

Innovation

This project aims to contribute to IFAD innovation, particularly in connection with the two preceding initiatives, in the following manner:

- It assists IFAD stakeholders in diagnosing and overcoming institutional problems and constraints that hinder successful project implementation.
- It facilitates design and execution of more process-oriented rural development projects, which aim to build sustainable, demand-driven service-delivery systems by focusing on livelihoods and governance issues.
- It helps IFAD attain its objective of strengthening the organizations of the rural poor by providing a methodological, actor-centred framework within which to map out pro-poor institutional transformation.



Enabling the rural poor to overcome poverty

Contact: David Kingsbury
International Fund for Agricultural Development
Via del Serafico 107, 00142 Rome, Italy
Telephone: +39 06 5459 2060
E-mail: d.kingsbury@ifad.org
www.ifad.org

Institutional analysis guidelines
and training modules

A holistic approach to assessing institutions

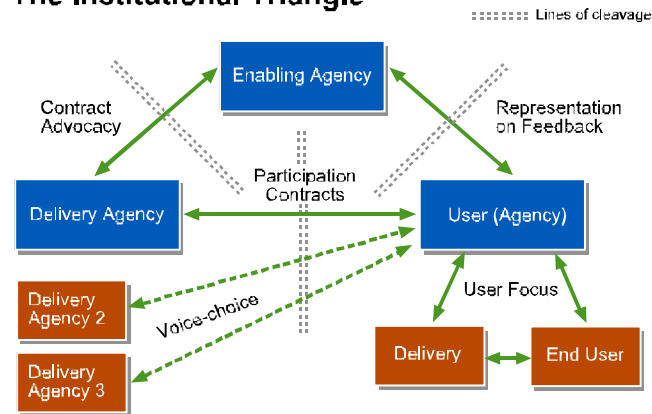


Overview

IFAD is increasingly shifting from the 'input-output' type of project to 'process' interventions that stress systems-building and longer-term impact. However, this has not yet been accompanied by a concomitant shift in upgrading the skills of project and programme designers, appraisers and implementers to be better equipped to handle the institutional issues that affect service-delivery systems. For IFAD projects to effectively operate within increasingly wider and complex institutional settings, the focus must be shifted from users and deliverers, as such, to the enablers, that is, the actors and agencies that enable the successful interaction between users and deliverers.

Weak and inadequate institutional environments are one of the leading reasons for suboptimal performance in rural development projects and programmes, and often for a lack of downward accountability towards IFAD's target groups as well. The Independent External Evaluation confirmed that IFAD needs a more rigorous understanding of institutional systems and governance issues during design and implementation. Sound institutional analysis is also critical to informing policy dialogue and coordinating IFAD interventions in any one country – by placing them within a common-system setting that would provide for cross-fertilization and joint learning (e.g. for mainstreaming the delivery arrangements for public goods through decentralized structures). For conducting such institutional analysis in project design and implementation, practical tools, methods and guidance adapted to IFAD's specific investment requirements are needed. At the same time, while all these are important, it has increasingly become apparent that they will only be used if hands-on training is provided and if that training is firmly anchored in field realities.

The Institutional Triangle



The recognition of this by IFAD's Africa I Division led to the drafting of a preliminary version of the Practitioner's Guide and related training materials. These materials are based on pilot-testing of IFAD projects during different phases (design, supervision, evaluation) in Cameroon (microfinance, and roots and tubers commodity-chain development) and Mali (community-driven development). The tests clearly showed their enormous potential for adding value across IFAD's heterogeneous portfolios. After successful field-testing, the guidance and training material was further validated and finalized with experts and other relevant stakeholders at a Rome workshop held on 22-23 September 2004. Workshop participants provided comments and suggestions on the draft guide – and inputs on a range of possible, complementary follow-up activities, tailor-made for different types of users and audiences. The workshop also built internal IFAD support for promoting better institutional analysis skills and ownership of the preliminary products. In addition, an initial training workshop for selected change 'champions' among

IFAD staff and senior consultants is planned for late 2004 or early 2005. Scaling up and mainstreaming plans include the development of a multi-year training programme for IFAD staff, regular consultants, and regional and in-country stakeholders, modelled on the IFAD sustainable livelihoods training approach supported by the Department for International Development (United Kingdom).

Final outputs

The main output is a validated, draft practitioner's guide for institutional analysis to improve pro-poor service delivery and the governance settings affecting the former. Although developed for one region, the guide is relevant to IFAD interventions and policy dialogue in general.

Anticipated impact

This project allows for the development of a new perspective and skills among CPMs, consultants, project staff, field workers, etc. – as well as of the materials to support the application of these new skills throughout the IFAD project cycle in a systematic, bottom-up approach. It will also allow IFAD to make better-informed contributions to policy dialogue on important issues – such as pro-poor service delivery; community-driven development; decentralization; reform of technical line agencies, including extension services; agricultural commodity-chain development; and rural financial systems development – for sustained poverty reduction.