

## profile

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### REPUBLIC OF TURKEY COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION

## Achievements and challenges in an upper middle-income country

Over the last 30 years, IFAD has financed ten projects in the country, with a total cost of US\$661.1 million, out of which IFAD provided US\$189 million. The projects supported rural infrastructure, agriculture, natural resource management, rural finance services, and other interventions. The geographical focus was on the economically lagging regions and provinces of the country.

This is the first Country Programme Evaluation in Turkey conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE). It covered the four projects approved during 2003-2012 (two of which were closed and two ongoing) as well as a regional grant approved in 2013 for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). The evaluation took into consideration IFAD's Country Strategic Opportunity Papers (COSOPs) of 2000 and 2006, and the 2010 Addendum to the 2006 COSOP. The addendum was prepared for the period 2011-2012.

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess the performance and impact of IFAD-supported operations in Turkey; generate a series of findings and recommendations to enhance the country programme's overall development effectiveness; and provide relevant information and insights to inform the formulation of the future COSOP.

### Main evaluation findings

The CPE found that project objectives were consistent with the government priorities and COSOPs at the time of project design, and that the interventions were relevant to national and local priorities and technical considerations. The projects improved the incomes and quality of life of the rural poor through development of rural infrastructure; made advances in increasing agricultural productivity and supporting commercialization; and achieved modest gains in rural employment and self-sustaining institutions of the rural poor. Project investments were generally well-managed and cost-effective, with infrastructure a highly efficient component, but offset, in terms of overall portfolio efficiency, by lack of replication of new agricultural technology as expected from a demonstration effect, and delays in project implementation.



Strawberry farmer displaying a strawberry seedling. He enjoys a high yield due to his expertise and the abundant precipitation in Okçu village, Giresun Province.

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With regard to the rural poverty impact of the portfolio, the CPE noted satisfactory achievements in income and assets, and some advances in agricultural productivity, human and social capital, and the environment. It observed that lack of a more focused targeting had limited the impact on rural poverty, and that the participation of women and benefits gained by them in terms of empowerment were limited. Moreover, while the projects introduced adequate sustainability mechanisms, sustainability was limited by weak operation and maintenance arrangements and insufficient collaboration with the rural financial sector.

Project management had generally been effective, despite the challenges of understaffing and rotation, with monitoring and evaluation a consistently low-performing aspect. There had been some valuable innovations, but in most cases the innovations were incremental, and evidence of scaling up was limited. Moreover, the CPE assessed performance in non-lending activities (knowledge management, policy dialogue and partnership-building), which are essential for scaling up impact and rural transformation, as moderately unsatisfactory. IFAD support to SSTC in Turkey is incipient and has yet to provide an adequate response to Turkey's interest and capacity in this area.

The CPE concluded that all three COSOP documents were consistent with relevant national strategies and plans that prevailed at the time. The COSOPs also maintained a consistent and understandable geographic focus on Turkey's lagging regions and reported country-wide analyses of poverty and disparity. However, they did not guide targeting toward the household level, and, since 2006, diluted the challenge of targeting with a belief in the trickle-down effect. They also exhibited a diminishing strategic focus on gender and women's empowerment.

The paradigm for rural poverty alleviation pursued in the COSOPs took three distinct forms\* in ten years, each of which could be considered relevant under its own set of assumptions but lacked a proper analysis of IFAD's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a rapidly changing country context. In particular, there had been no attempt to articulate strategic directions that took into account Turkey's status as an upper-middle-income country and its emerging role as an important bilateral donor and contributor to SSTC.

Achievements enabled the country programme to generate some significant impacts in some of the poorest parts of the country, much of it due to improvements in household income and assets due to infrastructure development, and some to agricultural interventions and non-infrastructure interventions in supply-chain management. The overall impact on the project areas was less than satisfactory due, in part, to the diffuse and indirect (and for women and youth, inadequate) targeting approaches, which limited the impact on rural poverty.

The evaluation assessed the performance of the IFAD-financed project portfolio during 2003-2015 as moderately satisfactory, which is at par with the average overall performance of projects evaluated by IOE in the Near East, North Africa and Europe Division during 2002-2014.

## TURKEY AT A GLANCE

Population: **75.9 million (2014)**

Rural population: **20.5 million (27% of total population, 2014)**

Gross Domestic Product growth: **2.87% (2014) in real terms**

Poverty head count ratio at national poverty line (% of population): **16.3 (2014)**

Life expectancy at birth: **75 (2014)**

Human development index: **0.761 (2014);**

Ranking (2014): **72 out of 188 countries, classified as high level of human development**

Sources: Ministry of Development of Turkey; United Nations Development Programme International Human Development Indicators; World Bank.

## Key recommendations

- **Prepare a new COSOP** with a proper analysis of IFAD's strengths and limitations in Turkey and the opportunities and threats it faces in building more effective partnerships. There are challenging issues that need fresh perspectives, and it is imperative to engage relevant national and international resource people from within and outside the public sector and the donor community to develop robust strategic directions.
- **Improve targeting**, particularly for poorer farmers and specific target groups, including women and youth. Future programming should be more precise in identifying target groups, use participatory processes, relevant interventions and new partners to help include these groups in project decision-making, and more sharply define monitoring and evaluation systems to track participation and benefits.
- **Strengthen non-lending activities** (knowledge management, policy dialogue and partnerships) and **ensure synergies with the portfolio**. In particular, there is a need to strengthen and diversify partnerships, further enhance investment in knowledge management, and support SSTC to facilitate transfer of knowledge and technical expertise to IFAD operations in other countries, in areas in which Turkey has particular strengths.
- **Emphasize innovation and scaling up as key strategic priorities**. Innovation is required to reduce dependency on public programmes and build sustainable institutional support in areas such as market-driven value addition, better access to new markets, alternative sources of investment capital, and business services that support platforms for future growth for the rural poor. For scaling up, there is a need to shift from a project-centric approach to influencing other partners through leveraging policies, knowledge and resources.
- **Strengthen the strategic focus on women and youth**. A consistent, strategic focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is required, including Gender Action Plans and gender equality in access to project resources and benefits at the project design stage. Moreover, a strengthened focus on youth in the new COSOP and project designs is recommended in order to address youth unemployment and rural outmigration, emphasizing direct targeting of youth through mechanisms that are relevant to their needs and interests.

\* Starting with a conventional province-based multi-component approach in 2000, combining the conventional approach with the pursuit of broad-based sector growth in 2006, and focusing exclusively on the nexus between poverty and natural resources in 2010.

### Further information:

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