent and promising gender equality approach promotes the complementarity of women and men in family production and farmers' organizations (see paragraphs 11-19 of the main report).

4.   The review of literature on the topic revealed that there are two major constraints to the effective application of lessons from previous operations: a reluctance to address gender as a major organizing principle of society and a failure to invest sufficiently. All development agencies with recent evaluations have revealed, at best, mixed success in implementing gender mainstreaming. There was a broad consensus among development partners that this was mainly due to the lack of: (i) results orientation; (ii) consistent leadership and follow-up by senior management and executive boards; (iii) staff incentives and accountability through performance management systems; (iv) a clear understanding of how best to address gender inequality; (v) adequate investment in gender equality expertise in operations; (vi) attention to gender balance in staffing; and (vii) an inclusive organizational culture. Some of the findings from these evaluations are also applicable to IFAD (see paragraphs 20-29).

5.   Because it was established at a time of significant global attention to the need for development to include women, IFAD has always paid attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. Between its inception and 1992, it did so mainly through women-specific project components; since then, it has included women as beneficiaries and as actors more systematically in its projects (see sections A and B in chapter III).

6.   The new millennium marked an increase in efforts to "mainstream" gender equality and women's empowerment in the design, implementation, supervision and evaluation of IFAD-funded operations. This was done mainly in connection with IFAD's Gender Plan of Action 2003-2006, and, subsequently, with the 2008 Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Operations. These are two of the key documents that capture IFAD's corporate strategic approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (see paragraphs 40-48).

7.   IFAD's corporate strategic approach to gender is largely relevant and consistent, but fragmented across numerous documents, including the gender action plan and gender framework. Moreover, synergies with other thematic and corporate policies and strategies are not clearly articulated. Interpretations of the terminology and understandings of the topic also differ widely, which has led to alternative approaches in COSOPs and in project design and implementation (see paragraphs 63-76).

8.   The evaluation found no evidence of systematic monitoring or reporting on progress related to gender equality and women's empowerment by either Senior Management or the Executive Board. Reporting is in fact largely confined to project-level activities. It is also fragmented across numerous documents, preventing a consolidated picture of the main results, opportunities and challenges associated with the topic. However, compared with comparator agencies, IFAD has done better in instilling a results orientation in its gender work (see paragraphs 73-74 and 78).

9.   The evaluation reviewed older and recently designed IFAD-funded projects, five country programme evaluations, and five COSOPs developed last year. Overall, the performance of past IFAD-financed projects is moderately satisfactory, but this average rating masks significant variance among projects and countries in attention to gender-related dimensions of design and implementation. Performance in efficiency and promotion of innovations and scaling up is inadequate. The evaluation found a relationship between gender achievement and a project's overall achievements, a finding confirmed by evaluations in other organizations. However, the analysis does not reveal a causal relationship in either direction. Compared with earlier ones, newer COSOPs and project designs are paying increasingly more attention across the board to gender issues. On the whole, the evaluation considers that IFAD's performance is moderately satisfactory in achieving its first two corporate objectives related to gender, but moderately unsatisfactory in achieving the third objective[1] (see sections B-E in chapter IV).

10.   The review of corporate business processes found that factors that support IFAD's work on gender equality and women's empowerment include a recognition of the importance of the issue at the most senior levels (in Management and the Executive Board); operational systems and processes that have a reinforced quality enhancement and quality assurance system; direct supervision and implementation support; and wider country presence. IFAD has established an elaborate results measurement framework including gender indicators for design and implementation, but this framework consists of multiple layers and systems and requires streamlining. Independent evaluations assess gender as part of the various evaluation criteria applied (e.g. relevance, effectiveness, etc.), but do not have dedicated gender indicators and/or questions that are applied in each evaluation (see paragraphs 48 (i), 166 and 181-183).

11.   In terms of knowledge management, few efforts have been made to aggregate results coherently at the regional or corporate levels, and lesson-learning and cross-fertilization of experiences on gender issues is limited and ad hoc. Like some of the comparator agencies, IFAD does not invest sufficiently in learning from its experience and building on its successes. Some initiatives to ensure learning and knowledge management are taking place, but they are not systematic or adequately resourced. Their analysis of what has contributed to or prevented progress on gender equality and women's empowerment needs to be strengthened. The role of communication in highlighting IFAD's work related to gender equality and women's empowerment is generally positive (see paragraphs 176, 184-185 and 189-190).

12.   There are some good examples of policy dialogue by IFAD on gender issues in partner countries. However, in spite of this, on the whole policy dialogue performance at the country level is variable, but generally unsystematic, with little analytic underpinning and not backed by the required human and financial resources. On the other hand, IFAD has played a useful role in selected global policy and advocacy platforms (e.g. farmers' associations) by drawing attention to the plight of rural women and their central role in smallholder agriculture and rural development processes (see paragraphs 186-187).

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[1]   Box 5 in the main report contains the three corporate objectives for gender equality and women's empowerment.

13.   Partnerships with civil society organizations and NGOs working on gender issues are generally positive. Some good examples of relations with borrowing-government agencies that deal with gender equality and women's empowerment were also found; this varies considerably from country to country. Partnerships with donor governments have been good in terms of the supplementary funds mobilized at the corporate level, but generally limited in terms of discussion of content issues with bilateral aid agencies involved in operations. However, IFAD representatives actively participate in the gender networks of the United Nations and those of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee. No significant partnerships devoted to gender were apparent with the private sector, apart from a handful of initiatives at the project level and with the Farmers' Forum (see paragraph 188).

14.   In terms of gender architecture, the gender desk within the Policy and Technical Advisory Division has spearheaded the process of ensuring attention to gender in project design and implementation, and supports other corporate processes such as communications and fundraising. In the five geographic regions covered by IFAD operations, the gender desk has provided support to leaning and knowledge management, but resources for this function are variable and inadequate. The contributions of the thematic group on gender were influential in the early years of the gender action plan, but more recently, there are indications that the group needs revitalization through the development of clearer results-oriented objectives and workplans. The role of gender focal points is unclear, and their accountability and working relationships also need review (see paragraphs 168-170 and 177-178).

15.   Arguably, the greatest challenge in IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment work relates to its human resources management and corporate culture. Historical data reveal that the ratio of women to men in the organization is rather traditional, with many women in support staff positions and few in leadership functions, even though in 2010 IFAD hired its first woman Vice-President and first woman Director of the Office of President and Vice-President. There are an encouragingly high proportion of women in the more junior Professional category. Even though there is room for further improvement, IFAD nevertheless compares well in terms of its gender balance in staffing with selected United Nations organizations and international financial institutions. Although IFAD's Human Resources Policy explicitly makes reference to ensuring gender balance in IFAD's workforce, the guidelines for consultants' recruitment makes no such provision. In fact, the evaluation found that few women and gender experts were recruited as consultants in the teams responsible for COSOP development and key phases of the project life cycle (e.g. design and supervision missions, including evaluation) (see paragraphs 193-200).

16.   IFAD's human resources policy includes anti-harassment provisions and a variety of work-life balance policies. The evaluation found poor uptake of the options provided in formal policies (e.g. special leave without pay). IFAD's informal culture has not traditionally encouraged the inclusion of perspectives and ways of working that are women-friendly or family-friendly, although these are important for building an organization capable of delivering on gender equality and women's empowerment (see paragraphs 202-204).

17.   Similarly, there are no specific incentives for attention to gender equality in staff, consultant or divisional performance; and no accountability or negative consequences for lack of attention. Performance in this area does not figure in individual workplans, which tend to be largely activity-based. In other words, the type of results orientation that is strongly advocated in IFAD-funded operations is not applied to an equal degree in individual work planning and human resources management (see paragraphs 176 and 179).

18.   Another shortcoming is that IFAD is unable to track in its loan investments the amounts allocated to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and there is no evidence that it has taken concrete steps to address this problem. Similarly, there is no indication of the funds allocated ex ante for this purpose in IFAD's annual results-based programme of work and budget. The evaluation also found that there has been a disproportionately high reliance on supplementary funds and grants for core gender activities. Access to such sources of funding is not secure – and, for supplementary funds, specific efforts are required for additional periodic reporting to the concerned donors. The Board, on its part, has not asked IFAD to provide information on the amount of resources the organization is investing in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (see paragraphs 165, 172 and 191-192).

19. **Conclusion.** IFAD's strategic approach to gender is relevant, but guidance is fragmented in several corporate documents. The Fund's effectiveness in meeting one of its three strategic objectives (improve women's well-being and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure) is moderately unsatisfactory. Moreover, results of IFAD-financed operations are moderately satisfactory on the whole, even though there is significant variability across projects and countries. A number of key corporate business processes that are essential for supporting IFAD's gender work remain weak. In sum, as far as the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is concerned, there seems to be a gap between rhetoric and practice, which raises the question of whether IFAD is indeed "walking the talk".

20. **Recommendations**. The evaluation makes the following recommendations:

21. **Develop an evidence- and results-based corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment.** IFAD should develop its first overarching corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment, for submission to the Executive Board in 2011. The policy would be IFAD's principal reference document on gender equality and women's empowerment, bringing under one umbrella the Fund's main strategic objectives and priorities in this area. The recommended policy should indicate how key corporate business processes will be adjusted for better results on the ground.

22. The gender policy should include a section on who within IFAD Management will be responsible for implementation, oversight and reporting. IFAD should produce a consolidated annual progress report, covering the results achieved in the implementation of the new policy, lessons learned and adjustments made to key corporate business processes that affect performance in gender-related activities. The policy should also include an overarching results measurement framework for IFAD's gender work, and specify how the Executive Board will fulfil its role in providing guidance and support, as well as oversight on results.

23. **Knowledge management, learning and analytic work.** IFAD needs to invest in building a common evidence-based understanding among staff of the theory of gender equality and women's empowerment, and its related terminology. Among other issues, this should include attention to the systematic documentation and cross-fertilization of lessons learned and good practices across projects, countries and regions, and at headquarters as well as in the field.

24. **Innovation and scaling up as key principles of engagement.** The corporate-level evaluation on innovation recommended that IFAD define an IFAD-wide innovation agenda at the corporate level that consisted of a few selected themes or domains. The themes or domains selected, "big bets", should be in areas of the agriculture and rural sector where there is a proven need for innovative solutions and where IFAD has developed (or can develop) a comparative advantage in successfully promoting pro-poor innovations that can be scaled up. In this regard, this evaluation recommends that gender equality and women's empowerment be included as one of the "big bets" in IFAD's corporate innovation agenda until 2015. IFAD should, however, remain open to promoting gender-related innovations at the country or project level that respond to context-specific challenges. COSOPs and project designs should outline the specific efforts needed to ensure that successful innovations can actually be scaled up for wider impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.

25. **Policy dialogue.** Policy dialogue and advocacy work should focus on the selected "big bets", but also on specific thematic areas that might require attention in a given country context. Furthermore, staff competencies and skills will need to be enhanced for effective engagement in policy processes, which also requires continued attention to partnerships with multiple stakeholders for advocacy at global and country levels.

26. **IFAD's gender architecture**. The evaluation recommends that Management conduct a dedicated, comprehensive review of IFAD's overall gender architecture to ensure that the organization has the required human resources and funds to achieve the desired results on the ground in borrowing countries. The review should include not just the Programme Management Department (PMD) but all other departments in the organization. The evaluation makes specific recommendations for the gender architecture, which may be seen in chapter VI of the report.

27. **Tracking investments and budgets.** It is recommended that Management undertake an analysis of spending on gender equality and women's empowerment in a regionally based sample of projects that have good gender equality results. This would allow it to determine the level of costs incurred in

the past, which can serve as a guideline for future project designers. In addition, efforts should be made to indicate the amount of administrative budget being devoted annually to gender-related activities.

28. **Training.** While gender-specific training and awareness-raising is needed on key concepts, it is also recommended that a gender perspective be incorporated in training events organized by PMD on operational aspects and by the Human Resources Division on core competencies and in staff induction programmes. A gender training programme should be developed as soon as possible and implemented from the beginning of 2011.

29. **Assessment of gender equality and women's empowerment in evaluations.** It is recommended that IOE develop specific indicators and key questions for assessing gender equality and women's empowerment in country programme and project evaluations.[2] In addition, it should include a dedicated section in all evaluation reports in order to provide an overall account of performance on this indicator and to highlight the proximate causes of good or less good performance. The same recommendation is also applicable to the various components of IFAD's self-evaluation system.

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[2]   That is, in the context of project completion report validations and project performance assessments.

IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment

Corporate-level evaluation

Main report

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1.   A decision was taken during the Consultation on the Eight Replenishment of IFAD's Resources in 2008[1] that the IFAD Office of Evaluation (IOE) would "conduct an evaluation of IFAD's performance with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the Executive Board will decide on the need to develop a corporate policy and implementation strategy on gender equality." The need for a similar evaluation by IOE was also recognized in IFAD's Gender Plan of Action, which was considered by the Executive Board in April 2003 within the framework of the Progress Report on the Project Portfolio.[2]

B. Objectives

2.   The evaluation's objectives are to: (i) assess the relevance of IFAD's actions in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; (ii) learn from the experiences and good practices of other development organizations; (iii) assess the results of IFAD-funded activities related to gender equality and women's empowerment in its country programmes and corporate processes; and (iv) generate a series of findings and recommendations that will assist IFAD Management and the Board in guiding the Fund's future activities in this area.

C. Methodology and process

3.   The evaluation conducted in 2010 followed the main provisions contained in the IFAD Evaluation Policy (2003)[3] and Evaluation Manual (2009).[4] To achieve its objectives, the evaluation was based on four mutually reinforcing building blocks (see paragraph 5), which included: (i) an analysis of the evolution of gender-related concepts and development approaches, and a comprehensive documentary review of the policy and evaluation documents prepared by other development organizations (i.e. a benchmarking review); (ii) an assessment of IFAD's key corporate policy and strategy documents; (iii) a meta-evaluation[5] of past IFAD-funded operations based on existing evaluative evidence, plus a review of recent country strategies and project designs, and five country visits to collect the perspectives of in-country partners and evidence on the ground about the evolving approaches and results of IFAD-funded projects; and (iv) a review of selected corporate business processes that have implications for IFAD's performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries. The enquiry methods were a mix of document reviews, a

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[1] See annex II of the Report on the Consultation on the Eighth Replenishment of IFAD Resources, document GC 32/L.5, available at http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/gc/32/e/GC-32-L-5.pdf
[2] See annex V of the Progress Report on the Project Portfolio, document EB 2003//78/R.16, available at http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/78/e/EB-2003-78-R-16.pdf. This progress report has since been merged into the Annual Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness.
[3] The evaluation policy was approved by the Executive Board in April 2003, and is available at http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/policy/new_policy.htm
[4] The Evaluation Manual was discussed by the Evaluation Committee in December 2008 and is available at http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/process_methodology/index.htm.
[5] This term is used for evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations – Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development /Development Assistance Committee.

quantitative and qualitative survey, interviews and focus group discussions with IFAD headquarters staff and the staff of partners in borrowing countries, and visits to project activities on the ground.

4.   Although the evaluation briefly traces, in chapter III, the history of IFAD's efforts and key activities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment since its establishment, its main focus is on activities from 2003 to 2009. This period was chosen because 2003 was the year that IFAD adopted its first-ever gender action plan, and the evaluation could therefore assess the Fund's efforts during the ensuing years to implement this plan. To enable the evaluation team to draw conclusions about results achieved in the field, it was important to select some projects that had reached their completion date during this period even though most were designed in the 1990s.

5.   Four mutually reinforcing building blocks form the basis of the evaluation:

        a)   **An analysis of the main concepts and evolving approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment, and benchmarking.** The aim of this building block was to: (i) provide a synopsis of the main concepts and evolving approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment; and (ii) compare IFAD's gender work with that of other organizations to identify commonalities and differences to derive good practices and pointers for learning. The main selection criteria for the identification of comparator organizations were: (i) the existence of previous corporate-level evaluations on gender equality and women's empowerment; (ii) the diversity of institutional background; and (iii) easy access to the organization to collect data, information and lessons on its gender-related efforts. The following organizations were selected: the Asian Development Bank (AsDB); the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the World Bank; and the World Food Programme (WFP). The methods for benchmarking were largely based on a documentary review of existing literature from the organizations covered. A dedicated working paper was produced during the course of the evaluation on the benchmarking exercise. (See appendix 4 for the full list of documents consulted.)

        b)   **An assessment of IFAD's work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.** The assessment included a review of numerous corporate policy, strategy and guideline documents generated by IFAD since 2003. Some older documents were also considered. The two main purposes of this building block were to: (i) assess the relevance of the objectives and approaches articulated, and the quality of the results framework, if available; and (ii) determine whether the documents examined provided consistent guidance to IFAD staff for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The latter was particularly important, given the absence of a single overarching corporate policy document on the topic.

        c) **A meta-evaluation of IFAD's past performance, collection from the field of evidence on the performance and perspectives of partners in borrowing countries, and review of recent country strategies and operations.** This building block consisted of three specific components: (i) a meta-evaluation based on 50 project evaluation reports prepared by IOE since 2003 using a common methodology, together with a review of five country programme evaluation reports, all of the Annual Reports on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations prepared thus far and recent corporate-level evaluations.[6] This exercise allowed the team to assess the results based on past operations and identify the proximate causes of good or less good performance; (ii) an assessment of the results of ten additional projects (in Bangladesh,

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[6] This included the evaluation on innovation (2009/2010), the joint evaluation with the African Development Bank on agriculture and rural development in Africa (2008/2009), and the evaluations on the Rural Finance Policy (2006/7), the Field Presence Pilot Programme (2006/2007) and the Direct Supervision Pilot Programme (2004/2005).

Egypt, Guatemala, Mauritania and Zambia),[7] and the collection of the perceptions of stakeholders at the country level; (iii) a review of a selected sample of 22 ongoing projects approved after the adoption of the gender action plan and five results-based country strategy opportunity programmes (COSOPs) prepared in 2009. The 22 projects were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure an adequate balance among the five geographic regions covered by IFAD operations. The main purpose of this component was to assess the extent to which lessons learned and experiences from past operations were being included in new COSOPs and project design and implementation, and to provide an indication of the emerging results, especially of projects approved soon after the action plan was adopted. (The background documentation reviewed for this building block may be seen in appendix 3.) This building block generated dedicated working papers on components (i) and (iii), and five individual country working papers for component (ii).

d) **An assessment of selected IFAD corporate business processes.** This building block involved the review of key operational and corporate business processes that affect IFAD's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, namely: (i) operational processes, including quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, direct supervision and implementation support, country presence, evaluation, the results measurement framework, partnerships, policy dialogue and knowledge management; and (ii) other corporate processes such as human resources management, budget processes, communication, and management decision-making processes related to gender equality and women's empowerment. The appropriateness of IFAD's internal gender architecture was also examined, in particular the functioning of the gender desk in the Policy and Technical Advisory Division (PTA) of the Programme Management Department (PMD), the role of the divisional gender focal points and the experiences of the corporate thematic group on gender. The evaluation also reviewed the role of the Executive Board, given its importance in the Fund's overall efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, even though it plays a governance role and is not an internal corporate business process. The analysis for this building block was undertaken through documentary enquiry and a combination of individual and group interviews with representatives of IFAD Management and staff, as well as with selected Executive Board members. In addition, an on-line survey was conducted with current and former group members about the work of the thematic group on gender and the divisional gender focal points. A specific working paper was written about this building block.

6.   The evaluation was organized in four main phases: (i) inception, during which the methods and the process were fine-tuned, the evaluation team of consultants was contracted, and the evaluation's approach paper was produced and then finalized taking into account the comments of the Core Learning Partnership (see paragraph 8); (ii) desk work, including a review of documents, a survey (see paragraph 5 (d)), and interviews and focus-group discussions with representatives of IFAD Management and staff. The various working papers produced in this phase are listed under the annexes section in this document's table of contents; (iii) visits to 10 IFAD-funded projects in five countries; and (iv) writing of this evaluation report, including the preparation of IFAD Management's response to the evaluation.

7.   During the draft final report writing phase, IOE tested a new approach, delivering Power Point presentations to the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board in July 2010, the core learning partnership in September and the President on the evaluation's preliminary findings. The aim was to provide the Committee, the President and core learning partnership members an early opportunity to express their views on the evaluation's main results.

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[7] The countries were selected on the basis of the following criteria: one from each region; diverse in terms of their progress on gender equality and women's empowerment; having at least two projects at different stages of maturity and in different contexts, if possible; and not being in the midst of a major review or evaluation.

8.   In line with IFAD's evaluation policy, a core learning partnership[8] was established for the gender evaluation, with the aim of providing inputs and reviewing key deliverables, including the approach paper and this draft final report. Its members were also responsible for sharing all information and documentation with others in their divisions. In addition, the evaluation underwent an internal peer review within IOE.[9] The comments of the core learning partnership, the Evaluation Committee, and the IOE peer reviewers were taken into account in this final evaluation report.

9.   Finally, in accordance with the evaluation policy, those involved in the development and implementation of IFAD strategies and operations were systematically invited to undertake a self-assessment during the conduct of independent evaluations by IOE. In this regard, it is useful to underline that IFAD Management had already undertaken an elaborate process of self-assessment relative to the gender action plan and the regional gender programmes in 2005-2006. A summary of the main findings of these self-assessments is contained in chapter III. IOE considers these efforts to be adequate, given that, in the course of this gender evaluation, Management provided additional, updated information and data to IOE on issues and areas that were not sufficiently covered in the self-assessments.

D. Structure of the report

10.   The evaluation report is structured in five chapters, in addition to this one. Chapter II gives a brief overview of concepts and practices relating to gender equality and women's empowerment, and provides a summary of what was learned from the benchmarking exercise. Chapter III outlines the evolution of IFAD's strategic approach to gender equality and women's empowerment, and compares IFAD's efforts with those of other organizations. Chapter IV provides an overview of the performance of past operations, the evolution in approaches in recent COSOPs and ongoing projects, and the perspectives of partners and results from the countries visited during the evaluation. Chapter V describes the findings of the analysis of corporate business processes, whereas chapter VI contains the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

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[8] Members of the Core Learning Partnership consisted of the Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Chief Development Strategist; the Chief Finance and Administrative Officer; the Director, IOE; all directors from the PMD regional divisions; the Director, Human Resources Division; regional economists from the five PMD regional divisions; the Senior Technical Adviser – Gender and Poverty Targeting, PTA; the Senior Portfolio Manager, PMD; the lead evaluator for the gender evaluation in IOE; regional division gender focal points; a representative of the thematic group on gender; and others.
[9] The Director, IOE, and numerous evaluation officers were part of the internal peer review process.

Key points

❖ The Consultation on the Eight Replenishment of IFAD's Resources in 2008 took a decision that IOE would undertake this evaluation. The need for a similar evaluation by IOE was also recognized in IFAD's Gender Plan of Action.

❖ The evaluation's objectives are to: (i) assess the relevance of IFAD's strategy in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; (ii) learn from the experiences and good practices of other development organizations; (iii) assess the results of IFAD-funded activities related to gender equality and women's empowerment in its country programmes and corporate processes; and (iv) generate a series of findings and recommendations that will assist IFAD Management and the Executive Board in guiding the Fund's future activities in this area.

❖ Four building blocks form the basis of the evaluation: (i) an analysis of the evolution of gender-related concepts and development approaches, and a comprehensive documentary review of the policy and evaluation documents prepared by other development organizations (i.e. a benchmarking review); (ii) an assessment of key IFAD corporate policy and strategy documents; (iii) a meta-evaluation of past operations based on existing evaluative evidence, a review of recent country strategies and ongoing projects, and five country visits to collect the perspectives of partners from the countries and evidence from the ground about the evolving approaches and results of IFAD-funded projects; and (iv) a review of selected corporate business processes that have implications for IFAD's performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries.

❖ The evaluation process followed IFAD's evaluation policies, including the establishment of a core learning partnership, self-assessment by Management, and an IOE internal peer review. The methodology included document review, interviews, focus group discussions, a targeted questionnaire survey, and direct observation of activities on the ground and at headquarters.

II. EVOLUTION OF GENDER-RELATED CONCEPTS AND DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES, AND FINDINGS FROM THE BENCHMARKING REVIEW

A. Evolution of gender-related concepts and development approaches

11. IFAD's mandate is to contribute to agricultural and rural development. In many of the countries where IFAD works, women produce most of the food that is consumed locally. One study calculated that agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa could rise by 20 per cent if women had equal access to land, seeds and fertilizers.[10] A World Bank report[11] concluded that reducing gender inequality leads to falling infant and child mortality, improved nutrition, higher economic productivity and faster growth. For the global community, gender equality is also a commitment, embedded in international human rights agreements and in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). IFAD needs to address the situation of women in rural communities, both to end rural poverty and to increase wealth.

Box 1. Excerpt from the World Bank's World Development Report 2008:
Agriculture for Development

"Women play a major, but largely unrecognized, role in agriculture in most countries of the world. Failure to recognize their roles is costly. It results in misguided policies and programs, forgone agricultural output and associated income flows, higher levels of poverty, and food and nutrient insecurity."

12. What is most surprising about this statement is that it closely resembles the well-researched arguments made by Ester Boserup in 1970, which initially stimulated the efforts of development

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[10] Paper prepared by C. Mark Blackden and R. Sudharshan Canagarajah for the World Bank/ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Expert Meeting on Pro-Poor Growth in Kampala, Uganda, 23-24 June 2003.
[11] See World Bank, An evaluation of World Bank support 2002-8, Gender and Development, 2010.

agencies to pay attention to the different roles and status of women and men in production systems and in the household, and to how inequality between women and men was generated and perpetuated. She and other researchers documented that gender, even more pervasively than race, ethnicity or class, is a fundamental organizing principle of society – and of inequality. Despite development efforts, the situation of rural women in developing countries has improved only slightly since that time. This is related both to the difficulty of and sensitivity to change in these areas, and to the reluctance of development agency leadership to engage with these issues seriously.

13.   Before Boserup, development agencies often dealt with women as an exclusive target group, and most assistance was for their work as homemakers (nutrition education, hygiene, childcare, kitchen gardens, poultry raising). Investments in agricultural production (security of land tenure, irrigation, improved seeds and new skills in production practices) were directed towards men. This approach tended to increase women's workload, and also widen the inequality between women and men, as men spent increased income, often without consulting their wives.

14.   In response to increased awareness of these problems, development practitioners concerned about gender inequality began to devise new approaches to strengthen women's decision-making and economic power. One major approach, today usually called women's empowerment (which evolved from "women in development"), was to assist women in forming groups that could undertake economic activities, and serve as a forum for women to learn new skills and gain new confidence. These were primarily intended to increase women's productivity. In more successful women's empowerment projects, or project components, women also increased their ability to negotiate for their wider interests (e.g. safe stalls in the market at reasonable prices, more voice in family decisions, or public investment priority for health care or education). Women benefiting from this empowerment approach had the added advantage of holding and controlling the group's working capital and profits, and keeping it safe until women needed it, since otherwise husbands or men relatives might appropriate either the produce or the profits. This women's empowerment strategy has been quite successful in South Asia and many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, when production is tied to viable markets. It has failed spectacularly when there are no safeguards to prevent men or elites from taking over profitable activities, or the resulting income. This approach requires negotiation with men and women in communities to persuade them that supporting women is a good idea. These activities are most often structured as a component of a project.

15.   The second approach, usually called gender equality, has taken two different forms, the second more recent. Rather than separating women and men, the gender equality approach is built on women and men having better opportunities for greater productivity and greater influence in decision-making. It treats women not only as producers, but also as citizens, and is the approach officially adopted by the United Nations and by the OECD.

16.   In a number of development programmes, the gender equality approach has been put into practice by activities such as hiring unrelated women as well as men (for road-building and maintenance projects, for example); training both women and men in improved agricultural production, in group participation and leadership; and investing in assets (land, productive equipment, transport, etc.) for women as well as men. This approach often requires: (i) awareness-building for both women and men to increase the likelihood that women will be permitted (and permit themselves) to participate, especially if the activities proposed are not traditionally undertaken by women; and (ii) skills training, confidence-building or other support to help women participate on an equal basis with men (for example, woman-headed households participating in an activity to improve agricultural productivity may need to hire ploughing services).

17.   More recently, a new form of gender equality approach in agriculture and small-scale enterprises has focused on strengthening the complementarity of family-based production: helping husbands and wives become involved in improving agricultural production, recognizing that when everyone's contribution is valued and everyone benefits, it increases productivity. This has been especially powerful for quality improvements in agricultural value chains, where women are often traditionally responsible for post-harvest processing, and are said, by members of farmers' organizations, to have a comparative advantage in this type of work. This approach has had the added

advantage, some families report, of redistributing household work as needed, to allow both women and men to take advantage of training and work opportunities, thereby increasing the family's coping capacity. When the improved productivity generates significant profits, it contributes to decreasing men's seasonal or permanent off-farm migration, thereby improving community viability. This form of gender equality is also likely to require "catch-up" support for women and awareness-building for women and men.[12]

18.   While both women's empowerment and gender equality approaches can be successful, few agencies apply them systematically, and most fail to invest in them. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee notes that gender equality and women's empowerment should be treated as an accountability issue, not an advocacy issue. In other words, it is not whether development programmers or managers are "persuaded" that gender equality is important: unless they and the organization take it seriously, their work will suffer, and they must be accountable for their performance. This belief led to the development of organizational policies, and the desire to "mainstream" gender – i.e. to ensure that the gender-related implications of an organization's work are taken into account and acted on. However, fewer than 10 per cent of all development resources are devoted to gender equality or women's empowerment, and accountability for following gender-related policies is generally weak.

19.   An overall conceptual framework to explain the dimensions and dynamics of change needed for gender equality and women's empowerment is set out in figure 1. It is similar to frameworks for change for other social dimensions such as race, class or ethnicity. Both the gender equality and women's empowerment approaches outlined above can be situated within this framework. Where IFAD's programming has been successful in contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment, it has paid attention to activities in each of the quadrants (or ensured that other actors are undertaking complementary activities), and allotted adequate resources to these efforts. Whether to use a gender equality or a women's empowerment approach depends on the context and the gendered division of labour, on the nature of the agricultural or rural development investment, and on the response of partner Governments.

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[12] See, for example, the Las Verapaces project in Guatemala, the work with Linda Mayou and Oxfam NOVIB in Uganda, and SDC's programming in agriculture in Cuba. This approach merits more systematic analysis and documentation than was possible during this evaluation.

Figure 1. What needs to change for gender equality and women's empowerment
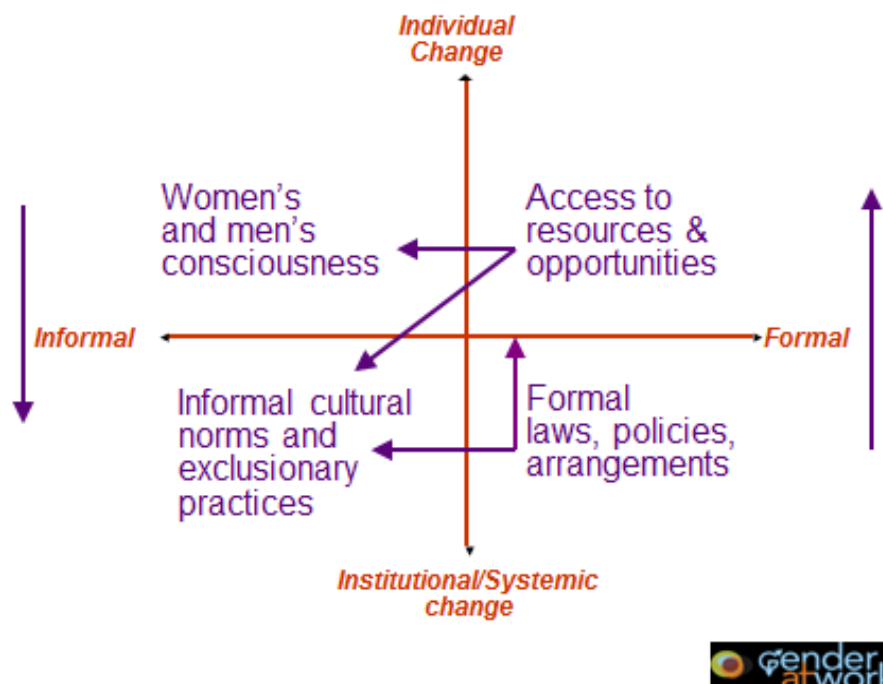
B. Benchmarking review

20.   The benchmarking review was undertaken with a view to comparing IFAD's gender work with that of other organizations, identifying commonalities and differences in order to derive good practices and pointers for learning. To the extent that the information was easily available, efforts were made to collect data on the performance of operations financed by the other organizations reviewed, to the extent that this information was readily available.

21.   Recent gender policy documents and evaluation reports from comparator agencies were reviewed. As mentioned in paragraph 5, the benchmarking review included AsDB, CIDA, OECD, SDC, UNDP, World Bank, and WFP. The methods for benchmarking were largely based on a documentary review of existing literature as well as discussions with key informants in the organizations covered.

22.   **What is the nature of comparator agencies' gender policies?** The reports revealed that all agencies had, fairly similarly, expended significant efforts in mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment through the development of dedicated policies. There were differences among the agencies, however, as to whether these policies focused on gender equality in the agency's development activities (AsDB, UNDP, World Bank), or whether they had a more comprehensive agency-wide focus (CIDA, WFP). Two agencies included attention to gender equality in staffing and creating a culture of inclusion (SDC, WFP) as an important dimension of generating results on the ground. Other agencies may also have human resources policies relating to equality and inclusion based on gender, race or other dimensions, but these were not reviewed by the evaluations. The rationale for all the policies is similar, combining a development effectiveness rationale and a human rights rationale[13] (although recent World Bank documents emphasize the development rationale). The objectives of the policies are also similar, combining access to and control over resources (including basic services) and ability to make and influence decisions.

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[13] This is confirmed by the 2006 OECD study.

23.   Agencies differed in their communication efforts and in the dissemination of their gender policy. In some agencies, outreach to the field was weak, with evaluations reporting that basic documents were not available, not translated or not read (UNDP). Consistent commitment and communication by agency leaders was important (WFP, SDC on gender equality in staffing and culture), although most evaluations noted that policy interpretation and application varied widely at the field level. CIDA made a large investment in gender analysis training for all of its management and staff during the 1980s and 1990s, but has not since done much in that area despite a significant generational turnover in staff.

24.   Agencies varied in the efforts they put into developing results-based frameworks and programming tools, and communicating and implementing them throughout the agency. The strongest focus (AsDB, CIDA, World Bank) is on ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment is taken into account during the design phase. However, the World Bank reports that only 59 per cent of its agriculture and rural development projects address gender equality and women's empowerment at design.[14] CIDA requires a gender analysis and gender strategy for all its projects, the World Bank only for those in priority sectors. Reviews of how well this is working over time are not regularly tracked. Box 2 provides examples of some good practice initiatives in other organizations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Box 2. Examples of good practice found in the benchmarking study

> **CIDA:** Policy dialogue and advocacy for gender equality is a significant component of the organization's work.
>
> **World Bank:** Increasing the number of girls in school is a major objective of the World Bank.
>
> **SDC:** Increasing the proportion of women at all levels of the organization and taking steps to create a culture of inclusion is an important focus of SDCs' work.
>
> **WFP**: Strong leadership contributed to enhancing support for attention to gender equality.

25.   **What is the level of investment in gender equality and women's empowerment in comparator agencies?** The evaluations undertaken by the organizations covered in the benchmarking review did not successfully address this area, probably because of the complexity in identifying and extracting the specific amount of resources allocated for gender-related initiatives. This is a challenge across the board – including for IFAD – and will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

26.   There are two major types of resources allocated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The first is related to organizational costs (sometimes described as administrative or overhead costs). The evaluations typically described the number of regular staff dedicated to gender-related work in the various organizations covered (see box 3). However, one challenge in getting a clear picture is that the organizations covered use different titles and locate such staff in different organizational units. In all the evaluations reviewed, the resources spent on mobilizing consulting expertise related to gender equality and women's empowerment (which is frequently used) is not well captured.

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[14] World Bank Group Gender Action Plan: Implementation Status Update, October 2009, prepared for the IDA 15 mid-term review.

Box 3. Gender architecture and staffing levels according to the evaluation reports

UNDP	In 2005, the Gender Unit of UNDP had four professional staff members. Also, at the time of the evaluation, UNDP had a gender adviser in each of the six regional service centres. **Total gender staff: 10**
SDC	At the time of the evaluation (2008), SDC had allocated two part-time staff (two 80 per cent positions) in the Governance Division of its Professional Services Department to support the implementation of the gender equality policy. There were also gender focal points in regional units and other departments at headquarters and in field offices, whose time allocation increased as a result of the evaluation. **Total gender staff in central unit: 1.6**
WFP	Not available in the report **Total gender staff: n/a**
CIDA	Twelve professional staff in the Human Development and Gender Equality Policy Unit (not all working on gender), one gender adviser for each region and department at headquarters, locally engaged full-time gender advisers in many country offices. **Total gender staff: n/a**
AsDB	At the time of the evaluation (2009), there were three gender specialists working in Manila and one vacant post. Additionally, six gender and development consultants were appointed to the resident missions in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. **Total gender staff: 9 plus a vacant post**
World Bank	At the corporate level, 16 staff members were formally appointed as gender staff as of May 2009. Beyond this, data on the number of gender specialists at the World Bank is difficult to obtain. Furthermore, staff members other than gender specialists also spend time on gender issues, which is very difficult to quantify. **Total gender staff: 16** (at corporate level)

27.   The second major category of expenditures is in the projects supported by these agencies. None of the organizations covered systematically captures this expenditure, as there is no rigorous definition of what should be counted (essential for financial system coding). For example, if a project improves a rural road, should half the cost of the road be coded as an expenditure for gender equality and women's empowerment, since women use roads too, and constitute half the population? Or, for a communications department, should only messages relating to gender equality and women's empowerment be counted, or also general communications that make reference to both women and men – and if so, what percentage? Staff in the agencies (CIDA, SDC) commented to the evaluators that it is seldom a problem to budget for gender equality and women's empowerment within projects and programmes: if there is a need and a justification in the design, the expenditure is generally approved. Lack of funding, therefore, is not seen to be a reason for inadequate performance in this area.

28.   If one does not automatically count every investment as being 50 per cent gender-related, since women constitute half of the population, and instead counts the additional level of effort needed to include women (e.g. ensuring that girls go to school and that women have identity documents, building capacity and support for women to lead, etc.), a rough estimate from OECD studies and other analyses is that agencies allocate less than 10 per cent for gender equality and women's empowerment (and many less than 5 per cent). Given the paucity of results, this level of investment is clearly inadequate.

29.   **Results.** Because IFAD has a more limited sectoral focus than the comparator agencies, its ability to develop and report on results on the ground related to gender equality and women's empowerment – through mechanisms such as the IFAD Results and Impact Management System (RIMS), the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI) and the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) – is among the strongest. IFAD also has indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment results, even though these are not separately compiled and analysed and are often hidden because they are "rolled up" with other social indicators in the reports. One of the evaluations (CIDA) noted that there were "invisible results" the organization's

systems could not capture. While all evaluations were able to point to some positive field-based results, most found uneven and disappointing implementation of gender equality policies and limited results. The reasons for this disappointing performance were relatively common, although with some difference in emphasis, depending on the agency. Based on the benchmarking review, the following recommendations highlight the main areas in need of improvement:

- **Strengthen the capacity and role of senior management structures in leading and overseeing gender equality work.** The role of senior management structures in successful gender mainstreaming is discussed in four out of six reviewed reports. The UNDP evaluation report summarizes the discussion well: "Leadership is crucial to strengthening and making effective progress with gender mainstreaming in the organization." Without clear and sufficient guidance, vision and knowledge from the management level, there is a risk of ineffective mainstreaming. This observation is not specific to the issue of gender equality but is applicable to any mainstreaming process.

- **Develop and include training on gender equality for staff.** All six evaluation reports highlight the lack of gender training and knowledge among staff as a key issue. UNDP finds that there is considerable confusion about what the term gender mainstreaming means. SDC points out that the lack of a theory of change, or hypotheses about cause and effect relationships, leaves staff without evidence-based approaches as a basis for action. WFP reports that staff collected some gender-disaggregated monitoring data, but were unable to use them to shape programming. For successful gender mainstreaming, not everyone needs to be an expert, but testing approaches to remove economic, social and cultural barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment requires an intelligent understanding of what those approaches are. Without this, implementation becomes lip service, or at best, a guessing game.

- **Encourage gender balance at all levels of staffing in the agency.** Evidence from private-sector studies indicates that policies promoting gender equality in staffing and building cultures that sustain their implementation are linked to better corporate performance, higher employee satisfaction, and ability to attract and retain top talent.[15] Two of the six agencies reviewed (SDC and WFP) have integrated gender balance in hiring and promoting staff as part of their gender equality and women's empowerment efforts. Not only were they convinced that this would contribute to the success of their gender mainstreaming efforts, but they also felt that it was important to be consistent with what they were requiring of their grantees and partners. The two evaluations found that internal policies and systems to ensure gender equality on staff were not sufficient in themselves: other efforts were also needed to build an inclusive culture that fully welcomes all staff. For example, staff members at WFP describe its culture as one where women and men, with or without family obligations, are expected to – and do – respond immediately to crises, especially natural disasters. When there is no emergency, it is widely accepted that staff members will organize their work to balance work and family responsibilities, using telecommuting and flexible working hours and taking time off against their accumulated overtime entitlement. SDC has made it a practice to ensure young professionals have opportunities to rotate positions in order to build broad competencies and understanding, while at the same time enabling individuals to accommodate their personal and family situations.

- **Ensure an appropriate level of effort for integrating gender equality, with clear terms of reference, time and coordination.** A commonly used approach to ensure gender mainstreaming (in addition to a dedicated policy or programmatic gender equality unit) is to assign gender focal point responsibility within work units. The purpose of these positions is mainly to strengthen the efforts of gender equality and women's empowerment work in their units, and to be aware of the efforts of – and coordinate with – other units in

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[15] http://www.twiinc.com/twi-philosophy.html

the agency. In agencies where this has been the practice, the evaluations found that the role of the gender focal points was problematic, mainly because of the inadequate time allocation (most commonly 10 per cent); the unclear mandate and terms of reference they are given; and the imprecise accountability relationships of this function. To be effective, gender focal points need to have tools, time, resources and authority. They should have clear terms of reference, or job descriptions that indicate their responsibilities with regard to gender mainstreaming. If they report to a regional manager and work with a gender working group, the accountability and problem-solving mechanisms should be clear. Gender focal point responsibility should not be an add-on task that suffers under the pressure of other work, nor should it be delegated to the most junior woman in the unit.

Another strategy to achieve effective gender mainstreaming is to increase the number of gender experts available to the agencies. The purpose of this investment (in staff and/or consulting expertise) is to support staff capacity to improve design and delivery. Without expert knowledge, programming is unlikely to meet good practice standards, and may inadvertently be ineffectual or even harmful to gender equality and women's empowerment.

- **Improve results orientation, and monitoring, reporting and evaluation to assess results.** All evaluation reports reviewed identified the lack of a results framework to measure gender equality systematically as a crucial concern. Some reports highlighted the importance of focusing on outcomes rather than on outputs, and setting clear targets for gender mainstreaming. Evaluation instruments also needed to be revised to ensure that the results of gender activities are captured. These measures, especially those focusing on specific targets that can be monitored, make it possible to retain gender as a "driver" or cross-cutting issue; without them, there is a risk that gender will be "invisible" and no one's business in particular.

- **Make adequate financial resources available for gender equality.** All of the evaluations had difficulty in finding reliable information about the volume of investment in gender equality. This is in part because the investment is required in both programme and administrative budgets, and there is not an agreed system of coding. Nevertheless, most evaluations felt the investment was insufficient, especially in administrative budgets, although in two cases (CIDA, SDC) staff consulted felt that there was no constraint on the availability of programme investments.

- **Address staff accountability.** The evaluations found that accountability systems for gender equality and women's empowerment were weak. There is no system for work planning and staff performance evaluation that includes attention to gender equality. Where gender advisers exist, their responsibility, compared with that of programme managers, is often unclear (UNDP). The role of gender focal points – who are seldom specialists – is also unclear in a number of agencies (SDC, WFP).

Key points

❖ There has been an evolution in approaches to building gender equality and women's empowerment: pre-1975 efforts were mainly addressed to men as producers and women as homemakers, which ignored the important role of women as farmers and food producers.

❖ This led to the adoption of women-focused approaches (today usually called women's empowerment); and approaches focusing on changing the relations between women and men (usually called gender equality approaches).

❖ A recent and promising gender equality approach promotes the complementarity of women and men in family production and farmers' organizations.

❖ Two major drawbacks to the effective application of lessons from previous operations are a reluctance to address gender as a major organizing principle of society and a failure to invest sufficiently.

❖ All development agencies with recent evaluations have had, at best, mixed success in implementing gender mainstreaming. There was a broad consensus among the agencies that this was mainly due to lack of:
  • results orientation (for impact or for organizational process);
  • consistent leadership and follow-up by senior management;
  • accountability by staff through performance management systems;
  • a clear understanding of how best to address gender inequality;
  • adequate investment in gender equality expertise in IFAD regional divisions as well as in IFAD-funded projects; and
  • attention to gender balance in staffing, and absence of an inclusive organizational culture.

III. IFAD'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

30. This chapter contains an analysis of IFAD's strategic approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In particular, it aims to: (i) assess the relevance of the objectives and approaches articulated, and the quality of the results framework, if available; and (ii) review whether the documents examined provided consistent guidance to IFAD staff for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The chapter begins with an account of IFAD's efforts in this area from its establishment until 2000. Thereafter, it reviews IFAD's efforts in the first decade of the new millenium. Its final part compares IFAD's strategic approach with the approaches of the benchmarked agencies.

A. IFAD's experience with gender equality and women's empowerment: 1978-2000

31. IFAD started its operations in 1978, at the beginning of the International Decade for Women.[16] At the time, there was growing global awareness that women perform critical roles in agricultural production, natural resources management and household food security in developing countries, but have less access to assets and services and less decision-making power than men do. One of IFAD's basic legal texts, the Lending Policies and Criteria,[17] with its various updates over the years, has

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[16] The United Nations declared 1975 the International Women's Year to mark the importance of women in international development cooperation. The global conference that culminated the year was held in Mexico City, Mexico, and the United Nations decided that the issue was of such importance that it declared 1975-1985 to be the International Decade for Women. It also held two further world conferences to review progress: in 1985, in Nairobi, Kenya; and in 1995, in Beijing, China.

[17] The Lending Policies and Criteria were adopted by the Governing Council at its second session on 14 December 1978. They were amended by the Governing Council at its seventeenth session on 28 January 1994 (resolution 83/XVII), its eighteenth session on 26 January 1995 (resolution 89/XVIII), its nineteenth session

always included the directive that IFAD loans for investment projects should benefit women and men equally. This policy has meant that, even in the early 1980s, many key IFAD documents stressed the importance of women in agriculture. Similarly, IFAD-funded projects had activities/subcomponents specifically directed towards improving women's welfare and livelihoods.

32.   IFAD therefore began to focus on the situation of rural women soon after its establishment and has devoted increasing attention to issues affecting them over time. For example, in February 1992, it organized a major summit in Geneva on the economic development of rural women.[18] The summit aimed to promote political commitment at the highest level, raise public awareness and mobilize worldwide support for rural women. One of its findings was that stand-alone project components aimed at "women in development" were generally ineffectual because they were often small, unrelated to profitable production systems and did not address the unequal relationships between women and men, or the exclusion of women from systems and services such as land ownership and agricultural extension. Given the greater recognition that women – and men – did not exist in isolation, and that ways to address the existing unequal relations between women and men needed to be found, IFAD began, in the early 1990s, to design and implement projects that targeted both women and men. Nevertheless, components in some projects continued to emphasize women's empowerment.

33.   In January 1992, to provide a framework for the Geneva summit, IFAD issued a landmark document on gender equality and women's empowerment, "Strategies for the Economic Advancement of Poor Rural Women". The document had a strong focus on women as producers and the gender constraints that are frequently associated with their reproductive, social and cultural roles. The premise was that it was essential to understand the socially defined distinction between women's and men's productive responsibilities and activities in order to allocate resources and services to those who need them the most and can make the best use of them. The document recommended a shift from stand-alone "women in development" project components to the integration of women in all aspects of IFAD-funded operations.

34.   Another indication of the importance that IFAD attributed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment was the establishment, in 1991, of a Gender Desk in PTA staffed by one Professional (i.e. a senior technical adviser), with earmarked funding support from donors. The desk's main purpose initially was to provide technical inputs during project design, but over time it took on a significantly expanded range of activities. Today it is headed by a "senior technical adviser - gender and poverty targeting", with support from two Professional staff members and one administrative staff member funded by IFAD. The evolving role, responsibilities and resources available to the Gender Desk will be discussed in detail in Chapter V.

35.   The 1992 strategies document did not set targets for IFAD to meet, but described an approach that the Fund could take that was consistent with the international thinking of the time on gender equality. The approach involved empowering women and building IFAD capacity to cater for their production-related needs, their rights to self-determination and their effective participation in all aspects of society. These principles provided the starting point for IFAD's efforts to articulate a gender-equality approach over the following two decades. In 2003, IFAD adopted the definitions set out in box 4, which are consistent with United Nations system definitions.

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on 18 January 1996 (resolution 94/XIX), its twentieth Session on 21 February 1997 (resolution 101/XX), and its twenty-first session on 12 February 1998 (resolution 106/XXI).

[18] The Geneva summit brought together, among others, 64 wives of heads of state or government; representatives of heads of state or government from 47 other countries; the Secretary-General of the United Nations; 10 heads of United Nations agencies and representatives of 12 others; and six special guests from the developing world. For more information on the summit, see www.ifad.org/events/past/anniv/mile92.htm.

Box 4. Gender equality and women's empowerment definitions used by IFAD[19]

Gender

The term **gender** refers to culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviours of women and men. The term distinguishes the socially constructed from the biologically determined aspects of being male and female. Unlike the biology of sex, *gender* roles and behaviours and the relations between women and men (*gender relations*) can change over time, even if aspects of these roles originated in the biological differences between the sexes.

Gender equality

In IFAD's terminology, **gender equality** means that women and men have equal opportunities, or life chances, to access and control socially valued goods and resources. This does not mean that the goal is for women and men to become the same, but it does mean that IFAD will work towards equal life chances for both sexes. In order to achieve this, it is sometimes necessary to empower, or "build up" groups that have limited access to resources – for example, by providing day care for children, enabling women to participate along with men in training workshops, providing credit to rural women with restricted access to productive resources, or, as was the case in Latin America, establishing educational programmes for boys because their school attendance was weak compared with that of girls.

Gender mainstreaming

For IFAD as an institution, **gender mainstreaming** is the process by which reducing the gaps in development opportunities between women and men and working towards equality between them become an integral part of the organization's strategy, policies and operations, and the focus of continued efforts to achieve excellence. Thus gender mainstreaming is fully reflected, along with other core priorities, in the mindset of IFAD's leadership and staff, its values, resource allocations, operating norms and procedures, performance measurements, accountabilities, competencies, and its learning and improvement processes. In IFAD's development activities, gender mainstreaming implies assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, and ensuring that their concerns and experiences are taken fully into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development activities. The aim is to develop interventions that overcome barriers preventing women and men from having equal access to the resources and services they need to improve their livelihoods.

Empowerment

Empowerment is about people taking control of their lives. It is about people pursuing their own goals, living according to their own values, developing self-reliance, and being able to make choices and influence – both individually and collectively – the decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment is a process that can be long and complex. For women and men to be empowered, conditions have to be

36. In the second half of the 1990s, IFAD sought to define ways and means to implement the main provisions contained in the 1992 document. For example, it forged a strategic link between household food security, which was increasingly emerging as a major objective of IFAD-supported projects, and women's empowerment and gender equality issues in agriculture and rural development. A major milestone was the development and introduction in 1999 of "Memory Checks for Programme and Project Design – Household Food Security and Gender", [20] which contained a set of questions related to household food security and gender that needed to be addressed when designing an IFAD-funded project. IFAD used this checklist to formalize its existing strategies on gender in the project cycle and to increase consistency, transparency and accountability in decisions concerning the gender dimensions of its operations.

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[19] These definitions were contained in the Gender Plan of Action discussed with the Board in April 2003.
[20] The Memory Checks may be viewed at www.ifad.org/gender/approach/gender/mem.htm.

37.   As mentioned earlier, other efforts were made to include gender equality and women's empowerment in major organizational documents. IFAD's Lending Policies and Criteria (1998), for example, states: "Within IFAD's policy and programmatic focus on poverty targeting, the poverty group deserving more particular attention is poor rural women, who are the most significant suppliers of family labour and efficient managers of household food security. IFAD, working closely with other agencies, should pursue its policy dialogue with Member Governments on the issues related to the economic participation of poor rural women, in the light of its field experiences and in accordance with the Declaration for the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, which was adopted by the Geneva Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women. IFAD should strengthen its focus on poor rural women by developing and sharpening specific instruments of intervention through the exchange of experiences with others working in the field, and through further deepening the conceptual understanding of the complex issues involved" (page 23, paragraph 4).

38.   Another example of efforts to apply this strategy is found in IFAD's General Conditions for Agricultural Development Financing (1999, revised in 2009).[21] Section 7.13 of the document states: "The Loan Parties and the Project Parties shall ensure that the resources and benefits of the Project, to the fullest extent practicable, are allocated among the target population using gender-disaggregated methods".

39.   Although no explicit reference was made to gender issues or women in the 1995 statement of *IFAD's Vision*, the Strategic Framework for IFAD 1998-2000 (the Fund's first such framework) highlighted the importance of rural women for sustainable agriculture and rural development. One of the five core thrusts of the strategic framework concerned gender equality and women's empowerment, emphasizing the need for "ensuring gender balance by supporting the development of NGOs, targeting gender activities and consolidating related lessons and experiences from IFAD's projects and, where possible, replicating and upscaling them".

B. Gender equality and women's empowerment efforts from 2000 to 2010

40.   In the early 2000s, the IFAD Strategic Framework (2002-2006) recognized that rural poverty reduction was intrinsically linked to women's empowerment and gender equality. The framework articulated, for the first time by IFAD, the role of women as "agents of change" for their communities. It acknowledged that powerlessness is a dimension of poverty and that gender inequality is a manifestation of poverty. It stated that gender issues should be addressed as a cross-cutting concern in all aspects of IFAD's work – in other words, women's empowerment and gender equality should be "mainstreamed". It noted the link between MDG3 – to promote gender equality and empower women – and the achievement of almost all the other MDGs, particularly the hunger and poverty goals in MDG1. This general directive for mainstreaming contributed to shaping IFAD's strategies, IFAD-funded operations, and, as discussed in detail in Chapter V, the Fund's key corporate business processes.

41.   To make its 2002-2006 strategic framework operational, IFAD developed the Gender Plan of Action[22] for implementation between 2003 and 2006. This action plan was not submitted separately to the Executive Board for approval but was discussed with the Board in April 2003 during presentation of the then Progress Report on the Project Portfolio.[23] The minutes of the Board session state: "Directors expressed interest in……..the Gender Action Plan, whose implementation was being launched. It was also noted that future portfolio reports would provide information on the experience in implementing this plan."

42.   The action plan primarily aimed at internalizing gender issues in the project cycle by ensuring gender-sensitive design and identifying specific actions, with related performance indicators at different stages of the project life cycle. The plan identified 25 actions, accompanied by time-bound

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[21] The revised General Conditions for Agricultural Development Financing was approved by the Executive Board in April 2009 (see www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/96/e/EB-2009-96-R-3-Rev-1.pdf).
[22] http://www.ifad.org/gender/policy/action.htm#poa.
[23] Available at http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/78/e/EB-2003-78-R-16.pdf.

and verifiable indicators, with which to monitor progress. The actions were procedural and related to the project cycle, policy and partnerships, learning and innovation, accountability and monitoring. They were clustered in three blocks, namely (i) impact achievement in the project cycle; (ii) IFAD as a catalyst – policy and partnerships, learning and innovation; and (iii) accountability and monitoring. For monitoring purposes, a baseline survey was undertaken in 2003, identifying the pre-plan situation with regards to the established indicators.[24]

43.   The preparation of the gender action plan was coordinated by PTA and developed by the IFAD-wide staff Working Group on Gender in Projects and Programmes.[25] The plan also specified implementation responsibilities of units/positions within and beyond PMD. At the highest level, the then Senior Management was made responsible for the plan's implementation and monitoring, and for allocating the human and financial resources necessary for these purposes. Moreover, Senior Management was required to "include progress in gender mainstreaming as agenda items in senior management meetings twice a year." In fact, these meetings did not take place regularly, and, indeed, many commitments made under "implementation responsibilities" (as reflected in the gender action plan, which may be seen in annex V of the Progress Report on the Project Portfolio) have not been met. The list of implementation responsibilities is also reproduced in appendix 6 of this document.

44.   The gender action plan did not require additional resources from IFAD's administrative budget, which constrained its implementation. It should have included at least resources for awareness-building and training of IFAD staff. The action plan was eventually funded by earmarked resources from supplementary funds and from financing mobilized from IFAD's grants envelope. In this regard, over the last decade, all PMD regional divisions have implemented grant-funded regional gender programmes for capacity-building, technical assistance, research and support to gender policy and advocacy. Regional divisions developed specific regional gender strategies, or implemented regional and country-specific grant programmes for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. The results of these efforts were internally assessed in 2006 (see paragraphs 49-50 below).

45.   The action plan's overall objective was to systematize and scale up ongoing efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in different aspects of IFAD's work and to comply with the many United Nations commitments, in particular the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) agreed conclusions 1997/2002 on gender mainstreaming at the United Nations and intergovernmental levels, most recently with the ECOSOC resolution E/2002/L.14, "Mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes in the United Nations system". The plan was not intended as a policy document, but as an instrument to mainstream attention to gender in IFAD-funded projects and other business processes. It recalled the principle, set out in the Lending Policies and Criteria, of gender-equitable access to benefits and services. The plan also distilled from IFAD's established approach and experience in the field, three overarching objectives towards which it intended to contribute (see box 5).

Box 5. IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment objectives, 2003

- ❖ Expand women's access to and control over fundamental assets – capital, land, knowledge and technologies;
- ❖ Strengthen women's agencies – their decision-making role in community affairs and representation in local institutions; and
- ❖ Improve women's well-being and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructures.

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46.   The gender action plan set minimum standards and established a common framework within which IFAD's regional divisions would develop specific strategies and approaches, appropriate to

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[24] In fact, this was the first time IFAD conducted a full-fledged baseline survey for a corporate policy or plan of action.

[25] Later known as the Gender Thematic Group.

particular regional and country contexts. Each division had to determine how, with what resources, and within what time frame it would achieve the established targets, and incorporate these measures into its divisional workplan and budget. Progress in the plan's implementation was to be reported annually to the Executive Board in the context of the Progress Report on the Project Portfolio (later called Portfolio Performance Report, which has since been merged into the RIDE). However, the space and attention provided in the Portfolio Performance Report to the coverage of gender issues was limited.[26] The Board, on its part, did not request more comprehensive annual reporting on the topic until it called for this evaluation by IOE.

47.   Attention to gender-equality issues, as an element of IFAD's poverty targeting approach, was reconfirmed in the IFAD Policy on Targeting, approved by the Board in September 2006. The policy states: "In any given context, IFAD will, together with its partners, identify the target groups through a gender-sensitive poverty and livelihood analysis and have a special focus on women within all identified target groups – for reasons of equity, effectiveness and impact – with particular attention to women heads of household, who are often especially disadvantaged."

48.   Over the past decade, following the adoption of the gender action plan, IFAD has incorporated gender-related indicators in its internal guidelines for the design, implementation, supervision and evaluation of its strategies and the projects it supports. It also included gender indicators in its corporate results measurement framework. These include:

(a)   In the internal guidelines issued in December 2006 for the preparation and implementation of results-based COSOPs,[27] the whole of appendix VII is devoted to a "checklist for inclusion of gender issues in COSOP formulation".

(b)   In the guidelines for project design issued in December 2007, project designers are required to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment issues are treated under the section on "poverty, social development and targeting" within the maturity assessment template and in other places specified in the template. In addition, IFAD has developed a "checklist for gender-sensitive design" to support staff and consultants during the design process.

(c)   The framework for RIMS for IFAD-supported country programmes (approved by the Executive Board in December 2003) requires all results and impact indicators to be disaggregated by gender where relevant. In practice, relevant first-level (output) indicators do have requirements for gender disaggregation; the only second-level indicator (outcomes) that is disaggregated by gender is women's leadership; whereas in the third level (impact) neither the main indicator (change in malnutrition) nor the additional indicator (change in assets) is disaggregated by gender. Moreover, there should be at least one second-level RIMS indicator for each of IFAD's gender-related corporate objectives.

(d)   The guidelines for supervision and implementation support[28] of projects and programmes funded from IFAD loans and grants states that "targeting and gender" is one of the special issues to be treated in the supervision process. Annex 9 of the aforementioned document provides guidelines on reviewing targeting and gender issues during supervision and implementation support, with additional questions to ask and information to obtain.

(e)   The template of the project status reports includes provision for a rating and space for comments on the "gender focus" of the operation under consideration.

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[26] For example, a specific section on gender issues was included in the 2004 and 2005 editions. An annex was included in the Portfolio Performance Report in 2006, but there was no section on gender issues in the 2007 document (the year the last edition of the Portfolio Performance Report was discussed with the Board).

[27] The revised framework for the preparation of results-based COSOPs was adopted by the Board in September 2006.

[28] The guidelines issued in September 2007 were prepared following Executive Board approval in December 2006 of the IFAD Policy on Supervision.

(f)   The guidelines for project completion reports, issued in June 2006, states under the section on assessment of impact, that the evidence of greater "gender equality and empowerment of poor rural people" should be brought out under the various impact domains. There is however no dedicated indicator devoted to gender equality and women's empowerment.

(g)   The results measurement framework for reporting on progress achieved against the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010, approved by the Executive Board in December 2006, includes "gender equity" as an indicator of impact on poverty among the target group with targets at entry, during implementation and at completion of projects financed by IFAD.

(h)   The results measurement framework for the Eighth Replenishment period (2010-2012), approved by the Board in September 2009, includes an indicator to measure "gender equality" in country programmes and project outcomes, with a baseline and 2012 target. There is however no explicit, dedicated indicator on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Fund's results-based annual programme of work and budget.

(i)   Finally, gender equality and women's empowerment are also treated in independent evaluations carried out by IOE, even though not currently assessed individually. Instead, gender equality and women's empowerment are considered as integral dimensions within the various evaluation criteria adopted by IOE (e.g. relevance, effectiveness, etc.). This follows the logic that gender is a cross-cutting theme mainstreamed in IFAD-funded operations. However, IOE has decided to expand its evaluation manual by developing dedicated indicators/questions to provide an overall assessment of gender equality and women's empowerment. This task will be completed by the end of 2010, and all evaluations from 2011 will be required to include a more comprehensive analysis and reporting on the topic. In the meantime, IOE has already recently introduced a specific section on gender equality and women's empowerment in its evaluation reports.

49.   In 2005-2006, PMD undertook a progress review and a self-assessment to take stock of the variety of experiences in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and to draw lessons. This self-assessment included:

(a)   A mid-term review of the Gender Plan of Action in 2005;

(b)   Surveys of IFAD-supported projects, cooperating institutions and IFAD consultants regarding gender issues in IFAD operations;

(c)   Self-assessment of the regional gender-equality programmes; and

(d)   A global workshop to bring together the results of the assessment in a forward-looking exercise in 2007 in Rome.[29]

50.   The self-assessment concludes that: (i) in general, gender support has improved project outreach to rural women, and made project staff and the participating households more aware of gender issues and mainstreaming; (ii) some pilot activities to empower women have been mainstreamed in IFAD-supported projects; (iii) the knowledge produced and the dissemination activities have provided significant learning to IFAD; (iv) the gender equality programmes have had the greatest overall impact on project staff (for example, in terms of their understanding and knowledge of gender issues), a promising overall impact on end-beneficiaries (poor women), but only a moderate overall impact on IFAD staff (mainly because of the limited direct involvement of many country programme managers in project activities); and (v) most programmes have been less effective at the policy level, that is, in exercising influence or in playing an advocacy role on gender equality issues.

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[29] "Looking for new directions: Gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment". The workshop report is available at www.ifad.org/gender/workshop/report.pdf.

51. IFAD's 2007-2010 Strategic Framework reiterates: "For development efforts to be effective, differences in gender roles and responsibilities need to be taken into account; and across all these (target) groups IFAD will focus particularly on women, not only because they have significantly less access than do men to assets and services – and less voice in public decision-making, but also because addressing these inequalities, and strengthening the capacity of rural women to perform their productive roles more effectively, has a major impact on poverty reduction and on household food security."

52. **A new framework for gender mainstreaming in IFAD operations.** The gender action plan was a time-bound initiative (from 2003 to 2006) mainly to operationalize attention to gender relations in the 2002-2006 Strategic Framework. However, following Management self-assessments and as a follow-up to the action plan, a new document, the Results Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Operations, was issued by the Associate Vice-President, PMD, in July 2008. This was an internal management document and was not discussed with the Executive Board.

53. The gender framework reiterates the principles, definitions and key responsibilities contained in the gender action plan. It confirms that attention to gender issues is a permanent feature in business processes related to the life cycle of IFAD-funded projects, and establishes the basic parameters and indicators against which the performance of IFAD-funded operations in this area will be monitored within its regular reporting and monitoring systems (that is, through the RIDE). The specific results indicators may be seen in table 1 of the gender framework.[30] It is also reproduced in appendix 7 of this report.

54. In terms of reporting to Management and to the Executive Board, the RIDE, produced annually since December 2007, treats gender issues in much the same way as the Portfolio Performance Report did. The evaluation found that, in general, there is mention of gender issues in a variety of corporate management documents, including the RIDE and ARRI, the Annual Report on Quality Assurance of IFAD's Projects and Programmes, the progress report on human resources reform, and the progress report on the implementation of IFAD's strategy for knowledge management. At present, however, it is difficult to give a comprehensive or in-depth overview of the organization's achievements in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

55. Unlike the gender action plan, the gender framework refers only to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the context of IFAD-funded operations and thus to actions that fall directly under the responsibility of PMD. It emphasizes that attention to gender equality will be addressed in the departmental results framework and in key performance indicators. The results against all indicators were to be reported through the RIDE but this is not the case at the moment.

56. The gender framework reiterated the three objectives contained in the gender action plan (see box 5 above). In pursuing these objectives, IFAD continued to include proactive measures and activities specifically directed at gender equality and women's empowerment in its approach.

57. **The Eighth Replenishment: gender equality and women's empowerment.** IFAD Management presented a dedicated paper on the topic to the October 2008 session of the Consultation on the Eighth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources.[31] Building on this document, the final report on the Eighth Consultation[32] adopted by the Governing Council in February 2010 included five actions for IFAD to take: (i) build the capacity of IFAD's workforce – both Rome- and country office-based – to better analyse the causes of gender inequalities and address effectively gender issues in IFAD country programmes and IFAD-supported projects, in policy dialogue, and in areas such as innovation, knowledge management and communication; (ii) ensure that gender specialists and/or representatives of women's organizations participate in the design of COSOPs and projects, and that projects give particular emphasis to training and capacity-building as a vehicle for the empowerment of women and girls; (iii) strengthen capacity to gather sex-disaggregated data at project level, and report annually on its performance on gender in its operations; (iv) join the multilateral development

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[30] The new gender framework is available at www.ifad.org/gender/framework/index.htm.
[31] This document may be seen at www.ifad.org/gbdocs/repl/8/iv/e/REPL-VIII-4-R-8.pdf.
[32] This report is available at www.ifad.org/gbdocs/gc/32/e/GC-32-L-5.pdf.

bank working group on gender and through the RIDE, wherever appropriate providing sex-disaggregated data; and (v) review both IFAD's existing Results Framework for Gender Mainstreaming and state-of-the-art indicators, and consult with the African Development Bank and other partners to identify the indicators for mainstreaming gender that are most useful and appropriate for inclusion in the Results Measurement Framework for the Eighth Replenishment. It also requested IOE to conduct this evaluation of IFAD's gender performance.

58.   Some of the above commitments have been met, while others have not yet been fully accomplished. For example, some training activities have been undertaken (e.g., security training for women travelers), but there has been no IFAD-wide training on gender issues. IFAD has joined the multilateral development bank working group and participated in three meetings thus far. Projects are increasingly collecting sex-disaggregated data to ensure participation of women as well as men but this varies from project to project. More efforts could be made to ensure the participation of gender specialists in the design of COSOPs and projects, which will be discussed in chapter V.

59.   **Gender sourcebook.** In 2008, IFAD together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank, issued *Gender in Agriculture – Sourcebook.* This is an important achievement and a useful instrument to guide COSOP development and project design. The sourcebook combines descriptive accounts of national and international experiences in investing in agriculture with practical operational guidance on how to design agriculture strategies and projects involving both women and men. The guidance is organized by the nature of the intervention, for example, rural finance, water and value chains.

60.   The sourcebook provides guidance to practitioners and technical staff in addressing gender issues and integrating gender-responsive actions in the design and implementation of agricultural projects and programmes. Its purpose is not to help gender specialists improve their skills but to guide technical experts in finding ways to integrate gender dimensions into their operations. The sourcebook delivers practical advice, guidelines, principles, and descriptions and illustrations of approaches that have worked so far to achieve the goal of effective gender mainstreaming in the agricultural operations of development agencies. It captures and expands the main messages of the *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development* and is considered an important tool to facilitate the operationalization and implementation of the report's key principles on gender equality and women's empowerment.

61.   **The MDG3 gender torch.** On 4 October 2009, the President of IFAD agreed to take the gender torch (in support of MDG 3, see box 6) from the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, committing IFAD "to do something extra" to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

62.   One early outcome of this commitment was a joint advocacy effort with other Rome-based agencies, which contributed to the unanimous adoption of a declaration by the 2010 High-level Segment of ECOSOC unequivocally reaffirming gender equality and the empowerment of women – especially rural women – as essential for economic and social development and for the achievement of the MDGs. This is a further indication of IFAD's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the 21st century.

Box 6. MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women

The main target for MDG3 is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. The three main indicators to track progress are: (i) ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; (ii) share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; and (iii) proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.

C. Analysis of IFAD's strategic approach to gender equality and women's empowerment

63.   The Gender Plan of Action (2003) and the Results Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Operations (2008) articulate IFAD's main operational objectives for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. To recall, these include: (i) expanding women's access to and control

over fundamental assets – capital, land, knowledge and technologies; (ii) strengthening women's agencies – their decision-making role in community affairs and representation in local institutions; and (iii) improving women's well-being and easing their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure. The numerous other corporate policies on different themes examined during the evaluation (e.g. targeting, rural finance, rural enterprise) do not contradict these objectives, although they vary in their attention to and inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment dimensions.

64.   In general, the evaluation finds that IFAD's gender-related objectives are relevant to the needs of poor rural people and coherent with the Fund's overarching mandate of addressing rural poverty through sustainable agriculture and rural development. The objectives recognize the central role women play in agriculture and non-agricultural activities; the importance of investing in women proactively in order to improve their individual welfare and livelihoods, and the food security of their households; the need to expand women's role in decision-making at both the household and the community level; and the need for better public services for women and men in rural areas.

65.   The objectives are consistent with the commitments of the international community in achieving MDG3 (see box 6 above), even though, given the nature of the activities it funds, IFAD is likely to have a direct impact only against the second indicator under MDG3, the creation of non-agricultural employment for women. IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment activities are, however, likely to contribute indirectly to results in the other two MDG3 indicator areas as well.

66.   The three IFAD objectives (as captured in the gender action plan and the gender framework) relate to women's empowerment, but do not state why gender equality is important. Women's empowerment cannot be addressed without considering the relations between women and men (including the division of labour, resources, power and influence). The absence of this explanation as a preamble to or context for these objectives has important programmatic implications. In practice, the evaluation finds that the most successful IFAD-funded projects engage both women and men in renegotiating traditional roles and relationships to the benefit of both parties and the increased well-being of their families and communities – a win-win solution. However, this is not given as a rationale for the objectives, and, as a result, some projects do not reach their potential for integrating women and men in agricultural and rural development, as will be highlighted in chapter IV of this report.

67.   Based on a review of the gender policies of other development organizations,[33] six dimensions are considered to be positive characteristics of an organization's gender policy. Such a policy should specify the desirable ends (the what) and how progress will be measured (accountability), but leaves the strategy (the how) to be developed by managers and staff. This section provides an analysis of IFAD's corporate gender-related actions across these six key dimensions as follows:

- There is one overarching normative document that tells its readers what is important, why it is important, and how it fits with other corporate policies and priorities;

- The document sets goals or objectives with measurable progress indicators, especially in terms of programmatic and organizational results;

- It states who is responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed;

- It sets out who is accountable for implementing the policy, including development of a strategy and how accountability will be assessed;

- There are mechanisms to review progress, which are considered by the organization's senior management and governing bodies; and

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[33] See: B. Plewes and R. Stuart, Developing An Organizational Gender Policy, Match International, Ottawa 1990.

- Subsidiary operational strategies and guidelines may be developed from time to time to provide details about the mechanisms for ensuring that the policy goals are met in a timely manner.

68.   The evaluation notes that IFAD has an operational policy on gender equality and women's empowerment, as captured in the various corporate documents, rather than an overarching organizational corporate policy on the topic. That is, although the various documents provide useful guidance to staff responsible in PMD for designing, implementing and supervising COSOPs, investment projects and grant-funded activities, they do not underline the adjustments required to fundamental corporate business processes (e.g. human resources, budgeting, communication, etc.) for ensuring the policy's effective implementation and the timely achievement of results on the ground. Therefore, in the absence of an overarching organizational corporate policy on gender, when other new corporate policies or strategies are developed on different topics (e.g. such as the *IFAD Vision* statement, strategic frameworks, human resources policy, or other corporate policies), there is no mechanism to ensure that these core documents are coherent with and include appropriate consideration of IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment objectives.

69.   One other concern raised by the evaluation is the fragmented nature of IFAD's strategic approach to gender equality. Elements of its strategic approach and guidance are found in different documents, which have been developed at different times so that it is not always easy to appreciate the positioning of the guidance and the various instruments used to ensure implementation, or gain an overview of results achieved. For example, as mentioned earlier, the 2003 gender action plan sets out clear and relevant development-related gender equality and women's empowerment objectives and rationales, but was mainly concerned with organizational processes and related indicators. The 2008 gender framework included attention to development-related results and indicators, maintained the programme cycle processes and measures, but de-emphasized the objectives and the rationale, and dropped attention to non-PMD issues. This can partly be explained by the limited support to accountability by the management at the time for the gender plan of action. The replenishment document(s) and strategic frameworks also include objectives and statements as well as actions that the Fund should undertake to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. All this makes it difficult for staff to find the entirety of the guidance provided, and for Management to ensure that necessary follow-up is done in terms of COSOP development, project design and implementation, and monitoring and reporting. There is, in fact, no evidence of systematic monitoring of either processes or results by Senior Management or the Executive Board.

70.   IFAD has ensured that gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed comprehensively throughout its COSOP and project life cycle through a set of well-defined checklists and guidelines. For example, Memory Checks (see paragraph 36) were used for project design, and more recently, dedicated indicators are included in the quality enhancement and quality assurance processes. Specific indicators are also included in the self-evaluation instruments used during implementation – for example, in the preparation of project status reports and project completion reports, even though the evaluation found that different indicators were used in different self evaluation processes (see paragraph 48). Independent evaluations also treat gender equality and women's empowerment in their methodology, and IOE is now developing specific indicators on gender that will be assessed in each evaluation henceforth.

71.   While IFAD uses the standard United Nations definitions, there is a varying understanding of the concepts of gender equality, gender equity, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Often the documents reveal that the terms are used interchangeably. This is because there is no explanation of how the concepts and definitions used fit together and relate to other aspects of development programming. This makes it difficult for a non-expert to understand and apply the definitions and strategies in a meaningful way. It is therefore also difficult to see whether the assumptions that underlie the gender equality and women's empowerment strategic approach adopted by IFAD are coherently applied in COSOPs and project designs.

72.   As examples of differing interpretations, in the Guatemala country programme, there are significant investments in building the value of farm products, organizing activities for coffee and

other crops and products, facilitating meetings and negotiations with buyers at various levels of the value chain, building capacity for grading and sorting, and providing branding and marketing support (e.g. coffee "cupping" competitions). The programme is ensuring that farmers' associations discuss opportunities with women as well as men, and delegate work and resources fairly to both women and men producers. In Sri Lanka, proposed value chain activities will include some products that are made or processed by women. Elsewhere, in recent projects concerned with value chains, no mention is made at all of attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. This misses opportunities and risks inadvertently marginalizing women further. In Bangladesh, one project staff member felt that the priority was to improve women's productivity and not to ascertain whether women derived any benefit from increased income or had any say in how it was spent.

73.   On another issue, there is little systematic reporting at the regional level and beyond on how IFAD is progressing on gender equality and women's empowerment, even though there is some coverage in the ARRI and RIDE. Most commonly, however, such reporting is at the project level, and to some extent at the country programme level. Some information is collected (for example, the number of women in associational or community leadership positions, a second-level RIMS indicator) but it is used to tell stories – about a particular woman who successfully ran for municipal office in Mauritania, for example – rather than analysed for trends, problems or lessons learned. As a result, Management has little basis for adjusting its achievements in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and the Executive Board has even less of a basis for assessing whether IFAD is meeting its objectives and what the associated opportunities and challenges are.

74.   As mentioned earlier, there is little evidence that either the Executive Board or Senior Management systematically monitors progress. This may in part be because where monitoring or research reports do exist (e.g. research on efforts to lighten women's workload), they are difficult to find and are often not framed in ways that are easy to act on. Monitoring (and reporting) is further complicated because IFAD has more than one results measurement framework (see paragraph 48). The incentives system and accountability mechanisms (i.e. the consequences of non-compliance) on monitoring and reporting results are largely absent.

75.   There is also little indication of how the IFAD's corporate gender objectives (i.e., as contained in the gender plan of action and/or gender framework) fits with other content-related thematic or sectoral organizational and operational policies and priorities, and the risk of proliferating priorities is that they give staff carte blanche to ignore the corporate thematic priorities they feel are less important. No formal system exists for reviewing new policies or directions to ensure they address issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment. In terms of thematic guidance, while there is guidance on microcredit and gender, for instance, there is much less on natural resources management and women. Similarly, IFAD's significant support to land registration could include directives to ensure that women are included as landholders in the registration system (for example, in communication strategies or policy dialogue). In part, this is one of the dilemmas inherent in the concept of "mainstreaming": by ensuring the issue is found in every relevant process and system, it becomes difficult to retain the same type of coherent overview possible with a stand-alone policy, such as a rural finance policy.

76.   On another issue, the evaluation finds that the mechanisms available for building IFAD's knowledge and expertise in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment are largely absent. Due to weaknesses in cross-cutting information-gathering and analysis, it is very difficult to have a systematic overview of the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment are an integral part of IFAD operations. There are, however, a large number of IFAD publications that document experiences in different countries and regions, but these are done largely on an ad hoc basis. This is because there is no systematic process for determining an institutional agenda and priority for publications on gender issues. Moreover, most of the publications do not necessarily capture less positive experiences that can also offer valuable lessons for the future, but rather tend to build on successful examples and case studies.

D. How IFAD compares with other agencies in terms of strategic guidance

77.   IFAD compares well with other agencies in a number of areas. The objectives of IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment strategy are similar to those of other agencies. IFAD (like CIDA) also states these objectives in a way that makes progress measurable.

78.   IFAD's greatest strength, in comparison with the other agencies, lies in its clear results orientation (although, with some limitation) and its adoption of indicators both for gender-related field-level results and for internal systems results (for example, the number of loan agreements that include explicit references to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, the attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in supervision, etc.). The RIMS is stronger in concept, application and usefulness than most of the systems used by comparator agencies – both for gender equality and for other results dimensions. This may be because IFAD's work is more focused than that of these agencies. Most stop their investment in gender equality and women's empowerment at the design or appraisal stage, and their monitoring or supervision systems do not include attention to implementation.

79.   Neither IFAD nor the comparator agencies have developed a clear statement about their understanding of how to bring about gender equality and women's empowerment in different country contexts. This contributes to uncertainty and lack of confidence in programming staff, and may promote "lip service" and disappointing uptake and results. On another issue, IFAD resembles the agencies evaluated in the lack of accountability and incentives for staff performance on gender.

80.   In comparison with the other organizations studied, IFAD does not seem to mobilize sufficient gender expertise in COSOP formulation, project design and implementation, and evaluation work. This will be further elaborated in chapter V. For example, consultants with expertise on gender equality and women's empowerment are often hired for particular assignments or on limited-term contracts to meet a specific need. This constrains IFAD's capacity to pull together its field-based learning systematically, and to build on its experience.

Key points

❖ Because it was established at a time of significant global attention to the need for development to include women, IFAD has always paid attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. Between its inception and 1992, this was mainly done through women-specific project components, and since then through attention to including women as beneficiaries and as actors more systematically in its projects.

❖ The new Millennium marked an increase in efforts to "mainstream" gender equality and women's empowerment in the design, implementation, supervision and evaluation of IFAD-funded operations. This was done mainly under the auspices of the Gender Plan of Action 2003-2006. The PMD shift to results in recent years is reflected in the results indicators set out in the 2008 Results Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Operations. IFAD's gender-related objectives allow programmers to adopt either gender equality or women's empowerment strategies, depending on the context. With either strategy, programmers need to generate the awareness and consent of women and men, and of the relevant community authorities.

❖ IFAD's corporate strategic approach to gender is largely relevant and consistent, but fragmented across numerous documents. Moreover, synergies with other thematic and corporate policies and strategies are not clearly articulated. There is also different interpretation of the terminology and understanding of the topic, which is leading to alternative approaches in COSOPs and project designs.

❖ There is no evidence of systematic monitoring of progress on gender equality or women's empowerment by either Senior Management or the Executive Board, and reporting is largely confined to project-level activities. Reporting is also fragmented across numerous documents, preventing a consolidated picture of the main results, opportunities and challenges on the topic. However, compared with comparator agencies, IFAD has done better on a results orientation, and on monitoring throughout the project life cycle. There is however opportunity for further streamlining the indicators related to gender in the overall self evaluation system.

❖ Few efforts have been made to aggregate results coherently at the regional or corporate level, and lessons-learning and cross-fertilization of experiences on gender issues is limited and ad hoc. Like some of the comparator agencies, IFAD does not invest sufficiently in learning from its experience and building on its successes.

❖ There is no incentive mechanism and accountability framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in COSOPs and IFAD-financed operations. These issues, including knowledge management, will be treated in detail in chapter V.

IV.   GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT RESULTS AND EVOLVING APPROACHES

A. Overview

81.   This chapter sets out the findings of three building blocks of the evaluation, namely the meta-evaluation, the five country case studies (Bangladesh, Egypt, Guatemala, Mauritania and Zambia) and the review of recent COSOPs and ongoing projects. The chapter's overarching objectives are to: (i) provide an account of the results achieved by IFAD on the ground in terms of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in past and ongoing operations; and (ii) comment on the extent to which IFAD is incorporating in the more recent COSOPs and projects both the lessons from past IFAD-funded operations and the emerging results from ongoing activities.

82.   The chapter begins with a brief overview of the scope and methodology of each of the three building blocks. (Greater detail can be found in the corresponding working papers produced by IOE during the evaluation, as listed in the table of contents of this report.) Part B reports on the findings of the meta-evaluation. Part C contains the results from the five country case studies. Part D discusses the results of the review of recent COSOPs and ongoing projects. Finally, part E summarizes findings on effectiveness by the three main gender equality and women's empowerment objectives found in the gender action plan and the gender framework. (See appendix 3 for the full list of projects and countries covered in the three building blocks.)

83.   **Meta-evaluation.** The meta-evaluation was based on 50 project evaluation reports prepared by IOE since 2002 using a common methodology. Thirty-one project evaluations were conducted between 2002 and 2005, and 19 between 2006 and 2009. Fourteen project evaluations covered operations in Asia and the Pacific, 12 in West and Central Africa, 9 in Near East and Northern Africa, 8 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7 in East and Southern Africa. All 50 projects evaluated were approved between 1987 and 2001. Forty-eight per cent of the sample was approved between 1995 and 1997, 30 per cent between 1998 and 2001, and 22 per cent between 1987 and 1994. Twenty-six of the 50 projects closed between 2001 and 2004, five each in 2005 and 2006, and six each in 2007 and 2008. Two projects are still ongoing. This implies that even if the projects were designed between 1987 and 2001, several of them were still under implementation in the second half of this decade and therefore do not represent the distant past.

84.   In addition, the evaluation team reviewed all the ARRIs prepared thus far, five country programme evaluation reports and selected recent corporate-level evaluations.[34] This allowed the evaluation team to assess the results based on past operations and discern the proximate causes of good or less good performance.

85.   The 50 project evaluation reports were examined one by one in their entirety. A common framework was developed by IOE to ensure that each report received the same careful assessment. The framework included more than 50 specific questions based on IFAD's corporate gender-related objectives. The questions were grouped according to the internationally recognized evaluation criteria[35] that form the basis of the evaluation manual, which allowed the evaluators to assign ratings[36] for the projects in terms of their gender-related performance. Applying a common framework across all evaluation reports facilitated the aggregation of results from the 50 projects reviewed. The review

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[34] This included the evaluations on innovation (2009/2010), the joint evaluation with AfDB on agriculture and rural development in Africa (2008/2009), the rural finance policy (2006/2007), the Field Presence Pilot Programme (2006/2007), and the Direct Supervision Pilot Programme (2004/2005).

[35] Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, innovation/scaling up, and overall achievement. Ratings for the performance of partners (IFAD and government) were not assigned, due to limited information in the evaluation reports, which precluded a rigorous assessment of this evaluation criterion. (See appendix 2 for definitions of these evaluation criteria.)

[36] As per usual practice, a six-point rating scale was used for the projects across the different evaluation criteria: 6 – highly satisfactory; 5 – satisfactory; 4 – moderately satisfactory; 3 – moderately unsatisfactory; 2 – unsatisfactory; and 1 – highly unsatisfactory.

of the ARRIs, country programme and corporate-level evaluations was conducted to identify cross-cutting issues and lessons learned relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.

86.   **Country case studies.** The objectives of the five country case studies,[37] which included visits to the concerned countries, were to: (i) collect the perspectives of diverse partners in the concerned countries; (ii) see project activities on the ground; and (iii) assess the performance – using IOE's standard project evaluation methodology (as also used in the meta-evaluation) – of a total of ten projects (two in each country) in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. The 10 projects were approved between 1999 and 2006, and all but one (in Zambia) are still ongoing. Six out of 10 will close between 2011 and 2013, two in 2014 and one in 2016. Therefore, it can be stated that this cohort of projects represents a relatively recent vintage of the IFAD portfolio globally, as compared with the projects examined in the meta-evaluation. The results from the country case studies were used to supplement the findings from the meta-evaluation and to highlight differences in performance among projects, by building block.

87.   **Review of recent COSOPs and projects.** A total of five results-based COSOPs[38] considered by the Board in 2009 and 22 projects approved between 2003 and 2009[39] formed the basis of this building block. All projects examined were approved after the adoption of the gender action plan in April 2003 and were still ongoing in 2009 at the time of this evaluation. The projects were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure an adequate balance among the five geographic regions covered by IFAD operations.

88.   The main purpose of this component was to assess the evolving approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment in recent COSOPs and projects. The same key questions used for the meta-evaluation were used to assess the 22 projects. To test whether there were differences between earlier and more recent projects, the evaluation grouped the projects into three roughly equal groups covering three time periods: 2003-2005 (six projects); 2006-2007 (seven projects); and 2008-2009 (nine projects). In addition to analysing project appraisal reports, the evaluation reviewed supervision reports and project status reports, where available, to gain an appreciation of emerging results. It also reviewed the five COSOPs, *inter alia,* to assess the extent to which they included gender-related objectives and approaches and results-based indicators.

B. Findings of the meta-evaluation

89.   **Relevance.** Under relevance, the evaluation assessed whether the objectives of the 50 projects analysed took into account gender equality and women's empowerment, and whether gender-related objectives were aligned with the policies and priorities of the Government, IFAD and poor rural women and men. In addition, the evaluation assessed the coherence of each project's strategy – that is, whether design arrangements were adequate to achieve the objectives defined. Table 1 shows that 88 per cent of the projects evaluated rated moderately satisfactory or better for relevance. However, of these, 44 per cent were merely moderately satisfactory and only 4 per cent were highly satisfactory.

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[37] Individual country working papers were produced in each case, after the country visits were completed.
[38] The Congo, Malawi, Pakistan, Peru and the Sudan.
[39] Eight projects were approved in 2009, one in 2008, seven in 2006, one in 2005, two in 2004 and three in 2003.

Table 1. Rating of relevance

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage
Satisfactory		
6 Highly satisfactory	2	4
5 Satisfactory	20	40
4 Moderately satisfactory	22	44
Unsatisfactory		
3 Moderately unsatisfactory	5	10
2 Unsatisfactory	0	0
1 Highly unsatisfactory	1	2
Total	**50**	**100**

90.   Of the 50 projects reviewed, 15 (30 per cent) were classified by IFAD as rural development projects. These were found to be particularly relevant to women: although they did not usually state specific gender objectives, they often resulted in substantial physical benefits to women as well as men. For example, in the Smallholder Livestock Rehabilitation Project in Lebanon, women's empowerment was not a specific project objective in the appraisal document. However, because of the success of the cooperatives it supports, the project has empowered women and enhanced their social status. More women are now able to work outside their homes; they are more self-reliant; and as income earners, their decision-making role in the household has been strengthened.

91.   Only 28 per cent of the projects had an overt plan to increase women's leadership skills. In 61 per cent, there was some evidence that increased leadership by women was an expected project output, but the strategies for achieving that aim were neither clearly stated nor carried out in a way that was relevant to the project context.

92.   In some cases, activities for women were stereotyped, and the women involved expressed dissatisfaction with the types of activities promoted by the project, considering them irrelevant to their needs. For instance, in the Belize Community Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management Project, the types of activities offered to women were sewing and keeping livestock. The evaluation found that, although the women's groups still kept sewing machines, they rarely used them. The women expressed a greater interest in agriculture production and credit activities, yet there was no attempt to achieve gender balance in the project's agriculture training or credit programmes. Similarly, in the Lebanon livestock project, women's activities almost always revolved around handicrafts, food processing and raising small livestock rather than herd development. Mechanisms for marketing women's products are rarely included as a design feature in the projects, constraining the potential enhancement of women's livelihoods.

93.   Ownership of land seems a clear case where equal rights for men and women would be a relevant objective. However, little effort seems to have been invested at the design stage in past operations to identify whether there was a desire for individual or collective ownership, for example, in tribal groups, or whether women and men considered land ownership for women a relevant investment.

94.   **Effectiveness.** The assessment of effectiveness relates to the extent to which the objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment were achieved in the projects under review. About 76 per cent of projects in the sample were rated moderately satisfactory or better, although close to 40 per cent were merely moderately satisfactory, and none was highly satisfactory in terms of effectiveness (see table 2).

95. The most effective activities appeared to be the targeting of women as well as men for capacity-building and training (90 per cent). The least effective concerned the inclusion of sex-disaggregated performance and impact indicators: only 10 per cent of projects showed clear evidence of disaggregated indicators; 32 per cent showed no evidence at all; and 58 per cent had limited disaggregated data for only a few indicators. A robust monitoring system that provides disaggregated results data for consideration by project management is critical for effectiveness in gender equality. This is consistently raised as an area of weakness in most projects in the meta-evaluation.

Table 2. Rating of Effectiveness

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage
Satisfactory		
6 Highly satisfactory	0	0
5 Satisfactory	19	38
4 Moderately satisfactory	19	38
Unsatisfactory		
3 Moderately unsatisfactory	6	12
2 Unsatisfactory	5	10
1 Highly unsatisfactory	1	2
Total	**50**	**100**

96. When practical economic and human capacity benefits are achieved, some evaluations also report greater effectiveness in improving women's status and capacity to influence. This is because, with project benefits, women become more self-confident and financially independent and are often more involved in local decision-making. For instance, in the Peru Southern Highlands project, women's status within the household and community improved as a result of project-supported training that increased their capacity to manage funds. Because of their higher visibility and prestige, and their greater contribution to household welfare, they are now more respected. Similarly, in the Tunisia Siliana project, activities to create and strengthen women's, and particularly girls', management skills have generated new revenue sources and an enabling environment for the emancipation of girls. Nevertheless, the link between practical benefit and empowerment cannot be assumed and should be fostered through project activities. The Argentina rural development project helped bring about significantly improved food security, which women appreciated, but there was no evidence that better food security led to their greater empowerment. Although household income improved, few women were direct recipients of loans, despite project staff having received extensive gender training.

97. Microfinance initiatives have generally shown positive gender benefits in most circumstances, even though it is not always possible to easily discern results given the lack of sex-disaggregated data in past IFAD-funded projects. In the Ethiopia Rural Finance Project, a study comparing the women clients of four microfinance institutions with non-clients found that microfinance services brought about changes in women's decision-making and participation, helped them to become involved in a greater range of income-generating activities, gave them more control over land, and developed their self-esteem and involvement in positions in the local administrations. Moreover, due to their involvement in group discussions, women become more aware of HIV/AIDS and family planning.

98. In other situations, the steps forward in gender equality are more tentative. This does not mean they are not effective, but they are realistic given the context of the project area. In the Nepal Forestry and Forage Project, for instance, mixed groups initially tended to include one or two women members only. After gender training and orientation, the evaluation team found, forest rangers began to include more women in new groups. This project in the end was considered a good example of women's empowerment and 'gender-inclusive' forestry.

99. Effective progress depends both on realistic expectations of what can be achieved within the project design and the resources available to a project. For instance, the evaluation of the Yemen Tihama project concluded: "The use of a quota for gender-sensitive targeting in the highly hierarchical rural social structure of Raymah, with a very high gender-gap in education and representation, without any precedent experience with community mobilizations and with partners unprepared to accept participatory principles, can be considered beyond reasonable expectation." Yet,

greater access to water brought about by the project contributed gradually to improving women's involvement in income-generating activities. This shows that, even in difficult contexts, it is possible to take some steps forward, through setting ambitious but realistic goals: but steps may be slower and smaller at this time than elsewhere.

100. A major factor in achieving effectiveness was the appointment of gender specialists and women officers, where appropriate. For instance, the Ghana Upper East Region Project has employed a gender officer on a contract basis to ensure that the specific objectives of the appraisal report were met, and this has been an effective strategy. Women were not traditionally landowners in this region, but the project has given them direct access to irrigated land. As a result, women play a much greater role in irrigation management and are highly visible at meetings where they speak up to represent their own views.

101. Still, major gaps in effectiveness were also evident across the sample of projects evaluated. In the Paraguay Eastern Region Project, for instance, the inclusion of women in the target group was considered to be "excessively limited". Experiences in the Mongolia Arhangai project show that there is a more worrying side to ineffectiveness: the project actually had a negative impact on women because when men were forced by drought to emigrate, women were left behind with no way to pay back loans except their social welfare stipends.

102. **Efficiency** is a measure of how economic resources/inputs are converted into results. It is difficult to assess the efficiency of gender-related initiatives, inter alia, because of the limited information available in the reports covered by the meta-evaluation. Nevertheless, there are some indications as to whether project investments supported the gender initiatives and whether the resources allocated were sufficient to meet the stated gender output targets and objectives. Of the 50 evaluations, 62 per cent were rated as moderately satisfactory or better, with none rated highly satisfactory (see table 3).

Table 3. Rating of efficiency

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage
Satisfactory		
6 Highly satisfactory	0	0
5 Satisfactory	15	30
4 Moderately satisfactory	16	32
Unsatisfactory		
3 Moderately unsatisfactory	11	22
2 Unsatisfactory	5	10
1 Highly unsatisfactory	3	6
Total	**50**	**100**

103. The meta-evaluation concluded that most projects did in fact devote adequate resources to gender-related initiatives. However, resources were not always well used because insufficient thought had been given to their suitability for the required activities. In both the Argentina Rural Development Project in the North East and the Ethiopia Rural Finance Programme, gender training was provided but no favourable results from the training were achieved. Based on this finding, the evaluation noted the importance of strengthening the links between project design, implementation strategies and how resources are deployed. Monitoring gender-disaggregated outputs alone is not enough.

104. There were a number of examples where lack of investment resulted in barriers to achieving targeted outputs. In the Ghana Upper West project, for instance, despite women's empowerment being a stated project component for which a specific budget was allocated, the project failed to appoint specific (adequately qualified) staff at regional or district level. Activities for women were not optimized and targets were not reached. The evaluation report concluded that, in the case of livestock activities, "women were the last to benefit". Even when adequate investment was made, as in the case of the Yemen Tihama project, which had a budget to recruit women staff members and duly did so, it was found that the women's work was "restricted due to the lack of supplies, equipment, and transport, a lack of leadership at the central level and lower financial incentives than their male colleagues".

105. **Rural poverty impact.** There was insufficient gender-disaggregated information for all of the domains in which IOE rates poverty impact to ascertain whether projects had differential impacts on women and men. For example, although 39 per cent of the projects increased household income and

assets, these may accrue to men (land ownership, for example), or physical assets may help women (collection of rainwater for kitchen gardens) or men (ploughs). Income may be spent by men, by women or jointly, but there is little information on this in the evaluations. Improvements in water supply benefit the whole household, but benefit women and girls the most because their work fetching and carrying water is lightened.

106.   In terms of building human and social capital, the successful performance ratings of many projects were undermined by the very low ratings in 9 of the 50 projects evaluated, which missed targeting women altogether. With regard to food security and agricultural productivity, 78 per cent of the sample was rated moderately satisfactory and above. The results were particularly positive for food security, which proved to be of special interest to women. The positive impact of better food security went beyond the improved nutrition and health benefits: women had to spend less time in

Table 4. Rating of rural poverty impact

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage
Satisfactory		
6 Highly satisfactory	0	0
5 Satisfactory	8	16
4 Moderately satisfactory	27	54
Unsatisfactory		
3 Moderately unsatisfactory	12	24
2 Unsatisfactory	3	6
1 Highly unsatisfactory	0	0
Total	**50**	**100**

food production and therefore had more time for income-generating activities. Domestic water provision also eased women's work burden and contributed to food security. With regard to agricultural productivity, significant improvements could be made by increasing attention to women.

107.   Very few projects in the sample dealt with natural resource management, and none provided gender-disaggregated information, so it was not possible to rate this dimension. For institutions and policies, performance of the entire cohort in general was moderately satisfactory. Although little evidence could be found of policy engagement on gender equality and women's empowerment, a number of projects did engage with project staff, service providers and communities to raise awareness about the importance of these gender issues and how to take them into account. Some examples of these efforts contributing to policy change can be cites. In India, for instance, women's self-help groups were recognized as instruments for rural poverty reduction in nationally funded schemes. Often, however, such achievements are due to the individual initiatives and efforts of country programme managers, rather than results of a strategic and coherent approach.

108.   **Sustainability** relates to the likelihood that the benefit streams in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment generated by the investment will continue after project closure. Some 70 per cent of the 50 projects covered in the meta-evaluation were considered moderately satisfactory or better and above (see table 5) for sustainability.

Table 5. Rating of sustainability

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage
Satisfactory		
6 Highly satisfactory	1	2
5 Satisfactory	7	14
4 Moderately satisfactory	27	54
Unsatisfactory		
3 Moderately unsatisfactory	6	12
2 Unsatisfactory	6	12
1 Highly unsatisfactory	3	6
Total	**50**	**100**

109. On the whole, the practical benefits that have accrued to participants of both genders, and to women in particular, seem likely to be continued. The projects that seem most likely to act as a positive catalyst for lasting change, however, are those where women are included in decision-making. Improving learning and input to national knowledge-building on the inclusion of women in agricultural and rural development would provide a springboard for broader policy dialogue, more gender-relevant project designs and longer-lasting structural change in gender equality in the concerned countries.

110. The changes brought about in gender equality and women's empowerment show relatively good signs of sustainability. Intuitively, once women are empowered, it is unlikely that they will return to their previous condition of powerlessness (unless the economic dimensions of empowerment generated by the project depend on continued external subsidies or support). One critical factor is the provision in the project for maintenance of physical facilities that benefit women, in order for them to continue to be useful in the long run. This includes both capacity for maintenance and repairs, and affordability of repairs.

111. The criterion of **innovation and scaling up** is rated moderately unsatisfactory or below for 70 per cent of the 50 projects reviewed during the meta-evaluation (see table 6). Performance in innovation in gender is therefore significantly lower, as compared to the overall results of IFAD-funded projects for innovation.

112. **Innovation**. The approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment were generally similar across different regions and types of projects. Activities for women focused mainly on microfinance, livestock and the provision of public facilities like schools, health posts and domestic water supply. Gender equality activities mainly occurred through participatory planning. There is little evidence that information on any innovations has been communicated outside of the projects. An exception is Viet Nam's Ha Giang Development Project, which reports that "establishment of the Women's User Groups for irrigation have been replicated by the province for all small-scale irrigation schemes throughout the province."

Table 6. Rating of innovation and scaling up

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage
Satisfactory		
6 Highly satisfactory	0	0
5 Satisfactory	2	4
4 Moderately satisfactory	13	26
Unsatisfactory		
3 Moderately unsatisfactory	23	46
2 Unsatisfactory	7	14
1 Highly unsatisfactory	5	10
Total	**50**	**100**

113. In only a few projects do innovative methods stand out. Senegal's microenterprise project introduced two innovative tools: a technical support fund; and a commercial support agreement allowing the project to take over some of the risk for the technological innovations (for equipment or packaging) being proposed by women and men participants. Research has shown that women tend to be more risk-averse than men, so tools that help them address risks are very relevant innovations for women. As another example, the IFAD-funded India Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project, approved in 1989, very successfully pioneered the "self-help group" approach to empowerment, thereby improving women's livelihoods and incomes. A determining factor of the project's success, as reported in the IOE project evaluation, was the facilitation that allowed women to have direct access to credit from private commercial banks. The project thus recognized some 20 years ago that rural poor women were indeed "bankable".

114. In spite of some successful examples of innovations and improving results, the promotion of innovation in general, including innovation that affected gender equality and women's empowerment, was unsystematic. The meta-evaluation confirms the findings of the recent corporate-level evaluation on innovation, which stated that "IFAD's approach to the innovations journey, which includes the critical steps of searching (or scouting), exploring, committing, realizing (piloting) and optimizing

(scaling up) is not yet as systematic and effective as it should be. Far too much is left to the initiative and individual entrepreneurial skills of country programme managers, who act without concrete incentives and accountability."

115. **Scaling up**. For scaling up to occur, the lessons learned in project implementation need to be effectively captured, documented and disseminated. In very few cases (6 per cent of the sample), do the evaluations report that strategic efforts were made to capture learning and reinvest more resources in scaling up. Similarly, the recent corporate-level evaluation on innovation found that pathways to ensure scaling up were not well defined in recent COSOPs and project design. About 56 per cent of the projects show some efforts to capture learning, but the extent to which those lessons are communicated, scaled up in subsequent activities or used to facilitate policy dialogue is, on the whole, poor (only 2 per cent of projects). For instance, in Viet Nam, because of significant legislative changes in recent years, land and housing titles may now be issued jointly to a husband and wife. The Ha Giang project therefore had a good opportunity to promote this information, test the process in the project area and, if this initiative was successful, recommend scaling up in future IFAD-funded and other projects in Viet Nam. Yet the women involved in the project, and even the staff of the women's union in the communes visited by the evaluation, were unaware of these changes.

116. Like the corporate-level evaluation on innovation, the meta-evaluation underlines that innovation alone cannot achieve a decisive reduction in rural poverty among women. For broader impact, innovation at the local level must become a lever for change on a larger scale. Thus attention to scaling up is essential for ensuring a wider impact on rural poverty – for example, in terms of the number of poor rural women reached. Examples can be cited of innovations favouring gender equality and women's empowerment that have been successfully scaled up by Governments and other donors, but the evaluation concludes that these have been possible largely due to individual initiatives and commitment, rather than to systematic IFAD processes. This raises an important question about the ultimate usefulness of the gender-related innovations introduced in IFAD-funded operations, since scaling up is essential to achieving a wider impact on rural poverty. Moreover, limited attention and resources were devoted to scaling up in COSOP formulation and project design and implementation, as compared with the scouting and piloting of innovations. Although interrelated and mutually reinforcing, these are distinct aspects of the innovation journey that require dedicated resources, approaches and attention.

117. **Overall gender achievement.** The overall gender achievement rating[40] from the meta-evaluation reflects the variable performance across projects, although very marginal improvement over time is apparent (see chart 1). An analysis of all the meta-evaluation ratings reveals that overall gender achievement for all past projects examined is broadly the same across the five geographic regions covered by IFAD operations, even though it is relatively less satisfactory in the Near East and Northern Africa region.

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[40] The overall gender achievement evaluation criteria is a composite of the various evaluation criteria, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and innovation and scaling up.

Chart 1. Overall gender achievement by date of project approval

Source: Evaluation data 2010   **Date of project approval**
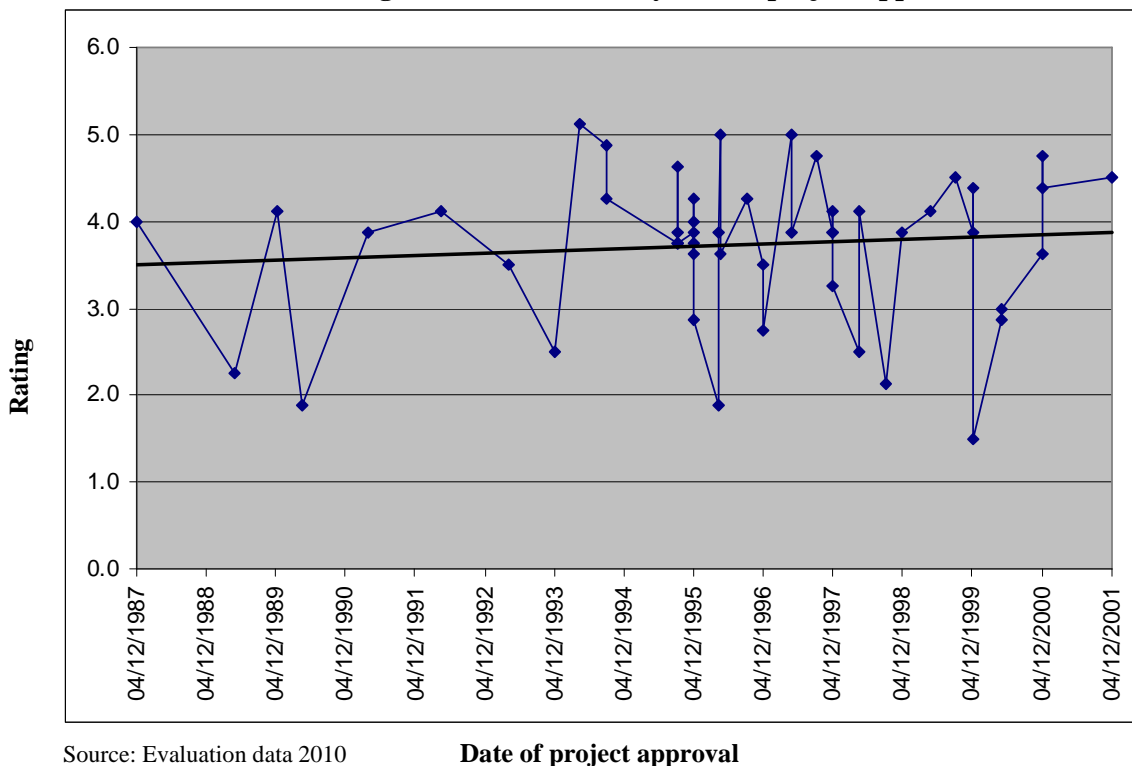
118.   **Relation between overall project achievement and gender achievement.** The evaluation undertook an analysis to see if a relationship could be discerned between a project's overall achievement[41] and its gender-related achievement, based on the 50 projects covered by the meta-evaluation (see chart 2).

119.   The analysis reveals that there appears to be a relationship between projects that perform well overall and those that perform well on gender equality and women's empowerment (although gender equality achievement is generally slightly lower than overall project achievement). However, there is not necessarily a causal relationship in either direction.[42] These findings corroborate the findings of similar evaluations in other agencies (notably CARE International). More specifically, the hypothesis emerging from this analysis is that, when project design and implementation are attentive to gender equality and women's empowerment, a project is more likely to be successful. Among other factors, this is because of: (i) the central role women play in promoting sustainable agriculture development in developing countries, especially in rural areas; and (ii) the importance of taking into account the dynamics of society at large including the interrelationships between men and women in broader development interventions.

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[41] Overall project achievement is one of the most important evaluation criteria. It is a composite of the ratings for project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, rural poverty impact, sustainability and innovation.
[42] The dip in gender achievements in the 2004-2006 period reflects the more rigorous process followed by IFAD in assessing gender equality and women's empowerment, following the introduction of the 2003 gender action plan.

Chart 2. Projects' gender achievement and overall project achievement, by year
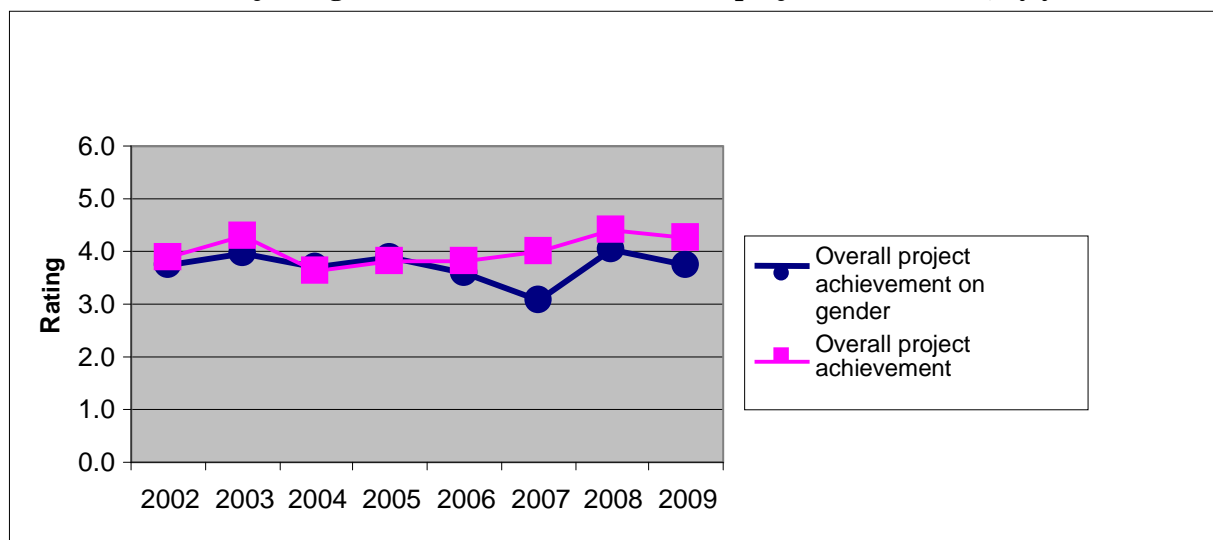
Source: Evaluation data 2010

C. Country case studies

120. The objectives of the five country case studies were outlined in paragraph 86. In terms of process, the country case studies involved reviewing the COSOPs available together with all documentation on two projects in each country. In addition to collecting perspectives from partners in the field, the evaluation team rated the gender performance of the projects based on IOE evaluation criteria, as also used in the meta-evaluation. Some projects could not be rated fully, either because they were not mature enough to be rated at this stage, or the information available was inadequate for generating a reliable rating. Moreover, the team could not rate the efficiency of the projects visited because the lack of relevant information, coupled with methodological complications, made it impossible to gain a proper appreciation of performance in this evaluation criterion.

121. Table 7 shows the aggregate results based on the 10 projects reviewed and compares them with the results from the meta-evaluation. It is worth recalling that the projects reviewed during country visits are of a more recent vintage than those included in the meta-evaluation.

Table 7. Gender performance of the 10 projects reviewed during country visits, compared with results from the meta-evaluation
(percentage of projects considered moderately satisfactory or better)

Criterion	Meta-evaluation (sample size 50)	Projects assessed through the country visits (sample size 10)
Relevance	88	90
Effectiveness	76	90
Efficiency	62	-
Rural poverty impact	70	88
Sustainability	70	75
Innovation and scaling up	30	100
Overall gender achievement[43]	76	100

122. As can be seen from table 7, the projects covered in the country visits outperform the older projects in the meta-evaluation in every criteria. However, as in the meta-evaluation, five of the 10 projects were merely moderately satisfactory for overall gender achievement and three were

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[43] This criterion is a composite of the ratings for relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and innovation and scaling up.

satisfactory. The best-performing project of the 10 projects in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment was the Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces in Guatemala, the only project to receive a highly satisfactory rating. Apart from this project, no other project had highly satisfactory ratings in any of the seven evaluation criteria assessed. In fact, many of the ratings for the remaining nine projects were in the moderately satisfactory range.

123. Therefore, the country visits confirmed that more recent projects are performing better on gender equality and women's empowerment than earlier ones. Nevertheless, the importance given to gender concerns, the approaches applied, and the coherence of the strategy adopted continue to vary widely.

124. To illustrate, in terms of differences in priority, both the Guatemala and Mauritania projects consider including women as well as men as rural and agricultural leaders and actors to be a core part of their strategy. In Mauritania, this is actively supported by the policy of the new government, while in Guatemala it is viewed as an accepted part of IFAD's approach, even though it is not necessarily well understood or adopted by government agencies. In Bangladesh, while the Government officially supports gender equality, social norms are less progressive, and government capacity is weak, so that IFAD's targeting of women, while a priority, suffers some weakness in implementation (see below). The Egypt programme is only recently becoming more engaged in women's empowerment programming through a range of support for income-generating activities in upper Egypt with the objective of improving incomes, having previously devoted major efforts to irrigation investments that did little for women's empowerment or gender equality.

125. In terms of variance of approaches, some project staff (e.g. one project in Bangladesh) seem to view increasing women's economic activity as an end in itself, regardless of whether women benefit or not. In other contexts (e.g. Mauritania, one project in Guatemala), traditional women's handicraft activities are still being pursued regardless of their commercial viability. By contrast, the Guatemala Las Verapaces project has a leading-edge strategy and well-managed implementation of gender equality activities in a successful value chain enhancement project for vegetables, spices, coffee and cocoa. The employment of a full-time gender adviser in the Las Verapaces project has contributed significantly to the inclusion and advancement of women in the project. Mauritania is mapping out its women's empowerment strategy with the active support of the Ministry responsible for women and ensuring their participation in decentralized planning and decision-making processes. This promises to be another leading-edge strategy with potential for policy-related learning and scaling up.

126. In Egypt, (and in Guatemala, as well as in other countries reviewed by other elements of this evaluation), IFAD project staff assisted women in obtaining identity documents, which are a prerequisite for accessing government services, opening bank accounts, or benefiting from other commercial services such as cell phones. Literacy, concepts of accounting and group management, technical skills and other "catch-up" services were offered to women in Guatemala and Mauritania as an integral part of project services, and to some degree, in Egypt and Bangladesh. There was very little attention to lightening women's workload in Egypt or Bangladesh, and some evidence that their workload was actually increased by project activities or transferred to other women.

127. None of the projects visited or their country strategies had articulated a set of objectives or strategies specifying their contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. Where a strategy could be said to exist (the strongest being in Guatemala and Mauritania), it was implicit, and could therefore be ignored or contested (as in one situation in Guatemala where some staff felt it was important to help very poor women, even though the kind of support provided by IFAD was a poor fit with their needs).[44]

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[44] There is much more detailed information available in the five country case study reports, which are available on request from IOE.

D. Review of recent COSOPs and ongoing projects

128. **COSOPs.** The recent COSOPs reviewed (the Congo, Malawi, Pakistan, Peru and the Sudan)[45] pay significant attention to gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with design guidelines, and their gender equality dimensions are results-oriented. The analysis of gender-related dimensions of rural underdevelopment shows improvements over those in earlier COSOPs. For example, the Malawi COSOP recognizes that the problem is not that women do not know how to farm, but that they lack decision-making power. Therefore, the COSOP states that IFAD-funded projects need to tackle this issue. Most current COSOPs show more explicit, systematic and sophisticated logic about IFAD's potential contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality. While there is limited evidence about implementation of this logic in the COSOPs, since they are high-level documents, some recent IFAD-funded projects (see next section) serve as good examples in terms of gender: building positively on the traditional rights and status of women (the Gambia); allowing women-only groups to ensure that benefits remain under the control of women (Pakistan); and using positive reinforcement of women's improved capacity in communication to promote adoption by other women and support by men (Bangladesh).

129. IFAD staff increasingly situate the COSOPs in the context of aid effectiveness. This forces them to make an adequate analysis of what others are doing. The results framework for COSOPs also asks staff to collaborate with women's ministries or departments. The COSOPs for Peru and the Sudan describe the links IFAD staff are forming with these ministries, and such links are also evident in some of the projects approved in 2009 reviewed by the evaluation team.

130. Several recent COSOPs had gender equality-related results, indicators and resources explicitly set out in their frameworks (e.g. those for Malawi, Pakistan and the Sudan). This will provide a strong benchmark for measuring whether there is follow-through on these objectives. Finally, the COSOPs are more focused, with fewer and often clearer and more realistic objectives; they illustrate the connections among different operations; and there appear to be stronger links with country priorities and institutions than in the past. This makes it easier to look at the gender dimensions of each intervention – and more difficult to ignore them.

131. **Projects.** To recall, 22 ongoing projects were reviewed in terms of their attention to gender in design. All 22 projects were approved by the Executive Board after the adoption of the 2003 gender action plan.

132. The gender dimensions of the project designs varied considerably. In general, the more recent project designs (e.g. the nine projects approved in 2008 and 2009) were significantly more attentive to the project's gender dimensions. Some designers understood in considerable detail the gendered agricultural division of labour – what work women and men did on various kinds of crops, who made which decisions, and how decisions about income were made (see Box 7), and designed their intervention to meet poverty reduction targets in a way that also increased gender equality.

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[45] All these COSOPs were considered by the Board in 2009.

Box 7. Household economy in the Gambia: A collective purse with separate purses

The excerpt that follows formed part of the preliminary analysis for an IFAD-funded project in the Gambia approved in 2009. It is indicative of the great attention some project designers pay to gender issues:

 The head of the household, usually a man, must provide the cereals base and this carries the right to call on the labour of all household members. Wives, who are expected to provide the ingredients for the sauce (vegtables, spices, animal protein), are assisted by children, especially daughters. This basic division of responsibilities masks an enormous capacity for flexibility in response to circumstances. All household members are expected to collaborate towards collective well-being, usually by working on the "family fields" managed by the household head. They are also entitled to undertake a personal activity and to keep the earnings as their own. However, everyone is expected to renounce these earnings when times are hard.

This interlocking system of separate purses within a collective purse has evolved over time, but the basic principles remain valid. As in any human society, theory may not be put in practice and factors such as precedence (first wife, co-wives), age (eldest son, younger sons), favouritism and personal inclination come into play. The experience of most NGOs and projects, including those financed by IFAD, indicates that only local people will know who is truly vulnerable and who is not and that outreach to particularly vulnerable categories can be improved by getting the local community both to identify those categories and to ensure that they also benefit from the supported activities.

133. Others project designers made no analysis at all of the different responsibilities of women and men farmers, or of the social and agricultural implications of this allocation. Sometimes it was merely noted that woman-headed households were poorer than man-headed households (except in Liberia, where woman-headed households were better-off). When there is no gender analysis of agricultural production systems, there is no basis to conclude that the design took gender equality into account.

134. Only seven of the 22 projects described the gender strategies and institutions of the borrowing Government, and connected with these institutions during the design phase. Four of those projects were among the 2008-2009 cohort. Most Governments have ministries or departments responsible for the advancement of women. Although they may not have expertise in agricultural development or rural poverty, they are in a position to convince their colleagues in other departments to support gender equality and women's advancement. Furthermore, they are usually knowledgeable about the women's organizations active in the project area and may have useful suggestions about effective and appropriate ways to involve women in leadership and decision-making. With regard to the latter, the evaluation found that project designs were increasingly paying attention to enhancing women's decision-making role – see chart 3.

Chart 3. Attention to increasing women's decision-making in project design
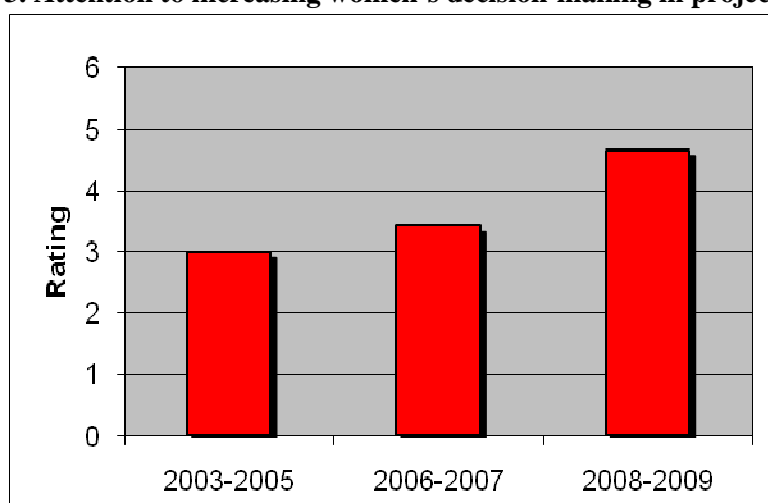
Rating scale: 6 – highly satisfactory, 5 – satisfactory, 4 – moderately satisfactory,
3 – moderately unsatisfactory, 2 – unsatisfactory, and 1 – highly unsatisfactory
Source: Evaluation data 2010

135.   The design documents seldom indicated that women were consulted about the project design, or would be consulted as part of implementation planning. None of the 2003-2005 projects made mention of such consultation, and only one of the 2005-2007 projects did. However, in the 2008-2009 cohort of projects, three did mention that project designers had met with women who were intended project beneficiaries to discuss their interests and ideas, or planned to do so as part of the project start-up. Of the 22 project designs reviewed, only four indicated any consultation with women about their needs, interests or ideas.

136.   Ten of the projects did not include gender-disaggregated results or indicators in their logical framework. In a few cases, these were absent even where the text made specific reference to women's participation in project activities and presented a gender analysis of agriculture in the project area. The lack of gender-disaggregated results or indicators could influence project achievements and possibly even worsen the situation of poor rural women, who are most likely to take a prominent role in agricultural production. In other cases, the logical frameworks were weak from a gender perspective because (i) again, indicators were not gender-differentiated (despite an explicit mention of women beneficiaries) or (ii) gender-differentiated indicators were linked only to outputs, rather than to results. A results-orientation forces the design documents to be more specific about the strategies and activities that will produce the desired results. More recent projects have improved their results-orientation, ensuring that gender-disaggregated data are collected (see chart 4). However, there is still a "design-implementation gap" in terms of monitoring and reporting – in a sex disaggregated manner – of results on poverty. This is due to a variety of reasons, including the relatively weak accountability and incentives framework for CPMs to actually follow-up during implementation.

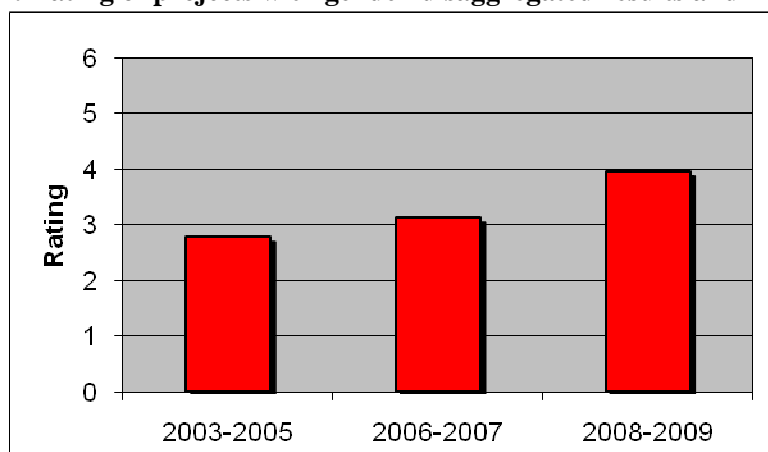**Chart 4. Rating of projects with gender-disaggregated results and indicators**

Rating scale: 6 – highly satisfactory, 5 – satisfactory, 4 – moderately satisfactory, 3 – moderately unsatisfactory, 2 – unsatisfactory, and 1 – highly unsatisfactory
Source: Evaluation data 2010

137.   Fewer than 20 per cent of the projects reviewed made mention of any strategy or plan for how their gender-related objectives would be met. This could indicate either that the objectives were set mechanistically, in response to IFAD's internal requirements, without any clear analysis or strategy to meet them; or that the presentation of even the barest outline of a gender-related strategy was not a prerequisite for project design approval. Thirteen of the 22 projects reviewed mentioned allocating resources for gender equality: for women staff, training for women and support to implementing partners in addressing gender equality issues. The quality enhancement process notes these shortcomings, but has limited capacity to follow-up on their recommendations during the 'arms-length' quality assurance process.

138.   Lightening women's workload was the least prominent gender-related aspects in project design. In the earliest group of projects (2003-2005), women's workload was mainly a consideration in components for water provision, and in literacy training. More recently, the design document of an irrigation project noted that a previous market gardening scheme had required too much hand-carrying

of water and proposed putting the tanks closer to the growing beds. Women's workloads were also considered in a project component requiring ploughing of fields in households where no male labour was available, and provision was made to provide this service for hire. However, most often, the extra work required for increased production was not considered as an opportunity cost, the assumption being that women had time to spare or could delegate other tasks. It may be important to consider opportunity costs explicitly, since if work is delegated to younger women or children, it may reduce their educational opportunities. In eight projects (six in the 2008-2009 cohort), the design explicitly mentions the need to promote the re-negotiation of what traditionally is defined as "men's work" or "women's work" in order to achieve the project goals.

139. There is significant regional variability in the level and quality of attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in IFAD design documents. This was noted in the 2006 self-assessment of the gender action plan and remains true today, even though the meta-evaluation found little variability in results. The quality assurance ratings[46] for new projects designed up to March 2010[47] for gender, shown in table 8, are evidence of this variability. In fact, the second consolidated annual quality assurance report to the Executive Board[48] in December 2009 noted, with reference to projects designed in 2008/2009, that "targeting including gender" was one of the five thematic areas[49] that needed attention before Management could consider the projects feasible for loan negotiation and submission to the Board.

Table 8. Rating of new project design for gender equality and women's empowerment

Rating for gender equality	West and Central Africa	East and Southern Africa	Asia and the Pacific	Latin America and Caribbean	Near East and North Africa
Number of projects reviewed	16	13	18	11	11
Percentage rated 4 or above	94	100	83	100	64
Percentage rated 5 or above	63	62	39	91	0
Mean score	4.9	4.8	4.3	5.4	3.8

Rating scale: 6 – highly satisfactory, 5 – satisfactory, 4 – moderately satisfactory, 3 – moderately unsatisfactory, 2 – unsatisfactory, and 1 – highly unsatisfactory
Source: Evaluation data 2010

140. While there are some good-quality gender-related projects in Chad and the Sudan, where gender inequality is very high, projects in Eastern Europe, where inequality is relatively low but important in rural areas, seem to pay little attention to this issue. This reinforces the findings that the level of commitment and importance given to gender inequality by country programme managers and regional division directors is an important determinant of IFAD's performance in this area. Staff interviewed told evaluators that some government partners became more receptive to the idea of gender equity components in projects when shown that they can successfully be financed by a grant. When government partners are resistant, piloting grant-financing efforts to demonstrate the potential of investing in gender quality and women's empowerment is used by some CPMs successfully to win over government partners. The determining factor seems to be whether the country programme

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[46] These ratings are given by independent reviewers hired by the "Quality Assurance Team" in the Office of the President and Vice-President, as part of IFAD's enhanced quality assurance mechanism.
[47] This includes data since the Quality Assurance Group started its activities in 2008.
[48] See document http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/98/e/EB-2009-98-R-57.pdf.
[49] The other four areas were implementation arrangements, monitoring and evaluation, institutional arrangements/analysis, and technical issues.

manager or the PMD regional division director identifies gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority and mobilizes technical advice in support of advocacy efforts to have these aspects accepted in the project. The Associate Vice-President, PMD, also has an important role to play in terms of both advocacy and oversight, ensuring, for example, that there is follow-up to the common gender-related issues identified during the quality enhancement process.[50]

141. The evaluation made attempts (by reviewing supervision reports and project status reports)[51] to gain an appreciation of emerging results from the 22 projects. It should be noted, however, that nine of the 22 projects were approved in either 2008 or 2009 and eight in 2006, which means that the majority of the projects reviewed had been under implementation for a relatively limited period of time and some had not yet been declared effective at the time of this evaluation.

142. Based on a review of 12 of the 22 projects that has been under implementation at least for a few years, the evaluation found that only five had any comments to support the gender ratings included in their respective project status reports. In preparing project status reports, country programme managers are asked to rate the gender dimensions of activities, monitoring arrangements, and results achieved in terms of gender focus. Of the five projects, only one (the Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project in the Sudan) commented on gender equality and women's empowerment results and what strategies would need to be adopted to improve these results (in this case, land titles in the name of women heads of household). The other four projects only noted the gender-related activities that had been undertaken. Except for the start-up year, only four projects changed their rating on gender dimensions (i.e. the Community-based Rural Development Project in Burkina Faso, the Southern Nyanza Community Development Project in Kenya, the Sudan GASH project, and the Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction in Ha Giang and Quang Binh Provinces in Viet Nam). In all these cases, with the exception of Burkina Faso, the ratings improved slightly over time. In Burkina Faso, the 2009 project status report rated performance in this area as moderately unsatisfactory, after all previous reports had given it a moderately satisfactory rating. The report commented on the need for improved communications, especially about gender equality. It is interesting to note that the only project that commented on gender equality results (i.e. the Sudan GASH project) gave itself a lower rating than did the project status report that was only looking at activity-level indicators. This finding indicates that it is important to cross-check these ratings for consistency, and also to ensure that projects that are more effectively results-oriented get positive recognition, even if their ratings are lower than those that measure only activities or outputs. If these measures are not instituted, IFAD risks rewarding trouble-free implementation more than contribution to results, and also risks over promising in the design phase.

E. Effectiveness in relation to IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment objectives

143. First of all, it is important to clarify that the analysis presented below differs from the analysis of project effectiveness presented earlier (see paragraph 94). The earlier analysis is based only on a desk review of 50 project evaluation reports carried out by IOE as part of the meta-evaluation. The analysis of effectiveness against the three IFAD corporate objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment that follows (paragraphs 144-153) is more comprehensive, as it is based on the findings of meta-evaluation of 50 projects, the ten projects in the five country visits conducted by the evaluation team, the review of ongoing operations, as well as feedback from key informants within IFAD including country programme managers, the gender desk and PMD directors.

144. The first of IFAD's three gender-related objectives, "**expand women's access to and control over fundamental assets – capital, land, knowledge and technologies**" has received the most attention in both design and in terms of results across all projects, most likely because it is where IFAD has traditionally had most experience and therefore an area of specialization and comparative advantage. For gender equality and women's empowerment, this has included access to microcredit,

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[50] Quality enhancement process is internal to PMD, and precedes the more arms-length quality assurance process led by the Office of the President and Vice-President.

[51] Project status reports (for each project financed by IFAD) are usually produced once a year (in some cases twice). They are expected to be updated after each direct supervision and implementation support mission.

access to income-generating opportunities and provision of "catch-up services" such as literacy, numeracy and basic entrepreneurship to increase the likelihood that women will be able to take advantage of development opportunities offered by IFAD programming. Over time, more projects have focused on improving women's productivity through better capacity-building efforts and access to rural financial services in agriculture for both income-generating activities and food security (especially through horticultural and market gardening projects (e.g. in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Zambia) and investment in small stock (goats, chickens). Some recent value-chain work (involving agroprocessing of fruits and vegetables) has deliberately planned to integrate women into high-value agricultural production and processing activities that are usually restricted to men (the case in Guatemala).

145. A significant level of activity has focused on handicrafts associated with women's traditional roles (pottery, sewing, embroidery, weaving, baking, hairdressing, etc.), but in most cases – as evidenced by the country studies in Guatemala and Mauritania – these efforts do not generate adequate income and may barely cover the costs of material, much less labour. Since they do require significant effort, it is important to ask why these activities persist. Part of the reason may be because they are familiar to the women beneficiaries and project designers, do not generate any conflict, and are relatively easy to start up. Theoretically, handicrafts could be a springboard for other more remunerative or non-traditional activities, but there was no indication of this in the projects reviewed for this evaluation.

146. IFAD has made special efforts to ensure that microcredit is available to women, and the majority of its microfinance loans are made to women lenders. This can be a mixed blessing. The Zambia country study reports, for example, that, because loans to women have lower requirements than those for men, men get access to credit through their spouses. Similarly, in Bangladesh, some women reported to the evaluation team that even though their husbands use the credit, the fact that the loan is in their name gives them more say about how it is used. However, if the loan is misused, or if it cannot be repaid, this potentially leaves the woman in a worse financial situation than before, and may increase domestic conflict. Several evaluations have noted that while women have easy access to microcredit, their ability to get larger loans is limited, even if they have an excellent repayment record: there is therefore little potential for women to "graduate" from microcredit. There was no evidence that efforts to provide commercial credit in rural areas were specifically addressing this issue.

147. Despite the importance of increased access to resources and assets, there is less emphasis on women's control over the income that results from these investments, or even over the resources themselves. To some extent, this control is provided through projects that are managed by women's groups themselves (a common approach used in Africa and in South Asia), although generally these projects are in less profitable domains. Women report that they use the benefits they control for improved household nutrition and for children's education. If the level of income increases significantly, they also report improvements to housing (e.g. Guatemala).

148. Women's access to agricultural extension services is often problematic. In Guatemala, for instance, it is generally easier for men to travel to see demonstration farms using improved varieties. In Bangladesh and Mauritania, some agricultural extension departments do not reach out to women, and alternative service providers for women need to be identified and contracted, or trained. Frequently, training is not provided at times and locations convenient for women. These difficulties have limited women's ability to improve their productivity in agriculture-related areas that have the potential for greater remuneration than handicraft-type projects.

149. IFAD is increasingly investing in entrepreneurship training to ensure that a greater share of the value-chain remains with primary producers. No mention is made in the projects reviewed that efforts are being made to ensure that this training is available to women as well as men. Entrepreneurship training could be particularly important for women given their generally limited exposure to markets outside the local milieu. The Guatemala experience suggests that women have a "good eye" for quality control and consistency in products and packaging, as affirmed by the men interviewed. In conclusion, on the whole, the evaluation assesses IFAD's performance in terms of effectiveness as

moderately satisfactory in expanding women's access to and control over fundamental assets – capital, land, knowledge and technologies.

150. IFAD's second objective is to "**strengthen women's agency – their decision-making role in community affairs and representation in local institutions**". The earlier projects examined in the projects reviewed paid little or no attention to this objective, but as IFAD's work is increasingly focused on strengthening producer and user associations, and as the RIMS includes an indicator to assess women's leadership role in such organizations, this objective is more visible both in design documents and in the field. The meta-evaluation rated 16 per cent of the projects as satisfactory in increasing women's participation in decision-making and 58 per cent moderately satisfactory. In some cases, the objective of women's agency seems to be adopted in a tokenistic way, as a response to conditions set by IFAD for project investments, but in other cases (Guatemala and, in some instances, Mauritania), there is a significant increase not only in the number of women members and leaders in organizations, but also in their ability to articulate their own interests and perspectives, and add value to the organization's decision-making. For example, men in Guatemalan organizations reported that the women's attention to how the association managed its money resembled their care with household income: this money should not be spent frivolously, and the returns should benefit all fairly. While IFAD has documented its successes in this area (e.g. Peru), there is less information available on how these successes were achieved – information that is vital for both project managers and implementers.

151. The meta-evaluation points out that strengthening women's involvement in associations is closely linked with project success, and is also one area where IFAD could significantly improve its performance. While the RIMS indicator on women's leadership in associations is adequate for overall progress monitoring, project operational manuals could go into more detail on how to strengthen both women's participation and the associations as a whole – in terms of building women's and men's capacities to address, prevent and resolve conflicts; identify, analyse and resolve problems; or negotiate and build useful partnerships both within the association and externally. The manuals can address what can usefully be done to shift women's participation from tokenism to a meaningful and valued involvement. Understanding how and when to build these types of capacities efficiently and effectively is an area where IFAD would benefit greatly from documenting and sharing experience, rather than leaving each project to experiment on its own. The country visits indicated not only increased attention to this issue, but also greater sophistication in the analysis of why this was important and how it could be approached. Relatively little work is being done to connect women's regional and national federations with local groups. In places where this does occur (e.g. India), it has been assessed as helpful. Effectiveness in strengthening women's agency is rated, like the first corporate objective, moderately satisfactory.

152. IFAD's third gender-related objective is to "**improve women's well-being and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure**". Work in this area has included provision of water for domestic use, to prevent women and girls from having to walk long distances to procure water. Building health centres has also been described as contributing to this objective, although there is less information about whether the centres continue to be adequately staffed, and the extent to which the services are affordable. In at least one situation where women were gathered for training or literacy, project staff provided reproductive health information and services (Guatemala). Some projects (West Africa, Guatemala) have provided improved stoves, which have health benefits for the entire household and use less fuelwood as well as reducing the time that women or men have to spend searching for fuelwood. More recently, a very limited number of projects consider the ergonomics of agricultural infrastructure – making sure that the height or weight of water transfer facilities can be handled by women (Gambia) or that woman-headed households have access to ploughing services. In the documents reviewed for this evaluation, there was no reference to what efforts were easiest or most used or useful for improving well-being and easing workloads, although IFAD has produced a recent study on this subject.[3] In a few instances, there were reports about discussions with men about sharing household work as women's earning capacity

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[3] See "Lightening the Load", http://www.ifad.org/gender/pub/load.pdf .

increased (e.g. Guatemala), but no information was available about how successful these efforts have been.

153. Some women report hiring extra household help when their incomes increased (Guatemala). IFAD's work on rural roads has also made it easier for women to access services and sometimes to transport goods and crops. In a few cases, there is evidence (in Bangladesh and Peru) that women have been consulted on the design and maintenance of the roads. Better roads may facilitate women's mobility, as it may be considered safer for women to travel, but may not be sufficient to increase their freedom of movement in culturally conservative areas. Finally, the evaluation concludes that effectiveness has improved but is still moderately unsatisfactory in terms of increasing women's well-being and easing their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure. This third objective has received relatively less attention because it is less clearly articulated, and because the "well-being" part refers to access to services (primarily health and education) that are not central to IFAD's mandate.

Key points

❖ The review covered 82 projects, five country programme evaluations and five COSOPs. Overall performance rating was only moderately satisfactory, but the average masks significant variance among projects and regions in attention to gender-related dimensions of design and implementation, in approach and in follow-through during implementation.

❖ The weakest performance is in innovation and scaling up, largely because there is very limited investment in systematic cross-cutting analysis, learning and performance feedback.

❖ There is little evidence of policy dialogue related to gender equality and women's empowerment, but such dialogue has been significant where it has been given serious attention, no matter at which stage of the loan cycle.

❖ The largest emphasis in IFAD-supported operations is on increasing women's access to resources, but less systematic attention is devoted to who benefits from their increased productivity and skills.

❖ Together with IFAD's emphasis on strengthening farmers' and users' organizations and community groups, there is also evidence of an emphasis on increasing women's participation and leadership in these associations.

❖ Women's workloads and well-being have been addressed through project infrastructure to ensure household water provision or through construction of health posts, and by introducing items such as improved stoves. Women's workloads are less of a consideration in agricultural work, although there is evidence in a few projects that the manageability of equipment is a consideration.

❖ The overall finding is that there appears to be a relationship between gender achievement and a project's overall achievements, a finding confirmed by evaluations in other organizations. However, the analysis does not reveal a causal relationship in either direction.

❖ Nevertheless, variability in the importance given to gender issues by individual country programme managers and divisional directors makes a difference in success levels in this area – a serious accountability gap. This confirms the finding from wider evaluation experience from other multilateral development organisations that leadership is essential for achieving results on the ground. That is, things tend to move when managers demonstrate the importance they attach to the issue and lead by example.

❖ Recent COSOPs and project designs show more consistent, detailed and thorough attention to gender equality and women's empowerment, attention to gender-related partnerships, and the benefits of a strong results orientation. There is however opportunity for further streamlining IFAD's overall results and reporting system on gender equality and women's empowerment.

V. ASSESSMENT OF CORPORATE BUSINESS PROCESSES

A. Overview

154. This chapter reviews numerous corporate business processes that affect IFAD's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. There are two main reasons why an assessment of corporate processes is important: (i) some of the processes and functions that influence an organization's ability to contribute effectively to gender equality and women's empowerment through its projects lie outside the purview of operations, with human resources and communications being two important examples; and (ii) the results achieved on the ground can only be fully understood when the processes (both formal and informal) that shape what is possible in the field are examined.

155. In particular, the evaluation reviewed the following processes and functions of IFAD for their coherence, interrelationships and their influence on IFAD's work in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment: (i) corporate business processes directly related to operations including quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, direct supervision and implementation support, country presence, evaluation, the results measurement framework, knowledge management, policy dialogue and partnerships; and (ii) other corporate business processes such as human resources management, financial management and administration, and communication. It also examined the appropriateness of IFAD's internal gender architecture, in particular the functioning of the PTA gender desk, the role of the divisional gender focal points and the experiences of the corporate thematic group on gender.

156. The evaluation also felt that it was important to analyse the roles of the Executive Board and IFAD Senior Management. The Board, among its many responsibilities, determines what areas will be given priority by IFAD (and in fact decided that gender equality and women's empowerment would be a priority area). Management is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources, systems and processes are put in place so that the desired results can be achieved on the ground. Both therefore play important roles in determining the nature of IFAD's gender activities and ensuring that these activities are carried out in an effective and timely way. Figure 2 illustrates the responsibilities of the Executive Board, Senior Management, middle management and staff in IFAD's gender work.

Figure 2: IFAD's gender-related systems and responsibilities

Board
- Commissions and approves policy
- Sets out what, why, expected results and indicators, accountability framework, monitoring and review process, priority/fit with other policies
- Responsible for quality of policy
- Reviews progress reports, commissions independent evaluations or benchmarking
- Revises policy as required

Senior Management
- Develops implementation plan
- Ensures adequate resources
- Monitors and reports progress to Board
- Actively seeks out good practice on policy implementation relevant to IFAD
- Recommends policy adjustments as required
- Adjusts implementation as required to attain expected results
- Ensures accountability of all departmental managers for implementation instruments and processes
- Communicates expectations

Middle Management
- Develops, coordinates and oversees instruments and processes to implement and monitor implementation at departmental or divisional levels (including human resources, communication, finance and administration)
- Ensures systems for staff accountability for implementation, including the necessary support
- Compiles progress reports
- Ensures quality and comparability of progress reports
- Recommends implementation adjustments as required
- Communicates expectations

Staff
- Are accountable for:
  - Ensuring quality of project design in relation to policy
  - Ensuring quality of supervision in relation to policy
  - Ensuring quality of monitoring and data analysis in relation to policy
  - Negotiating contracts and agreements to implement policy
  - Communicating policy to contacts and partners
  - Ensuring quality of COSOP in relation to policy

157. This assessment entailed a review of documents, and individual and group interviews with representatives of IFAD Management and staff. Before reviewing the work of each unit, division or department, the evaluation team circulated a set of open-ended interview questions and determined, in collaboration with the senior staff concerned, the relevant source materials and the individuals who could best respond to those questions. The team held more than 40 individual interviews with the senior management and staff, and nine interviews with Executive Board members. It also organized a series of focus group discussions, including with the thematic group on gender. Some key informants were interviewed more than once, or further information was collected through follow-up correspondence. An on-line survey was also conducted about the work of the thematic group on gender and the divisional gender focal points, with the involvement of both current and former group members.

B. Major findings

158. **The Executive Board.** Over the years, the Executive Board has underlined the need for IFAD to pay due attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. The Board members interviewed felt that these objectives were not contested or a cause of division within the Board. They affirmed that the Board attached great importance to gender concerns. As one example, it was pointed out that some women Member State representatives to the three Rome-based United Nations agencies had

formed an informal group to discuss issues related to gender, improve their own capacity as representatives, and exchange views of the mainstreaming efforts and results of gender equality and women's empowerment in the respective United Nations agencies.

159. In 1992, the Executive Board supported the proposal that IFAD should shift from a narrow focus on women in IFAD-funded operations to a more integrated approach to treating gender issues within the overall development objectives that the Fund pursued. Consequently, IFAD-supported projects began to pay attention to the needs and interests of both women and men, and to how these needs and interests were interrelated. In 2003, the Board provided its overall support to the Gender Plan of Action, which allowed IFAD to "embed" attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in each part of the project life cycle, from design to supervision and monitoring and evaluation. However, the Board did not spend much time in considering the mid-term review of the Gender Plan of Action, which could be partly attributed to the fact that the mid-term review was presented merely as an appendix in volume two of the 2006 Portfolio Performance Report.

160. With Executive Board support, donors committed a fair amount of dedicated supplementary funds for gender activities, even though the Board was not directly involved in the negotiations of the supplementary funds agreements. These funds allowed IFAD to hire professional technical staff on gender[4] (initially on a fixed-term basis), cofinance operations, undertake studies and capacity-building, and organize conferences and workshops on the topic. The Board also authorized resources from IFAD's grants envelope to support various gender mainstreaming activities. More discussion on the use of supplementary funds and grants for gender activities can be found later in this chapter.

161. In 2009, in approving the IOE annual work programme, the Board commissioned this corporate-level evaluation, which is a further illustration of the importance it attaches to the subject. The Board's Evaluation Committee has also played an important role in raising attention to gender issues on numerous occasions in the context of IOE evaluations, for example, in 2009 while considering the joint IFAD/AfDB evaluation on agriculture in Africa.

162. However, there is no systematic review by the Board of key corporate documents submitted by Management in terms of their coherence with IFAD's strategic approach on gender equality and women's empowerment. As a result, major documents (such as new policies or strategy documents) may vary considerably in their attention to this issue.[5]

163. All Board members interviewed consider gender equality and women's empowerment to be central to progress in achieving IFAD's mandate. They feel, however, that they lack a good overview and systematic information about how well IFAD is tackling these issues in its operations. Apart from coverage in the ARRI and RIDE, there is no specific process through which the Executive Board can review progress on IFAD's work in gender equality and women's empowerment on a regular (annual or biennial) basis. Several Board members pointed out that this information gap is not unique to gender issues: the Board faces similar constraints when dealing with other issues and themes.

164. However, it is fair to note that, with the exception of its decision to commission this corporate-level evaluation, the Board has largely played a responsive rather than proactive role in relation to IFAD's gender activities. It has not exercised leadership in this area by requiring IFAD Management to submit comprehensive and systematic annual reports on gender-related results, and it has not allocated core administrative resources (including human resources) to gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, it has never requested IOE or Management to treat gender as a central learning theme in the ARRI or RIDE, which would have given it the opportunity to understand in depth the proximate causes of good or less good performance in this thematic area. Although the Board did, when considering different agenda items, issue general statements about the importance of

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[4] Initially, the post of the senior technical adviser on gender in PTA was financed through supplementary funds. The two staff posts in the division dedicated to gender are now part of IFAD's administrative budget.

[5] For example, although the new IFAD Rural Finance Policy approved in April 2009 includes various references to the role of women, there are merely two references to gender equality and women's empowerment, one of which is in a footnote. In contrast, the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, approved by the Board in September 2009, treats gender equality and women's empowerment comprehensively.

gender, it has not explicitly requested policy coherence across the organization on gender equality and women's empowerment, nor has it outlined its priorities for IFAD's gender work. Finally, the Board has at times tended to focus its scarce resources and efforts on inputs and details (e.g. defining the indicators for assessing gender equality and women's empowerment) and not on results and lessons learned.

165. **The Executive Management Committee.** Established in 2009, the Executive Management Committee is the highest internal management decision-making body within the Fund. The committee is chaired by the President of IFAD, and its members include the Vice-President; the Associate Vice-President, Programmes; the Chief Development Strategist; the Chief Financial Officer; and the General Counsel. The Director of the Office of the President and Vice President is the Committee's Secretary. The committee normally meets once a week and, to ensure transparency, minutes of these meetings are posted on the Intranet.

166. Committee Members, who were interviewed separately during the evaluation process, consistently shared the Executive Board's views on the importance of women's empowerment. This was demonstrated, among other things, by the President's acceptance of the MDG3 Gender Torch and his support for this independent evaluation. The President's speech to the 2010 annual IFAD Governing Council also underlines the importance attributed to the topic.[6]

167. At present, however, no one in the Executive Management Committee is specifically charged with ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are appropriately integrated in major IFAD policy documents presented to the Executive Board, that adequate resources are allocated by the Fund to further these objectives and that the required accountability and incentives are in place.

168. **The Programme Management Department.** PMD was a major component in this evaluation. The starting point for the analysis was to review the work of PTA, which is responsible for leading and coordinating gender equality and women's empowerment efforts within IFAD. PTA's gender desk currently consists of two Professional staff members,[7] one of whom is also responsible for poverty targeting in IFAD-funded operations. To supplement its existing capacity, the gender desk makes use of interns, consultants and – whenever it can mobilize their services – volunteers. The desk is supported by one General Service staff member. The more junior of the two professional positions is relatively recent, and, like the senior technical adviser position, was initially financed through supplementary funding from IFAD donors. Both positions are now funded through IFAD's administrative budget.

169. The gender desk has, over the years, played a useful role in designing and rolling out IFAD's strategic approach for gender equality and women's empowerment, including the gender action plan and the gender framework. The desk has provided inputs and advice for COSOP development and project design during the quality enhancement process, in order to ensure that gender concerns were duly reflected. It has undertaken numerous self assessments[8] and also made efforts to share information, lessons and experiences across divisions; more, however, could have been achieved in this area had resources been available and coordination mandated by PMD Management. Externally, the desk organized an international learning workshop in Rome in 2007 on "gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment", which allowed for cross-fertilization of good practice and raised attention to state-of-the art approaches in addressing gender concerns. During interviews, many staff in operations expressed appreciation for the inputs and advice provided by the desk. However, in some cases, the staff member considered these inputs necessary merely to satisfy internal

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[6] "Women remain a primary target of our country programmes and projects and I gladly accepted last October the MDG3 Gender Torch from Minister Ulla Tornaes, of Denmark and committed to do something extra. Internally, at IFAD, gender equality at the workplace is not just words – 75 per cent of recently recruited professional staff in the Office of the President and Vice-President are women, including the Vice-President and the Director of the Office."

[7] One at the P-5 level and the other at the P-4 level.

[8] This includes, for example, five regional assessments in 2004-5, the review of gender equality and women's empowerment in IFAD's portfolio in 2000, and other activities.

management requirements and procedures in COSOP preparation or project design and implementation.

170. The gender desk has supported, and been supported by, gender focal points (designated by most IFAD divisions) and by gender advisers (periodically appointed, discontinued and then re-appointed within the five PMD regional divisions). The focal points were instrumental in setting up IFAD's Thematic Group on Gender, which was extremely active in the early 2000s, providing the intellectual energy and drive behind the gender action plan and its implementation. Some members of the thematic group – which is the oldest such group in IFAD established in 1998 - feel that the group has now become less relevant especially in the past two years and needs to be rethought. Currently, it mainly serves as a network for sharing information and for contributing to organization-wide events on gender-related issues. The group has no formal mandate, no specific workplan and no budget; participation is voluntary, and, in the case of gender advisers who are in decentralized locations, by virtual communications only. There is very little pressure on regional division directors to support co-ordination or agency-wide learning on gender equality and women's empowerment.

171. No dedicated resources are allocated for the gender desk's non-staff costs (for example, for hiring consultants for knowledge management, special studies and workshops), but this holds true for other PTA thematic desks (such as the desks for rural finance or for natural resources and the environment). In fact, the thematic desks are required to "apply" to the Director of PTA for available non-staff resources, providing a detailed workplan in support of their application. Because resources are few and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, the gender desk has tended to rely mainly on mobilizing and using IFAD grant resources and supplementary funds for conducting its core business. This is a cause for concern, especially since access to these resources is not assured.

172. IFAD has managed since 1996 to secure a total of about US$14.8 million in supplementary funds for pursuing gender-related activities, with Japan and Norway being the largest donors (see chart 5). In addition, around US$6.2 million has been mobilized from IFAD's grant resources for this purpose. Therefore, in total, extra-budgetary resources (supplementary funds and grants) of around US$21 million have been raised for gender-related activities since 1996. Unfortunately, these resources have not been evenly distributed over the years, with most being received in the late 1990s, which has led to stops and starts in some regions for attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. Resources specifically earmarked for the gender desk have amounted to around US$3.7 million since 1996 (or 18 per cent of the total extra-budgetary funds mobilized). The remaining funds were earmarked for use by the PMD regional divisions, the then External Affairs Department and other organizational units. It is fair to note that the gender desk has played an important role in mobilising supplementary funds from donors for gender, which are then shared among and used by IFAD's regional divisions.

Chart 5. Supplementary funds raised for gender-related activities (by source): 1996-2009
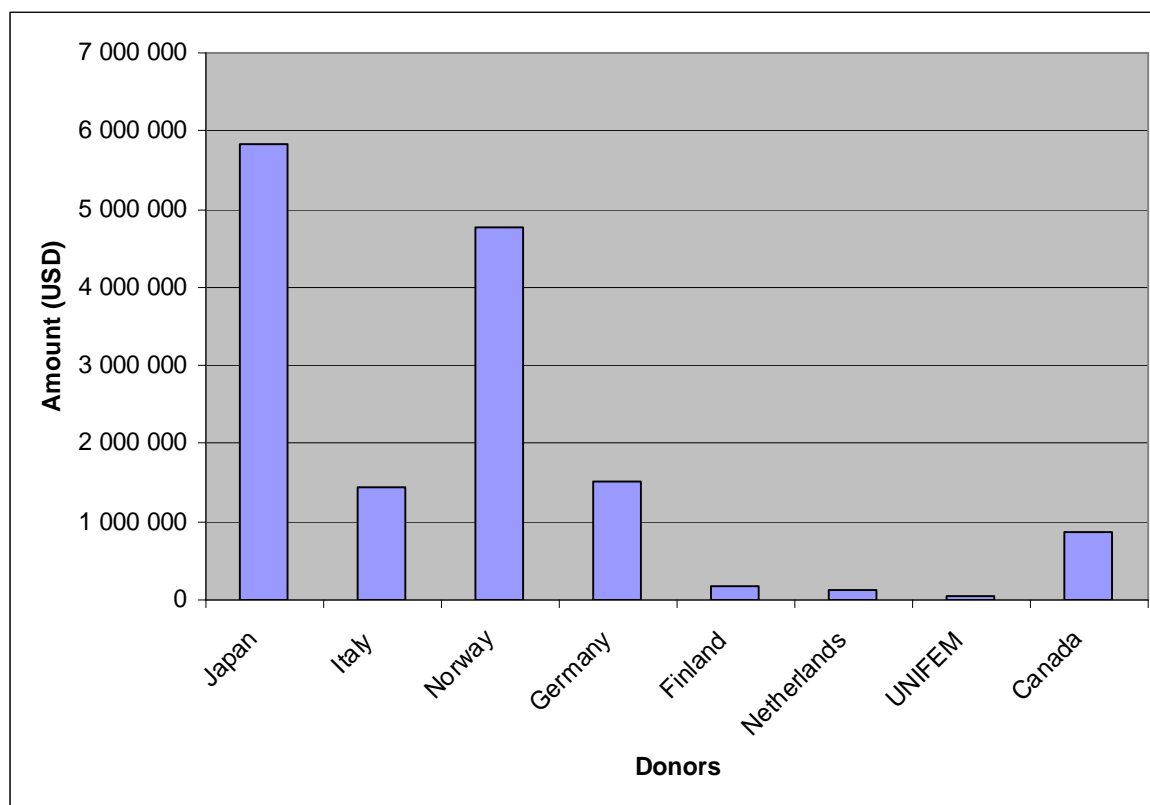
173. To summarize, the following may be considered some of the main achievements and/or strengths of the gender desk:

- Development of the gender action plan and gender framework, self assessments, and formulation of coherent procedures, checklists and guidelines for addressing gender concerns in all parts of the programme cycle and ensuring their adoption;

- Collaboration with other divisions in IFAD in supporting their respective gender activities. This includes profiling and communicating IFAD's work on gender equality and women's empowerment internally, with other Rome-based United Nations agencies and in other key bilateral and multilateral forums; and

- Advocacy in many key platforms within and outside IFAD (e.g. at the Farmers' Forum held in conjunction with IFAD's Governing Council in 2010, which included a special session on women's leadership in farmer organisations, or at the 2010 ECOSOC High-level Segment (by supporting IFAD's North American Liaison Office in New York) to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture and in rural development are promoted as appropriate.

174. Areas where the gender desk's performance has been weak are:

- Its lack of consolidated annual results-based workplans, which would guide its choice of priorities and its allocation of time more effectively;

- Its "even-handed" approach, spreading resources equally across IFAD, when it might make more sense, in some instances, to offer more selective support to examples of excellence, innovation and scaling up, or to sectors or areas where performance in gender equality and women's empowerment is weak; and

- Its facilitation role in cross-fertilization of lessons learned, good practices and experiences across projects, countries and regions, including its focus on disseminating success stories,

rather than on also learning from failures. This is due to the fact that information comes mainly from regional divisional reports, rather than a learning agenda that is jointly defined by PTA and the regional divisions.

175. The **PMD regional divisions** vary in their level of attention to, and interest in, gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the evaluation found that leadership at both the departmental and divisional management level is a critical success factor. The performance of IFAD-funded projects in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is generally better in those regions (e.g., Asia and the Pacific as well as Latin America and the Caribbean) where regional division directors have consistently paid significant attention to the topic, for example, in the IFAD regional strategies of 2002 and related operational processes.

176. In terms of knowledge sharing, real learning at the project or country level is seldom transferred to other countries or regions, in part because no one is tasked with this on an ongoing basis. There are some good initiatives – particularly the production of a wealth of useful publications on gender-related issues,[9] which serve to document and share experiences based on case studies and research. However, on the whole, these efforts are ad hoc and left to individual initiatives rather than pursued systematically. It is, however, fair to underline that weaknesses in cross-fertilization of lessons learned, good practice and knowledge management in general are systemic concerns within IFAD and are not confined to the Fund's gender work. For example, the internal management annual portfolio review reports could include a well spelled-out section on progress achieved by the concerned regional division in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

177. Gender focal points in the regional divisions are not working full time on the topic[10] and therefore have limited time available for it. They could potentially have a key role in sharing knowledge; ensuring quality assurance of projects, COSOPs and self-evaluation documents prepared by their divisions; capturing lessons from outside IFAD and keeping the Fund up-to-date on state-of-the-art techniques on gender equality and women's empowerment. However, three quarters of the focal points report that they spend less than 20 per cent of their time on gender-related work, and over one quarter spend less than 10 per cent. They may or may not have the time or capacity to influence their regional colleagues (e.g. country programme managers, regional economists, portfolio advisers), particularly since many are relatively junior. The gender focal points' mandate is not clear, and only 14 per cent of the gender focal points had workplans or specific terms of reference for their gender work agreed with their managers. They have not had time to collaborate sufficiently with the gender desk in PTA or with other gender focal points. Some reasons for this are outlined above, but the main reasons are that PMD gender activities are not integrated into one coherent plan across the department, and the funding mobilized (e.g. through supplementary funds or grants, but also from the administrative budget) is normally earmarked specifically for use by regional divisions. Among other issues, this has constrained learning and sharing of experiences, and limited opportunities for aggregating results and reporting beyond the regional level.

178. Attempts have been made in the past to invite the regional divisions to work with the gender desk in building an IFAD-wide gender implementation strategy, and to agree on common criteria for using a fund that would be pooled and then managed divisionally when allocated. These attempts have not been successful, in good part because the regional divisions tend to work in "silos". This may be understandable to some extent given the diversity in contexts across and within regions, but ways and means can be found to pursue both a region-specific and departmental-level agenda.

179. One consequence of the above is that mistakes are repeated, and successes are not built on as well as they might be. There seem to be few consequences for inattention to, or poor performance in, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within or among the regional divisions. This

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[9] Gender and Water (2007), Gender and Non-Timber Forest Products (2008), Polishing the Stone: A Journey through the Promotion of Gender Equality in Development Project (2007), Lightening the Load; Labour-saving Technologies and Practices for Rural Women (2010), and many others.
[10] For example, some gender focal points are country programme managers, regional economists or knowledge management officers.

may be because individual work planning and performance management systems are not results-oriented or considered binding.

180. On a related issue, while a number of projects have had consultant or staff gender advisers or officers, this is not a regular feature across the portfolio examined. Recently, however, with the support of PTA gender desk, the regional divisions have hired regional gender advisers, who are located in the respective regions. They are financed through supplementary funds and their contracts are time-bound (one year). This is a move in the right direction, and it may be worth reflecting on whether these positions need to be institutionalized by IFAD in the future – especially since this is the second time donors have invested in regional gender advisers through earmarked funds (the first investment was made in 2003-2006 as part of the gender action plan's implementation, but the positions were not institutionalized).

181. In terms of operational processes, as mentioned in Chapter III, gender-specific indicators are assessed at entry during the project design process and reported upon in the maturity assessment template used for quality enhancement and quality assurance. However, various staff members across PMD considered that too much emphasis was being placed on design in contexts where projects often changed significantly between design and implementation.[11] "Slimming down" the design process, they felt, would free resources for better implementation support, which is also an essential ingredient for impact achievement. This issue is worth further consideration. Although PTA gender desk is cognizant of the importance of supporting CPMs during project implementation, they have not traditionally been able to sufficiently participate in supervision and implementation support missions. This is largely due to the limited time at their disposal, compared to the number of ongoing projects at any given time.

182. There was broad agreement among interviewees that the shift to direct supervision and implementation support was increasing attention to the quality of implementation in general and the coverage of gender issues in particular. Including gender expertise on supervision missions and including attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in the resulting reports would further reinforce this trend. The RIMS indicators on gender equality and women's empowerment, when they are used, seem to be having an influence on improving attention to gender equality. The inclusion of gender-related indicators in corporate results frameworks, project status reports and project completion report guidelines are a further indication of the growing importance attributed to gender aspects during project implementation. The challenge, however, is to ensure that the gender indicators established within the different processes are mutually reinforcing and facilitate aggregation and reporting. In fact, the multiple layers of results measurement frameworks and indicators within IFAD's overall self-evaluation system is a broader concern and one that will need to be addressed in the future.

183. Country presence is also serving to further IFAD's gender agenda on the ground. Some country offices (e.g. India) have appointed technical staff with gender expertise who are responsible for mainstreaming gender across the portfolio, providing technical inputs to project staff, facilitating knowledge management on the topic, and so on.

184. **Learning and knowledge management.** IFAD has much valuable experience in successfully – and less successfully – contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment in its programming through a wide range of approaches and strategies. Unfortunately, this knowledge is not easily available to staff, and as already stated, the gender desk could have played a wider role in the process. However, it is fair to note that when the gender desk has tried to draw together this learning, it has had very few resources at its disposal for making this a participatory process that could feed collective reflection and learning back to the operations and partners in the field and information in existing reports is often too superficial to be useful. Moreover, many of the communication materials tell stories about successful results; they reflect less on the strategies, activities or attitudes that made the results possible, and hardly at all on the institutional or structural arrangements that underpin the

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[11] The meta-evaluation and the five country case studies undertaken in this evaluation found evidence to support this contention, including major changes in spending categories.

strategies. There is also little evidence that less good practices and negative experiences are documented and debated, although the insights that these could provide into what does not work and why would be equally valuable.

185. It is worth reiterating that weak knowledge management is a wider issue and does not only affect IFAD's work on gender. The same finding emerged from the recent corporate-level evaluation on innovation and the joint evaluation with AfDB on agriculture in Africa. Recognizing the importance of developing a solid knowledge function on agriculture and rural development, IFAD has recently devoted more time and attention to knowledge management across the board. This has included adopting a knowledge management strategy; establishing a knowledge management core team, which is supported by a knowledge management community of practice including representatives from different IFAD divisions; designating the chief development strategist as the knowledge and innovation champion; reconfiguring the Office of the Chief Development Strategist into the Office of Strategy and Knowledge Management; and organizing a knowledge fair on community-driven development. While these are steps in the right direction and the results are slowly emerging, much more should be done to capture, store, package and disseminate knowledge based on the Fund's rich field experience, including knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment.

186. **Policy dialogue.** There are some good examples of policy dialogue by IFAD on gender issues in partner countries. In Brazil, for example, based on the experiences of the IFAD-funded Dom Helder Câmara Project, the federal Ministry of Agrarian Development agreed to promote a national campaign for providing rural women with identity cards, which are essential for securing access to credit, land and other resources.

187. In India, building on the experience of numerous IFAD-financed projects, the Government has now included women's self-help groups as instruments for rural poverty alleviation in major rural development schemes financed through domestic resources. However, as stated in chapter IV and in spite of some good examples, on the whole policy dialogue performance at the country level is variable, but generally unsystematic, with little analytic underpinning and not backed by the required human and financial resources. This is not a new finding, as weaknesses in IFAD's capacity to engage in policy dialogue in partner countries has repeatedly been highlighted by the ARRI and other recent corporate-level evaluations (e.g. on innovation). On the other hand, as pointed out in chapter III, IFAD has played a useful role in selected global policy platforms (e.g. Farmers' Association) on gender equality and women's empowerment by drawing attention to the plight of rural women and their central role in smallholder agriculture and rural development processes.

188. **Partnerships.** IFAD's most consistent partnerships in its gender work have been with peers – with the gender networks of other multilateral development banks and Rome-based agencies – supported through the PTA gender desk. PTA is also an active member in the United Nations inter-agency network on women and gender equality, the OECD/Development Assistance Committee network on gender equality and plays a role with FAO on advocacy for rural women and agriculture in these bodies. IFAD reports on gender-related human resource issues to UN Women, the new United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women; and the gender desk has relations with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, now part of UN Women. These connections have not necessarily been translated into parallel field-based relationships for the regional divisions. In addition, some country programme managers have supported links with gender-related NGOs (e.g. in Argentina and Guatemala), and PMD has supported some links with women leaders of farmers' organizations (e.g. the women delegates to the 2010 Farmer' Forum). Donor Governments have mostly been important sources of funding, but there has been only some partnership with them on content issues. Relationships with borrowing Governments on gender issues have been weak. Only a few outstanding examples can be cited of country programme managers building relations with departments of borrowing Governments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, both as a matter of principle or as a demonstration of the link between women's advancement and successful rural and agricultural development. There is, however, little evidence that regional directors more generally or IFAD Senior Management have systematically cultivated such relationships.

189. **Communication.** IFAD's Communications Division and IFAD's Liaison Office in Washington, D.C. works closely with the gender desk to proactively profile and promote gender equality and women's empowerment dimensions of IFAD's work, and to support internal information-sharing and advocacy. The development of widening consensus around international norms related to women's rights has been a critical factor in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment around the world. The Liaison Office feels that international policy outreach and engagement on gender equality and women's empowerment has been among the most successful of its international advocacy efforts overall. Communication has been strategic, systematic, and linked closely with programme experience and perspectives; it has created opportunities for the voices of women farmers and built on coalition efforts led by IFAD. The high quality results of these collaborations could be examined by other divisions that are mainstreaming gender as a model for how to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment. This collaboration also extends to the global advocacy functions of the Liaison Office, which is well coordinated with both Communications and the gender desk to seize advocacy opportunities at the global level.

190. The IFAD website, for which the Communication Division is responsible, frequently features gender-related news and information on its front page and also contains substantial gender-related information, both on programming and on IFAD processes and systems, in its sections. The information in the sections is not very visible, however, and must be sought by using the search function, which sometimes makes finding materials a matter of chance. Also, there is little weeding out of dated information or different versions of the same materials.

191. **Finance and budgeting.** Another corporate process reviewed during the evaluation concerned the work of the Financial Services Division. The main issue identified was that the Loans and Grants System (LGS) maintained by the division does not track expenditure in IFAD-funded investment projects on gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, IFAD has no way of knowing how much it spends cumulatively on gender-related work and whether the level of investments is at all adequate. There are two main reasons for this: (i) IFAD-funded projects no longer include dedicated components for "women in development" and gender is mainstreamed across project components and activities, which makes it extremely difficult to quantify the proportion of loan funds allocated in design for gender work; and (ii) the LGS does not record expenditures by project component or activity, but rather by "category of expenditure" (e.g. vehicles, civil works, incremental operating costs, technical assistance). Reason (ii) in fact has wider implications: IFAD cannot know how much it actually disburses at project completion in any major thematic area, including gender equality and women's empowerment. The situation is similar in other agencies reviewed during the benchmarking exercise. As an alternative to tracking, it would be possible to analyse gender-related expenditures in a sample of projects highly rated for their gender equality and women's empowerment results to determine a reasonable level of expenditure for delivering gender strategies, and offer this as a budgeting guide to country programme managers. The exercise could be repeated from time to time to provide updated information.

192. Similarly, it is not possible to quantify ex ante how much of the annual administrative budget IFAD is devoting to gender-related activities – for example, in terms of allocation for thematic studies, workshops, knowledge-sharing activities, workforce training, communication, and other core business processes – nor is this information collected and analysed ex post. In fact, gender is not explicitly part of the indicators included in IFAD's results-based programme of work and budget document, even though it may be covered under some of the corporate management results (e.g. CMR 5, better human resources management) specified in the document.

193. **Human resources.** The evaluation reviewed in detail some issues related to human resources and whether/how they contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. There is compelling evidence in development literature that just having more women in the total workforce leads to better performance on the ground in gender equality and women's empowerment. There are two rationales supported by studies that explain why attention to gender balance at all levels of staffing is important. The first is that as an organization puts in place internal gender equality measures, it becomes more credible as an advocate in its relations with governments and other partners, and has relevant experience to offer. The second is that a diverse organization which is able to respect and effectively

include men and women's perspectives (or different cultural perspectives) is more robust, innovative and successful.

194. IFAD has an overarching Human Resources Policy[12] approved by the Executive Board in September 2004. It states: "The recruitment of professional staff will result in the selection of the individual judged to be the best person for the position, taking into account the criteria of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance." There are no further references to the topic or specific targets that the Fund aims to achieve to ensure gender balance in its staff cadre. Management issued the Human Resources Procedures Manual in 2005, which outlines the importance of gender issues in several key procedures, such as in staff recruitment and the determination of benefits, and also has a section on sexual harassment.

195. Data supplied by the Human Resources Division (HRD) for this evaluation reveal that the ratio of women to men in the organization remains traditional: many women are in support positions (i.e. in the General Service staff cadre) and few are in leadership positions (senior Professional and Managerial posts). There have been some improvements in this ratio from 41 per cent to 46 per cent women professional at all grades between 2003 and 2010. In this regard, IFAD has recently committed to increase the proportion of women recruited to management positions (D1 and above) to 50 per cent by 2014, in accordance with the policies adopted by the governing bodies of the Fund taking into consideration the criteria of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance.

Table 9. Gender representation in the regular IFAD staff cadre, 2003-2010

General Service staff															
Comparing the years 2003-2010, by grade and sex															
Year	G-1		G-2		G-3		G-4		G-5		G-6		G-7		T	% F
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
2010	3	1	78	11	67	12	54	10	14	11	13	6	13	7	300	81
2009	10	4	13	10	14	10	47	8	67	12	79	11	3	1	289	81
2008	7	4	9	11	19	6	49	9	65	10	79	13	4	2	287	81
2007	3	3	11	7	24	6	52	12	67	11	76	12	5	2	291	82
2006	4	3	16	11	17	7	49	14	68	8	68	13	5	2	285	80
2005	3	2	16	8	19	8	54	14	67	9	67	11	6	2	286	81
2004	6	5	15	13	27	8	51	13	70	9	58	12	9	3	299	79
2003	4	5	21	5	20	9	52	10	66	11	55	10	11	3	282	81

Professional staff																					
Comparing 2003-2010 by grade and sex																					
Year	P-1		P-2		P-3		P-4		P-5		D-1		D-2		APR		AVP	VP		Pres.	T	% F
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	M	F	M	M		
2010	3	2	29	19	46	18	28	40	20	59	5	9	2	7	1	1	1	1	0	1	292	46
2009	2	3	26	17	48	19	28	39	21	59	5	9	3	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	289	46
2008	3	2	26	13	42	16	27	44	19	58	6	7	2	8	1	2	0	0	1	1	278	45
2007	2	2	24	13	43	15	24	44	19	55	6	8	1	6	0	1	0	0	1	1	265	46
2006	1	1	24	11	35	15	24	37	17	46	9	8	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	235	47
2005	1	1	24	11	36	19	22	33	19	45	9	9	0	6	0	1	0	0	1	1	238	47
2004	2	1	28	9	25	18	22	32	16	46	6	7	1	6	0	1	0	0	1	1	222	45
2003	2	4	21	7	18	15	21	28	14	46	4	6	1	7	0	1	0	0	1	1	197	41

196. Among the professional staff, there is greater representation of women in more junior professional grades. For example, around 60-70 per cent of staff at P-2-P-3 level and around 40 per

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[12] The policy may be seen at http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/82/e/EB-2004-82-R-28-REV-1.pdf.

cent at the P-4 level are women. In absolute numbers, IFAD hired the largest number of women in the P-2-P-5 categories during 2009-2010. This is promising for the future, provided that this cohort advances in the organization.

197. There has been little change in the proportion of women and men among professional staff at senior levels (D-1 Vice-President), although in the last year the new President appointed IFAD's first woman Vice-President and its first woman Director in the Office of the President and Vice-President. IFAD has recently issued vacancy announcements for five senior positions (including three at the Assistant Secretary General and two at the Director rank), and has a further opportunity to enhance the representation of women in the senior levels of the organization.

198. IFAD compares well with the United Nations System at large. On the whole, on average, the United Nations System has 39.9 per cent women in professional and higher categories, as of December 2009[13] (as compared to 46 per cent in IFAD). This data is taken from the 2010 Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly,[14] which illustrates that the Fund ranks fifth among 31 organizations from the United Nations System covered in the analysis. The two other Rome-based food and agriculture agencies record a lower proportion of women professionals compared to IFAD (31.8 per cent for the Food and Agriculture Organization and 40 per cent for WFP). Table 10 below presents data from the United Nations System, as included in the 2010 Report of the Secretary General on Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations System.

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[13] See Annex I, document A/65/334, Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly: "Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system" http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/500/50/PDF/N1050050.pdf.

[14] The agencies which record higher percentages of women staff in professional and higher categories than IFAD are the International Court of Justice (53.1 per cent), the United Nations Population Fund (51.2 per cent), United Nations Children's Fund (50.2 per cent), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (49.5 per cent)

Table 10. Representation of women in the Professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more in the United Nations system during the period 2000-2009[15]

Level	31 December 2000ᵃ	31 December 2009ᵇ	Percentage point change (2000-2009)	Average annual change in percentage points (2000-2009)
Ungraded	17.4	27.8	10.4	1.2
D-2	18.2	26.0	7.8	0.9
D-1	21.4	29.2	7.8	0.9
P-5	23.5	32.3	8.8	1.0
P-4	31.0	37.8	6.8	0.8
P-3	41.4	44.1	2.7	0.3
P-2	54.5	57.4	2.9	0.3
P-1	62.6	54.8	(7.8)	(0.9)
Total	33.4	39.9	6.5	0.7

ᵃ See CEB/2002/HLCM/3, table 11C. Available from http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/stats/hr/ps/ years/2000.
ᵇ Prepared on the basis of data submitted by United Nations entities.

199.   IFAD also compares well, for example, with the AsDB, which has a current ratio of only 27.8 per cent women at the professional and higher levels,[16] and with the AfDB, which has a ratio of 26 per cent.[17] In the World Bank, women account for 52 per cent of all staff and hold 33 per cent of managerial positions.[18] Overall, it can be concluded that IFAD compares well with others, even though there is room for improvement, particularly in terms of the representation of women at more senior levels.

200. IFAD issued new "Guidelines for the Recruitment of Consultants" in April 2010. The guidelines make no reference to gender balance. On a related issue, in the context of this evaluation, IOE assessed the proportion of women and gender experts (hired as consultants) that took part in COSOP preparation and project design. Diversity in design teams is important. With more women in the team, one could expect a wider consultation process with women at different levels in borrowing countries. The analysis is based on the five 2009 COSOPs reviewed by IOE and the 22 projects designed between 2003 and 2009 (see list in appendix 3). The analysis is revealing:

- The five COSOPs involved a total of 23 consultants, of whom six were women (26 per cent of total). Only two of the 23 consultants specifically served as gender experts, but other consultants who were part of the COSOP development may have covered gender issues as part of their broader terms of reference; and

- The 22 projects involved a total of 124 consultants, of whom 24 were women (19 per cent). Only six of the 124 consultants specifically served as gender experts. As for the COSOPs, however, other consultants who took part in project design may have covered gender issues as part of their broader terms of reference.

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[15]   Source: Table 5, document A/65/334, Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly: "Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system" http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/500/50/PDF/N1050050.pdf?OpenElement
[16]   AsDB Annual Report 2009, page 93
[17]   AfDB, Bank Group Result Measurement Framework, Table 4
[18]   World Bank, Annual Report 2010

201. On another issue, IFAD's training budget has tended to be small in the past, but has recently increased somewhat. Most of the budget is used by HRD for corporate training programmes covering issues such as performance management, information technology, communication and language. Very little funding is devoted to technical training in different thematic areas, although some training was financed two to three years ago through the budget allocated to the Action Plan to Enhance IFAD's Development Effectiveness. IFAD has not invested in training staff on gender-related concepts, approaches or strategies in the COSOPs and the project life cycle. To date, there is also no training for new staff on IFAD's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment in the induction process or in the leadership training programme (although it has been discussed), and knowledge and skills in this area are not normally a criteria for selection for programme-related professional positions. Last year, however, as part of its corporate training programme, the Fund organized a training course on enhancing awareness, aimed specifically at women travelling to the field. Finally, IFAD supports the participation of two or three women staff in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) women's leadership programme.

202. As mentioned earlier, IFAD has formal policy measures in place to encourage both women and men to contribute their best to IFAD. These include gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion, anti-harassment policies, and a variety of work-life balance policies. But staff members seem to have little confidence in these policies and therefore use them very sparingly. For example, there have been no formal complaints about harassment, however evaluators were informed that staff had no confidence in the complaints process, for example, because the harassment committee is chaired by a relatively junior staff at a P3-level. Based on HRD data, only 2-3 per cent of staff make use of work-life balance policies (see table 11).

Table 11. Uptake of professional development and work-life balance policies in IFAD

Options available[19] * data not available	31 December 2008				31 December 2009			
	No. of participants as at 31 December 2008		Percentage of total staff		No. of participants as at 31 December 2009		Percentage of total staff	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Staggered working hours	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Compressed work schedule	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Scheduled break for extended learning activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Work away from the office (teleworking)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Leave without pay	3	2	1.55	0.63	2	3	1.04	0.94
Part-time employment	0	12	0	3.75	0	11	0	3.45
Phased retirement	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	3	0	0.94
Financial support for mothers travelling with a child	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	

203. The evaluation team realized that an examination of informal culture and practices was likely to provide some understanding of why there was such poor uptake of these formal policies. Therefore, during interviews and the group discussions it asked interviewees to explain this phenomenon; it also reviewed the findings of staff surveys conducted by IFAD. According to the officer-in-charge of HRD at the time of this evaluation, part of the explanation is that there is a lack of accountability for how managers manage their staff, at all levels of the organization. The type of results orientation that is strongly advocated in IFAD-funded operations is not applied to an equal degree in work planning and human resource management. Other staff members noted that many people who manage staff at

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[19]   IFAD also offers paternity leave and has an on-site childcare centre.

IFAD, at different levels, have had little training in managing people and therefore have insufficient or ineffectual management practices, many of which have become ingrained in IFAD. As an illustration of this disconnect, box 8 reveals staff opinion about the relevance of some of the policies.

204. Given the disjuncture between policy and practice, it is important to explore those elements of organizational culture which are not gender-inclusive. There are a number of frameworks and tools available to diagnose and address ways of working that discourage women's integration and advancement. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to address these issues in depth, but interviews indicate the level of concern among young professionals (women and men), and mid-level women is significant.

Box 8. Findings from the IFAD Staff Survey, 2008

- Some 16 per cent of respondents across IFAD say their director is unsupportive of work-life balance. Thirty five per cent stated that work pressures are not at acceptable levels.

- About 30 per cent responded that their job does not allow them to take care of their family and personal responsibilities as they would like.

- An average of 32 per cent consider that women and men do not have the same career opportunities at IFAD. Similarly, 28 per cent declare than women and men are not treated equally. However, only 16 per cent state that IFAD does not encourage the advancement of women. The difference seems to suggest that, while in principle this support exists, the practical measures to make it happen are not in place or well implemented.

- About 22 per cent of staff say that they would not be comfortable in reporting a situation of discrimination or harassment in their divisions.

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Key points

❖ Factors that support IFAD's work on gender equality and women's empowerment include recognition at the most senior levels (in Management and the Executive Board) of the importance of the issue.

❖ Divisions with leadership consistently demonstrating commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment have greater chances of achieving better results on the ground.

❖ However, there is no regular, dedicated reporting on IFAD's performance in this area at the Executive Board or Senior Management level. The only documents that report in a somewhat limited manner on gender are the RIDE and the ARRI.

❖ Strengths in operational systems and processes include programming tools for design, supervision, country presence and monitoring and evaluation. IFAD has established an elaborate results measurement framework including gender indicators. Compared with its peers, IFAD performs better on a results orientation, and on monitoring throughout the programme cycle. The results framework in general, however, consists of multiple layers and systems, and therefore is of broader concern across IFAD.

❖ In terms of gender architecture, the relationship between the gender focal points, regional gender advisers, and the PTA gender desk is not clear and merits to be revitalised. The PTA gender desk is providing satisfactory inputs even though its contribution to knowledge management has been insufficient. The contributions of the thematic group on gender and gender focal points has been important but not consistent.

❖ IFAD recently hired its first woman Vice-President and woman Director of the Office of President and Vice- President, but, in general, relatively few women occupy leadership positions.

❖ Weaknesses include lack of accountability by staff and consultants for their performance in this area, weak performance management systems, and a corporate culture that does not support gender-inclusive ways of working.

❖ Some initiatives to ensure learning and knowledge management are taking place, but they are not systematic and are inadequately resourced. The role of communication in highlighting IFAD's work related to gender is generally positive.

❖ It is not possible for IFAD to know ex ante or ex post how much is spent on gender-related activities in investment operations or through the administrative budget. This however is a challenge also faced by other development organizations.

❖ There are some good examples of policy dialogue on gender at the country level, but in general policy dialogue on the topic is left to individual initiatives and interests. Good efforts have been made in global-level policy and advocacy work.

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VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions[20]

205. **The importance of gender equality and women's empowerment** (see chapter II, sections A and B). A majority of the world's poor people are women and the gap between men and women has been widening in recent years, which is leading to the "feminization of poverty". Women living in poverty are often denied access to critical resources such as rural finance, inputs, land and inheritance. Their labour goes unrewarded and unrecognized. Their health care and nutritional needs are not given priority; they lack sufficient access to education and support services; and their participation in decision-making at home and in the community is minimal. Caught in the cycle of poverty, women have no access to the resources and services they need to change their situation. Given the seriousness of the problem, the international community agreed, in 2000, to set MGD3, which focuses exclusively on promoting gender equality and empowering women.

206. Numerous evaluations and studies provide compelling evidence that attention to gender equality and women's empowerment is essential for improving family assets and incomes, livelihoods, health and education. Gender equality and women's empowerment are mutually reinforcing, as both men and women's needs are analysed and addressed at the same time, taking into account their specific socio-cultural, ethnic, traditional and economic situation, and context. Development actions that promote both gender equality and women's empowerment have provided better results on rural poverty reduction than actions addressed solely to women or to men.

207. Evaluations and studies also reveal that development activities that ignore half of the potential workforce have little impact on rural poverty reduction. "A society which tolerates inequality is blocking its own social and economic progress. Like in football, you will not win if you only play with half of your team."[21] The links between rural poverty reduction efforts and gender equality and women's empowerment are intrinsic and widely recognized. Despite this, policy makers and development planners and implementers often fail to devote adequate resources and attention to tackling issues related to gender inequality and the role of women in particular.

208. It is also a fact that rural women play a prominent role in agriculture and rural development in developing countries, especially in low-income countries where agriculture accounts for a major share of GDP. Women produce most of the food crops that is consumed locally in developing countries. They also fulfil a pivotal function in food security, dairy development, natural resources and environmental management, water conservation, agroprocessing and marketing, and off-farm income-generating activities. It is therefore fair to conclude, on the basis of wide-ranging literature on the subject, that women are instrumental in the advancement of the agriculture and rural sectors in developing countries.

209. **IFAD's leadership role and comparative advantage** (see chapter III, sections A and B). IFAD is the only multilateral development organization with a mandate to focus exclusively on combating rural poverty by promoting sustainable smallholder agriculture and rural development. Its operations extend to all geographic regions globally, providing opportunities for cross-fertilization of lessons learned and good practices on gender issues from a diverse range of contexts and situations. Against that backdrop, and given that agriculture is an important pathway out of poverty in developing countries, IFAD can potentially play a leadership role globally in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

210. IFAD has long recognized that investing in women is essential for ensuring sustainable smallholder agriculture and rural development, and has developed a comparative advantage and specialization on the topic. Since the early 1990s, it has played a prominent advocacy role in bringing the plight of rural women to policymakers' attention, especially at the global level. The Fund shifted

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[20] The paragraph reference for each major conclusion directs the reader back to the relevant point in the main text where the main analysis and findings for the corresponding topic were presented.
[21] Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, at the United Nations High-level Event on MDGs, September 2008.

its focus from "women" to "gender" during the 1990s, which implied placing emphasis on the social context of women's and men's roles and on the relationships between the two sexes. This shift was a critical turning point, since, as research and evidence show, better results can be achieved by focusing on women, while also recognizing that they do not live in a vacuum and that the dynamics surrounding them, including the role of men, also needs to be considered as part of any overall development package.

211. **The fragmented and limited nature of IFAD's strategic guidance** (see chapter III, sections C and D)**.** IFAD's strategic approach and corresponding guidance on gender is fragmented and found in different corporate policies and various other documents (strategic frameworks, the gender action plan, gender framework, etc.) developed at different times and for a variety of audiences (e.g. the Executive Board, IFAD Management and staff, partners in the field). While the objectives and main thrusts advocated are broadly consistent across all documents, this fragmentation makes it difficult for staff at headquarters and in the field, not to mention partners in developing countries, to know which document should be considered the main reference. It also leaves room for alternative interpretations. In fact, the evaluation found evidence that many staff members are not fully clear about the strategic approaches advocated and how to turn these approaches into action through COSOPs and operations. One result has been inconsistent approaches across the portfolio of projects supported by the Fund.

212. Furthermore, the evaluation concludes that IFAD's strategic guidance on gender is limited in scope to operational policy – that is, it focuses on approaches and processes for ensuring that gender is duly included in COSOP development and the project life cycle, but does not sufficiently consider the adjustments needed in key corporate business processes such as human resources management, budgeting and communication. Yet, these business processes are crucial to ensuring the effective implementation of the strategic approach and the timely achievement of corresponding results on the ground.

213. **The relevance and effectiveness of IFAD's corporate strategic objectives** (see chapter III, sections C and D, and chapter IV, section E)**.** IFAD's first gender action plan, adopted in 2003, and its revised gender framework of 2008 set out three main corporate objectives that the Fund is committed to pursue in its efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment: (i) expanding women's access to and control over fundamental assets – capital, land, knowledge and technologies; (ii) strengthening women's agency – their decision-making role in community affairs and representation in local institutions; and (iii) improving women's well-being and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure. The evaluation concludes that the three main corporate gender objectives were relevant at the time they were first explicitly introduced in 2003 and continue to be relevant today.

214. Based on the review of IFAD's past and ongoing operations, and of its non-lending activities (policy dialogue at different levels, knowledge management and partnership-building), the evaluation concludes that IFAD's effectiveness in achieving strategic objectives (i) and (ii) is moderately satisfactory, whereas its performance with respect to strategic objective (iii) is moderately unsatisfactory. IFAD has paid relatively less attention to the third objective because it is less clearly articulated, and because the "well-being" part refers to access to services (especially health and education), which are not central to IFAD's mandate.

215. **Results from past IFAD-financed operations** (chapter IV, section B)**.** Recent evaluations of gender mainstreaming in other major development organizations have shown sporadic, small and disappointing results on the ground. The experience at IFAD has been more positive. The Fund has made good efforts to improve operational processes to strengthen its gender-related work and results. For example, the quality enhancement and quality assurance mechanisms, direct supervision and implementation support, the self-evaluation systems in general with some streamlining, and country presence are processes that are particularly important and contribute to achieving more significant results on the ground in gender equality and women's empowerment.

216. This evaluation concluded that the performance of IFAD-financed operations is better than its peers. However, on the whole, the overall gender achievement of IFAD's past operations is only merely moderately satisfactory. There is significant variability in performance among projects within

countries and across countries. Performance in terms of efficiency and the promotion of innovation and scaling up is particularly weak in IFAD's past gender activities. There are multiple reasons for this including a limited common understanding in IFAD of gender terminology; a focus on compliance rather than a results orientation; poor incentives and accountability frameworks; underestimation of the role of consistent commitment from managers to lead by example; insufficient knowledge management, and limited staff training on the topic.

217. **Recent operations reveal improved performance** (chapter IV, sections C and D)**.** A review of selected COSOPs introduced in 2009 and projects of more recent vintage illustrate that performance on gender equality and women's empowerment is better than in older operations. The same review revealed that IFAD is learning from past experience and fine-tuning its approaches and instruments on the basis of this new understanding. The more recent COSOPs pay more attention to gender, and their gender dimensions are more results-oriented. Newer projects more often include gender-specific objectives; provide increased attention to ensuring the collection of gender-disaggregated data; make provisions for increasing women's decision-making; and have better institutional analysis, which allows them to include the capacity-building measures required to ensure that partner organizations can adequately provide support for gender activities. However, insufficient attention is devoted to ensuring women's control over resources, and to lightening their workloads so that they can become more engaged in development activities. Also, some new projects lacked a gender analysis of agricultural production systems. Few projects reviewed have an explicit strategy or plan articulating how their gender-related objectives will be met.

218. **The importance of corporate business process for better results** (chapter V, section B)**.** IFAD's strategic approach to gender did not make provisions for adjustments to key corporate business processes that affect the Fund's gender-related performance on the ground. As a result, various key corporate business processes remain weak, including those related to human resources management, monitoring and annual reporting, knowledge management, policy dialogue, and partnerships (especially with the private sector).

219. Arguably, the greatest challenge in IFAD's gender equality and women's empowerment work relates to its human resources management and corporate culture. Historical data reveal that the ratio of women to men in the organization is rather traditional, with many women in support staff positions and few in leadership functions, even though in 2010 IFAD hired its first woman Vice-President and first woman Director of the Office of President and Vice-President. There are an encouragingly high proportion of women in the more junior professional category. Also, IFAD compares well with other United Nations organizations and IFIs in terms of the gender balance in its staffing, even though further improvements can be achieved. Although the corporate human resources policy makes an explicit reference to ensuring gender balance in IFAD's workforce, the guidelines for consultants' recruitment makes no such provision. In fact, the evaluation found that few women and gender experts were recruited as consultants in the teams responsible for COSOP development and key phases of the project life cycle (e.g. design and supervision missions, including evaluation).

220. IFAD's human resources policy includes anti-harassment provisions and a variety of work-life balance policies. The evaluation found poor uptake of the options provided in formal policies (e.g. leave without pay). IFAD's informal culture has not traditionally encouraged the inclusion of perspectives and ways of working that are women-friendly or family-friendly, although these are important for building an organization capable of delivering on gender equality and women's empowerment.

221. Similarly, there are no specific incentives for attention to gender equality in staff, consultant or divisional performance assessments; and no accountability or negative consequences for lack of attention. Performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is not a part of individual workplans. In other words, the type of results orientation that is strongly advocated in IFAD-funded operations is not applied to an equal degree in individual work planning and human resources management. For example, gender concerns are not part of the objectives or competencies of the staff annual performance evaluation system, and there is little dedicated training of staff and consultants on gender issues.

222.   IFAD has introduced gender-related indicators and targets in key corporate results measurement frameworks in recent years – notably in the results measurement frameworks for the 2007-2010 strategic framework and for the Eighth Replenishment commitments, but not in the corporate management results contained in the annual results-based programme of work and budget. The RIDE and the ARRI cover gender issues, but neither has a dedicated section on the topic. More generally, three issues related to indicators, monitoring and reporting merit highlighting: (i) reporting on gender is fragmented, as there is no single dedicated document that provides a comprehensive overview of IFAD's corporate gender work, including performance of operations and other critical corporate business processes (such as human resources management, training activities, budgets and financial progress); (ii) IFAD has included gender-related indicators in its overall self-evaluation system, but the challenge is to ensure that the gender indicators established within the different results measurement frameworks (e.g. at the corporate level, and in COSOPs, supervision reports, project status reports and project completion reports) are consistent and build on each other to facilitate aggregation and reporting at different levels; and (iii) although independent evaluations assess gender equality and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting theme within the evaluation criteria in the IFAD Evaluation Manual, there are no specific gender equality indicators or a dedicated section summarizing a project's or country programme's performance and achievements on the topic in IOE evaluation reports.

223. In terms of knowledge management, inadequate attention was devoted in the past to systematically analysing, documenting and sharing experiences and good and less good practices on gender equality and women's empowerment across IFAD. Recently, more effort is being invested in corporate knowledge management. No mechanism exists, however, for building on successful approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment – for example, those in Guatemala, India and Senegal that effectively brought women into mainstream economic activities by involving them in the production of high-value crops and facilitating their access to sustainable rural finance for on- and off-farm activities.

224. On the whole, policy dialogue at the country level on gender equality and women's empowerment has not been successful. Even in COSOPs where gender concerns are part of the planned policy dialogue agenda (e.g. Peru), almost no support has been provided to CPMs in terms of resources, workplans and targets. Policy dialogue has also tended to be constrained by weak knowledge management and insufficient analytic work. IFAD has, however, made useful contributions to the debate among policy makers and development practitioners on gender equality and women's empowerment in key international forums.

225.   Partnerships with civil society organizations and NGOs working on gender issues are generally positive. Some good examples of relations with borrowing government agencies that deal with gender equality and women's empowerment were also found; this varies considerably from country to country and depends on the initiative of individual country programme managers and the encouragement of the regional division director. Partnerships with donor Governments have been good in terms of the supplementary funds mobilized at the corporate level, but generally limited in terms of discussion of content issues with bilateral aid agencies involved in operations. However, IFAD representatives actively participate in the gender networks of the United Nations and OECD/Development Assistance Committee. No significant partnerships devoted to gender were apparent with the private sector, apart from a handful of initiatives at the project level and with the Farmers' Forum.

226. Another shortcoming is that IFAD is unable to track the amounts allocated in its loan investments to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and there was no evidence that it has taken concrete steps to address this problem. Therefore, apart from being unable to report on the amount of money spent by country, region and globally on gender work, IFAD cannot determine whether the amount of funding or its allocation across countries and projects is adequate to tackle these concerns. The evaluation recognizes that this is quite a challenging task – which other development organizations also face – especially given that gender is mainstreamed across the components and activities of IFAD-financed projects.

227. Similarly, there is no indication of the funds allocated ex ante in IFAD's annual results-based programme of work and budget. The evaluation also found that there has been a disproportionately high reliance on supplementary funds and grants for core gender activities. Access to such sources of funding is not secure. And, for supplementary funds, efforts are required for specific periodic reporting to the concerned donors.

228. The gender-related architecture of IFAD systems is appropriate on the whole. However, it needs review with the aim of achieving better clarity and accountability. The gender desk in PTA has played a useful role in designing and rolling out IFAD's gender approach. But, management has not played a proactive role in providing an architecture that aligns the responsibilities and relations of the gender desk with the regional and other divisions, and has not reviewed the adequacy of the gender-related human and financial resources. The gender desk does not have a results-based annual workplan, and no resources are allocated in advance for implementation of its activities. IFAD's thematic group on gender has increasingly become less relevant: it now mainly serves to share information among its members and has no coherent workplan or budget. The divisional gender focal points could potentially have played a wider role in gender mainstreaming within regional divisions. For this to have happened, however, they would have needed clear terms of reference; the divisional staff designated as focal points should have been more senior; and the focal points should have devoted a larger share of their time to the topic.

229. **The role of the Board** (chapter V, paragraphs 158-164)**.** The Executive Board has a central role to play in fostering an overall positive environment for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Although a number of its members forcefully advocate the importance of these objectives, the Board has not on the whole taken an institutionalized and consistent approach to the subject. For example, it has never asked for dedicated periodic progress reports on the implementation of the gender aspects contained in the 2004 human resources policy, nor has it asked for evidence that adequate resources are invested in IFAD's gender work.

230. **Conclusion.** IFAD's strategic approach to gender is relevant, but guidance is fragmented in several corporate documents. Its effectiveness in meeting one of the three strategic objectives (improve women's well-being and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructure) is moderately unsatisfactory. Results of IFAD-financed operations are moderately satisfactory on the whole, even though there is significant variability across projects and countries. A number of key corporate business processes that are essential for supporting IFAD's gender work remain weak. In sum, as far as the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is concerned, there seems to be a gap between rhetoric and practice, which raises the question of whether IFAD is indeed committed to "walking the talk".

B. Recommendations[22]

231. The following recommendations aim to strengthen IFAD's performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The recommendations are organized into two main blocks – strategic and operational.

Strategic

232. **Develop an evidence- and results-based corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment** (see paragraphs 211-212 and 218-229)**.** IFAD should develop its first overarching corporate policy on gender equality and women's empowerment, for submission to the Executive Board in 2011. The policy would be IFAD's principal reference document on gender equality and women's empowerment, bringing under one umbrella the Fund's main strategic objectives and priorities in this area. It should be an overarching policy of the organization, covering not just operational aspects but also the key corporate business processes (e.g. finance, budget, communication, human resources management) that can contribute to making IFAD a more gender-

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[22] The paragraph numbers next to each recommendation reference the reader back to the relevant text in the preceding section on conclusions.

friendly and effective multilateral development organization. The policy should clarify how it fits in with other corporate policies and emphasize its pivotal role in furthering IFAD's overall mandate.

233. The three core strategic objectives set out in the Gender Plan of Action and Gender Framework, ((i) expand women's access to and control over fundamental assets – capital, land, knowledge and technologies; (ii) strengthen women's agencies – their decision-making role in community affairs and representation in local institutions; and (iii) improve women's well-being and ease their workloads by facilitating access to basic rural services and infrastructures), continue to remain valid and should therefore be at the heart of the new policy. They should also be reflected in IFAD's next strategic framework (for 2011-2015). Building on IFAD's comparative advantage, track record and specialization, the gender policy and the next strategic framework should also emphasize the importance of wealth creation for poor rural women. This will require specific attention to including women as an integral part of IFAD's work on value chains and market access in order to ensure women are fully integrated as economic and entrepreneurial actors within the rural economy.

234. The recommended policy on gender equality and women's empowerment should indicate how key corporate business processes will be adjusted for better results on the ground. In this regard, the evaluation makes a series of strategic recommendations related to human resources issues, annual reporting and results measurement, knowledge management, learning and analytic work, and policy dialogue. There are some operational recommendations (on IFAD's gender architecture, tracking investments and budgets, and evaluation), which may be seen in paragraph 243 onwards.

235. The evaluation recommends that, to achieve better results in the area of human resources, IFAD should:

- Strengthen the capacity and role of the Executive Board, Senior Management and Directors in leading and overseeing gender equality and women's empowerment efforts of IFAD. This is essential for gender mainstreaming throughout the organisation and its work;

- Include performance on gender equality and women's empowerment in the job descriptions and work planning/performance management of all staff. This would address staff incentives and accountability, which was found to be weak. It would make it possible for work performed and contributions made in this area to be recognized and supported, and performance strengthened through feedback. It would also help bring about a gradual culture change in IFAD, from perfunctory compliance with gender directives to greater results orientation;

- Promote gender balance at all levels of staffing, including in IFAD country offices. In particular, make specific provisions to hire or promote more women in senior professional and managerial positions and increase the proportion of women working as consultants in different stages of COSOP preparation and the project life cycle. At the project level, efforts should be made to increase the number of women project directors and include provisions for hiring gender advisers during implementation; and

- Ensure that the existing human resources policy provisions related to work-life balance (flexible working hours, teleworking, etc.) are adequately applied. This would contribute to staff motivation and underpin other efforts to build an organization capable of delivering results on gender. This could be considered as one core indicator in assessing the year-end performance of directors, who are responsible for fostering a conducive environment in their divisions.

236. The policy should include a section on who within IFAD Management will be responsible for implementation, oversight and reporting. IFAD should produce a consolidated annual progress report for the Board's consideration, covering the results achieved in the implementation of the new policy, lessons learned and adjustments made to key corporate business processes that affect the performance in gender-related activities. The cost implications for the effective implementation of the new policy will need to be determined as well.

237. The gender policy should include an overarching results measurement framework for IFAD's gender work. It should articulate the synergies with existing results measurement frameworks of other

IFAD corporate policies that include gender indicators. The cascading effects of the gender policy results framework on the Fund's annual results-based programme of work and budget, COSOPs and project results frameworks will also need to be considered, together with any adjustments needed to IFAD's overall self-evaluation system to ensure the timely capture, analysis and reporting of necessary data. Finally, the policy should specify how the Executive Board will fulfil its role in providing guidance and support[23] as well as oversight on results (e.g. by the periodic review of a progress report on achievements gender equality and women's empowerment).

238. **Knowledge management, learning and analytic work** (paragraph 223)**.** IFAD needs to invest in building a common evidence-based understanding among staff of the theory of gender equality and women's empowerment, and its related terminology. Adequate staff and financial resources will need to be earmarked for the purpose. Among other issues, this should include attention to the systematic documentation and cross-fertilization of lessons learned and good practices across projects, countries and regions, and at headquarters as well as in the field. More attention and resources need to be devoted to analytic work on gender as a basis for country strategy preparation and project design. This will ensure that objectives and activities are more realistic in the country context concerned.

239. **Innovation and scaling up as key principles of engagement** (paragraph 216)**.** In line with the main recommendation of the corporate-level evaluation on innovation, and given the relatively weak performance of past projects in this area, gender equality and women's empowerment should be included as one of the "big bets" in IFAD's corporate innovation agenda[24] until 2015, which is the year that the international community will come together to take stock of MDG implementation, and beyond. The inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment as a "big bet" would be one way of fulfilling the commitment IFAD made when accepting the MDG3 gender torch "to do something extra" in this area.

240. The following are areas where there is a clear need for innovative solutions that could be considered as gender-related "big bets": (i) increasing women's access to and control over productive assets (land, water, capital, technologies); (ii) supporting women's economic graduation (moving up the value chain, from micro enterprises to small and medium, from micro enterprises to borrowing from formal institutions); (iii) advancing women's leadership role in mixed farmer and rural producer organizations; and (iv) facilitating culture change in gender relations. In all these areas, there should be a strong focus on young rural women. The selection of gender equality and women's empowerment as one of the "big bets" should be reflected in the new corporate strategic framework. At the same time, however, IFAD should remain open to promoting gender-related innovations at the country/project level that respond to challenges specific to the context.

241. The choice of gender equality and women's empowerment as a "big bet" would require the Fund to define – in each COSOP and project design – how it intends to pursue innovations in this area, the resources needed, and the monitoring and learning measures that will be implemented to document the corresponding experiences. Scaling up must be treated as "mission critical". COSOPs and project designs should outline specific efforts that will be needed to ensure that successful innovations can actually be scaled up for wider impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. In this regard, attention and resources will need to be devoted specifically to gender-related initiatives in IFAD's non-lending activities (policy dialogue, partnership-building and knowledge management), where performance in the past has generally been inadequate.

242. **Policy dialogue** (paragraphs 224-225)**.** Better knowledge management, learning and analytic work will also contribute to IFAD's policy dialogue and advocacy efforts on gender. Policy dialogue

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[23] For example, by ensuring that clear provisions are made for training in the Fund's results-based programme of work and budget on gender issues.

[24] The innovation evaluation recommended that an IFAD-wide innovation agenda be developed at the corporate level, consisting of a few selected themes or domains. The themes or domains selected – "big bets" – should be in those areas of the agriculture and rural sector where there is a proven need for innovative solutions and where IFAD has (or can develop) a comparative advantage to successfully promote pro-poor innovations that can be scaled up.

and advocacy work should focus on the areas outlined in paragraph 240 above, but also on specific thematic areas that might require attention in a given country context. Furthermore, staff competencies and skills will need to be enhanced for effective engagement in policy processes, which also requires continued attention to partnerships with multiple stakeholders for advocacy at global and country levels.

Operational

243. **IFAD's gender architecture** (paragraph 228). The evaluation recommends that management conduct a dedicated, comprehensive review of the Fund's overall gender architecture that includes PMD and all other departments, to ensure that it has the required human resources and funds to achieve the desired results on the ground in borrowing countries. This evaluation makes some recommendations related to IFAD's gender architecture, which may be seen in paragraphs 244-246.

244. The gender desk in PTA should develop a result-based annual workplan and budget. They could pilot results-based (rather than activity-based) work planning for potential roll-out throughout IFAD. The workplan needs to be supported by adequate resources from IFAD's administrative budget for core activities, in addition to any supplementary funds and grants that may be mobilized from time to time for *ad hoc* studies, workshops and other activities.

245. Management should carefully assess the relevance and feasibility of re-galvanizing the gender thematic group and whether it should be formalized as an institutional structure, with clear terms of reference, reporting lines and allocation of an annual administrative budget. Based on past experience, participation of staff in such a working group needs to be governed by a clear incentives and accountability framework.

246. The role of the gender focal points in each regional division at headquarters should be strengthened and clearly defined, and have an adequate time allocation to accomplish the designated work. Among other tasks, the gender focal points would participate in the thematic group on gender (subject to the findings of the assessment referred to above), ensure gender mainstreaming in COSOPs and projects, and be responsible for tracking performance, distilling lessons and good practices, and sharing them outside the division. The regionally based gender advisers whose positions are dependent on limited-term earmarked donor funds should be included in the regular staffing complement, if need be, combining their gender-related work with other responsibilities.

247. **Tracking investments and budgets** (paragraphs 226-227). Across the donor community, tracking gender-related spending when it is "mainstreamed" across all expenditure categories has proved to be too costly and inefficient to be useful. Nevertheless, IFAD needs to have a better grasp of its investment in this area. Therefore, it is recommended that Management undertake an analysis of spending on gender equality and women's empowerment in a regionally based sample of projects that have good gender equality results. This would allow determination of the level of costs incurred for gender-related analysis in COSOPs and project designs, as well as the loan amounts invested for gender development activities by these projects, as a guideline for future project designers. IFAD should repeat this sampling every two or three years in order to ensure efficient monitoring of changes in its investment levels. In addition, efforts should be made to indicate, within the framework of the Fund's annual results-based programme of work and administrative budget, the amount of administrative budget being devoted annually to gender-related activities.

248. **Training** (paragraphs 211 and 216). It is also recommended to incorporate a gender perspective in training events organized by PMD on operational aspects and by HRD on core competencies, as well as in staff induction programmes. This requires a strengthened gender desk and HRD should consider building IFAD staff competencies on the topic, and if required hire a "Gender and Diversity Officer', who would be involved in the planning of such events. Attention to gender issues in all training programmes should be developed as soon as possible and implemented from the beginning of 2011, even before the corporate policy is introduced. In this regard, IFAD should continue existing staff development programmes like the IFAD Springboard that can promote women up the ranks within the organization.

249. **Assessment of gender equality and women's empowerment in evaluations** (paragraph 222)**.** It is recommended that IOE develop specific indicators and key questions for assessing gender equality and women's empowerment in country programme and project evaluations.[25] In addition, a dedicated section should be included in all evaluation reports, in order to provide an overall account of the performance and the proximate causes of good or less performance on the topic. The same recommendation is also applicable to the various components of IFAD's self-evaluation system.

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[25] That is, in the context of project completion report validations and project performance assessments.

Criteria	*Definition[a]*
Project performance	
• Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies. It also entails an assessment of project coherence in achieving its objectives.
• Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
• Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.
Rural poverty impact[b]	Impact is defined as the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions.
• Household income and assets	Household income provides a means of assessing the flow of economic benefits accruing to an individual or group, whereas assets relate to a stock of accumulated items of economic value.
• Human and social capital and empowerment	Human and social capital and empowerment include an assessment of the changes that have occurred in the empowerment of individuals, the quality of grass-roots organizations and institutions, and the poor's individual and collective capacity.
• Food security and agricultural productivity	Changes in food security relate to availability, access to food and stability of access, whereas changes in agricultural productivity are measured in terms of yields.
• Natural resources and the environment	The focus on NRE involves assessing the extent to which a project contributes to changes in the protection, rehabilitation or depletion of NRE.
• Institutions and policies	The criterion relating to institutions and policies is designed to assess changes in the quality and performance of institutions, policies and the regulatory framework that influence the lives of the poor.
Other performance criteria	
• Sustainability	The likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life.
• Promotion of pro-poor innovation, replication and scaling up	The extent to which IFAD development interventions have: (i) introduced innovative approaches to rural poverty reduction; and (ii) the extent to which these interventions have been (or are likely to be) replicated and scaled up by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and others agencies.
Overall project achievement	This provides an overarching assessment of the project, drawing upon the analysis made under the various evaluation criteria cited above.
Performance of partners • IFAD • Government • Cooperating institution • NGO/CBO[*] [*]community-based organization	This criterion assesses the contribution of partners to project design, execution, monitoring and reporting, supervision and implementation support, and evaluation. The performance of each partner will be assessed on an individual basis with a view to the partner's expected role and responsibility in the project life cycle.

Definition of Evaluation Criteria used by the Office of Evaluation

[a.] These definitions have been taken from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* and from the IFAD Evaluation Manual (2009).

[b] It is important to underline that the new manual also deals with the "lack of intervention". That is, no specific intervention may have been foreseen or intended with respect to one or more of the five impact domains. In spite of this, if positive or negative changes are detected and can be attributed in whole or in part to the project, a rating should be assigned to the particular impact domain. On the other hand, if no changes are detected and no intervention was foreseen or intended, then no rating (or the mention "not applicable") is assigned.

Evaluation Framework		
Objectives	**Key activities**	**Key questions**
Assess the relevance and adequacy of IFAD's strategic guidance on gender mainstreaming, gender equality and women empowerment (first objectives page 7)	- Benchmarking IFAD's strategic guidance on Gender in relation to comparators (other agencies and other IFAD policies) - Desk review of IFAD's strategic guidance on gender-all documents related to Gender approved by EB, GC and Executive Management Committee, - Self assessment of PMD - Desk review of other agencies gender policies/strategies (World Bank, AfDB ,UNDP, WFP,FAO, DfID, SDC, CIDA) - Interview with IFAD staff - Interviews with other agencies informers	• Is IFAD's strategic guidance on Gender relevant for IFAD's rural poverty reduction mandate? • Is it relevant to the diverse institutional and cultural circumstances of IFAD's country partners (borrowing member countries)? • Is it consistent with the practices of other development assistance agencies? • Is it appropriate to the changing features of IFAD' operational modalities within the new development assistance architecture and the emerging global issues in agricultural and rural development? • What are the experiences of other organizations in terms of corporate processes and instruments to support Gender objectives? • What are the determinants of performance in promoting gender objectives in other organizations? • What are the good practices and successful approaches of other organizations in promoting gender objectives? • To what extent does IFAD's strategic guidance on Gender provide the institution with a clear, coherent (along corporate policy and guidelines), results focused and well resourced framework to promote gender equality and women empowerment? • What are the recommendations for future IFAD gender strategic guidance?
Assess the performance and results of IFAD's efforts to promote gender equality and women empowerment in its country programmes (second objectives page 7)	- Desk review (existing evaluations - selected completion reports- COSOPs and design documents of the ongoing portfolio) - Review specific section on gender n existing OE evaluation reports and the sample of ongoing portfolio - Identify good practices and constraints faced in promoting gender objectives - Interview with relevant IFAD staff - Review annual division and corporate-level portfolio	• Is IFAD Strategic guidance on gender well reflected into IFAD's Country Programmes (COSOPs- project design and implementation- non lending operations)? • Do IFAD projects set monitorable objectives for women and men beneficiaries? • Does the M&E system include measurable indicators for progress in gender objectives?

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Evaluation Framework		
Objectives	**Key activities**	**Key questions**
	review reports related to gender - Self assessment by PMD - Consolidate performance - Country visits and structured discussions with key policymakers, key partners, government officials, projects staff, implementing agencies, NGOs and representatives from civil society , in country international donors, advocacy groups, IFAD country representatives - Preparation of briefing notes /ppp and final report including ACP	• Are baseline gender disaggregated data available through RIMS or otherwise? • Have the gender objectives (equal access to assets and basic services, stronger decision making and representation, better knowledge and well being) been achieved or are likely to be achieved? • Do country partners have a buy- in for gender objectives in IFAD supported projects? • Has IFAD forged partnerships for gender equality at country level? • Is policy dialogue used to promote gender objectives in IFAD country programmes? • What are the factors affecting project performance in achieving gender objectives? • What is the influence of the regional/country context in achieving gender objectives? • Have the Regional Gender Programmes been relevant and effective? • What are the actual results being achieved on the ground relating to Gender? • Are the achieved Gender results likely to be sustainable? • What are the key lessons and insights from IFAD's efforts in Gender pre and post Gender mainstreaming? • Based on the above, what are the key recommendations for the future of IFAD's gender efforts?

Evaluation Framework		
Objectives	**Key activities**	**Key questions**
- Assess the performance and results of IFAD's efforts to promote gender equality and women empowerment in business processes	- Interviews and document review of the following departments or units: · Board of Directors, · Executive Management Committee , · Human Resources, · External Relations and Communications, · Programme Management Department, and the · IFAD Office of Evaluation	- To what extent do programmatic and non programmatic systems in IFAD effectively promote gender equality and women's empowerment? - Are the accountability systems for implementing IFAD's strategic guidance on gender equality adequate? - Are gender-equality related results and outcomes adequately included and measured in IFAD's Corporate Management Results? - Are IFAD's human resources policy and practices conducive to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment? - How aware and supportive is IFAD staff of gender policies? - Have capacities to mainstream gender been adequately developed? Is there encouragement of leadership and excellence in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within IFAD? - Does IFAD's culture promote the achievement of gender-equality objectives? - Is there appropriate recognition of effort to achieve IFAD's gender-equality goals? - Do the resources to achieve IFAD's gender equality efforts match what is needed to achieve the desired results? - Are the systems and processes aligned and coherent to achieve the desired results?

List of Projects and COSOPs Covered by the Building Blocks

	1. Meta-evaluation Projects and Country Programme Evaluations			
COUNTRY	**EVALUATIONS**	**Region**	**Year included in ARRI**	**Project Type**
	PROJECT EVALUATIONS		-	-
Bangladesh	Netrakona Integrated Agricultural Production and Water Management	PI	2002	AGRIC
Chad	Ouadis of Kanem Agricultural Development Project	PA	2002	RSRCH
Haiti	Small-scale Irrigation Schemes Rehabilitation Project	PL	2002	IRRIG
Mauritania	Oasis Development Project-Phase II	PA	2002	AGRIC
Morocco	Livestock and Pasture Development Project in the Eastern Region	PN	2002	LIVST
Namibia	Northern Regions Livestock Development Project	PF	2002	LIVST
Peru	Management of Natural Resources in the Southern Highlands Project (MARENASS)	PL	2002	RSRCH
Philippines	Rural Micro-Enterprise Finance Project	PI	2002	CREDI
Tanzania	Kagera Agricultural and Environmental Management Project (KAEMP)	PF	2002	AGRIC
Yemen	Tihama Environment Protection Project	PN	2002	AGRIC
Benin	Income Generating Activities Project (IGAP)	PA	2003	RURAL
Burkina Faso	Special Programme for Soil and Water Conservation and Agroforestry in the Central Plateau (Phase I and II)	PA	2003	AGRIC
Ecuador	Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian People's Development Project	PL	2003	RURAL
Guinea	Smallholder Development Project in North Lower Guinea	PA	2003	RURAL
Lebanon	Smallholder Livestock Rehabilitation Project	PN	2003	LIVST
Nepal	Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project	PI	2003	RURAL
Venezuela	Support Project for Small Producers in the Semi-Arid Zones of Falcon and Lara States	PL	2003	AGRIC
Ethiopia	Special Country Programme Phase II	PF	2004	IRRIG
Gambia	Rural Finance and Community Initiatives Project (RFCIP)	PA	2004	CREDI
Jordan	Agricultural Resource Management Project Phase II (ARMP)	PN	2004	AGRIC
Lao	Northern Sayabouri Rural Development Project	PI	2004	RURAL
Paraguay	Peasant Development Fund Credit Project - Eastern Region (PDF)	PL	2004	CREDI
Senegal	Rural Micro-Enterprise Project	PA	2004	RURAL
Tunisia	Integrated Agricultural Development Project in the Governorate of Siliana (PDARI)	PN	2004	AGRIC
Vietnam	Ha Giang Development Project for Ethnic Minorities	PI	2004	RURAL
China	Southwest Anhui Integrated Agricultural Development Project	PI	2005	AGRIC
Ghana	Upper East Region Land Conservation and Smallholder Rehabilitation Project II (LACOSREP II)	PA	2005	AGRIC

1. Meta-evaluation Projects and Country Programme Evaluations				
COUNTRY	**EVALUATIONS**	**Region**	**Year included in ARRI**	**Project Type**
Ghana	Upper West Agricultural Development Project (UWADEP)	PA	2005	AGRIC
India	North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas	PI	2005	AGRIC
Mongolia	Arhangai Rural Poverty Alleviation Project	PI	2005	LIVST
Mozambique	Niassa Agricultural Development Project	PF	2005	RURAL
Georgia	Agricultural Development Project	PN	2006	CREDI
Niger	Special Country Programme - Phase II	PA	2006	AGRIC
Philippines	Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project	PI	2006	AGRIC
Romania	Apuseni Development Project	PN	2006	CREDI
Tanzania	Participatory Irrigation Development Programme	PF	2006	IRRIG
Albania	Mountain Areas Development Programme (MADP)	PN	2007	AGRIC
Belize	Community-Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management Project (CARD)	PL	2007	AGRIC
Burkina Faso	Community Based Rural Development Project	PA	2007	RURAL
Pakistan	Dir Area Support Project (DASP)	PI	2007	RURAL
Philippines	Western Mindanao Community Innitiatives Project	PI	2007	RURAL
Argentina	Rural Development Project for the North-Eastern Provinces (PRODERNEA)	PL	2008	RURAL
China	Qinling Mountain Area Poverty Alleviation Project (QMAPAP)	PI	2008	AGRIC
Guatemala	Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (PRODEVER)	PL	2008	RURAL
Korea DPR	Uplands Food Security Project	PI	2008	AGRIC
Madagascar	Upper Mandraré Basin Development Project - Phase II	PF	2008	RURAL
Ethiopia	Rural Financial Intermediation Programme (RUFIP)	PF	2009	CREDI
Benin	Roots and Tubers Development Programme	PA	2009	RURAL
China	West Guangxi Poverty Alleviation Project	PI	2009	AGRIC
Yemen	Raymah Area Development Project	PN	2009	RURAL

2. List of Projects Reviewed by the Desk Review Study

1. 2009 The Federative Republic Of Brazil, State Of Paraíba Cariri And Seridó Sustainable Development Project (Procase)
2. 2009 The Arab Republic of Egypt On-farm Irrigation Development Project in the Oldlands (OFIDO)
3. 2009 The Republic Of The Gambia Livestock And Horticulture Development Project (LHDP)
4. 2009 Georgia Agricultural Support Project
5. 2009 The Republic Of Liberia Agriculture Sector Rehabilitation Project (ASRP)
6. 2009 Desarrollo Comunitario Forestal en los Estados del Sur (Campeche, Chiapas y Oaxaca)
7. 2009 Nepal High Value Agriculture Project In Hill And Mountain Areas
8. 2009 Sri Lanka National Agribusiness Development Programme (NADeP)
9. 2008 Ethiopia Pastoral Community Development Project II
10. 2006 Argentina Proyecto De Desarrollo Rural De La Patagonia (PRODERPA)
11. 2006 Madagascar Projet d'Appui au Développement de Menabe et du Melaky (AD2M)
12. 2006 Niger Initiative De Réhabilitation Et De Développement Agricole Et Rural (IRDAR)
13. 2006 Tanzania Rural Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises Support Programme (MUVI)
14. 2006 Zambia Rural Finance Programme
15. 2006 Sudan Butana Integrated Rural Development Project
16. 2006 Vietnam Decentralized Programme For Rural Poverty Reduction In Ha Giang And Quang Binh Provinces
17. 2005 Bangladesh Microfinance For Marginal And Small Farmers Project
18. 2004 Republic of Kenya Southern Nyanza Community Development Project
19. 2004 Burkina Faso Programme De Developpement Rural Durable (PDRD)
20. 2003 Sudan Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project
21. 2003 Ethiopia Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP)
22. 2003 Burkina Faso Programme d'Investissement Communautaire en Fertilité Agricole

3. List of 2009 COSOPs Reviewed by the Desk Review Study

1. Democratic Republic of the Congo
2. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
3. Republic of Malawi
4. Republic of Peru
5. Republic of the Sudan

4. List of Projects Reviewed During the Five Country Visits

Project Name	Country	Approval Date	Effectiveness Date	Closing Date	Previous Evaluations by IOE
1. Las Verapaces Rural Development Programme	Guatemala	08 Dec 1999	06 Sep 2001	31 Mar 2012	Interim evaluation
2. National Rural Development Programme Phase 1: Western Region	Guatemala	11 Sep 2003	20 Oct 2006	30 Jun 2013	
3. West Nabouria Rural Development Project	Egypt	23 Apr 2002	09 Apr 2003	31 Dec 2011	
4. Upper Egypt Rural Development Project	Egypt	14 Dec 2006	24 Sep 2007	31 Mar 2016	
5. Microfinance and Technical Support Project	Bangladesh	10 Apr 2003	20 Oct 2003	30 Jun 2011	Bangladesh CPE
6. Sunamganj Community-Based resources Management Project	Bangladesh	12 Sep 2001	14 Jan 2003	30 Sept 2014	Bangladesh CPE
7. Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project Phase II*	Mauritania	05 Sep 2002	23 Jul 2003	31 Jan 2011	
8. Oasis Sustainable Development Programme	Mauritania	17 Dec 2003	18 Nov 2004	30 Jun 2013	
9. Smallholder Enterprise and Marketing Programme	Zambia	09 Dec 1999	07 Nov 2000	31 Dec 2008	
10. Rural Finance Programme	Zambia	02 Dec 2004	07 Sep 2007	31 Mar 2014	

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(for subsequent inclusion)

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN OF ACTION[26]

Unit/Position	Implementation Responsibilities
Senior management	• Ensure POA is implemented and monitored by allocating necessary human and financial resources. • Include progress in gender mainstreaming as agenda item in senior management meetings twice a year.
Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE)	• Includes gender equality as impact domain in new evaluation methodology. Requires evaluations to disaggregate impact information and analysis by gender.
Office of the General Counsel (OL)	• Fully utilizes Schedule 3A (additional covenants) to describe actions for gender mainstreaming within the limitations of project appraisal report. • Recalls section 7.13 as actions binding for borrower under Article 3 of loan agreement. • Ensures that letters of agreement and appointment with CIs specify tasks related to gender issues. • Monitors POA with reference to above.
External Affairs Department (EAD)	• Catalyses partnerships with other donors and civil-society groups for advocacy and policy dialogue of gender issues and women's empowerment. • Advocates gender and development issues and women's empowerment in global and regional policy forums. • Contributes to strengthening dissemination of gender-related knowledge. • Maintains and expands gender subsite, with technical support of Gender Focal Point, Technical Advisory Division (PTGFP) and WGGPP. • Mobilizes external resources to support implementation of POA.
Assistant President (AP)/PMD	• Ensures that POA is implemented and monitored by allocating mentioned responsibilities, and necessary human and financial resources. • Ensures that divisional workplans and budgets incorporate gender-mainstreaming responsibilities. • Includes progress in implementing POA as agenda item in PMD meetings every six months. • Recognizes WGGPP as thematic group. • Allocates responsibility to PT to review existing IFAD reporting formats (including supervision and key files) to ensure adequate and consistent reporting on gender mainstreaming. • Ensures that letters of agreement with CIs specify tasks related to supervision of gender issues.
Regional Division Directors	• Ensure that POA is implemented and monitored by allocating the mentioned responsibilities, and necessary human and financial resources. • Incorporate gender-mainstreaming objectives and activities into divisional workplans and budgets and individual staff scorecards. • Increase efforts to ensure implementation support is available where needed. • Include progress in gender mainstreaming as agenda item in divisional meetings every three months. • Ensure, in collaboration with OL, that letters of agreement with CIs specify tasks related to supervision of gender issues. Nominate staff members to participate in WGGPP.

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[26] Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in IFAD's Operations, Plan of Action 2003-2006, see Annex V of the Progress Report on the Project Portfolio, pages 59-60, EB 2003/78/R.16.

Country Portfolio Managers	- Ensure that COSOPs include GEM and GDI information (where available) Ensure that COSOPs identify gender-related constraints and opportunities. Ensure that project design complies with standard design features. - Ensure that start-up workshop discusses gender strategy and is substantially attended by women. - Ensure that AWP/Bs address gender as cross-cutting concern. Ensure that PMU monitors gender mainstreaming. - Ensure, in collaboration with OL, that letters of appointment specify tasks related to the supervision of gender issues. - Expand on partnerships and cofinancing arrangements to ensure implementation support for gender. - Ensure grant funding is used as a catalyst to improve gender-related field impact.
Regional gender focal points/regional economists	*Provide guidance, advice and assistance on policy-related issues in gender mainstreaming to regional directors and CPMs.* *Strengthen knowledge exchange with external sources on gender and development. Participate in WGGPP and in external events.* *Manage time-bound activities in support of gender mainstreaming.* *Assist in integration of gender issues into regional activities.* *Represent IFAD on gender issues to external audiences.*
Technical Advisory Division (PT) Director	- Ensures that gender concerns are taken into account in all aspects of division's work, specifically TRC, PDT and review of grant proposals. - Includes progress in gender mainstreaming as agenda item in division's meetings every three months. - Ensures that key files are revised to address gender as cross-cutting concern. Incorporates gender-mainstreaming objectives and activities into divisional workplan and budget.
PT Gender Focal Point	- Advises senior management on issues related to POA implementation. - Ensures that project design meets gender-sensitive design prerequisites. Undertakes baseline survey to identify benchmarks for POA. - Assists in monitoring POA, as requested by AP/PMD. - Assists in revision of letters of agreement to specify tasks related to supervision of gender issues. - Assists in revision of supervision report format to cover gender issues. - Establishes, maintains and expands internal and external gender networks, including gender subsite. - Strengthens its knowledge exchange with external sources on gender and development. - Chairs WGGPP. - Advocates gender and development issues in global and regional policy forums. - Represents IFAD on gender issues to external audiences.
Working Group on Gender in Projects and Programmes (WG)	- Provides policy advice related to gender mainstreaming. - Maintains and expands internal and external gender networks. - Meets regularly for learning and information exchange on gender and development. - Contributes to gender subsite through collection of dissemination of 'best practices' across regions and sectors.

Table 1. **RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN IFAD OPERATIONS**[27]		
Narrative Summary	**Results Indicators**	**Data source**
Goal: Improve gender equality/women's empowerment	Percentage of projects rated 4 or better for (projected) impact on gender equality (IFAD Results Management Framework 2007-2010, Result Indicator 4, sub-indicator 4)	Annual Portfolio Performance Report (PPR)
Objectives		
Results-based Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes (COSOP) integrate gender concerns	Percentage of COSOPs rated 4 or better on gender under Results Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (RB-COSOP) MAT KSF 2	COSOP MAT KSF 2 - question on gender 2.4[3]
Project design fully integrates gender concerns according to the Key features of gender sensitive design and implementation	Percentage of project design reports rated 4 and above on gender as per 'Pre-Key features of gender-sensitive design and implementation" Maturity Assessment Template (MAT), Key Success Factor (KSF) 2 sub-score at QE	KSF 2 Sub-scores on gender as per QE Panel report Summary Assessment Sheet) summarized in PPR[4]7 Departmental Management Plan, Programme Management Department (as a key performance indicators KPI). from 2009
Grant design fully integrates gender concerns according to the Key features of gender sensitive design and implementation	Percentage of grant design documents scored 4 and above and for gender focus	Gender-sensitivity score in grants assessment template following grants TRC
Project implementation ensures gender-equitable participation in and benefit from project activities	Percentage of projects scoring 4 and above on gender focus in implementation[5]	Annual Portfolio Performance Report (PPR)
Grant implementation ensures gender-equitable participation in and benefit from project activities	Percentage of grants scoring 4 and above on gender focus[6]	Annual Portfolio Performance Report (PPR)
Supervision/implementation support gives attention to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment	Percentage of supervision reports reflecting Guidelines for supervision and implementation support of projects and programmes funded from IFAD loans and grants (2007)", Annex 4, (http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/supervision/guidelines.pdf)	Baseline to set benchmarks (2008) Bi-annual reviews
Project completion reports give attention to gender mainstreaming/women's empowerment	Project completion reports (PCRs) ratings factor in attention to gender equality/women's empowerment7	Rating by PMD Front Office

[3] A question will be added under KSF 2 "Poverty, Social Development and Targeting" of the COSOP MAT. "to what extent does the COSOP promote gender equality and empowerment of women"; in responding to the question reference is to be made to the RB-COSOP policy and RB-COSOP Guidelines which make reference to http://www.ifad.org/operations/policy/cosop.htm)and Guidelines http://www.ifad.org/operations/policy/cosop/guidelines/index.htm)Inclusion of gender sensitive Baseline Poverty Analysis in Preparatory studies (Para 35), gender balance in participation (Para. 40) , inclusion of a section on gender issues with GEM and GDI data, gender disaggregated data and indicator (Para. 43).

[4] Project design ratings (as per QE or QA) will be modified in line with the PPR. QE scores are expected to be used in PPR 2008, and QA scores for the following years. Pending revision of TRC Panel Report Template, QE project scores against the Key features will be derived from RRN gender checklist scores.

[5] PPR Guidelines for 2009 will update guidance for scoring on "gender focus" in line with the "Key features".

[6] As above

[7] Revision of PCR Guidelines will detail scoring criteria for ge/we

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[27]   http://www.ifad.org/gender/framework/framework.pdf