IOE | IFAD Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation





Republic of Bangladesh
Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation

Preliminary findings

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Dhaka, 16 Nov. 2026

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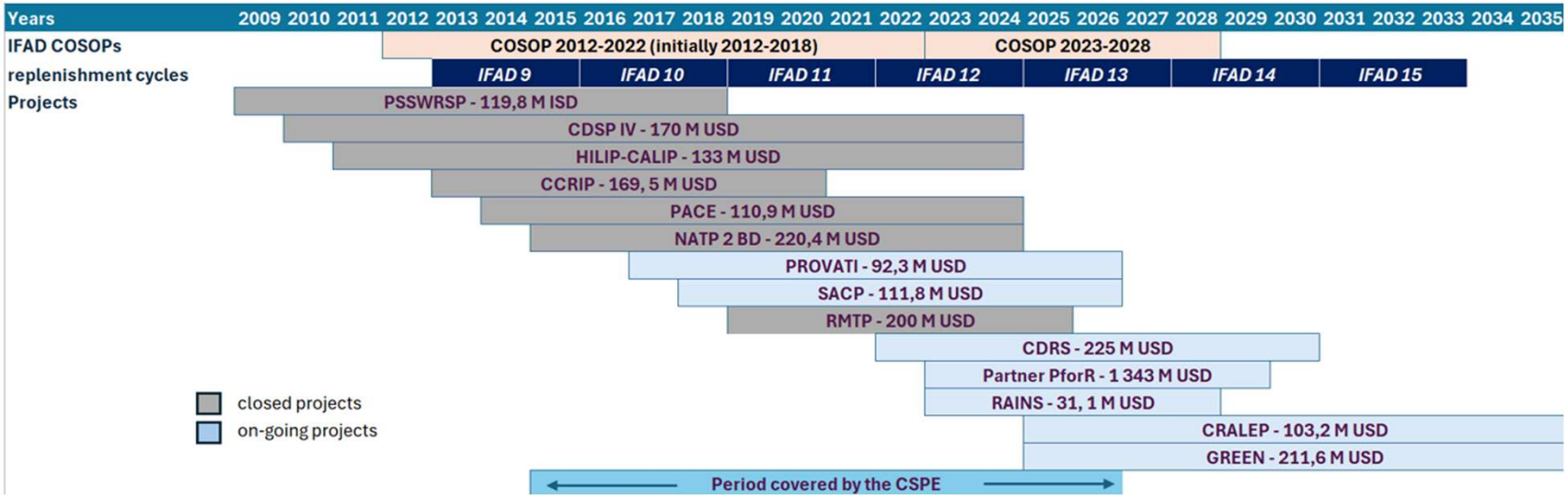
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Agenda

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Key preliminary findings
- Key Lessons

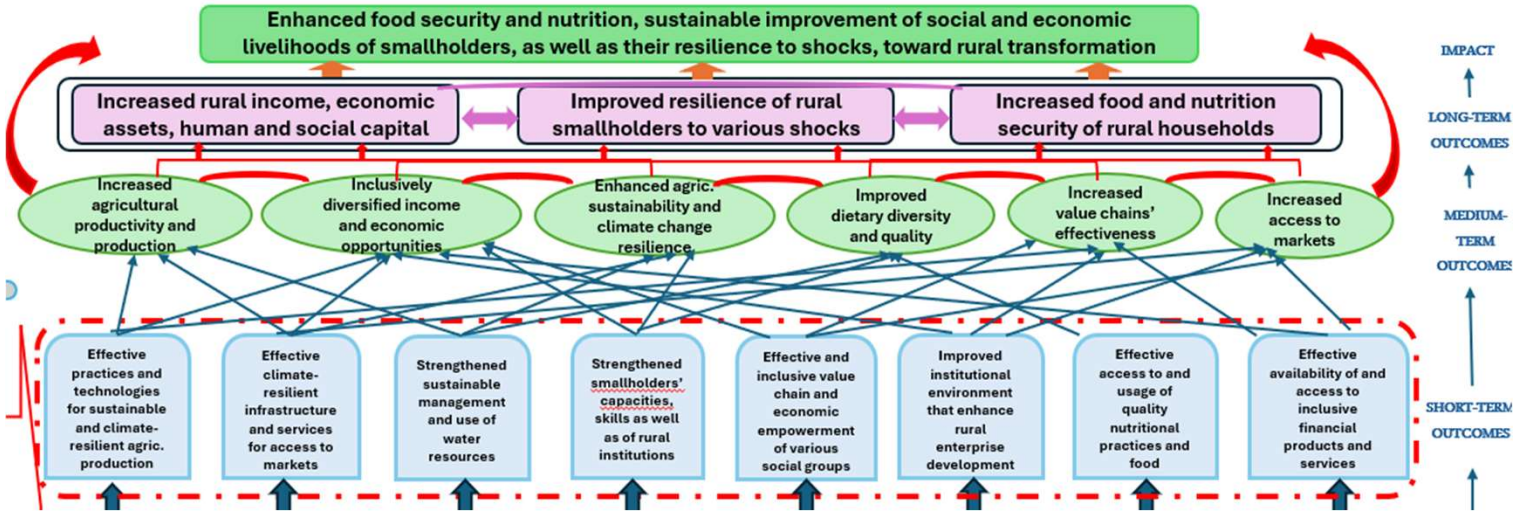
Introduction

- **Fourth** country-level evaluation of IFAD support in Bangladesh
- **Objectives:** Assess results and performance of the strategies and program in order to generate useful findings and lessons for developing the next strategy
- **Scope:** IFAD-supported strategies (COSOPs 2012-2022 and 2023-2028), portfolio projects and non-lending activities; covering the period from 2015-2026
- **Portfolio:** 14 projects (7 completed, 5 on-going, and 2 recent)
- **Evaluated portfolio: US$3.24 billion, with IFAD financing = US$ 777.5 million**

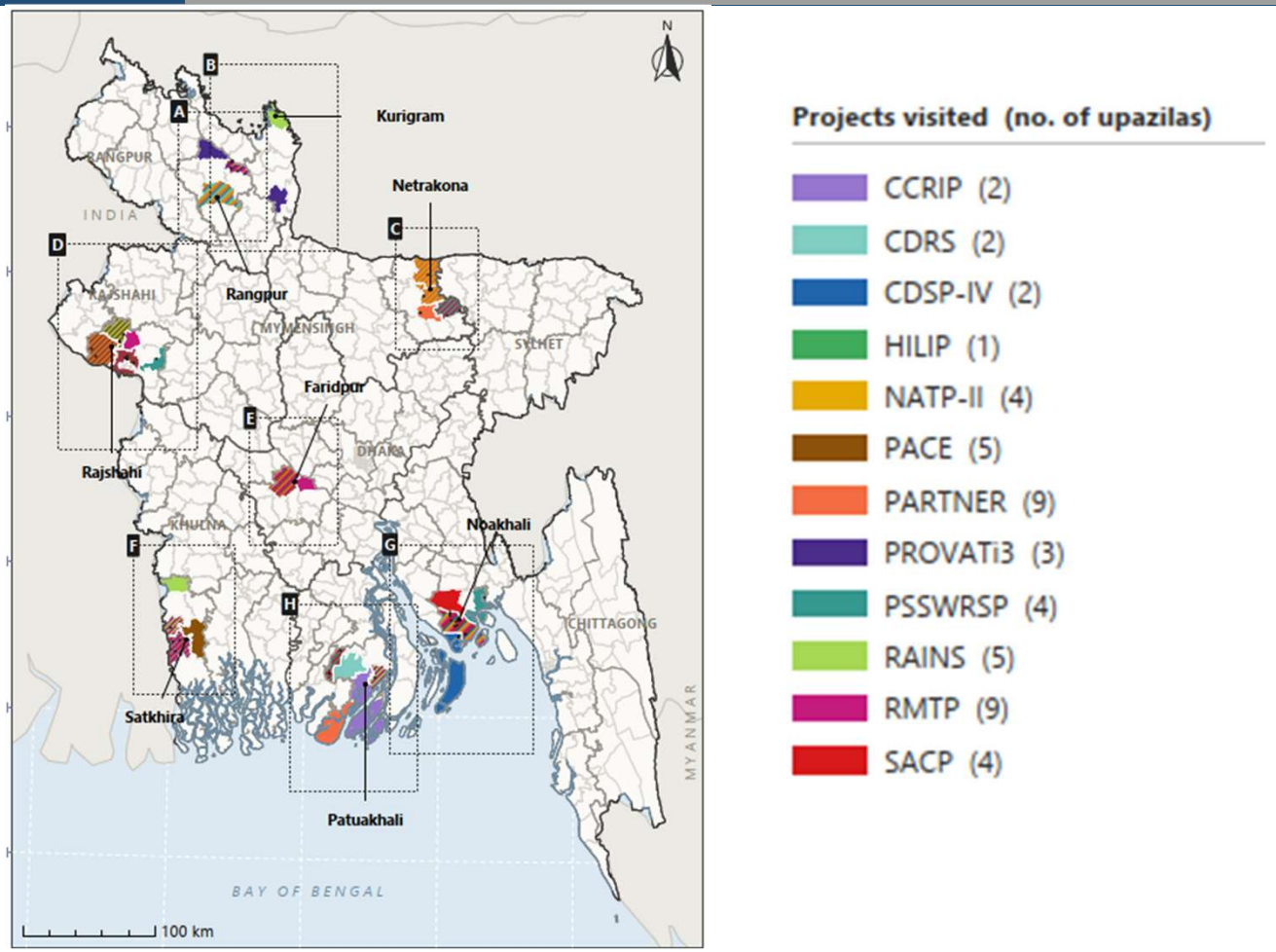


Methodology

- **Theory-based evaluation design:** reconstructed theory of change with six impact pathways.
- **Mixed-methods approach**, including:
  - Self-assessments
  - Analysis of secondary quantitative data
  - In-depth document review
  - Virtual meetings (32) held with > 66 persons
  - Purposive sampling for field visits covering 8 districts
  - Direct observations and interactions at project sites, 83 meetings held with more than 2300 project participants
- **Challenges:** Mixed quality of monitoring data. Bias during field visits



CSPE field mission
Upazilas visited by the team over the period of 30 Oct to 11 Nov 2026: 29 upazilas in 8 districts



Projects visited (no. of upazilas)

- CCRIP (2)
- CDRS (2)
- CDSP-IV (2)
- HILIP (1)
- NATP-II (4)
- PACE (5)
- PARTNER (9)
- PROVATi3 (3)
- PSSWRSP (4)
- RAINS (5)
- RMTP (9)
- SACP (4)

Results: Relevance

- Strategies and operations broadly aligned with national priorities
- Explicit attention to climate resilience in recent designs
- Selected recent operations explicitly incorporated nutrition
- Strong relevance of investments in remote haor, coastal and char areas
- Women's participation was significant in several core activities; Attention to youth increased recently



- Variability of designs on several points
- Insufficient evidence on how the most vulnerable groups have been reached
- Participation in profitable activities reached mostly entrepreneurial and better-off farmers

Results: Coherence

- Strategic coherence ensured in the two COSOPs
- IFAD Comparative advantage in reaching smallholder farmers in climate vulnerable rural areas
- Cofinancing and collaborations with other partners
- Periodic experience sharing organized by the ICO
- Building on experiences of previous projects and of the implementing institution



- Absence of programmatic approach weakened operational linkages and systematic coordination of all operations
- Operational integration and contributions of grants to lending results were mixed

Results: Non-lending Activities

- Knowledge was disseminated through various channels
- Government agencies and structures are effective partners for the programme delivery
- Complementary financing and expertise were mobilized, and multi-agency cooperation was enabled
- Results informed selected institutional practices and processes
- Active role of IFAD in the country food system approach



- Insufficient evidence on systematic usage of knowledge for decision
- Limited depth of partnerships with private actors for smallholder market access
- Insufficient policy engagement and policy influence results
- No evidence of South-South and Triangular Cooperation activity

Results: Effectiveness (1)

- Closed projects exceeded design outreach targets
- Women's participation reached 49 per cent
- Critical rural infrastructure supported. e.g. rural / submersible roads, canals, cyclone shelters, and markets.
- Clear production gains with support combining locally adapted technologies, access to land, water and inputs.





- Successful introduction of locally adapted and stress-tolerant varieties alongside good agricultural practices
- Contributions of improved water access, increased crop production and income gains
- Water interventions reached many households
- Expanded access to agricultural technologies and technical and business trainings, with various technical innovations promoted.

Results: Effectiveness (2)

- Effective system for substantial financial outreach by PKSF
- Expanded access to inclusive financial services
- Combination of financial and non-financial services and good foundation established for entrepreneurship
- Expanded access to skills and value chains
- Complementary capabilities developed for economic diversification





- Producer organizations, aggregation facilities and market brokerage supported in selected cases
- Investments in roads improved smallholders' market access
- Nutrition trainings reached substantial numbers of persons, introduced new practices, with positive awareness and behavioral change.
- Effective partnership with FAO on nutrition support.

Results: Effectiveness (3)

- Lack of beneficiary poverty profiles prevents confirmation of outreach to ultra poor
- Uneven operational links across agencies and themes
- IFAD's contribution and additionality to the PKSF overall performance network not documented
- Insufficient support for continuous profitability, sales growth and enterprise survival



- Limited evidence to show how acquired competencies led to changes in business practices or enterprise gains
- Limited data on enterprise ownership and control by women
- Weak links between market assessments, value chain selection and interventions at design stage
- Weak producer bargaining power, and still dependence on traditional intermediaries
- Nutrition education targeted women mostly, with insufficient involvement of men

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

- Expanded support for women's access to training, employment and enterprise support
- Participation of women in projects' activities led to improved self-esteem, better household influence and recognition by husbands
- Labor contracting approach was a positive pathway for poor women for access to income in some areas



- Weak women's control over resources
- Women's income gains uneven across projects
- Evidence suggests women:
  - Inconsistent representation in communities' structures
  - Insufficient access to leadership positions
- More formal participation of women, than their substantive involvement
- Easing women workload still unaddressed

Youth, Marginalised Groups and PWD

- Youth disaggregation data more visible in recent projects
- Recent projects expanded youth access to training, employment and enterprise support, with employment outcomes
- One project in the portfolio has set an outreach target for ethnic minorities
- Inclusion of PwDs explicitly foreseen in recently approved projects



- Quotas applied for young people, but participation limited to specific activities.
- Beyond quotas, limited efforts to systematically integrate youth across all projects' components
- Insufficient efforts to target ethnic minorities and PwDs
- No clear approach to reach PwDs and unspecific outreach target










নারীদের একচ্ছিসিভ ইন্টিগ্রেটেড মডেল
(Women-exclusive integrated Model)
কৃষাণীর নাম : কৈকিয় মুর্মু
মোবাইল নম্বর : ০১৩১৯-৩৬৭১৫২
গ্রামের নাম : গাগরন্দ বাবুলভাং
ইউনিয়নের নাম : চাঁদপুড়িয়া
স্থাপনের তারিখ : ২৩/০৬/২০২৫ খ্রি:

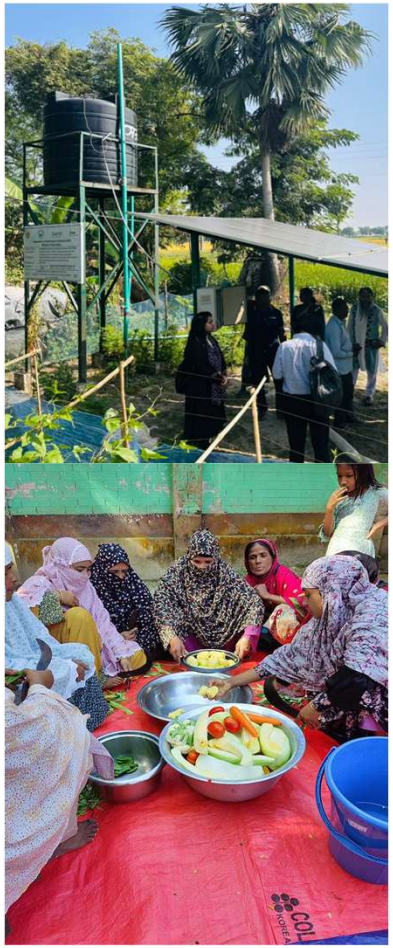






Efficiency and Impact

- Average timeframe from approval to first disbursement is below the regional and IFAD averages
- Positive economic efficiency of completed projects
- Positive contributions to improved food security, nutrition, and household income
- Social capital improvement and positive human capital development



- Cost-efficiency by participant household was mixed
- Slow start-up and delivery constraints with earlier projects
- Insufficient contribution to institutional uptake and to sector-policy reform

Sustainability of Benefits

- Embedding projects in government structure is positive for sustainability
- Government engagement and institutional ownership evident
- PKSF's POs, with range of products and services, are positive for sustainability.
- LGED provides continuous follow up of infrastructure
- Some infrastructure constructed under closed projects still functional



- Mixed sustainability of grassroots organizations; and conditional viability of O&M institutions
- Continuous IRF access for intended IFAD target groups, beyond projects not evidenced
- Unclear commercial and financial viability of enterprises
- Insufficient relationships with private actors, thus preventing to sustain economic gains
- Uneven exit arrangements

Natural Resources Management and Adaptation to CC

- Sound geographically differentiated adaptation approach applied for NRM
- Relevant and effective approaches applied to address environmental vulnerabilities
- Progress made towards better sustainable production practices
- Strengthened adaptive capacities of communities with assets protection, warnings, diversified farming and economic opportunities



- Environmental trade-offs or negative impacts were not consistently measured or monitored
- Depth of environmental and climate resilience solutions have varied across the portfolio
- Absence of systematic measurement of longer-term resilience outcomes and impacts on wider ecological systems

Performance of Partners

- IFAD and GoB established and maintained a strong and continuous strategic relationship
- Strong focus on rural poor by IFAD, which provided good technical support to designs, and regular supervisions
- Effective Alignment with government priorities and complementary financing from various partners
- Strong government ownership and continuity across successive projects



- Designs insufficiently considered outcome monitoring, market linkages and private sector engagement
- Gaps in field-level coordination between the government implementing institutions
- Insufficient government strategic coordination of supports within the broader agriculture and rural development sector

Key points

- Strong and effective partnership between IFAD and the GoB over the evaluated period.
- Strategic or operational themes were relevant to address vulnerability challenges faced by smallholders.
- Strategic challenges in terms of weak coordination, insufficient robustness of KM systems and of policy engagement for policy change
- Support more effective on several themes, e.g. climate resilience, food security and nutrition, value chain, access to IRF and economic diversification
- Support less effective on few themes, e.g. access to markets, gender equality and results' sustainability



Evaluation next steps



- Additional data collection / interviews until mid Dec 2026
- Analysis and preparing the draft report by end of February 2027
- Internal IOE peer review early March 2027
- Draft report to be shared for comments by end March 2027
- Comments on the draft report sent by IFAD and GoB by end of April 2027
- Final workshop (in-person) by end of June 2027

Thank you for your attention

