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Republic of Malawi

COUNTRY STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION





Republic of Malawi

Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation

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Photos of activities supported by IFAD-financed projects in the Republic of Malawi

Front cover: Access to clean water and electricity is critical for milk collection centres, Thyolo District.

Back cover: A group of women discussing the limited access to loans, Dedza District (left); farmers use their bikes to take their milk to the collection centres, Thyolo District (right).

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Foreword

In 2021, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD conducted the first country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in Malawi, covering the period from 2011 to 2021. The evaluation found that the country programme has been comprehensive and consistent in addressing the key issues faced by smallholder farmers in Malawi. Crucially, it addressed the high vulnerability, low productivity and food insecurity deriving from unsustainable land use and monocropping cultures (with a focus on maize production).

The country programme has actively promoted gender equality and women's empowerment, encouraging participation of women in all activities and promoting household methodologies to address the root causes of inequalities and power imbalances. Furthermore, climate change adaptation and nutrition were mainstreamed into the programme.

The CSPE found that poverty and food insecurity are deep-rooted and widespread in the districts targeted by IFAD's country programme. Related to this, projects have achieved significant increases in productivity, through the provision of technology, inputs and irrigation. In most cases, however, these gains were eroded soon after project completion.

The programme made limited achievements in diversifying production systems and securing reliable market access for smallholder farmers. While the integration of livestock into production systems had a positive effect on food security and nutrition, food remains the most important expenditure item for smallholder farmers.

The evaluation concludes that food security and climate change resilience are the principal challenges that the country programme has to address more effectively. IFAD would have to further enhance its support to sustainable and diversified production systems and take decisive steps to resolve the ongoing implementation challenges. To this end, realistic implementation planning and effective oversight are of paramount importance.

IFAD's country presence will open opportunities for enhanced engagement with the Government of the Republic of Malawi, development partners and other stakeholders, and for addressing performance issues through continuous follow-up with implementing partners. IFAD would need to develop concrete strategies to address the persistent performance bottlenecks and enhance the results, sustainability and impact of its operations in the country.

I hope that this evaluation will provide the foundation for enhancing country-level engagement in support of inclusive and sustainable rural transformation.



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Stephen Tembo was the senior consultant leading the country mission and the preparation of the draft report. The evaluation team included Hope Kabuchu (gender and targeting specialist), Flavio Luiz (environment and natural resource management and climate change adaptation specialist), Anthony Ngwira (rural finance specialist), Wezi Moyo (gender and nutrition specialist), Calvin Miller (financial sector specialist), Thomas Ranz (food security specialist) and Cristina Perricone (IOE intern). Laura Silici (Evaluation Analyst) and Yuting Huang (IOE intern) ably supported the finalization of the report.

The report benefited from a peer review conducted by IOE. IOE is grateful to the Programme Management Department – in particular the East and Southern Africa Division, the country director and the country team in Malawi – for their constructive collaboration during the course of this evaluation.

The country strategy and programme evaluation concluded with a national workshop. This virtual event, which took place on 17 May 2022, was attended by over 80 participants, including representatives of the Government, development partners, civil society organizations, private sector partners, and IFAD senior Management and staff.

We would like to thank the facilitator, Felix Lombe, and the participants for their valuable contributions.

We also wish to convey our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Malawi and IFAD partners in Malawi for their support and cooperation during the evaluation process.

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Currency equivalent, weights and measures

Currency equivalents

Currency Unit	=	Malawi Kwacha
USD1.00	=	791 Malawi Kwacha

Weights and measures

1 kilogram (kg)	=	2.204 pounds (lb)
1 000 kg	=	1 metric tonne (t)
1 kilometre (km)	=	0.62 miles
1 metre (m)	=	1.09 yards
1 square metre (m ²)	=	10.76 square feet(ft)
1 acre (ac)	=	0.405 ha
1 hectare (ha)	=	2.47 acres

Abbreviations and acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
ASWAp	Agriculture Sector-wide Approach
CA	conservation agriculture
CBFO	community-based financial organizations
CCA	climate change adaptation
COSOP	country strategic opportunities paper/programme
CSPE	country strategy and programme evaluation
DCAFS	Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security
DSF	Debt Sustainability Framework
EFA	economic and financial analysis
ENRM	environment and natural resources management
ERASP	Enhancing the Resilience of Agro-ecological Systems Project
ESA	East and Southern Africa Division of IFAD
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARMSE	Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme
FBS	farmers business school
FFS	farmers field school
FGD	focus group discussion
FM	financial management
FSPs	financial service providers
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GDP	gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIS	geographic information system
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HHM	household methodology approach
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
IRLADP	Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MFI	microfinance institution
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MICF	Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MEPD	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MPI	Multi-dimensional Poverty Index
NAIP	National Agriculture Investment Plan

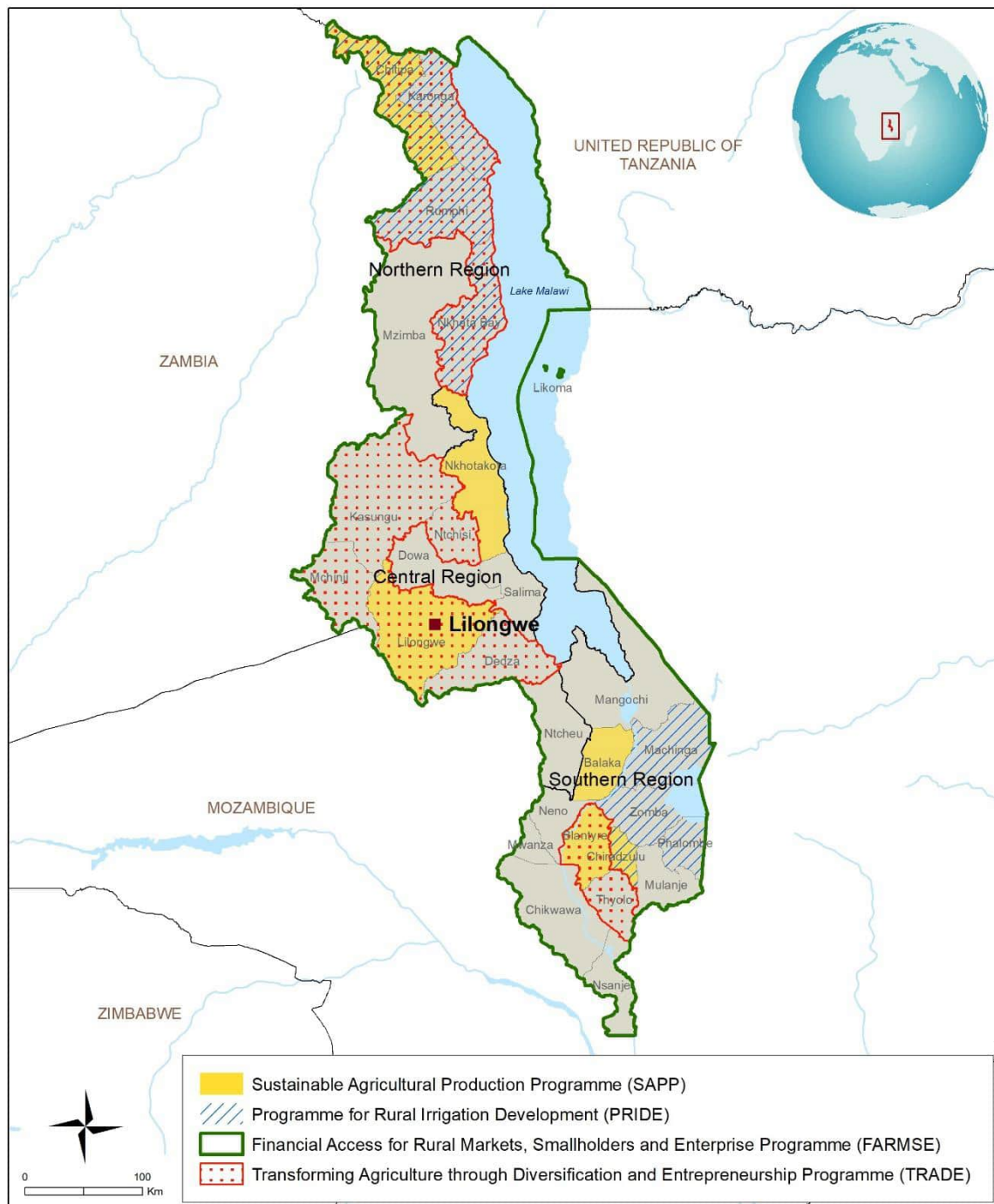
NRM	natural resources management
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCU	project coordination unit
PMU	project management unit
PPE	project performance evaluation
RIA	Research Impact Assessment Division of IFAD
RLEEP	Rural Livelihoods Economic Enhancement Programme
RLSP	Rural Livelihoods Support Programme
SAPP	Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme
SECAP	Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures
SO	strategic objective
SP	service provider
TRADE	Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UPG	Ultra-Poor Graduation component
VC	value chain
VDC	village development committee
VSLA	village savings and loans association
WFP	World Food Programme
WUA	water user association

Maps of the country programme under evaluation

Republic of Malawi

IFAD-funded ongoing operations

Country strategy and programme evaluation



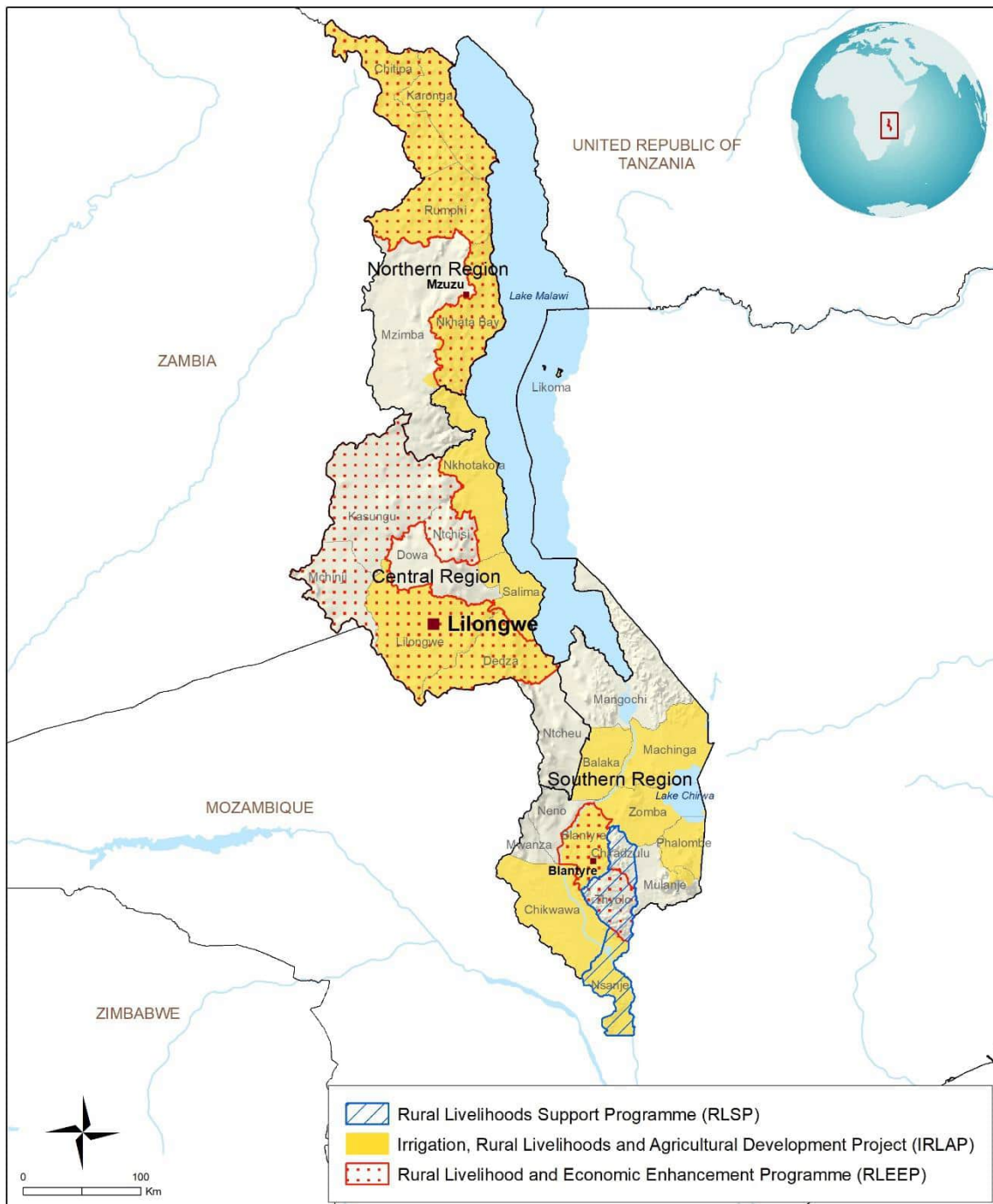
The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

IFAD Map compiled by IFAD | 04-05-2021

Republic of Malawi

IFAD-funded closed operations

Country strategy and programme evaluation



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

Map compiled by IFAD | 03-05-2021

Farmer presenting certified seeds at a community seed bank, Ntchisi District.
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Executive summary

A. Introduction

1. **Background.** In line with the revised IFAD Evaluation Policy, and as approved by the Executive Board at its 132nd session held in April 2021, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) has performed a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in Malawi. This CSPE is the first country-level evaluation conducted in Malawi.
2. Malawi is a low-income country where poverty remains stubbornly high, driven by poor performance by the agricultural sector, high population growth and limited opportunities in non-farm activities. More than half of the country's population was moderately or severely food-insecure in 2020. There are several factors contributing to malnutrition in the country, including poor diets, overdependence on maize as a staple food and infectious diseases. Weather-related shocks, limited purchasing power and high population density and growth curb food availability and access. The COVID-19 crisis is having a negative impact on poverty, with difficulties in accessing markets during lockdowns affecting farmers' incomes.
3. IFAD began operations in Malawi in 1981. Since then, it has provided US\$350.5 million in lending, contributing to a cumulative US\$652.4 million in financing for 14 programmes, four of which are ongoing. The portfolio supports rural poverty reduction and agricultural development, by investing in a range of activities and sectors.
4. **CSPE objectives and scope.** The main objectives of the CSPE are: (i) to assess the results and performance of the ongoing country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) 2016–2022; and (ii) to generate findings, conclusions and recommendations for the next COSOP in 2022. The evaluation assessed the overall strategy pursued, implicit and explicit, and explored the synergies and interlinkages between different elements of the country strategy and programme, the extent to which the lending and non-lending portfolio (including grants) contributed to the achievement of the strategy, and the role played by the Government and IFAD.
5. **The CSPE mission** in September 2021 comprised remote interviews with partner organizations and other stakeholders, virtual meetings with farmer groups, focus group discussions and field visits. Two local consultants conducted a field visit to obtain feedback from beneficiaries, verify the assets built and assess the complementarity of benefits from various interventions. The CSPE mission interviewed beneficiary groups, key project staff, local government officials and service providers in seven districts.

B. Findings

6. **Relevance.** Continuity in the thematic focus and the strategic objectives of the 2010 and 2016 COSOPs was fair. Both COSOPs were well aligned with the Government's development focus on poverty reduction. The Government's increased emphasis on agricultural commercialization is reflected in the shift in focus of the COSOP since 2016. While the 2010 COSOP stipulated a more direct focus on poverty reduction, the current COSOP targets rural poverty through improved service delivery and access to markets. In recent years, IFAD has recalibrated the focus on vulnerable and food-insecure populations through ultra-poor graduation pilots and additional grant funding under the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility to support food production.
7. The country programme has been comprehensive and consistent in addressing key issues faced by smallholder farmers in Malawi. Issues such as high vulnerability, low productivity and food insecurity as a result of unsustainable land use and monocropping cultures (maize) were addressed in various ways, including technology (e.g. double-roll planting in legumes, Good Agricultural Practices, improved cultivars and improved livestock breeds) and irrigation development, and promotion of legumes under the Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP) to contribute to both crop and dietary diversity and capacity-building.

Projects were designed in complementary ways to support a transition to commercial agriculture, for example by strengthening access to markets and commercialization through a value chain approach supported by infrastructure development and governance.

8. Loan resources allocated for environment and natural resources management and climate change were largely inadequate. Projects promoted the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS), which, among other things, aim to improve soil health through integrated packages of improved soil and water management. The programme also supported irrigation management, water catchment and soil management, with additional grant funding under the Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP).
9. Under the COSOP 2016–2022, larger budgets have been allocated to progressively more ambitious projects that included a number of innovative features and built on assumed synergies across projects to achieve the intended results. In addition, the increased technical complexity of value chain and rural finance projects, such as the Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme (TRADE) and SAPP, requires the coordination of a larger number of service providers and implementing partners with multiple activities at local and national levels, which were demanding to coordinate and monitor.
10. **Coherence.** Coordination among IFAD projects improved under the COSOP 2016–2020. Project designs considered complementarity but did not provide for institutional mechanisms for coordination or integration at implementation levels. A broad range of interventions was funded by each programme, with many pilots and activities implemented by different entities and service providers, but they were not integrated or linked. Similar activities in different projects were not well connected and successful interventions were not rolled out across districts.
11. The country programme also included many grants. Overall, they were well linked to the loan portfolio, providing complementary funding for similar themes. Grant funding supported knowledge management, institutions, digital tools and farming technologies. Many of the grants, including some of the largest, focused on resilience and food security.
12. Partnership-building with local stakeholders has been key to the success of IFAD-funded activities and especially important in knowledge management processes that involve the use of platforms, field research and testing activities, and piloting of innovations. However, the Government’s role in and ownership of knowledge management, including monitoring and evaluation (M&E), was insufficient. Knowledge management relied on partnerships with local actors such as national agricultural research institutes, colleges and universities, but they remained dependent on external support.
13. In spite of many similarities and complementarity between IFAD-supported projects and those by other development partners, there was little evidence of harmonization and coordination, even with other United Nations agencies such as the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The multitude of initiatives supporting similar practices did not lead to a coherent picture of adoption or change in Malawi. There are many cases of practices piloted by development partners in Malawi that were not continued, replicated or scaled up.
14. **Effectiveness.** Achievements under 2010 COSOP were moderate. There were limited achievements in relation to the first strategic objective (SO1) – improve access of the poor to appropriate technology and services for sustainable natural resource management. In relation to SO2 – improve access to sustainable agricultural input and produce markets – market linkages were insufficient and short-lived. The 2016 COSOP objectives are reportedly on track. Climate change is prominently placed within the first strategic objectives, while nutrition is also mainstreamed in all projects. Good progress has been made in promoting GAPS. Progress was also noted on access to rural financial services, with good outreach to

poor farmers, although the demand for credit and asset acquisition has not yet been met.

15. **Efficiency.** There were serious delays during the start-up of all projects, mainly due to difficulties in setting up the required institutional arrangements. The average effectiveness gap for the start-up of projects in the Malawi portfolio was longer than the East and Southern Africa (ESA) subregional and overall IFAD averages during the CSPE period. There were serious delays from approval to effectiveness at an average of 11 months, double that of the ESA subregion, indicating a need for the Government of Malawi to speed up the approval process. The effectiveness gap has been gradually reduced over time, but the long delays during start-up have affected both closed and ongoing projects.
16. Cost-effectiveness was eroded due to the long delays highlighted above. High inflation rates also increased the cost per beneficiary. Infrastructure subprojects were noted for their low cost-effectiveness. This includes slow progress in the planning, design and approval of infrastructure, which was the main reason why most investments were only realized during the second half of implementation. The implementation of infrastructure subprojects was usually delegated to districts, which often did not have the capacity to follow the procurement cycle.
17. IFAD has invested heavily in project management and institutions in Malawi. The budgets for project management accounted for 14 per cent of total project costs on average, which is 2 per cent higher than the average budget for project management in the ESA region. The country programme's investments in capacity-building did not however close the persistent capacity gaps. Turnover of staff was high, particularly at the district level. Making use of independent project management units with externally recruited staff was an effective way to overcome these capacity gaps in the short term, as was the engagement of service providers.
18. **Impact.** Poverty and food insecurity are deep-rooted and widespread in the districts targeted by IFAD's country programme. Projects have achieved significant increases in productivity through the provision of technology, inputs and irrigation. In most cases, these gains were eroded soon after project completion. The projects showed limited achievements in diversifying production systems and securing reliable market access for smallholder farmers. Food remains the most important expenditure item. In the past, the focus on maize and the lack of dietary diversity did not help to improve the nutrition situation. Integration of livestock into production systems had a positive effect on food security and nutrition. Recent projects have enhanced attention to diversification and nutrition.
19. The country programme has invested in capacities and institutions. Community-level organizations supported by the project were often not able to continue their activities after project closure. Farmers groups were not formalized and empowered to engage with other value chain actors, in particular vendors, traders and processors. Only very few water user associations (WUAs) were formally registered as independent legal entities. These groups will require strengthening before they are able to manage the infrastructure provided.
20. **Gender.** The IFAD portfolio in Malawi has actively promoted gender equality and women's empowerment, encouraging participation by women in all activities and promoting household methodologies to address root causes of inequalities and power imbalances. Positive contributions were noted particularly in: (i) women's participation in country programme activities; (ii) an increased focus on addressing economic challenges of women-headed households; and (iii) the implementation of household methodologies with the potential for supporting women's equality and empowerment in decision-making. Changes in gender division of labour and women's workloads were not yet visible. Reportedly, household methodologies have attempted to close some gender gaps at the household level and contributed to some level of women's empowerment, especially in their capacity to influence decisions

regarding farming and the household. However, the approach still needs to be rolled out throughout the ongoing projects.

21. **Sustainability.** The country programme invested heavily in institution-building. Farmers groups and WUAs were usually very active as long as the projects continued. However, once socioeconomic benefits started to erode, many of the local organizations failed to continue to operate. Sustainability has met with institutional and financial challenges, including insufficient funds and capacities at decentralized levels, low government ownership and insufficient integration of project activities in the Government's annual work plans and budgets.

C. Conclusions

22. **Over the evaluation period (2016–2022), the country programme has shown continuity and progression.** Following the unsatisfactory performance under the COSOP 2010_2015, the country programme has significantly enhanced its relevance and delivery of results overall. While the programme maintained its thematic focus, it has integrated lessons from the past. Areas of thematic focus were sharpened – more importantly with an enhanced focus on environment and natural resource management and climate change adaptation – and mainstreaming themes such as nutrition and gender were consistently followed up. The programme has enlarged collaboration with non-government service providers, and good outreach to an increasing number of poor women and men was observed.
23. **Larger and more complex projects have supported a multitude of initiatives and practices.** IFAD's financial allocations have almost doubled since 2016. Projects became larger and included an increasing number of stakeholders and service providers to deliver the expected results. The country programme supported a large number of initiatives, innovations, pilots and practices – many of them supported by additional grants. Each project has promoted a broad range of interventions and activities, with similar activities in different projects. Activities delivered by different projects and service providers were often not well coordinated or connected on the ground.
24. **The programme initiated many positive practices that would need to be sustained and scaled up.** This included the graduation approach targeting ultra-poor people and the partnerships with microfinance institutions (MFIs) under the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE); the sustainable farming practices promoted under the Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP), SAPP and the Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE); and community seed production and farm radio under the Rural Livelihoods Economic Enhancement Programme (RLEEP). The country programme has shared and continued some of these practices, but for most of them the levels of adoption and scale are not well documented. In many cases, practices were adopted but not continued or scaled up.
25. **The programme had good pro-poor and gender focus but has yet to demonstrate transformative results.** Strategies for targeting poverty have not been consistent throughout the period, but they have improved in recent projects, namely through pilots on ultra-poor graduation (FARMSE), precise targeting (SAPP) and the choice of more pro-poor value chains (TRADE). The programme has yet to assess whether these strategies were sufficient to transform the livelihoods of very poor smallholder farmers. The programme also reached high proportions of women. Household methodologies were mainstreamed as a transformative approach, but projects are yet to overcome women's high workloads, traditional norms and gender division of labour. While women are most active in savings groups, they still experience difficulties accessing formal financial services and using digital financial services. Female farmers are more involved in food production and less remunerative value chains.
26. **Smallholder farmers are facing multiple challenges and trade-offs, which the country programme has yet to address in a comprehensive manner.**

Trade-offs exist between smallholders' concerns about food self-sufficiency and the transition to market production. Past operations focused mainly on maize monocropping, neglecting market access and environmental and climate resilience. Recent operations tried to address the multiple challenges through complementary designs, but in practice overlaps and synergies were too few to make a step change. Additional climate change finance will be required to mainstream sustainable agricultural practices. The programme has yet to address the issue of tenure insecurity, which may undermine the durability of the environmental benefits. Community organizations were successfully linked with financial service providers, but the issue of MFI liquidity needs to be resolved.

27. **The Government's insufficient engagement and capacities in knowledge management, including M&E, also limited the scaling up of successful practices.** Until now, innovation, continuation and roll-out were entirely dependent on IFAD-financed loans and grants. The programme has invested heavily in M&E. Common weaknesses in M&E included insufficient focus on programme outcomes and impact indicators; insufficient feedback on implementation quality and performance of service providers; and insufficient use of innovative M&E tools financed through grants. In order to support learning from success and failure, the systems should have tracked the extent to which practices were adopted or discontinued.
28. **Institutional capacities were the main bottleneck undermining the programme's efficiency and effectiveness.** The programme used different institutional arrangements, in line with what was required for effective implementation. Overall, these arrangements worked for the purpose for which they were set up; but all of them had capacity challenges and costs attached. Common issues included low efficiency due to long delays during start-up, insufficient capacities for management and coordination, and low cost-effectiveness, in particular, in the case of infrastructure investments. Decentralized implementation approaches have met clear limitations with regard to impact, sustainability and scaling up, due to limited capacities and funds at district levels largely caused by stalled government-led decentralization during both COSOP periods.
29. **Food security and climate change resilience are the paramount challenges that the country programme has to address more effectively.** To this end, IFAD would have to further enhance its support to sustainable and diversified production systems. On-farm irrigation is important for farmers to adapt to irregular rainfall. IFAD would need to collaborate with international development partners to ensure effective and efficient provision of irrigation infrastructure and take decisive steps to resolve the ongoing implementation challenges, through realistic implementation planning and effective oversight.

D. Recommendations

30. **As part of its ongoing decentralization, IFAD will establish a stronger country presence.** For the new COSOP, this will open up opportunities for enhanced engagement with the Government of Malawi, development partners and other stakeholders and address performance issues through continuous follow-up with implementing partners. During the preparation of the new COSOP, IFAD needs to engage with its partners to develop concrete strategies that would address the persistent performance bottlenecks and enhance the results, sustainability and impact of its operations in the country.
31. **Recommendation 1. Adopt an explicit approach to addressing chronic food insecurity and malnutrition through diversified and sustainable production system as a COSOP objective.** The programme should pursue this objective through a multi-pronged approach: policy engagement, partnerships and practices on the ground. Malawi's Food Systems Dialogue (2021) outlines priorities and pathways for partners to align their support. IFAD should work with other Rome-based agencies to identify bottlenecks that prevent wider adoption of diversified production systems. The programme would need to develop methodologies to

understand the reasons behind the partial adoption or discontinuation of sustainable agricultural practices and address them effectively to ensure long-term positive impact. At the implementation level, the programme should apply a two-track approach: supporting cash crops and market access for small-scale commercial farmers and diversified nutritious food production for subsistence-oriented farmers. This would require a differentiated targeting approach, similar to the one developed for SAPP. The role of community-level organizations and farmers networks should be further strengthened, to support them in their key role as multipliers and social safety mechanisms. Digital technologies (mobile networks and apps) could enable farmers to connect with information and institutions to decrease uncertainty and mitigate risk for food-insecure farmers.

32. **Recommendation 2: Develop a strategic approach for enhancing the impact and scale of successful practices and initiatives.** The new COSOP should include a clear strategy on how it will enhance the impact of successful practices, support a coherent roll-out across districts and use the lessons learned to enhance the effectiveness and impact of upcoming initiatives and operations. The individual projects should provide fewer mechanisms of support but implement them well, supported by strong monitoring. The CSPE provides the following sub-recommendations that should guide the strategy:
- (a) Continue rolling out good practices and successful initiatives, but enhance support of institutional mechanisms for sustainability and scaling up.
 - (b) Deepen promising approaches and practices that are not yet consistently implemented and link them to coherent approaches.
 - (c) Review the performance of new initiatives on an ongoing basis and identify solutions to swiftly address bottlenecks.
 - (d) Step up efforts to monitor the adoption and scale of practices by loans and grants, and track results as part of a comprehensive approach to knowledge management at the country programme level.
33. **Recommendation 3: Address implementation bottlenecks through targeting specific capacity constraints at various levels.** The COSOP should include concrete solutions to address capacity gaps within specific institutional set-ups. Project coordination units will require a preparatory phase for the recruitment of external project staff. Project offices within the Government will need to develop incentives to attract and retain project management staff. District-level coordination will require a donor-harmonized approach. Infrastructure investments will require a preparatory phase, to allow time for government approval and technical design.

Agreement at Completion Point

A. Introduction

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) undertook a country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) in Malawi in 2021. This CSPE was the first country-level evaluation conducted in Malawi; it covered the period from 2011 to 2021.
2. The **main objectives of the CSPE** were: (i) to assess the results and performance of the ongoing COSOP 2016-2022; and (ii) to generate findings, conclusions and recommendations for the next COSOP in 2022. The evaluation assessed the overall strategy pursued, implicit and explicit, and explored the synergies and interlinkages between different elements of the country strategy and programme, the extent to which the lending and non-lending portfolio (including grants) contributed to the achievement of the strategy, and the role played by the Government and IFAD.
3. This **Agreement at Completion Point (ACP)** contains recommendations based on the evaluation findings and conclusions presented in the CSPE report, as well as proposed follow-up actions as agreed by IFAD and the Government. The signed ACP is an integral part of the CSPE report in which the evaluation findings are presented in detail, and will be submitted to the IFAD Executive Board as an annex to the new country strategic opportunities programme for Malawi. The implementation of the recommendations agreed upon will be tracked through the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions, which is presented to the IFAD Executive Board on an annual basis by the Fund's Management.

B. Recommendations and proposed follow-up actions

4. **Recommendation 1: Adopt an explicit approach to addressing chronic food insecurity and malnutrition through diversified and sustainable production system as COSOP objective.**
5. The programme would need to pursue this objective through a multi-pronged approach: policy engagement, partnerships and practices on the ground. Malawi's Food Systems Dialogue outlines priorities and pathways for partners to align their support.¹ IFAD should work with the RBAs identifying bottlenecks that prevent wider adoption of diversified production systems. The programme would need to develop methodologies to understand the reasons behind the partial adoption or discontinuation of sustainable agricultural practices and address them effectively to ensure the long-term positive impacts. At implementation level, the programme should apply a two-track approach, supporting cash crops and market access for small-scale commercial farmers and diversified nutritious food production for subsistence-oriented farmers. This would require a differentiated targeting approach, similar to the one developed for SAPP. The role of community-level organisations and farmers networks should be further strengthened, to support them in their key role as multipliers and social safety mechanisms. Digital technologies (mobile networks and apps) may enable farmers to connect with information and institutions that can decrease uncertainty and mitigate risk for food insecure farmers.

¹ <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/National-Pathway-Report-Malawi.pdf>

Proposed Follow-up: Agreed. IFAD and the Government of Malawi to collaborate on addressing the bottlenecks prevalent in the food production system in Malawi. It is imperative that local and community level structures (which have been strengthened through deliberate interventions) be integral to both the designing as well as implementation of the approaches that will be developed. Eradicating food insecurity is at the centre of Malawi 2063.

Responsible partners: The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Local Government; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs; other relevant line ministries; international cooperating partners (including UN organizations and IFAD).

Timeline: 2022 onward. Government to intensify its interventions in addressing food insecurity in Malawi. This key as outlined in the First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) of Malawi 2063.

6. **Recommendation 2: Develop a strategic approach for enhancing the impact and scale of successful practices and initiatives.**
7. The new COSOP should include a clear strategy on how it will enhance the impact of successful practices, support coherent roll out across districts and use the lessons learned to enhance the effectiveness and impact of upcoming initiatives and operations. The individual projects should provide fewer mechanisms of support, but implement them well, supported by strong monitoring. The CSPE provides the following sub-recommendations that should guide the strategy:
 - (a) **Continue rolling out good practices and successful initiatives, but enhance support of institutional mechanisms for sustainability and scaling up.** Partnerships with national structures such as the value chain platforms (RLEEP/TRADE), the national extension services (SAPP) and platforms and apex institutions (FARMSE) could provide avenues for scaling up. Districts will require direct support in scaling up practices. At district level, the programme should focus on fewer support mechanisms, which are coordinated with other development partners, to promote synergism among their interventions and ensure financial sustainability.
 - (b) **Deepen promising approaches and practices that are not yet consistently implemented and link them into coherent approaches.** This includes themes such as household methodologies and nutrition. The COSOP should include an approach to monitor implementation by different service partners, draw lessons from strengths and weaknesses and support (and monitor) a more consistent rollout of the approaches. The programme should also include measures to reduce the drudgery and demand on women's labour, and more youth specific activities that address youth interests and needs.
 - (c) **Review performance of new initiatives on an ongoing base and identify solutions to address bottlenecks swiftly.** This includes, for example, resolving the issue of MFI liquidity, which is holding up access to finance in FARMSE. Solutions might include more complex and time-consuming instruments, such as a guarantee fund or refinancing facility could address the issue. Other options for consideration could include an apex fund; and/or innovation fund supporting partnering of banks, MFIs and CBFs.
 - (d) **Step up efforts to monitor adoption and scale of practices from loans and grants, and track results as part of a comprehensive approach to knowledge management at country programme level.** IFAD would need to step up its technical assistance, to enhance the performance of the M&E systems (including data quality) and lessons learning from success and failure. In addition, the programme might consider external studies to provide more

sophisticated and unbiased methods for monitoring impact and sustainability of IFAD's interventions. External expertise would be required for climate-related interventions reporting and impact measurement, which should follow international standards (e.g. from IPCC), to enable a more accurate interpretation of the results in projects such as SAPP and PRIDE.

Proposed Follow-up: Agreed. The end of a partner financed project should not mean the end of the intervention(s). Government will explore the feasibility of scaling up the tried and tested good practices to maximise impact. For instance, the livestock pass-on has shown huge impact on rural farmers' livelihoods.

It is also imperative that capacity is built in monitoring and evaluation so that project interventions are thoroughly assessed at both impact and outcome levels. This will help generate findings that are crucial for both sustainability and scale-up purposes.

Responsible partners: The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Local Government; all projects/programmes; international cooperating partners

Timeline: 2022 onward. SAPP is ending in March 2023. It is imperative to start exploring ways of scaling up some of the high-impact Good Agricultural Practices that were implemented under the project; as well as the livestock pass-on.

8. **Recommendation 3: Address implementation bottlenecks through targeting specific capacity constraints at various levels.**

The COSOP should include concrete solutions to address capacity gaps within specific institutional set ups. Specific strategies to address recurrent delays in implementation would include, but not be limited to the following:

- (a) **Project coordination units (PCUs)** will require a preparatory phase for the recruitment of external project staff. The PCU should provide the required management skills, but also specialised staff with the technical skills to support implementation, such as M&E, gender and specialism in relevant areas such as agricultural production systems, value chains, financial services and others. Further expertise would also be needed to link the data provided by financial service providers into a comprehensive reporting system in FARMSE. PCUs also need to be provided with tools for assessing implementation capacities and monitoring their performance of service providers.
- (b) **Project offices in government** will need to develop incentives to attract and retain project management staff. Project offices should include dedicated staff to ensure implementation of cross-cutting issues such as gender, nutrition and climate change.
- (c) **District-level coordination** will require a donor-harmonised approach. In addition the COSOP should identify mechanisms to support the government in the implementation of decentralization, for example through the National Local Government Finance Committee, which has a mandate to coordinate donor-support to decentralisation.
- (d) **Infrastructure investments** will require a preparatory phase, to allow time for government approval and technical design. Furthermore, government and IFAD will need to mobilise the technical expertise required for quality assurance and supervision.

Proposed Follow-up: Agreed. Government of Malawi recognises that successful implementation of projects/programmes largely depends on the project coordination units/project offices. As such, the need to recruit qualified staff cannot be over-

emphasised. Drawing from the experience of PRIDE and TRADE projects, it is therefore important that programming of future interventions should indeed have a preparatory phase for recruitment of external staff. The Government of Malawi commits to offer competitive remuneration packages to project staff to curb turnover. The current harmonized remuneration is being reviewed to align with recent development.

Responsible partners: The Office of the President and Cabinet; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs; the Department of Human Resource Management and Development; all projects/programmes; IFAD.

Timeline: 2022 onward. Government is already looking at remuneration package(s) for project staff in public projects. The current packages became effective in 2018 and therefore it is only right to review the same in light of macro-economic as well as market development.

Signed by:


Nations Msowoya
Acting Director of Debt and Aid
For: SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY
Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs,
Government of Malawi

Date: 09/05/2022




Mr Donal Brown
Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department
International Fund for Agricultural Development

Date: 16.05.2022

Republic of Malawi

Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation

I. Background

A. Introduction

1. In line with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Evaluation Policy, and as approved by the 131st Session of the IFAD Executive Board in December 2020, the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) has undertaken a Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE) in Malawi. This CSPE is the first country-level evaluation conducted in Malawi and will inform the results-based Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) to be prepared in 2022.
2. IFAD began operations in Malawi in 1981. Since then, it has provided US\$350.5 million lending, contributing to a cumulative US\$652.4 million in financing for 14 programmes, four of which are ongoing. The portfolio supports rural poverty reduction and agricultural development by investing in a range of activities and sectors. IFAD's main counterparts in the Government of Malawi are the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Planning, Development and Public Sector Reforms (MEPD), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of the Local Government and Rural Development (see table 1 for further details).

Table 1
Snapshot of IFAD operations in Malawi

First IFAD-funded project	1981
Number of approved loans	14
Ongoing projects	4
Total amount of IFAD lending	US\$350.5 million
Counterpart funding	US\$82.4 million (ratio on IFAD lending:0.24)
Beneficiary contributions	US\$15.6 million (ratio on IFAD lending:0.04)
Co-financing amount (local)	US\$437.3 million (ratio on IFAD lending:0.11)
Co-financing amount (international)	US\$166.6 million (ratio on IFAD lending:0.48)
Total portfolio cost	US\$652.4 million
Lending terms	Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) grant; loans at highly concessional terms
Main co-financier	IDA (US\$121.6 million)
COSOPs	2010–2015; 2016–2022
Country Office	Country Director (A.N. Barros) based in South Africa
Country directors	M. Bradley (8/05–9/06); M. Okongo (9/06–1/12); A. Benhammouche (1/12–12/14); T. Rath (1/15–2/17); S. Jatta (2/17–6/17); A. Benhammouche (6/17–5/18); A. Barros (5/18–04/21)

Source: CSPE.

B. Objectives, scope and methodology

3. **Objectives.** The main objectives of the CSPE are: (i) to assess the results and performance of the ongoing COSOP 2016–2022; and (ii) to generate findings, conclusions and recommendations for the next COSOP in 2022.
4. **Scope.** This is the first IOE CSPE in Malawi. The evaluation assessed the overall strategy pursued (implicit and explicit) and explored the synergies and interlinkages between different elements of the country strategy and programme, the extent to which the lending and non-lending portfolio (including grants) contributed to the achievement of the strategy, and the role played by the Government and IFAD. The loan projects were assessed using standard IOE evaluation criteria, such as

relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Gender equality and women’s empowerment were also assessed and rated.

5. **The lending portfolio** for the CSPE period (2011_2021) includes seven projects (a synopsis is provided in table 2 below). The assessment of the three closed projects draws on the available evaluations from IFAD’s IOE and the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG).

Table 2
CSPE loan portfolio

<i>Project name</i>	<i>Date of effectiveness</i>	<i>Financial closure</i>	<i>Total programme costs (USD million)</i>	<i>Project status</i>
Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP)	30/08/2004	31/03/2014	16.6	Evaluated. IFAD IOE (2017 PPE)
Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP)	24/05/2006	31/12/2012	52.1	Evaluated. WB IEG (2021)
Rural Livelihoods and Economic Enhancement Programme (RLEEP)	01/10/2009	30/06/2018	29.2	Evaluated. IFAD IOE (2020 PPE)
Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP)	24/01/2012	30/09/2023	72.4	ONGOING
Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)	15/02/2017	30/06/2024	84.0	ONGOING
Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)	15/08/2018	31/12/2025	57.7	ONGOING
Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme (TRADE)	28/07/2020	31/03/2027	125.4	ONGOING

Source: Elaborated from ORMS data.

6. **The grants portfolio** for the CSPE period includes a total of 65 grants with a value of US\$160.2 million. A sample of 17 grants has been selected for a review (see table in annex IV). Priority was given to grants that focus on Malawi or, in case of regional or global grants, less than 10 countries, including Malawi. Furthermore, grants managed by the East and Southern Africa (ESA) division were priorities, followed by the technical divisions, such as the Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division and the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division.¹
7. **Methodology and process.** Based on a thorough desk review, the CSPE produced an approach paper and a theory of change (see annex II). The approach paper presents the evaluation methodology in detail. The theory of change identifies the impact pathways that guided the elaboration of hypotheses and expected results. It also helped define the key questions for each evaluation criterion (see annex III):
- (i) Relevance: Is the IFAD country programme relevant and coherent as contribution to the Government’s approach to reduce poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition?

¹ This was based on the assumption that these divisions are the most engaged in the implementation of the country and regional strategy. The shortlist did not include grants under the International Land Coalition window, and grants focusing on impact assessments (managed by the Research and Impact Assessment Division of IFAD).

- (ii) Effectiveness: Did the IFAD country programme (including lending and non-lending activities) achieve the COSOP objectives at the time of this CSPE?
 - (iii) Efficiency: Were the allocated resources adequate and in line with the COSOP priorities and objectives?
 - (iv) Partner performance: How well did IFAD and Government manage risks related to capacities and fiduciary management?
 - (v) Sustainability: To what extent did the country strategy and programme contribute to long-term institutional, environmental and social sustainability?
8. **The CSPE mission** in September 2021 comprised remote interviews with partner organizations and other stakeholders, virtual meetings with farmer groups, focus group discussions (FGDs) and field visits. Key informant interviews and FGDs involved government representatives at both the national and local levels, IFAD staff and consultants, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutions and private entrepreneurs as well as beneficiaries (see annex IX). The CSPE team held 11 FGDs with a total of 63 participants and 11 virtual meetings with beneficiary groups from nine districts, attended by 128 group members.
 9. Two local consultants conducted a field mission from 31 August to 13 September 2021 (see annex VII); field visits were key to obtain feedback from beneficiaries, verify the assets built and assess the complementarity of benefits from various interventions. A stratified sampling methodology was used to select districts and farmers groups with at least two ongoing projects and groups representing at least 20 per cent of all beneficiaries within a district. The CSPE mission interviewed 43 beneficiary groups, key project staff, local government officials, as well as service providers in seven districts.² In addition, an online stakeholder survey collected feedback from 123 respondents (consultants, project and government staff), commenting on programme design, programme efficiency, institutional agreements, IFAD's role and comparative advantage, sustainability, as well as future areas of focus for IFAD in Malawi (see annex VI).
 10. **Limitations.** The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation prevented international travel. It reduced the scope of site visits and direct engagement with larger groups of beneficiaries. Lack of projects' impact data limited the scope of the analysis. In addition, portfolio M&E data were not of sufficient quality or granularity to allow IOE to make a thorough assessment. Geographic information systems (GIS) data are only available for recent activities. Therefore, the CSPE primarily depended on the findings from previous project evaluations. The Research and Impact Assessment Division (RIA) has prepared an impact study on the Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP) in 2021, which provided some preliminary findings. Qualitative interviews, field visits and an online survey complemented the analysis to the extent possible and allowed triangulation of quantitative and qualitative information.

² Stakeholders interviewed: government officials (24); project staff (79); cooperating partners (9); NGOs (18); private sector (18); and banks/bank agents (22). 515 beneficiaries attended the FGDs during field visits; another 148 were met through virtual FGDs.

II. Country context and IFAD's strategy and operations for the CSPE period

A. Economic and social development

11. Malawi is a small, landlocked country in Southern Africa. The neighbouring countries are Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. Malawi is a low-income country where poverty remains stubbornly high, driven by poor performance of the agricultural sector, high population growth, and limited opportunities in non-farm activities. In the past two decades, the country has experienced relatively fast, but unstable, levels of economic growth, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth averaging 4 per cent between 2010 and 2020 (see figure 2 in annex V).³
12. The **COVID-19 pandemic** has had a heavy impact on the country's economy. The economic growth for 2020 was at a low 1 per cent, down from earlier projections of 4.8 per cent. The expected growth for 2021 is 2.8 per cent, but this will depend on the evolution of the pandemic in the country and the Government's response. The COVID-19 crisis is having a negative impact on poverty, with urban households being the hardest hit. Among others, the pandemic is affecting human capital investment in poorer households, reducing future generational income mobility. Nationally, COVID-19 is having an impact on revenue collection, thus increasing the fiscal deficit, public debt and putting the country at high risk of overall debt distress.⁴
13. **Persistent poverty and food insecurity.** The national poverty rate increased slightly from 50.7 per cent in 2010 to 51.5 per cent in 2016,⁵ although extreme national poverty decreased from 24.5 per cent in 2010/11 to 20.1 in 2016/17. In 2020, 37 per cent of children in Malawi were stunted, showing a slight decrease since 2010. As of 2020, the number of moderately or severely food insecure people was 15.2 million, more than half of the country's population.⁶ There are several factors contributing to malnutrition in the country, including poor diets, overdependence on maize as a staple food and infectious diseases. Limited purchase power, weather-related shocks, and high population density and growth curb the availability and access to food.⁷
14. **Youth.** In 2020, 81 per cent of the population was younger than 35 in Malawi.⁸ The lack of decent job opportunities in rural areas pushes young people to run informal, low-profit businesses, mainly in the farming sector. These businesses have poor value added, due to poor skills, limited access to infrastructure and ICT, constrained access to financial services, scarce market integration and missing support from business organizations.⁹
15. **Gender disparities** are a major obstacle to socio-economic development. Malawi ranks 142nd out of 162 countries in the 2019 Gender Inequality Index.¹⁰ Rural women perform unpaid labour and focus on subsistence crops to meet the food needs of the family. These expectations generate "time poverty," which reduces women's production and productivity.¹¹ Gender-based violence is more widespread in rural than in urban areas.¹² The opportunity cost of these gender disparities is substantial;

³ World Bank Open Data. 2021. Malawi Country Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/malawi>

⁴ World Bank. 2021. Malawi Country Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview#1>

⁵ World Bank Open Data. 2021. Malawi Country Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/malawi>

⁶ FAOSTAT Malawi Country Data. (Calculations on a three-year average over 2017-2019).

⁷ UNICEF 2018. Malawi Nutrition Factsheet.

⁸ Malawi's population is expected to double by 2038 (Source: World Bank Malawi Country Overview- World Bank. 2021. Malawi Country Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview#1>).

⁹ OECD Development Centre. 2018. Youth Well-being Policy Review of Malawi. EU-OECD Youth Inclusion Project.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2019. Human Development Index Malawi.

¹¹ UN Women, UNDP, UNEP. 2018. Factors Driving the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity: Malawi.

¹² OECD Development Centre. 2018. Youth Well-being Policy Review of Malawi. EU-OECD Youth Inclusion Project.

it is estimated that closing the gender gap would result in an increase of US\$100 million in GDP and lift 238,000 Malawians out of poverty every year for 10 years.¹³

16. **Agriculture** is by far the most important sector in the economy, accounting for 40 per cent of GDP and 80 per cent of the foreign exchange earnings; crop production provides 74 per cent of rural incomes. Notwithstanding, the agricultural sector continues to perform below its full potential due to a number of challenges, including: high transport costs; few functional farmer organizations; poor product quality control and inadequate information on markets and prices. Scarce diversification in crop production is a source of vulnerability. Tobacco has long been the main agricultural export, accounting for 55.6 per cent of the country's total exports in 2019.¹⁴ Maize is the main component of the Malawian diet, grown by about 80 per cent of smallholder farmers in predominantly monocropping systems.¹⁵ Agriculture is mainly rainfed and remains highly vulnerable to weather-related disasters.¹⁶ As of 2015, less than 3 per cent of agricultural areas benefitted from engineered irrigation. Irrigation is considered one of the key factors to foster agricultural development. To this end, the Government of Malawi, with funds from several donors, has mobilized substantial investment for irrigation and hydropower projects. Other interventions focus on sustainable soil and water management to address less profitable crops that do not justify the cost of operating and maintaining irrigation infrastructure.¹⁷
17. Lack of tenure security is a growing risk factor for smallholder farmers, which does not seem to be adequately addressed by the current COSOP. A recent reform of the Land Act has the potential to improve tenure security for customary landowners, but the roll-out has been delayed and it will likely continue to be problematic due to newly imposed taxes and the need for decentralized structures to become operative.
18. **Natural disasters.** Erratic rainfalls, higher temperatures and dry spells during the rainy season – now exacerbated by the effects of climate change – limit agricultural productivity.¹⁸ In March 2019, Cyclone Idai affected 17 geographical areas with heavy rains and strong winds, affecting an estimated 975,588 people. The socio-economic impact of climate-induced shocks is highest in the poorest districts.¹⁹
19. **Development assistance.** Malawi relies heavily on external aid. Both the commitments of the official development assistance and the remittances inflows have generally increased since 2006. Between 2010 and 2019, the country has received a total of US\$11.3 billion (current US\$) from official donors (further details on official development assistance and remittances in figure 1 in annex V).

B. Agriculture and rural development policies

20. The Government of Malawi has designed and implemented several policies and development frameworks to improve the performance of the agricultural sector. The **Malawi Growth and Development Strategy** (MGDS) is a series of five-year plans and the country's overarching medium-term development tool. The MGDS II (for the period 2012–2016) emphasized six priority areas: (i) agriculture and food security; (ii) irrigation and water development; (iii) transport infrastructure development; (iv) energy generation and supply; (v) integrated rural development; and (vi) prevention and management of nutrition disorders, and HIV/AIDS.
21. Under this framework, the **Agriculture Sector-wide Approach** (ASWAp) sets the priority investments in agriculture from 2011 to 2016. The main goal of ASWAp was

¹³ UN Women, World Bank, UNEP, UNDP. 2015. The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda.

¹⁴ Observatory of Economic Complexity. 2019. Malawi Country Overview. <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/mwi>

¹⁵ FAO. 2015a. Malawi country fact sheet on food and agriculture policy trends. Food and Agriculture Policy Decision Analysis.

¹⁶ FAO. 2015b. National Investment Profile. Water for Agriculture and Energy: Malawi.

¹⁷ USAID. 2018. Sustaining poverty escapes in Malawi.

¹⁸ USAID. 2017. Climate change risk profile Malawi.

¹⁹ World Bank. 2019. Malawi Economic Monitor: Charting a New Economic Course.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/06/25/malawi-economic-monitor-charting-a-new-economic-course>

to increase agricultural productivity and to make Malawi a hunger-free nation, enabling people to access nutritious foods and increase the contribution of agro-processing to economic growth.²⁰ The ASWAp included the Farms Input Subsidies Programme and the Green Belt Initiative.²¹

22. The current MGDS III (2017–2022), “Building a Productive, Competitive and Resilient Nation,” focuses on education, energy, agriculture, health and tourism. Achieving food and nutrition security is still a high priority and a prerequisite for poverty reduction. However, MGDS III presents a shift from social consumption to sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development.²² Also the **National Agricultural Policy** (2016–2021) sought to promote growth, by supporting the transition from subsistence farming to non-traditional, high-value agricultural value chains.²³ The National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) is the policy’s investment framework and ensures coherence with other sectorial policies and investment plans. The Malawi 2063 Vision, launched in January 2021, further supports this policy vision, aiming to transform the country into an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper-middle-income country. For the agriculture sector, the goal is to foster productivity and commercialization, and supply raw materials for industrial processing.²⁴
23. The **Farms Input Subsidies Programme** has been the flagship public programme for agriculture from 2005 to 2020, with a total yearly budget that grew from MK4.5 billion (US\$5.7 million) in 2005/2006 to MK35.5 billion (US\$44.9 million) in 2019 to 2020.²⁵ It mainly supported maize production, by supplying eligible households with vouchers to purchase subsidized inputs. The programme targeted smallholder farmers who owned land and were legitimate residents of their villages; as a result, more vulnerable community members, such as female-headed and poorer households, were less likely to benefit from the programme.²⁶ After the extent of the programme’s impact was repeatedly questioned, in 2020 it was replaced by the Affordable Input Programme, which is set to benefit 3.6 million farming households – improving food security and reducing poverty, implementing similar measures to its predecessor.²⁷
24. **The public expenditure in support of food and agriculture** has decreased for several years until very recently. In 2018, the Government allocated close to 10 per cent of its development budget to agriculture (MK78 billion; US\$98 million), in line with the commitment under the Comprehensive Agriculture Development Plan and Maputo Declaration, but the majority of this budget (53 per cent) was allocated to the Farms Input Subsidies Programme, which dominated agriculture investments without making significant contributions to food and nutritional security.²⁸ The Government has recently increased the budget allocation to agriculture, allocating MK167 billion (US\$211 million) to the agricultural sector for 2019–2020 and MK354.8 billion (US\$448 million) for 2020–2021 for wages and salaries, maize purchases, the Affordable Input Programme and other development projects, representing 16 per cent of the total budget.²⁹
25. The **National Resilience Strategy** (for the period 2018–2030) is a multi-sectoral strategy, aligned with the NAIP, that was developed to address the increasing

²⁰ MoA. 2011. Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp).

²¹ FAO. 2015a. Malawi country fact sheet on food and agriculture policy trends. Food and Agriculture Policy Decision Analysis.

²² UN Malawi. 2019. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III 2017-2022.

²³ Government of Malawi. 2016. National Agriculture Policy.

²⁴ NPC. 2021. ANNUAL REPORT 2021. Malawi 2063 Vision.

²⁵ Gladys Nthenda. 2019. Highlights of the K1.7 trillion 2019/20 Budget. Online article (9/9/2019) available at <https://www.kulinji.com/article/news/2019/highlights-k17-trillion-201920-budget>

²⁶ IFPRI. 2011. The impacts of agricultural input subsidies in Malawi.

²⁷ IFPRI. 2020. OP-ED: How to make the AIP more cost effective.

²⁸ UNDP. 2018. Malawi: Brief on the budget statement (financial year 2018-2019).

²⁹ Sylvester Kumwenda and Lilly Kampani. 2020. Malawi: K 2.2 Trillion 2020/2021 National Budget Presented. Online article (12/9/2020) available at <https://allafrica.com/stories/202009140107.html>

frequency of extreme weather events linked to climate change and variability. Under Pillar 1, the strategy identifies the priority areas for Resilient Agricultural Growth.³⁰ The **National Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy 2018–2022** seeks to realign the national nutrition priorities with the national development agenda and strengthen programming accordingly. In the agricultural sector, the policy identifies high dependence on subsistence and rainfed agriculture, poverty, limited crop diversification, and poor disaster-risk management as the main challenges to address.³¹

C. IFAD’s evolving strategy

26. During the period covered by the CSPE COSOPs were implemented: COSOP 2010–2015 and COSOP 2016–2022 (illustrated in table 3 below).
27. The **COSOP 2010–2015** sets reducing poverty and expanding economic opportunities for the rural population as the overarching goals of IFAD assistance to Malawi. It sought two strategic objectives (SO): (i) improve access for the poor to appropriate technology and services for sustainable natural resource management; and (ii) improve access to sustainable agricultural input and produce markets. The first SO focused on intensifying productivity through better agricultural practices and support to small- and medium-scale irrigation systems and water management. The second sought to support the transition from subsistence to small-scale commercial farming through larger agricultural surpluses and value added, access to financial services and availability of commercial agricultural inputs.

Table 3
COSOPs 2010–2015 and 2016–2022

	COSOP 2010–2015	COSOP 2016–2022
Strategic objectives	<p>SO1: appropriate technology and services for sustainable natural resource management; increased and sustainable productivity through improved management of land and water resources.</p> <p>SO2: sustainable agricultural input and produce markets; transition from subsistence farming to small-scale commercial farming built around public-private partnerships with agribusiness enterprises</p>	<p>SO1: Resilience to natural shocks and enhance food and nutrition security; reduce vulnerability to weather extremes and natural disasters. Investments in: (i) climate-proof infrastructure, including irrigation and soil and water conservation, and (ii) on-farm technology.</p> <p>SO2: Access to remunerative markets and services; benefit from agricultural commodity markets; improved access to rural financial, market and business development services; business opportunities for smallholder farmers; very poor households to benefit from the Graduation Approach.</p> <p>Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) strategic objective: promote an integrated catchment restoration and management approach in the future country programme – to ensure priorities in environmental sustainability, rural social equity and climate adaptation/mitigation are effectively integrated into the strategic objectives of the forthcoming RB-COSOP.</p>
Collaborations and co-financing	<p>Key government partners: Ministry of the Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).</p> <p>Cofinancing of IRLADP with WB.</p>	<p>Key government partners: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA); Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD); Ministry of the Local Government and Rural Development.</p>

Source: COSOP documents.

28. The **COSOP 2016–2022**, approved in December 2016, strongly focuses on supporting resilience and has an explicit reference to climate change and nutrition as mainstreaming themes. Its first strategic objective (SO): “Smallholder households become resilient to natural shocks and enhance food and nutrition security” is meant to be achieved through climate-proof infrastructure, such as irrigation and soil and

³⁰ Government of Malawi. National Resilience Strategy (2018 – 2030). Breaking the Cycle of Food Insecurity in Malawi.

³¹ Government of Malawi Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS. 2018. National Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy 2018–2022.

water conservation, and climate-smart, nutrition-sensitive agriculture. The second SO: "Smallholder households access remunerative markets and services" seeks to enable smallholder farmers to benefit from agricultural commodity markets by supporting improved access to rural financial, market and business development services.

D. Portfolio

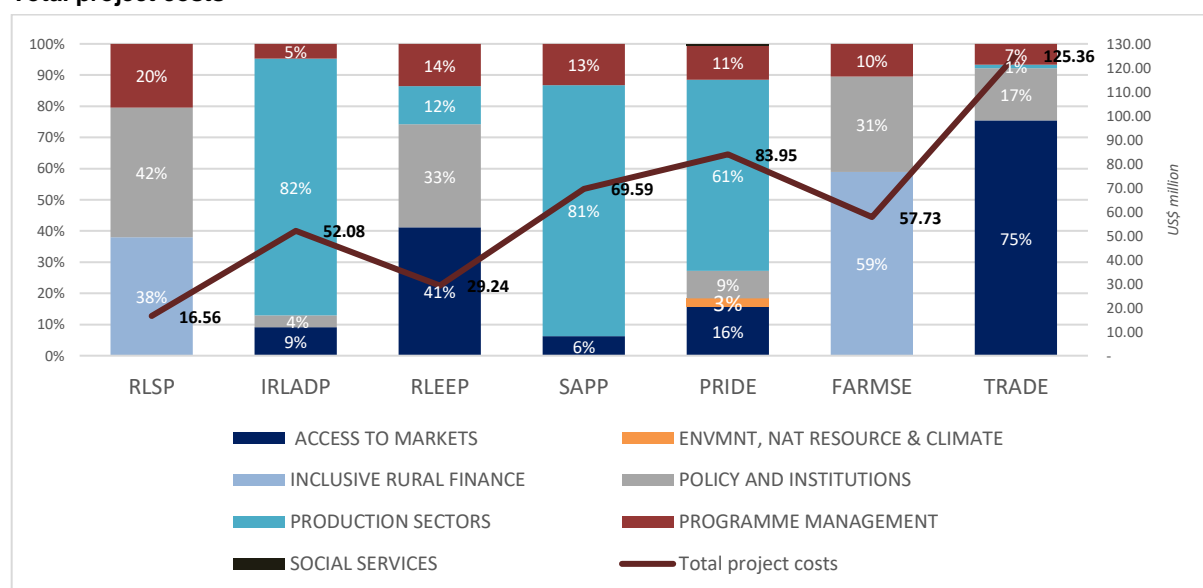
29. **IFAD's Performance-Based Allocations** for Malawi have doubled over the evaluation period, from an annual allocation of US\$13.3 million in 2013 to US\$28 million in 2020. This has led to a significant increase in the size of the lending portfolio and the size of individual programmes (see figure 4 in annex V).
30. **Loan portfolio.** Seven projects were implemented between 2011 and 2021, for a total portfolio financing of US\$437.3 million; of these, IFAD funded a total of US\$271.6 million and the Government's counterpart contribution was US\$49.5 million (see annex IV for details on financing terms). Beneficiaries contributed US\$22.8 million and domestic financiers contributed US\$22.2 million. International financial institutions contributed the remaining US\$71.2 million (see figure 6 in annex V). Table 4, below, highlights the seven projects' areas of intervention and main activities.

Table 4
Loan portfolio and main areas of intervention

<i>Project name</i>	<i>Start-End date</i>	<i>Total project costs (USD million)</i>	<i>Project description</i>
Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP)	2004–2014	16.6	Sustainable agricultural production and NRM technologies; Financial support for farm and off-farm investments; Infrastructure development; Capacity building for individuals and community organizations.
Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP)	2006–2012	52.1	Cofinanced with the World Bank; Irrigation farming (infrastructure; institutional capacity building).
Rural Livelihoods and Economic Enhancement Programme (RLEEP)	2009–2018	29.2	Cofinanced by OPEC Fund for International Development and Royal Tropical Institute of Netherlands; Development of value chains; Agriculture Commercialisation Fund grants facilitation; VC training/capacity-building; VC infrastructure.
Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP)	2012–2023	72.4	Widespread adoption of simple/affordable Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs); Adaptive research.
Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)	2017–2024	84.0	Irrigation development and catchment management; Support water user associations (WUAs); Facilitate GAPs adoption and link farmers to markets.
Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)	2018–2025	57.7	Ultra-poor graduation model development and scaling up; community-based Finance organizations' support; Innovation and outreach facility; Partnerships, knowledge generation, and policy support.
Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme (TRADE)	2020–2027	125.4	Cofinanced by OPEC Fund for International Development; VC commercialization; Producer/public/private partnerships (4 Ps); Capacity building, policies and regulatory support; Infrastructure development.

31. Since 2011, the largest investments have been in production sectors (36 per cent), with a focus on crops (19 per cent) and irrigation (17 per cent). Other large sectors of investment include business development (18 per cent), policy and institutions (15 per cent) and inclusive rural finance (9 per cent) (see figure 5 in annex V). While project investments became more focused on subsectors, their overall budget has sharply increased: PRIDE (irrigation development, US\$84 million), FARMSE (rural finance, US\$57.7 million) and TRADE (value chain and business development, US\$125.4 million). Not only the nature of the projects, but also the priority areas of focus have changed, with access to markets and access to rural financial services absorbing a large amount of funding (75 per cent and 59 per cent respectively in TRADE and FARMSE). Figure 1, below, illustrates the funding size and composition in the seven programmes evaluated.

Figure 1
Total project costs



Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data.

32. **Grant portfolio.** A large number of IFAD-funded grants were implemented in Malawi between 2011 and 2021. The grants portfolio during this period includes a total of 65 grants with a value of US\$160.2 million. Of this amount, US\$51.3 million were financed by IFAD, while US\$108.8 million were cofinanced by other partners such as the European Commission, research centres and national development agencies. Cofinancing was particularly relevant for the 34 global and regional large grants (covering US\$70.9 million out of US\$114.2 million) and the six Global Environment Facility (GEF) grants (covering US\$30.4 million). Twelve global and regional small grants were, instead, primarily financed with IFAD resources for a total amount of US\$5.6 million out of US\$6.7 million of total financing. Only one grant was funded under the country specific window (see table 5 below). The main thematic areas addressed by grants include resilience, food security, nutrition, market access, gender equality and women’s empowerment, financial services, producers’ groups, policy dialogue, agricultural technologies and knowledge management.

Table 5
Grants financing (2010–2020)

Window*	Number of grants	Sum of IFAD funds (USD)	Cofinancing (USD)	Total (USD)	%
CONTRIB	2	300 000	5 503 000	5 803 000	3.62%
CSPC	1	0	209 450	209 450	0.13%
GEF	6	0	30 417 339	30 417 339	18.98%
GLRG	48	51 070 100	72 124 198	123 194 298	76.89%
GR-ARFD	2	2 200 000	0	2 200 000	1.37%
GR-Large	34	43 305 100	70 937 708	114 242 808	71.30%
GR-Small	12	5 565 000	1 186 490	6 751 490	4.21%
ILC	8	0	597 137	597 137	0.37%
Grand Total	65	51 370 100	108 851 124	160 221 224	100.00%

* CONTRIB: global; CSPC: Country Specific; GEF: Global Environment Facility; GLRG: global and regional; ARFD: Agricultural Research for Development; ILC: International Land Coalition.
Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data.

33. In addition, PRIDE includes an ASAP trust fund (US\$7 million). The programme also mobilized grant funding worth US\$685,150 from the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF).

Key points

- Poverty and food security remain stubbornly high in Malawi, driven by poor performance of the agricultural sector, volatile economic growth, high population growth, and limited opportunities in non-farm activities for youth. Gender disparities are a major obstacle to socio-economic development.
- Agriculture is by far the most important sector in the economy, but it continues to perform below its full potential due to several challenges. Limited use of irrigation is a major constraint to land productivity.
- The Government has only recently started to allocate more funds to food and agriculture. The goal the Malawi 2063 Vision sets for the agricultural sector is to foster productivity and commercialization and supply raw materials for industrial processing, in view of a shift from social consumption to economic growth and infrastructure development.
- Between 2011 and 2021, IFAD implemented seven projects (for a total portfolio financing of US\$437.3 million) and funded 65 grants (with a grant portfolio value of US\$160.2 million).
- The size of IFAD lending portfolio in Malawi has significantly increased during the last 10 years. Both the size and the nature of projects have changed, with large budgets allocated to monothematic programmes.

III. Performance and rural poverty impact of the country strategy and programme

A. Relevance

Alignment with national policies and strategies

34. The objectives and thematic threads of the two COSOPs are broadly aligned with the Government's major development policies and strategies. IFAD's support to Malawi focuses on sustainably reducing the high level of rural poverty, as reflected by the COSOPs' strategic objectives and by the ongoing projects, which consistently follow up the closed ones across different sectoral priorities.
35. **Increased emphasis on agricultural commercialization** in agricultural policies is reflected in the shift of focus in the COSOP since 2016. The current COSOP was aligned to the 2016–2021 National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and the related NAIP, which place emphasis on farmer-led agricultural transformation and commercialization, and to the National Irrigation Policy (2016).
36. This shift in government policies has led IFAD to modify its approach to rural poverty. While COSOP 2010–2015 stipulated a more direct, explicit focus on poverty reduction, the current COSOP aims to reduce rural poverty through the transformation of smallholder agriculture by linking improved service delivery and access to markets. The COSOP 2016–2022 assumes that successful delivery of benefits will trickle down to the very poor: *"Investment and non-project activities will focus on economically active poor rural people while creating spin-off for vulnerable, food-deficit households."* The approach is evident based on progressively larger budgets being allocated to irrigation for cash crop production (PRIDE), access to financial services (FARMSE) and value chain development (RLEEP, TRADE). However, **considering the high and sustained rates of poverty and extreme poverty, it is questionable if the "spin-off effects" from market-oriented approaches will be sufficient to significantly improve the livelihoods of very poor and food-insecure households.**
37. **Increased focus on resilience** is reflected in the National Resilience Strategy (2018–2030) and in the recent Malawi 2063 Vision. The current COSOP includes a Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) Study, which sets an additional objective to guide the strategic orientation of the new country programme: *Promote an integrated catchment restoration and management approach in order to ensure that priorities in environmental sustainability, rural social equity and climate adaptation/mitigation are effectively integrated into COSOP strategic objectives.*³²
38. **Loan resources allocated for environment and natural resources management (ENRM) and climate change were largely inadequate.** SAPP has supported this objective by facilitating the dissemination and adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) which, among other things, aim to improve soil health through integrated packages of improved soil and water management.³³ PRIDE has also supported this objective through irrigated and rainfed agriculture. It also addresses water catchment and soil management, supported by the grant "Enhancing the Resilience of Agro-ecological Systems Project" (ERASP). These measures are important not just for sustaining the irrigation infrastructure but also for the ecosystem, but they were completely disregarded by IRLADP. In addition, there were two grant-funded projects that provided important support to PRIDE and

³² To this end, the SECAP Study suggests to support a transition from traditional sectoral project approaches (i.e. agriculture, irrigation, access to markets/financial services) to a holistic landscape approach; it emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming social, environmental and climate change measures in poverty reduction strategies; and it encourages the adoption of community-driven and participatory approaches in catchment / landscape management.

³³ SAPP Programme Design Report, p.13, November 2011.

SAPP adaptation targets, but they represent a small proportion of the overall grant portfolio.³⁴

39. **Increased focus on nutrition** under the second COSOP is aligned with the National Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy (2018–2022). Both PRIDE and SAPP included a strategy on mainstreaming nutrition in their respective project design reports. SAPP, in particular, has carried out extensive nutrition-sensitive activities such as trainings and cooking demonstrations, promotion of nutritional foods and crops diversification into nutrient-rich varieties, and promotion of small livestock and goat pass-on packages. In addition, the country programme includes one grant managed by McGill University specifically addressing nutrition. The grant supported retrofitting of nutrition to ongoing projects such as RLEEP, and was successful in reorienting the focus of concerned projects towards nutrition-sensitive interventions. Nutrition was broadly integrated into recent projects that benefited nutrition-sensitive social groups. In 2021, FARMSE received grant financing (with US\$435,062) from NORAD targeting 8,030 ultra-poor households in Balaka, Deza and Machinga. The grant will support nutrition-sensitive activities implemented by service providers (Oxfam, World Relief) under the FARMSE project. Anecdotal evidence from CSPE field visits suggests that nutrition demonstrations have benefited smallholders under different projects.
40. **Focus on gender** is aligned with the National Gender Policy (2015), whose aim is to reduce gender inequalities and enhance participation of women, men, girls and boys in equitable socio-economic development.³⁵ IFAD's focus on gender is highly relevant to the need of addressing different dimensions of inequality in agriculture and food security, as highlighted by the Malawi Country Gender Profile: unequal workloads between men and women; unequal control of productive assets; limited participation of women in household and community decision-making; lower literacy rates (57 per cent for women versus 74 per cent for men); lower access to opportunities and services; and women as the prime victims of gender-based violence.³⁶
41. **Emphasis on youth participation.** Both COSOPs respond to the priorities of the NAP and the National Export Strategy 2013–2018. Youth-targeted interventions include the promotion of off-farm work, training, financial services and agro-processing and services, with the aim to reduce youth unemployment (as high as 40 per cent), poor skills and low literacy rates.
42. **Addressing smallholder priorities.** The country programme has been comprehensive and consistent in addressing key issues faced by smallholder farmers in Malawi. Issues such as high vulnerability, low productivity and food insecurity as a result of unsustainable land use and monocropping cultures (maize) were addressed in various ways, including through technology (e.g. double-roll planting in legumes; GAPs; improved cultivars and improved livestock breeds) and irrigation development, and promotion of legumes under SAPP to contribute to both crop and dietary diversity, and capacity building. Projects were designed in complementary manners, to support the transition to commercial agriculture, for example by strengthening access to markets and commercialization through value chain approach supported by infrastructure development and governance (see table 3 in annex V). However, the actual geographic overlaps between projects' coverage,³⁷ were too few to realize the anticipated complementarities and synergies (see section III.B. Coherence).

³⁴ Enhancing the Resilience of Agro-Ecological Systems and Understanding the Adoption and Application of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa (follow up of the Programme for Facilitating the Adoption of Conservation Agriculture by Resource Poor Smallholder Farmers in Southern Africa).

³⁵ Republic of Malawi. 2015. National Gender Policy.

³⁶ Government of Malawi, African Development Bank, UN Women. 2020. Republic of Malawi Country Gender Profile: Current state of Gender equality and Women Empowerment.

³⁷ Chitipa has had all five programmes IRLSP, RLEEP, SAPP, PRIDE and FARMSE. Lilongwe and Bantyre have had IRLADP, RLEEP, SAPP and FARMSE. Nkatabay has had IRLADP, RLEEP, PRIDE and FARMSE.

Quality of country programme design

43. There is fair **continuity in the thematic focus** and the strategic objectives of COSOP 2010–2015 and COSOP 2016–2022. The closed projects that fell under COSOP 2010–2015 strategic framework focused on key thematic areas such as rural development (RLSP), irrigation and agricultural development (IRLADP) and value chains (RLEEP). The thematic focus was further aligned and tightened under COSOP 2016–2022. It included adaptive research and extension (SAPP), irrigation (PRIDE), access to financial services (FARMSE) and value chains (TRADE). TRADE is building on RLEEP, on explicit request from the Government, to continue the work started on value chain development. Finally, COSOP 2010–2015 provided some support to improving access to rural finance under RLSP. FARMSE responds to the need for an innovative approach to rural finance for smallholders and seeks to overcome the limited access to financial services by supporting the activities of the whole project portfolio transversally.
44. **Focus on IFAD’s mainstreaming themes** has evolved over the period. COSOP 2010–2015 stressed that HIV/AIDS, gender, youth and nutritional issues had to be mainstreamed across both strategic objectives and in all programmes/projects. Climate change was not among the mainstreaming themes. On the other hand, COSOP 2016–2022 puts strong emphasis on climate change and nutrition issues. Youth and gender are less explicit as mainstreaming themes but still extremely relevant. Finally, while tenure security was recognized as an important contribution to resilient livelihoods in the COSOP 2010–2015, and still is, it disappeared from the COSOP 2016–2022.³⁸ There were attempts to retrofit some of the emerging themes to ongoing projects (e.g. nutrition in RLEEP), but implementation has not always been consistent.
45. **Weaknesses in project designs.** Despite the progress made, there were some recurrent shortcomings in the design of infrastructure projects. For instance, the design of IRLADP did not foresee a **preparatory phase** to facilitate the kick-off of preparatory activities. This resulted in a three-year delay in implementation. The same shortcoming was noted for PRIDE (the follow-up programme). The programme has seen a start-up delay of approximately 18 months that led to further delays in developing the irrigation infrastructure and associated land and water governance core activities. There were issues related to land and water governance. Irrigation design, feasibility studies, environmental and social impact assessments and recruitment of service providers required lengthy and complex processes and support both from Government and IFAD.³⁹
46. The programmes implemented during the CSPE period, and especially those designed under COSOP 2016–2022, were **overambitious** in their attempt to introduce innovative practices and partnerships. For instance, some projects had numerous vertical and horizontal partnerships (RLEEP, FARMSE), resulting in difficulties to effectively manage and monitor them – this was exacerbated by weak M&E systems.⁴⁰ Other projects were complex to manage (IRLADP), and required expertise from a range of fields. This often resulted in many pilots and scattered results at the time of completion (RLEEP). Projects that benefitted from time extensions (SAPP) were able to bring these initiatives to fruition; in other cases (RLEEP), premature closure left projects with unfinished or unsustainable results.
47. Another concern is the continued practice of **low target-setting** during design (“under targeting”). While this was intended to improve the quality and depth of

³⁸ For example, a comprehensive assessment of land tenure context and related challenges, in relation to gender and climate change, is present in the PDRs of SAPP and PRIDE, but this analysis does not translate in the allocation of budget or in the planning of activities.

³⁹ The design of PRIDE has been overly ambitious especially in component 1 which deals with irrigation infrastructure and has the bulk of the resources (64 per cent) allocated. This component is also the core of the programme with the other components being mainly supportive or complementary. The feasibility studies revealed that the construction costs of the irrigation infrastructure were much higher than expected, with the results that the programme had to be downsized.

⁴⁰ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

targeting, reality showed that it did not prevent the excessive focus on outreach targets pursued by the service providers. The reported numbers suggest that projects were striving to achieve their targets long before the completion (SAPP and FARMSE). The focus on outreach and the high numbers reported by service providers suggests over-performance, while at the same time it distracts from the actual results achieved. For instance, the beneficiaries of FARMSE's Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) component surpassed the end of project target beneficiaries by 137 per cent just in the second year of implementation (see Effectiveness, section III.C).⁴¹

48. **Design of M&E** has shown persistent weaknesses.⁴² Logical frameworks lacked **Key Performance Indicators at outcome and impact level**; where appropriate indicators were in place, they were not consistently tracked. Logframes did not include baseline values (RLEEP, PRIDE, FARMSE, and SAPP). Baseline studies were implemented only several years into implementation.⁴³ This has made it difficult to track changes over time and ultimately **limited the possibility of assessing impact on poverty and food security** (as highlighted in all three Project Performance Evaluations (PPE) available for closed projects).

Targeting strategies

49. Set in a context of widespread poverty, IFAD interventions in Malawi were successful in targeting the poor. A range of pro-poor and gender-targeting strategies have been used throughout the Malawi Country programme, with variations in scope and depth in individual programmes. Project designs included a range of strategies targeting different poverty groups. However, they were not always implemented as planned, as for example stated by the RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation (PPE) (2020). In the projects working with service providers (RLEEP, FARMSE), the efficacy of targeting also depends on the commitment and capacity of the service provider; this has led to great variation in outreach to poor men and women (see section III.C).
50. **Geographic targeting.** Since 2011, the country programmes have covered all 28 districts in Malawi. Poverty is widespread in the country, and levels of poverty were not the sole criteria for selecting target areas. Rural and agricultural development programmes such as RLSP, SAPP and PRIDE did not specifically target the poorest districts. On the contrary, Nkhata Bay and Chitipa in the northern region, with relatively lower Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), benefited from five out of seven programmes during the last 10 years. Poorer districts such as Mangochi, Neno, Dowa, Mulanje, Mwanza are now targeted by two programmes (FARMSE and TRADE) (see table 2 in annex V).⁴⁴ Levels of food insecurity were also not the decisive factor for geographic targeting. In the case of PRIDE, geographic focus considered the potential of irrigation sites. These include districts with very high shares of food-insecure population, such as Machinga, Chikwawa, Mwanza, Mangochi and Mchinji). Two out of six districts where SAPP works are highly food-insecure, namely Balaka and Chiradzulu.
51. **Social targeting.** The selection of beneficiaries was participatory in consultation with district administrations, community leaders and community members. According to the interviews, participatory rural appraisal methods were quite effective at identifying populations with households categorized as poor within each district. These were classified as female-headed, male-headed and non-adult-headed households, with the latter aimed at reaching youth. Only few projects included specific activities targeting the poorest farmers. In SAPP, vulnerable farmers were targeted through income-generating projects. FARMSE targeted the very poor

⁴¹ Another issue was the confusion between household targets and person targets. In several cases this resulted in overreported outreach figures (e.g. RLEEP, FARMSE).

⁴² IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

⁴³ The RLSP PPE was not availed with baseline or endline reports. The Baseline Report for Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Food Survey among Smallholder Farmers was only ready in 2015, which is six years after RLEEP became effective and three years before project closure – similarly four years after SAPP became effective.

⁴⁴ Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). 2020. Global MPI Country Briefing 2020: Malawi (Sub-Saharan Africa).

through the UPG. TRADE is expected to select more pro-poor value chains for potential impacts on nutrition and climate change.

52. Targeting of women and youth was determined by quotas set at design. Targets for female beneficiaries varied between programmes ranging between 30 per cent in RLEEP's and PRIDE and 55 per cent in TRADE. RLEEP, PRIDE and FARMSE developed targeting strategies to guide gender considerations in the programme activities. The three closed projects did not foresee minimum quotas set for youth participation; among ongoing projects, targets on youth participation were set at 20 per cent, 30 per cent and 50 per cent for FARMSE, PRIDE and the most recent TRADE, respectively. In FARMSE, deliberate efforts were made to include people with disabilities, people living with HIV and the "ultra-poor" as defined by the Malawi Government.

Institutional arrangements and capacities

53. Under the COSOP 2016–2022, larger budgets have been allocated to progressively more ambitious projects, which included a number of innovative features and built on assumed synergies across projects to achieve the intended results. While this responds well to the latest COSOP call for IFAD to achieve a "country programme approach," it has proved challenging in practice. The increased size of the recent projects, e.g. TRADE (with a budget of US\$125.35 million), PRIDE (US\$83.95 million) and SAPP (US\$73.22 million), requires enhanced institutional capacity to monitor effective, efficient and appropriate project spending. In addition, the increased technical complexity of value-chain and rural finance projects (TRADE and SAPP) requires the coordination of larger numbers of service providers and implementing partners with multiple activities at local and national levels, which are demanding to organize and monitor.
54. **Institutional arrangements.** The programme has used a range of institutional set-ups for project management, ranging from project offices that were fully integrated into government structures (IRLADP, SAPP) to quasi-independent project coordination units (PCU) (RLEEP, FARMSE and TRADE). Both types present specific challenges but, overall, they were well adapted to the needs for stakeholder coordination in the respective projects. Projects that aimed to roll out implementation through existing government structures were used for irrigation (IRLADP) and climate-smart agriculture (SAPP), both under the mandate of the MoA.
55. **Project management and coordination set-up outside the government system** were well-suited to projects that required coordination with a large number of stakeholders, for example on value chain development (RLEEP, TRADE) and financial services (FARMSE). The e-survey conducted under the CSPE shows a higher performance rating for PCU programmes compared to government-hosted programmes,⁴⁵ an observation also supported by supervision ratings (see annex VI). The quasi-autonomous PCUs usually took longer to set up, because of delays in the recruitment process (RLEEP, TRADE), and their mixed acceptance within Government.⁴⁶
56. **Project management and coordination integrated in the government system** (IRLADP, SAPP) took time in the beginning due to coordination and capacity issues. SAPP institutional arrangements were fully integrated within the institutional framework of the ASWAp. This arrangement followed the Government's decision to discontinue the use of parallel project implementation structures by mid-2012, and to manage all the agricultural projects under the ASWAp. However, SAPP was affected by the delayed set-up of ASWAp management.⁴⁷ The arrangement was then revised to include a transitional programme coordination team with some level of

⁴⁵ Average score of 4.80 out of a maximum rating of 6.0 (second highest after project/programme steering committees which scored 4.85). CSPE e-survey, August 2021 (see annex VI).

⁴⁶ As seen from the e-survey and feedback received during CSPE interviews.

⁴⁷ The Ministry has been directly implementing several projects without implementation units. The existing ASWAp Secretariat was overwhelmed by the additional workload, resulting in diluted leadership over implementation and poor coordination.

decision-making autonomy. The adoption of an Implementation Fast-Tracking Action Plan ensured that MoA staff worked on a full-time basis and progressively built and retained their capacity for SAPP.

57. **Decentralized implementation arrangements.** Most IFAD projects were implemented through a multi-tier structure, involving government at national, district and sub-district levels. District-level structures have played a major role in implementation. They often had to deal with human and operational capacity gaps, and technical and financial management skills.⁴⁸
58. RLSP operated in a context of a stalled decentralization process, characterized by uncertain policy environment, weak capacity of public institutions and high staff turnover. RLSP adopted a participatory approach to community planning and worked through local government bodies, especially village-level bodies. The RLSP PPE noted that IFAD had not sufficiently appreciated the evolving political economy in Malawi at the point of design; local governments' assumed roles and responsibility did not have buy-in of the district governments, especially in light of the financial and human resource capacity constraints. Investments into institutional capacity-building were limited and mainly focused on strengthening village-level institutions with less attention to district structures.
59. SAPP assigned responsibility for field operations to the Agricultural Development Divisions and District Councils. Recognizing human resource capacity constraints within the MoA and at the district level, design envisaged that SAPP would outsource implementation and management of some activities to NGOs, research institutions and other service providers subject to output-based contracts. Partnership with Total Land Care, a Malawian NGO, provided field and specialized technical support and helped kick-start field activities in the area of conservation agriculture.
60. **Use of service providers.** RLEEP and FARMSE used service providers (SPs) that were locally based and had the required competencies to reach out to IFAD's target groups. However, weaknesses in M&E and coordination resulted in insufficient integration and coherence of activities, even within the same programme, and insufficient focus on outcomes. RLEEP PPE (2020) reported that the recruitment process of SPs, albeit fairly comprehensive, lacked a detailed assessment of their technical and human capacities. Consequently, the quality of services and results varied between the SPs. Innovative approaches (nutrition tools, household methodology) were not consistently implemented and, therefore, did not achieve the intended results at a larger scale.
61. **COVID-19 response:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government received funding from the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF). The total project budget was estimated at US\$685,150. The project is currently implemented in two districts of Balaka and Nkhotakota. The two districts were among those with high food insecurity.⁴⁹ The project targeted 8,000 vulnerable smallholder farming households, providing inputs, facilitating market access and promoting electronic services for marketing and agricultural extension. After initial delays, the project duration has been extended until June 2022.⁵⁰
62. **Overall relevance.** Both COSOPs were well aligned with government's development frameworks, including MGDS II and III, the NAP and NAIP, which all focused on poverty reduction. The country programme has progressed over the evaluation period, adjusting the design of most recent projects to evolving demands and incorporating lessons from closed projects. Areas of focus and poverty targeting were adequate. However, growing emphasis on commercial agriculture and value chains has diverted focus away from the very poor and food-insecure households in the

⁴⁸ FGD 2.1 (with International Financing Institutions): Implications of the ongoing Government Decentralization, 22nd September 2021. Refer also to IRDLAP Review, p.10, 15 and 16.

⁴⁹ According to the IHS5 (2019/2020), 80.9 per cent of the households had experienced food shortages in Balaka, in Nkhotakota is was 71.3 per cent.

⁵⁰ According to the 2021 SAPP supervision as of 31 March 2021, 38 per cent of the RPSF budget was executed.

ongoing COSOP. More recently, the ultra-poor pilot under FARMSE and the additional funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have raised attention to vulnerable and food-insecure households. Attention to climate change has increased, but investments were low given the ambitions of the strategy. Certain shortcomings in project design also persisted – unrealistic timelines, weaknesses in M&E and low targets set at design. Analysis of existing government capacities was not adequate, particularly at district and lower levels. The increased size and complexity of projects under the COSOP 2016–2022, due to the increased budgets, new mainstreaming themes and an increasing number of stakeholders, often overstretched the existing implementation capacities. The CSPE rates relevance as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

B. Coherence

Knowledge management

63. The COSOPs emphasized the need for effective knowledge management and communication to support evidence-based policy dialogue and scaling-up.⁵¹ Activities related to research, knowledge and dissemination have been reasonably successful in fostering IFAD-supported technologies and GAPs (especially under SAPP and ERASP, and less so with FARMSE). SAPP’s adaptive research and double-row spacing in legumes were cases in point. Knowledge-intensive practices such as farmers field schools (FFS), the Household Methodology Approach (HHA) and participatory variety selection were successfully used and mainstreamed. However, knowledge management and communication did not play a major role in policy engagement.
64. **Government’s role in and ownership of knowledge management, including M&E, was insufficient;** many knowledge management activities rely on partnerships with local actors such as national agricultural research institutes, colleges and universities, but rarely these take the lead, and they remain dependent on external support. Data collected by district staff were passed on to the programme management team, often without receiving any feedback or information on how data are used. This left field staff and implementing partners with the impression that the purpose of M&E was to control their activities; they did not appreciate the value of data for cross-learning and improvement.
65. **Links between M&E and knowledge management and communication were weak.** For example, the grant “Strengthening Capacity for Local Actors on Nutrition Sensitive Agri-Food Value Chain in Zambia and Malawi,” led by McGill University, delivered a nutrition monitoring tool to significantly reduce the resources for nutrition monitoring and provide food quality data. Although nutrition was mainstreamed in the ongoing projects, none of them has used these tools for M&E.⁵² Similarly, CYMMIT has managed two grants (for a total of six years) to produce evidence-based knowledge and advice on the adoption of conservation agriculture (CA) but is unsure if this knowledge has been used to effectively promote sustainable practices.
66. **Performance on knowledge management** improved in recent years, but Government and other stakeholders have shown limited ownership and uptake so far. Knowledge management is rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Partnership building

67. The IFAD portfolio strategy to work through partnerships and collaboration with like-minded institutions and service providers has been key to delivering the programme. **Partnership building with local stakeholders** has been key to the success of IFAD-funded activities and especially important in knowledge management processes that involve the use of platforms (from FFS to higher-level stakeholder

⁵¹ IFAD. 2009 & 2016. Republic of Malawi Country Strategic Opportunities Programme.

⁵² The country team explained that nutrition-sensitive investment projects are required to use the Core Indicators and the Core Indicators Guidelines for measuring nutrition outcomes. Adopting the M&E tools developed by McGill University may have led to a duplication of M&E efforts, since projects are required in any case to report on the nutrition Core Indicators using the COI guidelines.

forum), field research and testing activities, and piloting of innovations. Under SAPP, for instance, partnerships with international and national research institutions are at the basis of adaptive research to develop appropriate agricultural technologies. Most grant-funded activities are based on partnerships too; these provide learning opportunities through stakeholder platforms, field research activities and piloting of innovations. In addition, they provide opportunities for cofinancing and to engage in policy dialogue in regional initiatives.

68. Partnership building had a positive impact on projects' achievements as well as on building capacity for implementing partners, including government structure. For example, working with The World Bank, AGRA and The Government, IFAD has supported the development of fertilizer application strategy that is area specific. Additionally, collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) has resulted in PRIDE taking over one of the irrigation sites which should have been constructed by the African Development Bank. IFAD envisages expanding its collaboration to other initiatives and partners to further strengthen the harmonization of investments in agriculture.⁵³
69. COSOP 2016–2022 called for a more regular interaction of IFAD country staff with the **Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security (DCAFS)** and with the Scaling up Nutrition Movement. The DCAFS⁵⁴ was formed in 2009 to strengthen the harmonization of investment in agriculture and food security in Malawi, and IFAD has been attending the DCAFS monthly meetings in the last two years.
70. **Private sector partnerships.** The country programme has made efforts to include private sector stakeholders in implementation, usually through grant funding arrangements or as service providers. RLEEP established the Agricultural Commercialization Fund, an innovative instrument to engage with the private sector, which will be continued under TRADE.⁵⁵ In RLEEP, partnerships with the private sector started late, the response from the private sector players was weaker than expected, and there were clear limitations with regard to the financial capacity and responsibility of private sector partners. FARMSE, PRIDE and SAPP also engaged private sector partners, such as commercial banks, seed companies and irrigation companies.
71. **Partnerships** have grown over the evaluation period. Partnerships with international development partners have yet to yield concrete collaboration and harmonization of investments on the ground. NGOs and private sector stakeholders were engaged as service providers; they were instrumental for delivering outreach targets and project results. There is scope to further expand partnerships with private sector actors and make them lasting, also to ensure sustained linkages with farmers. Consequently, partnerships is rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Policy engagement

72. The COSOP 2016–2022 emphasized that policy engagement, supported by effective partnerships and knowledge management, would be key to achieving the strategic objectives. Climate change, and environmental policies and safeguards, including land tenure issues, were identified as areas where IFAD should especially assist the Government. The COSOP also called for greater involvement of IFAD in donor coordination and policy dialogue.
73. In the lending portfolio, SAPP and FARMSE have been most effective producing tangible results from their policy engagement activities. SAPP has influenced the National Agriculture Policy, by supporting stakeholder consultations and supporting

⁵³ According to the COSOP Result Review (2021), the recently approved initiative Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture (CARLA), financed by the AfDB and the UNDP's MICF in TRADE, should help enhance partnerships at country programme level.

⁵⁴ DCAFS has 22 member agencies consisting of bilateral, multilateral, Alliances and CGIAR institutions who meet on a monthly basis and once a year in June for a retreat.

⁵⁵ Project Design Report, Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme (TRADE), p.41, February 2020.

the national extension strategy. SAPP has also been collaborating with the Government and AGRA (through an IFAD-funded grant) on policy and implementation of the fertilizer policy. Other contributions include the mainstreaming of Household methodology approach in local government programmes throughout Malawi, recruitment of school leavers, training in rural extension and retention by the Government, and the double row planting in legumes adopted for the national extension strategy.

74. FARMSE has supported the draft of the rural finance policy. It also supported the development of the third and fourth National Strategies for Financial Inclusion and it is now supporting the next National Strategy for Financial Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance.
75. However, there have been missed opportunities as well. Land issues are of high relevance, in particular for PRIDE. Customary landowners would need to register their land under the New Land Act, to secure tenure under the new irrigation schemes. IFAD could have engaged with the actors (Oxfam, LandNet) supporting the Government in piloting the New Land Act, particularly the Customary Land Act.⁵⁶
76. **Policy engagement** has been around recent activities in the lending portfolio, notably SAPP and FARMSE. Lack of in-country presence has limited IFAD engagement in policy dialogue alongside other development actors, including with those involved in similar or complementary activities such as FAO, WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), as further discussed in the following section. Policy engagement is rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Complementarity, harmonization and coordination

77. **IFAD's comparative advantage.** Respondents to the CSPE's e-survey rated the country programme high due to its alignment with government policies, pro-poor targeting and focus on food security and nutrition. They recognized IFAD's comparative advantage in linking smallholder farmers to value chains and in promoting climate-smart agricultural practices. They also commented positively on IFAD's support to enhance productivity in the context of climate change. Key informant interviewees acknowledged that IFAD has built relationships and gained the Government's trust. There are a few examples of where IFAD was able to capitalize on these strengths and influence government policies and strategies (see section on policy engagement) (see annex VI).
78. **Coherence with other development partners.** In spite of many similarities and complementarity between IFAD-supported projects and those by other development partners,⁵⁷ there is little evidence of harmonization and coordination, even among UN agencies such as WFP, FAO and IFAD. Only in a few cases have development partners coordinated their activities around a common course. Lack of in-country presence has been a factor limiting IFAD's engagement with other development actors, but there are indications that this may improve in the near future.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ At the time of the CSPE, the Land Act was back with the Government for a new round of edits; it was unclear when the updated law will be enacted.

⁵⁷ For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) supports value chain actors and market linkages and provides households and schools with fuel efficient stoves (similar to ERASP, PRIDE and SAPP). Access to financial services, value chains, marketing organizations, agribusiness enterprises and crop diversification, are supported by several initiatives, including by Kulima (funded by the European Union), the Malawi Agriculture Catalytic Fund (supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the UK Government), Feed the Future Malawi (with funds from USAID) and Tradeline Cooperation. Community capacity-building is central to the approach of several DPs such as FAO, EU, GIZ and Development Fund of Norway. Finally, FAO is implementing complementary actions to strengthen community resilience to natural disasters such as in land restoration and afforestation.

⁵⁸ The country team referred to the ongoing dialogue with FAO on a new GCF proposal. TRADE design report states that the programme will build on and establish synergies with value chain development and commercialization interventions initiated and implemented by other development partners, including for instance the WB-funded Malawi Agricultural Commercialization Programme, WFP's "Food Assistance for Assets" and "Purchase for Progress" (P4P) programmes, the AfDB-funded Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture (CARLA), and the UNDP's MICF.

79. **The multitude of initiatives supporting similar practices did not lead to a coherent picture of adoption or change in Malawi.** Findings from an international study show that while the uptake of conservation agriculture (CA) in Malawi seems to be widely consolidated due to the many supporting initiatives, the actual adoption and adaptation of CA principles were erratic and inconsistent over time.⁵⁹ Recent SAPP data provide similar findings showing that the vast majority of beneficiary farmers gave up CA after few years.⁶⁰ There are many cases of practices piloted by development partners in Malawi which were not continued, replicated or scaled up.⁶¹ The experiences suggest that a concerted effort focussing on fewer initiatives and support mechanisms may eventually lead to better results.
80. **Coherence within IFAD's country programme.** COSOP 2016–2022 explicitly calls for better coordination between IFAD projects to achieve a country-programme approach. However, project design did not incorporate institutional mechanisms for coordination or integration. **A broad range of interventions was funded by each programme, with many pilots and activities implemented by different entities and service providers, but they were not integrated or linked.** Some collaboration and exchange between IFAD's programmes existed, but coordination at the district level was poor.⁶² Similar activities in different projects were not well-connected and successful interventions were not rolled out across districts. For example, for the 44 villages visited by the CSPE mission, out of 16 villages targeted by both PRIDE and SAPP, complementarities were found for four villages only.
81. The country programme also included a large number of grants. Overall, they were well linked to the loan portfolio, providing complementary funding for similar themes. Grant funding supported: (i) knowledge management (knowledge platforms, digitalization of extension and financial services, M&E on biophysical and climate data); (ii) institutions (water catchment management, the Social Tenure Domain Model for land administration); (iii) digital tool for seed quality assessment and e-extension (promoted by the RPSF project); and (iv) farming technologies (CA, improved varieties).⁶³ SAPP integrated three sub-grants managed by AGRA to facilitate access to high-quality seeds of improved legume varieties.⁶⁴ ERASP was designed to complement PRIDE, aiming to raise agricultural yields on rainfed farming systems through climate-smart and conservation farming practices (in connection also with SAPP). Many of the grants, including some of the largest, focused on resilience and food security, thereby responding to the first SO of COSOP 2016–2022. Two grants (McGill University, NORAD) support nutrition-sensitive activities. There is also a grant that supports the national farmers groups platform, benefitting SAPP and PRIDE under the second strategic objective.⁶⁵
82. **Overall coherence.** There was little evidence of harmonization and coordination between IFAD-supported projects and those supported by other development partners. Coordination among IFAD projects improved under the COSOP 2016–2020. Projects designs considered complementarity, but there was limited overlap and coordination at the district level. Grants supported loan interventions in several cases. Non-lending activities, especially knowledge management and partnership

⁵⁹ T.I. Bouwman, J.A. Andersson, K.E. Giller. 2021. Adapting yet not adopting? Conservation agriculture in Central Malawi. *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment*, Volume 307.

⁶⁰ According to the 2017/18 SAPP Annual Outcome Survey, only one per cent of farmers practice CA beyond five years. The 2021 SAPP supervision mission report expresses concern as increases in yields were attributed to the adoption of CA. And it suggests to evaluate why farmers discontinue CA after some years of practice and cannot continue beyond five years.

⁶¹ Another example relates to two grants on food waste funded by the Government of Ireland that produced several field-based studies, publication and awareness materials. The final report states that 'the donor had agreed to support activities to pilot food loss reduction solutions recommended for Malawi and Timor-Leste'. However, looking at a 2021 report of FAO-Ireland partnership and IFAD's Food loss reduction webpage, it does not seem the follow-up happened.

⁶² District officials commented on the lack of coordination between IFAD-supported initiatives in several cases.

⁶³ Analysis based on a sample of 17 grants, selected for their relevance as explained in paragraph 6.

⁶⁴ SAPP also makes use of the knowledge generated by CIMMYT-managed grant "Understanding the Adoption and Application of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa". SAPP is expected to provide support to ERASP for establishing and/or strengthening village saving and lending clubs and share approaches to promote conservation agriculture practices.

⁶⁵ Grant "Strengthening Country Level Agricultural Advisory Services".

building, have helped to achieve the projects' respective outputs. The CSPE rates coherence overall as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

C. Effectiveness

Achievement of COSOP objectives

83. **Achievements under COSOP 2010–2015 were overall moderate.** There were limited achievements related to the first SO, "access to technology and services for natural resources management (NRM)," including: partial results on water availability and sensitivity; limited focus on climate shocks by IRLADP; and insufficient attention to ENRM issues by RLSP and RLEEP. In relation to the second SO, "access to input markets," market linkages developed by IRLADP and RLEEP resulted in smallholders' increased income, but the income gains were short-lived and productivity gains under RLEEP could not be sustained. Progress in smallholder productivity was made through SAPP, initiated during COSOP 2010–2015 and continued into COSOP 2016–2022.
84. **The objectives for COSOP 2016–2022 are reportedly on-track.** While progress on "smallholder resilience through irrigated agriculture" was stalled (due to insufficient functional irrigation schemes), the programme has made headway towards "adoption of climate-smart agriculture and good agricultural practices". Climate change is prominently placed within the first strategic objectives, while nutrition is also mainstreamed in all projects. Under the current COSOP, geographic coverage expanded from area projects to nationwide coverage. Progress was also noted on "access to rural financial services," with good outreach under FARMSE, although the project fell short in meeting the demand for credit and asset acquisition has been limited. Delayed start of key programmes, notably PRIDE and TRADE, implies that some results might not materialize under the ongoing COSOP.
85. The theory of change for this evaluation lays out **four pathways** towards achieving the two COSOP strategic objectives (see annex II):
 - (i) Environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural production system (SAPP, PRIDE, IRLADP);
 - (ii) Climate resilient land and water management systems (PRIDE, IRLADP);
 - (iii) Smallholder access to financial services (FARMSE, RLSP);
 - (iv) Smallholder access to markets (TRADE, RLEEP).
86. After limited progress in the closed programmes, the first pathway of **environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural production systems** has become moderately effective in ongoing programmes such as SAPP and PRIDE, which are promoting sustainable GAPs.
87. Progress has been slow on irrigation development within the second pathway, **climate-resilient land and water management systems** to increase production. PRIDE may not be able to finalize all the works, despite the recent extension.⁶⁶
88. The third pathway of **smallholder access to financial services** is mainly driven by FARMSE, which achieved a highly satisfactory outreach to rural poor.
89. Lastly, there is limited evidence to show how effectively the pathway of **smallholder access to markets** has contributed to the second SO, partly because of the limited capacity of the private sector to sustainably procure farm produce from smallholder farmers. The following paragraphs further discuss the projects' achievements across the four pathways, as synthesized by table 6.

⁶⁶ The midterm review (July 2021) noted that five irrigation schemes may be completed and commissioned by July 2023. However, seven remaining irrigation schemes were indicated as unlikely to be constructed during the life of the programme due to budget and time constraints.

Table 6
Achievements of country programme (2010–2020)

COSOP objective*	Pathway	Achievements	Contributing projects
SO1: Smallholder households become resilient to shocks and enhance food and nutrition security	Environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural production systems	On track Improved productivity for maize, soya beans, pigeon peas, and especially beans.	SAPP
		On track Promotion of GAPs and nutrition mainstreaming activities ongoing. Variable adoption of GAPs due to rainfall and temperature shocks.	SAPP, IRLADP, PRIDE
	Climate-resilient land and water management systems	Off track WUAs not yet registered; delays in irrigation schemes development.	PRIDE
		Partially achieved Substantial contribution to strengthening WUAs, but only 15 per cent of WUAs set by IRLADP formally registered. Yield increases achieved but yet to be sustainable.	IRLADP
SO2: Smallholder households access remunerative markets and services	Smallholder farmers in rural areas accessing financial services	On track Access to financial services or products significantly increased with great share of women; community-based financial organizations in the process of being linked to formal financial institutions.	FARMSE
		Partially achieved) Access to financial services increased but yet to be sustainable.	RLSP
	Improved access to markets by smallholder producers	Off track Activities have not yet started due to several delays.	TRADE
		Partially achieved Enterprises report being operational and profitable. Regulatory and institutional environment still unsatisfactory. Increase in volume of produce sold by farmers and increase in sales prices unsatisfactory.	RLEEP, PRIDE

* SO1 was developed from COSOP 2010–2015 SO1: appropriate technology and services for sustainable natural resource management; SO2 was developed from COSOP 2010–2015 SO2: Sustainable agricultural input and produce markets. (see table 1 in annex V for details)

Sources: RLSP PPE; IRLADP IEG PE; RLEEP PPE; validated M&E data from ongoing projects

90. **Sustainable agricultural production.** The country programme has made progress promoting sustainable production practices. Four of the projects assessed by the CSPE (IRLADP, SAPP, PRIDE and to a lesser extent RLEEP) aimed to diversify and increase smallholder production. While projects recorded some yield increases in the short term, the evaluations raised doubts about the sustainability of these achievements. For example, in IRLADP the yields of all rainfed crops (apart from cassava) and all irrigated crops had increased by 68 per cent, but these increases were not sustained; the use of complementary land and water management practices to increase the profitability of modern technologies remained low.⁶⁷ The PPE of RLEEP also found that crop productivity has reduced two years after the project closure.⁶⁸
91. As for the ongoing projects, SAPP has supported the adoption of GAPs such as box ridges, pit planting, minimum tillage and soil cover. The SAPP midterm impact survey found that the GAPs had a direct positive impact on staples such as pigeon peas, but this was less evident for beneficiaries located in drought-prone areas.⁶⁹ SAPP also built capacities of extension staff and led farmers through training on GAPs, Farmer

⁶⁷ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

⁶⁸ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

⁶⁹ IFAD. 2016. SAPP Impact Assessment: Midline.

Business Schools (FBSs) and FFSs approaches. PRIDE is also promoting GAPs among rainfed agricultural farmers who are on irrigation sites.

92. **Climate resilient land and water management.** The country programme’s contribution to climate resilience was unsatisfactory during the first part of the evaluation period but has improved recently. While evaluations of RLSP and RLEEP concluded that efforts to support small-scale farmers’ adaptation to climate change were insufficient, focus on CCA has improved under the current COSOP. The ongoing projects are more effective with regard to CCA, in particular through crop diversification, introduction of resilient crops, fuel-efficient stoves, and irrigation (although the extent of the benefits has been limited by delays in the construction of the irrigation schemes). PRIDE and ERASP interventions are improving farming systems in rainfed areas, while expanding irrigated lands, which, in turn, is supporting the resilience of farmers to extreme climatic events and diseases spreading. They are also providing climate information services and building capacities of farmers and their organizations to fight climate change.⁷⁰
93. However, the extent to which promoting GAPs will help farmers to better cope with climate change seems uncertain. The SAPP midline survey conducted by the research impact assessment (RIA) in 2018 highlighted a mixed contribution of the programme to limit the negative effects of less favourable climatic conditions.⁷¹ In particular, the programme had modest impacts on two key elements of CA, namely minimum tillage and permanent organic crop cover.⁷² Nonetheless, the latest supervision mission report, released in May 2020, indicates that 60 per cent of beneficiary households were using organic fertilizers with increased production (against an end target of 50 per cent) and that households adopting environmentally sustainable technologies represented the 159 per cent of end target (table 7 provides examples of GAPs).

Table 7
Examples of GAPs promoted

Type of GAPs	Examples
Climate-smart practices	Conservation agriculture, bee-keeping and honey production, fuel-efficient cook stoves, use of weather and climate information services, sustainable water and soil management, post-harvest management optimization, application of integrated pest management
Soil conservation practices	Permanent organic cover, box ridges, and vetiver grass
Crop-focused practices	Minimum tillage, crop rotation, crop residues cover, cultivation of legumes (either sole stand or intercropped), legume intercropping, fertility trees, contour ridges, drainage channels
Livestock practices	Ownership of goats and chickens

Sources: SAPP and PRIDE project documents.

94. **Inclusive access to financial services** has become an area of focus under the ongoing COSOP. FARMSE supports financial inclusion through clear targeting strategies and partnerships with 12 implementing partners and six FSPs. The programme is meeting its targets, with 44 per cent of targeted existing community-based financial organizations (CBFOs) restructured, 58 per cent of targeted new CBFOs formed, and new members trained with financial literacy and business management skills.⁷³ FARME has linked CBFOs with formal financial institutions. FSPs have established bank agents to expand their services to hard-to-reach areas.
95. CSPE field visits and virtual meetings confirmed that beneficiaries were able to open savings accounts through bank agents and CBFO members were able to access loans

⁷⁰ IFAD. 2016. SAPP Impact Assessment: Midline.

⁷¹ Specifically, GAPs were not used systematically in situations of poorer climatic conditions, high temperatures and low and variable rainfall. (IFAD. 2016. SAPP Impact Assessment: Midline.)

⁷² According to the 2019 Annual Outcome Survey, GAPs technologies such as box ridges, pit planting, minimum tillage and soil cover, aimed at helping farmers adapt to changing weather patterns were not widely adopted in the SAPP districts.

⁷³ Quarterly reports from FARMSE Implementing Partners and FARMSE Logframe as of June 2020.

from financial institutions through their groups to start or boost their businesses. However, bank agents reported very low traffic of customers, poor connectivity and, in some cases, low liquidity, limiting funds withdrawals and causing high frustration of customers. The FSPs also reported high operational costs for reaching the rural poor, which they offset by charging high interest rates. Beneficiary group members reported high interest rates as a deterrent to accessing credit services. Dormant accounts and delayed loan reimbursements have raised the question of sustainability of usage. Furthermore, financial products are not adequately tailored to the needs of the rural poor. FARMSE's research grants, intended for developing and piloting pro-poor financial services, were mainly used for scaling up or rolling out pre-existing products.

96. **Smallholder access to markets** was an important area of focus in both COSOPs, but it has seen limited achievements. Production-oriented projects such as IRLADP, PRIDE and SAPP all included activities related to access to markets, while projects such as RLEEP and TRADE had market access as a key area of emphasis. A major assumption was that increased production would result in marketable surplus, which was indeed the case under IRLADP, RLEEP, and SAPP. However, smallholder farmers did not always find a sufficient market for their produce partly due to weak market linkages and weak private sector capacity to purchase adequate produce from them.⁷⁴ During the CSPE field visits farmers also complained about unfavourable contractual conditions, including low prices. For example, in Chiradzulu District, farmers often have to wait several months before being paid, resulting in serious consequences for their preparation of the next agricultural season.
97. **Outreach and targeting.** Overall, outreach to target groups was good, with two closed programmes equalling or exceeding the revised targets for beneficiaries reached (RLSP, IRLADP) and three ongoing programmes being on track for reaching out to beneficiaries (see table 8 below). IRLADP achieved the highest outreach numbers due to nationwide-scale action supported through World Bank and IFAD cofinancing.⁷⁵ In FARMSE, contracting NGOs and microfinance institutions (MFIs) helped the programme outreach to remote areas.
98. Outreach has been lower in agricultural projects. The RLSP and RLEEP have reached out to a relatively small number of beneficiaries due to their overall small scope and financing. PRIDE also has a lower-than-expected outreach due to the risen costs for irrigation infrastructure. SAPP is expected to reach a large number of lead farmers through the farmer extension network.⁷⁶ TRADE, the most recent and biggest programme so far, attempts to target a large number of beneficiaries thanks to a substantial amount of funding.
99. **Ultra-poor targeting.** FARMSE collaboration with NGOs in implementing the UPG component, which is based on The Government's criteria, has facilitated outreach to most vulnerable households with labour availability.⁷⁷ As of June 2020, the graduation activities have achieved 137 per cent of the target of 15,000 households, including 72 per cent women and 30 per cent youth. The share of women beneficiaries has exceeded the target mainly because of the high representation of women among the poor, as well as the readiness by the women to be organized. The CSPE field visits noted that not all the beneficiaries under the UPG may be able to graduate since not all groups were homogeneous and some beneficiaries were unable to take up the interventions offered by the programme.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

⁷⁵ A common error in the reporting of outreach numbers was the confusion of household targets and person targets. Table 8 includes the rectified data.

⁷⁶ The aim is to reach a total of 200,000 fellow farmers through the lead farmers (IFAD. 2016. SAPP Mid-term Review report).

⁷⁷ CARE, OXFAM COMSIP, Save the Children and World Relief implemented the UPG component to provide ultra-poor people with financial literacy, business training, climate smart agriculture and support to group formation.

⁷⁸ FARMSE supervision report noted that some members of the households lack means of production due to old age or disability.

100. **Outreach to women.** FARMSE and IRLADP have achieved the highest share of female beneficiaries, with 65 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively. IRLADP successfully targeted women through household methodologies and gender-disaggregated targets, e.g. for representation at WUAs, farmer business organizations, and Input for Asset committees.⁷⁹ FARMSE outreach to women also resulted from the large number of self-targeting female groups identified and supported by the implementing partners. MFIs, such as CUMO and FINCOOP, provide strong support to women in terms of value of savings and loans. The formal financial institution, NBS Bank, provides smaller loans to female beneficiaries compared to MFIs.
101. In the agricultural projects, women’s participation varied according to the crops promoted. In RLEEP, participation of women was high in groundnuts, potato and soya value chains, but not in beef value chain.⁸⁰ In SAPP, male lead farmers are still dominant in top five adopted crops – maize, groundnuts, beans, pigeon peas and soya beans. Except for the district of Balaka, the share of female lead farmers in the other five SAPP districts was outnumbered by males (see figure 8 and 9 in annex V).

Table 8

Country programme outreach (2010–2020)

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Target*</i>	<i>Outreach*</i>	<i>Outreach against target</i>	<i>Share of women</i>	<i>Share of youth</i>
RLSP (2004-2014)	190 000	190 000	100%	N/A	N/A
IRLADP (2006-2012)	982 500	1 513 345	154%	57%	N/A
RLEEP (2009-2018)	24 000***	30 146	126%	49%	N/A
SAPP (2012-2023)	10 000	1 607**	16%	36%	N/A
PRIDE (2017-2024)	17 500 (hhs)	12 473 (hhs)	71%	38%	41%
FARMSE (2018-2025)	417 774	377 573	90%	65%	31%
TRADE (2020-2026)	1 320 000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Targets according to President’s report. Individuals unless noted otherwise.

**SAPP lead farmers as recorded in the georeferenced list.

*** RLEEP target was 24,000 households according to President’s report.

Sources: RLSP PPE; IRLADP IEG PE; RLEEP PPE; validated M&E data from ongoing projects.

102. **Outreach to youth.** The three closed projects did not have targets on youth participation. Among the newest projects, outreach to youth was highest under PRIDE, with youth representing 41 per cent of programme beneficiaries. Outreach to youth was also high under FARMSE as innovative digital financial products, such as Ufulu Digital accounts and FDH Mobile Wallets, have attracted many young people. SAPP has highly underperformed in youth participation mainly because of a lack of specific strategies and attractive interventions. Two out of 13 visited farmers’ groups during the field mission had significant youth participation – 46 per cent and 52 per cent of youth members. Only a few farmers’ groups had youth representation in the leadership structures, which questions the effectiveness of the strategies used. Overall, it seems that IFAD has not yet found the right approach to attract and empower young people at large, including the many unemployed youth.
103. **Overall effectiveness.** The achievements of both COSOPs were limited in terms of increasing smallholder productivity (RLSP, IRLADP) and sustaining it through improved market access (IRLADP, RLEEP). The country programme seems to focus on the achievements of the SOs of COSOP 2016–2022. Access to inclusive rural finance (FARMSE) and increased productivity through GAPs (SAPP) have been key drivers of the positive direction taken by the programme. Most recent projects better addressed smallholders’ resilience to climate change. Overall, outreach to poor women and men was good, but the degree of youth participation varied across

⁷⁹ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

⁸⁰ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

projects. Following the underachievements of the previous COSOP, a more positive trajectory can be seen under the current COSOP. The CSPE rates effectiveness as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

Innovation

104. IFAD-funded projects introduced innovative tools and approaches in different thematic areas. RLEEP was innovative in its participatory approach to value chain development, as it was the first of its kind in Malawi.⁸¹ IRLADP developed an innovative approach, also used in PRIDE, with agreements between landowners and WUAs to temporarily hand over customary rights during irrigation season. The household methodologies were introduced by IRLADP and mainstreamed under SAPP; the Government of Malawi has rolled them out nationally.
105. The country programme introduced a number of **innovations in M&E**, to help collect new types of data (e.g. biophysical and climate-related data) or to better systematize the information, including a result dashboard⁸² and a community of practice (CoP) on M&E and knowledge management. Digitalized ICT tools were introduced by different programmes. Grant funding supported: M&E tools, such as the use of DATAR; a biodiversity monitoring tool; in ERASP, the nutrition assessment tool developed by McGill University; and an Earth observation knowledge system to combine biophysical and socio-economic indicators that is being developed by an ICRAF-managed grant. PRIDE is also using ex-ante carbon balance tool and is in the process of building capacity for the use of the Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF).
106. The country programme promoted **ICT and digital tools** for service delivery, such as entrepreneurship training via mobile phones – introduced by FARMSE implementing partners – which has been successfully developed and rolled out. FARMSE has promoted a number of innovative financial products and services, including small loan insurance, digital tools for household training, establishment of digital bank agents, mobile money platforms, digital accounts, and use of point-of-sale machines in rural areas. PRIDE has introduced innovations under the Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund (MICF), including a mobile app for marketing and supplying resource centres with ICT equipment (TVs) to facilitate farmers learning about new technologies. However, the effective operationalization of some of these innovations has been hindered by poor internet connectivity and high illiteracy rates in rural areas.
107. The extent to which these innovations were integrated into country programmes and responded to farmers’ needs varied. Some innovative methods, for example, for measuring nutrition and biophysical data, were piloted and tested but have not been uptaken by the Government or IFAD. In other cases, innovations were taken up by smallholder farmers, for example weather-related information or rural finance information.
108. The Innovation and Outreach Facility, which aimed to enhance the capacity of FSPs and increase the involvement of the private sector in demand-driven services in rural areas, was slow to start. The low utilization of these funds (38 per cent in 2021) has led to a set of non-connected, non-scaled innovations, rather than a more unified strategy around actions at scale.
109. **Overall innovation.** The country programme included a large number of innovative practices and initiatives, often financed by grants. There was a strong focus on ICT and digital tools and innovative M&E. Uptake of innovations has not been well

⁸¹ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

⁸² A Result Dashboard for M&E is being introduced to promote evidence-based, strategic decision-making. At the moment, the MIS software is mostly new to all projects, staff has been recently trained or has to be trained; FARMSE M&E Officers already report some problems linked to the use of MIS and mobile phones with limited network coverage. Nonetheless, the effective utilization and performance of the system will depend on the quality of data in-putted into the system which, presently, is a challenge.

documented; it appears to be uneven. Innovation is rated **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

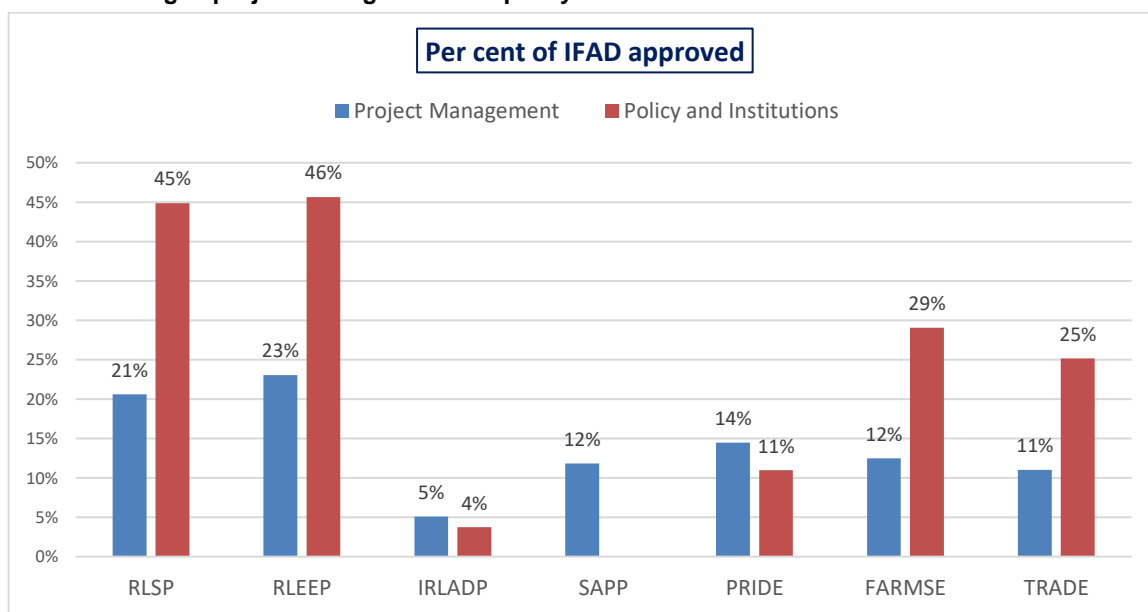
D. Efficiency

Operational efficiency

110. **Project management.** IFAD has invested heavily in project management and institutions in Malawi (figure 2). The budgets for project management accounted for 14 per cent of total project costs on average, which is 2 per cent higher than the average budget for project management in the ESA region. Costs for project management far exceeded this average in RLSP and RLEEP. The RLSP PPE (2017) attributes the high costs to high salaries, the dense implementation structure, and the fixed costs accrued during the 10-year implementation period. Furthermore, several projects included institutional funds for cooperation with a large number of service providers (RLEEP, FARMSE and TRADE). RLSP included a mechanism for untied funding, which was costly to manage.

Figure 2

IFAD financing in project management and policy and institutions



Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data.

111. The country programme's investments in capacity building were high, but they did not overcome the **persistent capacity gaps**. Staff turnover was high, particularly at the district level. In some cases, staff would stay in a district for up to nine months before being transferred, resulting in loss of the skills that he/she acquired. Independent project management units (PMUs) with externally recruited staff were an effective way to overcome these capacity gaps in the short term; their performance was also rated high in the CSPE e-survey.
112. **Engagement of service providers** was another strategy to overcome capacity gaps, which also came at a cost. Qualified SPs were identified through a competitive process. They usually had the required capacity to reach out to IFAD's target groups in projects such as RLEEP and FARMSE. The RLEEP PPE (2020) reported that the recruitment process of SPs was fairly comprehensive but lacked a detailed assessment of their technical and human capacities. The quality of services and results varied between SPs and there was insufficient coordination to ensure coherence of activities and outcomes.
113. The **performance of project management** over time, as shown by the average supervision ratings (figure 3), reflects persistent capacity gaps and inconsistent support by IFAD. Average supervision ratings for all projects steadily improved until 2012, after which they sharply declined first and then improved until 2015, due to

intensive supervision and support. Since 2015, performance ratings continuously declined during a period of high turnover of IFAD country directors (2015-2018) and a new generation of larger programmes coming on board (SAPP, PRIDE, FARMSE). Among the ongoing projects, PRIDE implementation continues to lag behind, with a number of key activities still at a preparatory stage. The frequency of supervision missions increased since 2020, but follow-up on supervision recommendations remains incomplete for all ongoing projects, with insufficient action taken particularly on aspects such as M&E and knowledge management (see figure 18 in annex V).

Figure 3
Project management performance over time



Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

114. **Operationalization of M&E plans** has been lagging due to late appointments and high staff turnover. Moreover, weak intra- and inter-coordination mechanisms made it difficult to systematize the information to enhance lesson learning. Corrective actions were taken when required, but the underlying problem is the lack of coherence and systematization of information that supports a learning culture: a lot of narrative is produced, but only little is systematized and integrated in an effort to track sustainable change over time.

Financial performance

115. **Timeliness.** The average effectiveness gap for project start-ups in the Malawi portfolio was longer than the ESA subregional and the IFAD averages during the CSPE period (see table 9 below). There were serious delays from approval to effectiveness. The 11-month average is double than that of ESA subregion, and indicates a need for the Government of Malawi to speed up the approval process.

Table 9
Timeline between approval and disbursements (months)

	Approval to effectiveness	Effectiveness to first disbursement	Approval to first disbursement
Malawi COSOP average	11.13	5.00	16.71
ESA subregional average *	5.73	7.48	13.20
IFAD average*	6.97	8.50	15.47

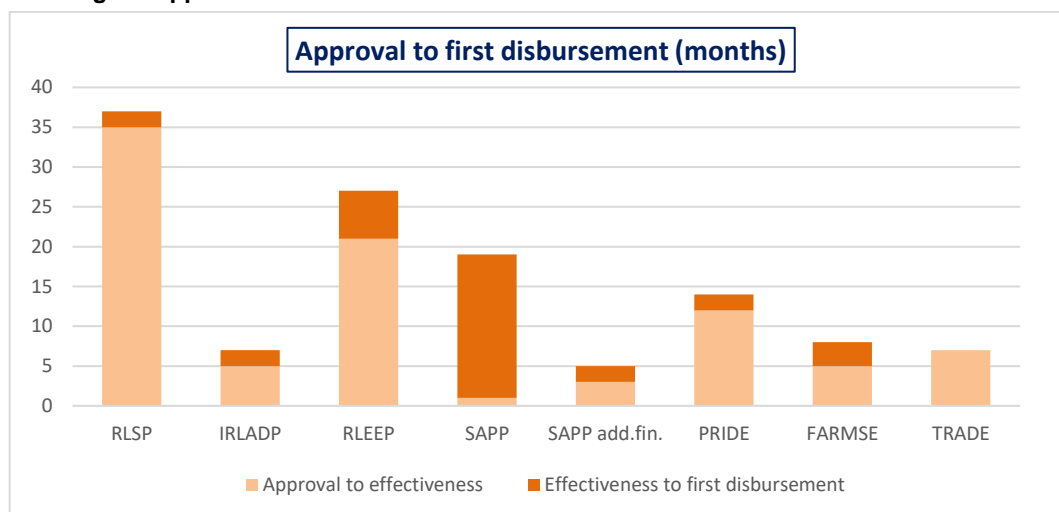
*Projects approved from 2010 to 2021.

Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data.

116. The effectiveness gap has gradually reduced over time, but the long delays during start-up have affected both closed and ongoing projects. The average months from

approval to effectiveness for closed projects was 20 months, with RLSP and RLEEP being the slowest at 35 and 21 months, respectively. The average time from approval to effectiveness for ongoing projects has reduced to six months, with PRIDE being the slowest at 12 months and SAPP being the fastest at only one month. In most cases, the effectiveness lag was due to delays in setting up project management structures.⁸³ At the second stage, time lag from effectiveness to first disbursement ranged between two and six months with an average of five months, except for SAPP, which experienced severe delays up to 18 months (figure 4).⁸⁴

Figure 4
Time lags of approval to first disbursement



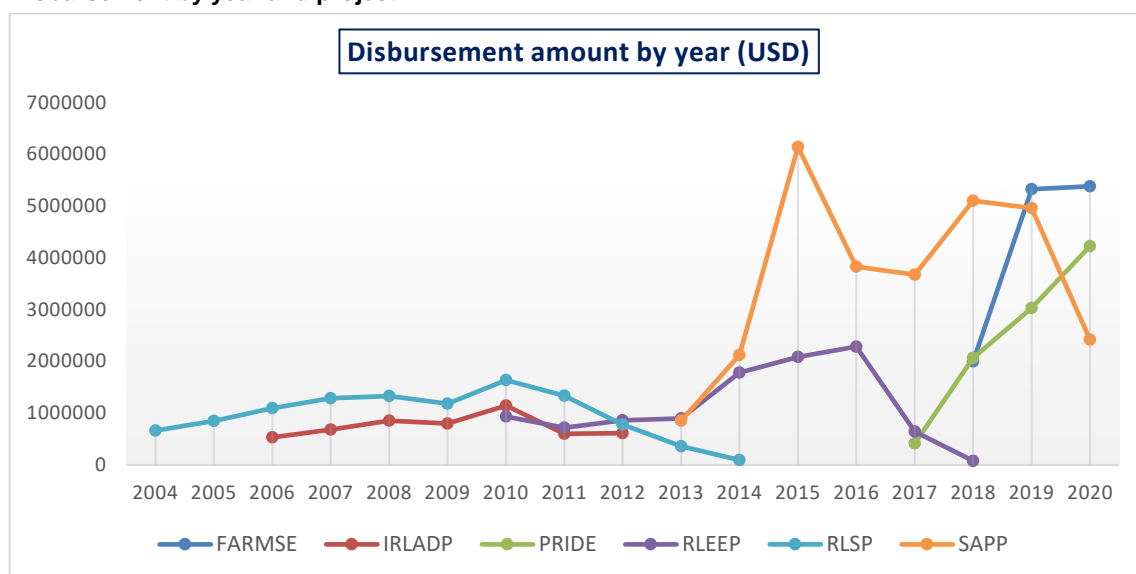
Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data.

117. **Disbursement of funds.** Disbursement rates were unsatisfactory during the first years of implementation in all projects due to slow initial set-ups; during the second half of implementation, projects were usually back on track (figure 5). IRLADP had delays in disbursements due to initial institutional capacity constraints and significant challenges at the district level in following the Statements of Expenditure procedure. Similarly, RLEEP had serious delays in disbursements at the beginning of implementation. Only RLSP did not have major disbursement issues from the outset. After initial delays, IFAD funds were fully disbursed for the closed projects at completion. However, all closed projects required extensions in order to fully disburse (one year for RLSP and RLEEP; three years for IRLADP).
118. For the ongoing projects the disbursement status varies. SAPP and FRAMSE have gradually improved disbursement performance, but PRIDE remains below expectation when compared to the disbursement profile of IFAD irrigation programmes. The disbursement of grants to the three projects followed a similar trend, namely: 23-25 per cent, 30 per cent and 98 per cent for PRIDE, FARMSE and SAPP, respectively. In 2020 disbursements slowed down in FARMSE and SAPP, due to disbursement caps by IFAD in May 2020 and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. SAPP has been granted an extension of two years, PRIDE has been given a one-year extension.

⁸³ In the case of PRIDE it was also related to the time required for parliamentary approval of infrastructure projects. In the case of FARMSE the effectiveness gap has been low because it took over the complete PCU from RLEEP. For TRADE it is likely to be higher because of the delays in the recruitment process.

⁸⁴ SAPP had a very challenging start-up period as the initial implementation arrangements were inadequate, leading to major delays in starting activities. The process of fulfilling the disbursement conditions was protracted and the programme essentially lost two years of implementation time. The main factor responsible for the late implementation and, therefore, the low disbursement rate, was the integration of the programme within the ASWAp and the delay in putting ASWAp management into place.

Figure 5
Disbursement by year and project



Source: CSPE analysis based on Oracle Business Intelligence data.

Economic efficiency

119. **Cost per beneficiary.** Cost-effectiveness was eroded because of the long delays highlighted above. High inflation rates also increased the cost per beneficiary. For the three closed projects, the average cost per beneficiary increased from US\$313.72 at design to US\$363.86 at project completion. Only for IRLADP the cost per beneficiary reduced between design and completion, from US\$53.03 to US\$34.41. In ongoing projects, the average cost per beneficiary at project design increased to an average of US\$397.53, mainly due to the low outreach targets set at design and the costly investments in irrigation infrastructure under PRIDE (see table 10).

Table 10

Costs per beneficiary

Project	Total project cost (USD)	No. of beneficiaries at design		No. of beneficiaries at completion		Cost per Beneficiary (USD)*	
		Households	Persons	Households	Persons	At design	At completion
RLSP	16 562 573	38 000	190 000	38 000	190 000	87.17	87.17
IRLADP	52 075 067	196 500	982 500	302 669	1 513 345	53	34.41
RLEEP	29 241 489	24 000	120 000	N/A	30 146	801**	970
SAPP	72 387 773	N/A	200 000	N/A	N/A	361.94	N/A
PRIDE	83 950 000	19 500	87 500	N/A	N/A	959.43	N/A
FARMSE	57 733 000	N/A	417 774	N/A	N/A	138.19	N/A
TRADE	125 359 000	N/A	1 320 000	N/A	N/A	94.97	N/A

*Cost per beneficiary was calculated based on No. of beneficiaries – Persons;

** At appraisal, the cost per beneficiary of RLEEP was estimated US\$801 without infrastructure component.

Source: PDRs; PCRs.

120. **The ex-post economic and financial analysis (EFA)** for closed projects was not sufficient to confirm cost-effectiveness. RLSP project completion report lacked substantive and critical analysis under efficiency criteria with some inaccuracies. An increase of 60 per cent of economic internal rate of return (EIRR) from design to completion was reported for RLEEP; however, the origin of the data used to calculate the EIRR was not stated and the assumptions were not clearly explained. The EFA for IRLADP showed favorable returns on investments and increasing returns in the updated EFA in the project completion report, even though the latter accounted for

the delays in the project's implementation.⁸⁵ The IRLADP evaluation report expressed caution in accepting this result, given that EFA had substantial methodological issues that make the estimated returns on investments questionable, such as lack of explanation of how incomes were defined and calculated.

121. **Infrastructure subprojects (IRLADP, RLEEP, and PRIDE) were noted for their low cost-effectiveness.** This includes the slow progress in the planning, design and approval of infrastructure, which was the main reason why most investments were only realized in the second half of implementation. Implementation of infrastructure subprojects was usually delegated to districts, which often did not have the capacity to follow the procurement cycle.
122. The IRLADP evaluation noted anomalies in procurement, misallocation of funds and quality issues. The quality of later irrigation schemes improved with a better procurement process and capacity of the district to manage funds, design and supervision of irrigation work.⁸⁶ RLEEP implemented the infrastructure component using the decentralized set-up. However, the delays in implementation led to a steep rise in investments towards the end of the project, leaving insufficient time to put suitable ownership and maintenance arrangements in place. Consequently, the quality of infrastructure varied and some structures had poor cost-effectiveness.⁸⁷ PRIDE has also been experiencing serious delays in key procurement activities for the launch of irrigation works.⁸⁸ In addition, higher-than-expected unit costs have led to a significant reduction in the number of irrigation schemes, from 15 to nine. In fact, the unit costs estimated by the feasibility studies were double the amounts budgeted and planned at design, with costs of some schemes even exceeding the recommended cap.⁸⁹
123. **Overall efficiency.** The country programme had serious delays during the start-up, mainly due to difficulties in setting up the required institutional arrangements. Project management performance was usually problematic during the first part of the implementation cycle, but generally improved after midterm and all closed projects were able to fully disburse the allocated funds at completion. Operationalizing M&E and lesson learning has been weak. Efficiency was compromised by the delays that affected all projects, which have particularly affected infrastructural components that were noted for their low cost-effectiveness. Efficiency is rated moderately **unsatisfactory (3)**.

E. Rural poverty impact

124. **Overall poverty situation.** District-level data show a decline of poverty between 2016 and 2020 in most districts targeted by the country programme, except the Northern and Central regions districts of Salima, Rumphi, Ntchisi and Karonga, (see figure 25 in annex V). Food security did not improve. According to the Integrated Malawi Household Surveys, the proportion of population with inadequate food security increased from 38.3 per cent in 2011 to 63.8 per cent in 2016, and it still was 63.5 per cent in 2019. The food security situation has worsened in target districts, with the exception of Chikwawa and Nsaje (see figure 26 in annex V).⁹⁰ In

⁸⁵ The increased returns are attributed in the PCR to the "increment in the number of beneficiaries, total hectare under irrigation and crop productivity as a result of the rehabilitation and development of the schemes coupled with related activities".

⁸⁶ World Bank IRLADP ICR. IFAD lessons learning report (2014).

⁸⁷ The RLEEP PPE noted oversized milk-bulking centers and warehouses that were not fit for purpose (IOE, 2020).

⁸⁸ According to the supervision report, after close to three years of implementation PRIDE had still been affected by low disbursement rates, low execution of Annual Work Programme & Budget, low value for money, slow procurement, and an incomplete M&E system.

⁸⁹ This is attributed to a number of factors including the use of solar-based systems in some irrigation schemes e.g. Matoponi and Mlooka as well as climate proofing such as inclusion of balancing tanks; lining of conveyance canals; inclusion of ancillary structures like livestock drinking troughs, offices for WUA and fences to reduce human wildlife conflicts. In Matoponi and Mlooka, the development cost per hectare is high US\$27,397/ha and US\$24,816/ha respectively. Even with the reduction, there is still a funding gap for irrigation construction of US\$1,512,284.79 which will need to be mobilized from other budget lines.

⁹⁰ Change in the proportion of households in inadequate food security status from the IHS3 (2010/11) to the IHS5 (2019/20).

districts, such as Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka, and Nchtisi, lack of farm inputs was a major cause for high food insecurity. Districts in the South were disproportionately hit by drought, floods and water logging.⁹¹

125. **Data availability.** Assessing rural poverty impact is hampered by the limited availability of robust evidence (RLSP, RLEEP, and IRLADP). Impact assessments document the successful delivery of agricultural services and the improvement of project beneficiaries' productivity, but the evidence underpinning the productivity effects and the sustainability of those effects is weak.⁹² Available evidence from closed projects points to the variability of these improvements, depending on the agroecological and weather conditions, the uneven adoption of improved practices, and the difficulties in sustaining productivity gains beyond the projects. Income data are not available or marred by methodological weaknesses.⁹³ In addition, the CSPE used the preliminary findings from an RIA impact assessment for SAPP. As SAPP is still ongoing, it was too early to judge if impacts will be sustained.

Agricultural productivity

126. **Evidence from closed projects** (RLSP, IRLADP, RLEEP) shows that they achieved **significant increases in productivity** through the provision of technology, inputs and (in the case of PRIDE) irrigation. In most cases, these **gains were eroded soon after project completion**. The RLSP PPE found that maize yields increased, although they remained below the national average.⁹⁴ In IRLADP, yields increased for rainfed (summer) rice almost three-fold. Yield increases were greater for irrigated crops than for rainfed crops (cassava, winter maize).⁹⁵ The IEG evaluation of IRLADP found that productivity increases were more volatile after the project ended; crop yields followed the trend of cumulative rainfall in Malawi.⁹⁶ Two years after RLEEP closed, the PPE found that improvements in yields⁹⁷ were not sustained due to weak market linkages, low prices and limited availability of improved seeds or poor seed quality.⁹⁸ The evaluations pointed out that limited attention was given to enhancing the sustainability of agricultural productivity in the past, e.g. through intercropping patterns or promoting conservation agriculture.⁹⁹
127. **In the ongoing projects**, emphasis has changed. SAPP, FARMSE and PRIDE have promoted **GAPs** to improve soil fertility and adoption of climate change mitigation practices. The midline survey conducted in 2018 found that the adoption of several GAPs in SAPP districts was low. Participating farmers adopted legume, legume intercrop and fertility trees at higher rates. The SAPP endline study shows a 12.74 per cent increase in maize yields compared to the control group. Higher increases (up to 60 and 80 per cent) were reported for legumes yields, with consequent income gains from crop production.¹⁰⁰ However, technologies such as box ridges, pit planting, minimum tillage and soil cover were not widely adopted. They were less suited for farmers with low agricultural assets and those living in drought-affected areas.¹⁰¹

⁹¹ Malawi Government. 2020. The Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) 2020 Report. National Statistical Office.

⁹² As noted in the IEG evaluation of the IRLADP (2021) and the IOE PPE of RLEEP (2020).

⁹³ IRLADP Independent Impact Assessment Survey. 2013.

⁹⁴ The Beneficiary Impact Assessment, Economic and Micro Project Analysis claimed that improved planting techniques have increased average production by 240 per cent from 459 kg/ha to 1,563/ha between 2009 and 2012. Malawi's national average yield for maize was 2,200 kg/ha and 2,100 kg /ha for 2009 and 2012 respectively.

⁹⁵ IRLADP Independent Impact Assessment Survey. 2013.

⁹⁶ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283. IRLADP achieved yield increases of 112.5 per cent of the target for irrigated maize and 230 per cent of the target for irrigated rice.

⁹⁷ The PCR for RLEEP reported an increase in soybean and groundnut yields by 100%. Increases in yields under the project were attributed to seed selection, double-row planting, and pest and disease management, among others. The impact assessment (in 2017) noted an overproduction for commodities promoted by the programme, such as soya, groundnuts and sunflower, leading to an erosion of market prices.

⁹⁸ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

⁹⁹ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹⁰⁰ IFAD. 2016 & 2021. SAPP Impact Assessment.

¹⁰¹ According to the 2019 Annual Outcome Survey.

128. **COVID impact.** The COVID-19 pandemic has, again, revealed the fragility of farmers' livelihoods. The PRIDE MTR (2021) reported a substantial reduction in gross margins for most rainfed crops. Maize had a reduced gross margin from MWK 85,411/ha at baseline to MKW 12,482/ha at MTR. Major contributing factors to this decline were the limited access to markets due to COVID-19 and decreased productivity for some crops. Difficulties in accessing markets during COVID-19 lockdowns have also affected farmers' incomes. The project is currently developing a mobile app that will allow farmers to participate in online marketing using a simple phone or a smartphone.

Food security

129. Project evaluations noted that **farmers continued to grow maize for food security.** The IRLADP impact assessment (2013) noted that food was the most important expenditure item for beneficiary households, accounting for the largest share of expenditure (36.4 per cent). Therefore, the "work for inputs" component under IRLADP was noted for its contribution to food security.¹⁰²
130. In the closed project, the **focus on maize and lack of diversity** was not conducive to improving the nutrition situation.¹⁰³ Farmers needed to diversify production systems to sustain productivity and enhance dietary diversity. Under IRLADP, only 20 per cent of beneficiaries' plots were intercropped compared to 30 per cent for non-beneficiaries.¹⁰⁴
131. **Integration of livestock** into production systems had a positive effect on food security and nutrition, for example the goats and dairy in RLSP.¹⁰⁵ The RLEEP impact assessment concluded that the project did not have an impact on food security for households participating in the soya, potato and groundnuts value chains; it only improved for dairy farmers.¹⁰⁶
132. The ongoing projects (SAPP, PRIDE) have **enhanced attention to diversification and nutrition.** The CSPE field mission also received positive feedback from SAPP and PRIDE beneficiaries, who explained that better farming methods provided a larger harvest; they were also positive about the nutrition lessons. The nutrition-sensitive activities implemented improved dietary diversification in targeted villages.¹⁰⁷ According to the SAPP endline study, programme beneficiaries are 23.46 per cent less food insecure than the control counterparts.¹⁰⁸ However, the two groups do not significantly differ in terms of dietary diversification.

Household income and assets

133. **Despite the increases in productivity, farmers found it still difficult to realize higher incomes due to limited market access.** The IRLADP impact assessment showed that real returns to land increased for all crops. The increase was highest for rice; farmers growing rainfed hybrid maize saw negative real returns to their land.¹⁰⁹ Market access was insufficient and small sizes of irrigated plots limited diversification and economies of scale.¹¹⁰ The problem of limited market access continued into

¹⁰² Documenting lessons learned of the Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP). 2014.

¹⁰³ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹⁰⁴ IRLADP Independent Impact Assessment Survey. 2013.

¹⁰⁵ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹⁰⁶ RLEEP Impact Assessment Survey. 2018.

¹⁰⁷ SAPP Supervision Mission (May 2020) reported that the increased awareness and consumption from Integrated Homestead Farming also contributed to improve nutrition security. The PRIDE MTR (2021) recorded; 6833 integrated homestead gardens, 8229 households receiving training in various nutrition topics support through care groups and dissemination of information through community radios.

¹⁰⁸ Preliminary findings from SAPP Impact Assessment, shared by RIA on 14 March 2022.

¹⁰⁹ IRLADP Independent Impact Assessment Survey. 2013.

¹¹⁰ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

RLEEP, which had a clear focus on value chains and market; yet many farmers continued to rely on vendors coming to their area.¹¹¹

134. Farmers met during the CSPE field mission reported income increases thanks to seed multiplication of crops such as groundnuts and rice, promoted by SAPP.¹¹² FARMSE-supported groups reported that seed money and credit from Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) helped cover household expenditure and expand business or farming production. Some beneficiaries have acquired household assets such as bicycles, solar power systems, and small livestock, such as goats, pigs and chickens, and are able to run small businesses (see annex IX).
135. According to the SAPP endline study, there has been a small increase in the estimated income from crop production.¹¹³ The SAPP project, which had a strong focus on agriculture and agricultural producers, did not lead to a reduction in the number of income sources. Furthermore, beneficiaries did not observe a significant increase in access to market compared to the control groups. The study did not find significant differences on either productive or livelihood assets nor on livestock between beneficiaries and the comparison group.

Human and social capital and empowerment

136. The country programme has strengthened **beneficiary skills and capacity** in areas such as livestock production, marketing, GAPs, financial literacy and several other areas, including skills development for government staff at national and district levels. Exposure to agriculture extension services and trainings on improved farming practices were among the positive achievements for SAPP farmers groups met during the CSPE field mission.¹¹⁴ The project has promoted problem-solving skills and household methodologies are likely to have long-term positive impacts.¹¹⁵
137. **Community-level organizations supported by the project were often not able to continue their activities after project closure.** The programme has mobilized many organizations such as producer groups (SAPP and RLEEP), Water User Associations (IRLADP, PRIDE), VSLAs and CBFOs (FARMSE). The groups have gained capacity in group dynamics, leadership and, for some, in savings and credit. Nevertheless, they often lacked the formal recognition required to carry out their business and, despite the investments made, many organizations were not fully functional by the end of the projects. Village Development Committees (VDCs) initially supported by RLSP were later hampered by limited local government funding (see section III.G, Sustainability).¹¹⁶ Farmers groups supported by RLEEP were not formalized and empowered to engage with other value chain actors, in particular vendors, traders and processors. Apart from dairy groups, farmer groups were not able to make effective use of the marketing and storage facilities built under the programme.¹¹⁷ Only 15 per cent of the WUAs set by IRLADP were formally registered as independent legal entities.¹¹⁸ None of the WUAs from PRIDE has been registered, and there is a need to further strengthen these newly formed and trained groups before they will be able to manage the infrastructure provided.

¹¹¹ RLEEP Value for Money Study. 2016. The study reported that 42 per cent of the respondents did not have access alternative market.

¹¹² For SAPP, preliminary findings from SAPP End line Impact Assessment (2021) show evidence of increased gross crop income and total wage earned.

¹¹³ According to the preliminary results on SAPP endline study, shared by RIA on 14 March 2022, gross income from crop production increased by 28 per cent, compared to the comparison group.

¹¹⁴ For instance, farmers reported to experience an increase in food security and livelihoods after exposure to demonstration sites with better farming methods and Conservation Agriculture practices learned from extension workers, which enabled them to generate more durable harvest and sell the surplus.

¹¹⁵ IFAD. 2020. SAPP Supervision Report.

¹¹⁶ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹¹⁷ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

¹¹⁸ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

Institutions and policies

138. **Slow progress on government reforms** prevented past projects from making an impact on institutions and policies. The RLSP was not able to contribute to the decentralization process, which was stalled at that time; the planned policy dialogue subcomponent was never implemented. High staff turnover and vacancies in ministries and district offices, and the reliance on external consultants and support, was not conducive to effective engagement and follow-up. For example, IRLADP aimed to support the institutionalization of Water Users Associations (WUAs) by drafting a WUA constitution. It assisted the Department of Irrigation (DOI) to prepare an M&E framework and a WUA training manual. However, in 2020 only 13 out of 91 WUAs formally registered as independent legal entities, as most WUAs could not continue without external support.¹¹⁹
139. RLEEP has made significant strives to support **value-chain governance through partnerships with non-government partners**. It supported advocacy through the commodity platforms – namely dairy, and roots and tubers platforms, which led to the revision of some tax laws and the introduction of potato production standards. After project closure, the platforms were reportedly in the process of developing and implementing measures to enhance self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability. At the same time, there were policy gaps, which the programme did not address, such as the Milk and Milk Products Act, which was not conducive to the development of dairy value chains.¹²⁰ Positive policy results were noted for SAPP and FARMSE (see section on policy engagement).
140. **Overall poverty impact**. District-level data show the deep-rooted and widespread nature of poverty and food insecurity in Malawi, indicating that for enhanced impact the root causes of poverty and food insecurity must be addressed. The closed projects have registered gains in productivity while they were still ongoing, but productivity gains eroded as soon as farmers stopped receiving inputs (fertilizer, improved seeds) and services. Moreover, the closed projects had no impact on diversifying production systems and securing reliable market access for smallholder farmers. For the same reasons, the closed projects did not have an impact on food security. The ongoing projects have increased attention to food security and nutrition. The SAPP endline survey found that the project has reduced food insecurity, but dietary diversity did not increase. The project's impact on market access was not significant. The country programme has supported a large number of farmer groups and WUAs, but they lack formal registration and are insufficiently empowered. The CSPE rates poverty impact as **moderately satisfactory (4)**

F. Gender equality and women's empowerment

141. IFAD Portfolio in Malawi has actively promoted gender equality and women empowerment, encouraging participation of women in all activities and promoting household methodologies to address root causes of inequalities and power imbalances. The programme designs for SAPP, FARMSE and PRIDE and, to some extent, RLEEP, set up affirmative action quotas for women's participation, with overall good results in the mobilization of women to access the programme services. PRIDE and FARMSE have also developed gender and youth mainstreaming strategies.
142. **Focus on women** has increased over the evaluation period. For example, the IRLADP design did not include specific interventions to address gender inequalities, but it later introduced the Household Methodology Approach (HHA), which helped address gender issues in the household and ensure equal participation of women and men in the project. The impact assessment of IRLADP indicates that the project support to women beneficiaries was adequate and effective, and that women's

¹¹⁹ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

¹²⁰ The RLEEP observed that the current law prohibits the sale of raw milk or locally processed milk to consumers. This law favours the big processors, which have no incentive to improve milk prices (IOE, 2020 RLEEP PPE).

participation was satisfactory.¹²¹ The design of RLEEP defined a minimum quota for the participation of women, with good results in the participation of women in training, although this did not lead to significant impacts in terms of benefits from actual implementation and follow-up of the activities.¹²²

143. In practice, women's participation in agricultural-related activities varied according to the traditional division of labour. Women's participation was higher in activities related to legumes crops such as cow peas, beans, pigeon peas, ground nuts and soybean (SAPP, adaptive research component) and to small livestock production (RLSP, RLEEP, SAPP).¹²³ Large livestock and dairy value chains remained a male domain (RLEEP, SAPP).
144. FARMSE greatly improved the focus on women's access to finance. Women constitute 68 per cent of the UPG beneficiaries. Apart from the availability of seed capital, the beneficiaries reported increased knowledge and skills in financial literacy, business skills, promotion of group savings, management of savings and credit, and enterprise selection. On average, women constitute 77 per cent of the members of the CBFOs and represent 60 per cent of the loan beneficiaries. However, many women reported that they were excluded from access to finance, due to loan delays from FSPs, high interest rates (up to 6 per cent per month), and limited ability to access and use digital financial services.
145. **Equal workloads.** The programme did not invest in labour-saving technologies for women. Some improvements were achieved through the provision of cooking stoves (SAPP)¹²⁴ and potable water (RLSP). However, the absence of data on women's workloads is striking, given the country programme's focus on farming technologies. For example, the IRLDP evaluation notes that the programme promoted labour-intensive staple crops that are usually looked after by women.¹²⁵ The introduction of conservation agriculture and GAPs through SAPP may reduce the labour burden for both men and women, for example for weeding. In addition, some women reported that with disposable income from the IFAD projects, they could hire casual labourers to perform farm duties such as planting, weeding, and processing, which they normally do.
146. **Access to and control over assets.** From the closed projects, little information was available on the extent of women's control of assets in the Malawi portfolio. The ongoing projects have placed greater emphasis on women's access to assets. SAPP supported a pass-on scheme for small livestock – namely chicken and goats, which greatly benefited women and youth especially in supporting household nutrition, as well as boosting women and youth ownership of small animals as assets. However, only a small percentage of the target households had received any goat (29 per cent) or chicken (40 per cent) by the end of the ninth year. FARMSE provided seed money for asset acquisition, with positive impacts noted in living conditions. Women interviewed by the CSPE mission reported that disposable income from VSLAs and sale of agricultural products allowed them to improve housing structures and to connect to electricity through solar panels or connection to the national electricity grid.
147. **Voice and decision-making.** The IFAD portfolio in Malawi has largely provided opportunities for women's voices to be heard in the programme activities. This is seen from the community mobilization that has emphasized women's participation from the onset. The use of Participatory Rural Appraisal methodologies in community mobilization and the HHA during implementation have helped to strengthen women's

¹²¹ MoA's irrigation database shows that women beneficiaries participating in IRLADP-supported sites was 57 per cent (out of 13,105 beneficiaries). (Source: D. H. Ng'ong'ola et al. 2013. IRLADP Independent Impact Assessment Survey.)

¹²² IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

¹²³ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹²⁴ 11,905 (60 per cent) women headed households and 7,937 (40 per cent) men headed households received cook-stoves.

¹²⁵ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

voices and decision-making, especially in recent programme interventions and group activities. Earlier projects did not have a strategy for gender mainstreaming but promoted the participation of women as a way of ensuring their access to programme activities. The RLSP PPE notes that women’s participation in local governments as well as VDCs was low.¹²⁶ Evaluation of IRLADP, however, notes that the project’s indicators with gender disaggregated targets were all achieved, especially those on the representation of women at WUAs, Village Development Committees, farmer business organizations, and the Input for Asset public works programme.¹²⁷ Similar findings were reported from field visits to SAPP and FARMSE groups. SAPP and FARMSE groups (and especially VSLAs and CBFOs) have more women than men in leadership committees. On the other hand, in SAPP only 36 per cent of the lead farmers are women, showing that women are not consistently empowered as “agents of change.”

Box 1

Participation of women and youth in SAPP and FARMSE group

- The 13 SAPP groups visited in four districts (Chitipa, Balaka, Chiradzulu and Nkhotakhota) had a total of 66 per cent women membership and 34 per cent men membership. An average of 63 per cent of women occupied the leadership committees, and 37 per cent of men. While youth constituted an average of 20 per cent of the membership in the 13 groups, only 5.3 per cent of the youth occupied leadership positions, with nine groups having no youth in leadership.
- The 11 FARMSE groups visited by the CSPE team in Chiladzulu, Balaka and Lilongwe, had 82 per cent female members with women occupying 74 per cent of the leadership positions. Unlike in SAPP or PRIDE, the youth also tended to do better in leadership in the FARMSE groups visited, where the 11 groups with an average of 19 per cent youth membership had an average of 27 per cent of the leadership positions.

Source: CSPE field visits.

148. **Gender transformative results.** Project designs have included gender transformative toolkits in a quest to address the root causes of inequality, power imbalances, poverty and climate change.¹²⁸ IRLADP introduced the HHM to address gender and HIV/AIDS issues within the household (box 2). The approach was judged successful in influencing how women, gender decision-making and HIV/AIDS issues were included in social and environmental safeguards and mitigation measures in the design of the second ASWAp.¹²⁹

Box 2

Household methodologies

The Household Methodologies Approach uses a variety of participatory methodologies, such as Household Mentoring, and Gender Action Learning System that tackle underlying social norms, attitudes, behaviors and systems, which are at the root of gender inequality. The aim is to enable family members to work together to improve relations and decision-making, and achieve more equitable workloads, with a purpose to strengthen the overall well-being of the household and its members.

Source: IFAD. 2014. Household methodologies: harnessing the family’s potential for change. Gender, targeting and social inclusion.

149. Since then, the country programme has introduced HHM in other projects, including SAPP, PRIDE and FARMSE, although different approaches were used to roll it out and results varied accordingly. SAPP, which is implemented within the government system, has fully mainstreamed HHM. In 2015, it developed a Household Approach

¹²⁶ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹²⁷ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

¹²⁸ Gender transformation in IFAD terms “requires addressing the root causes generating and reproducing economic, social, political and environmental problems and inequities, and not just addressing their symptoms”, challenges social normal and ways of working, and transformation (IFAD. 2019. Mainstreaming Gender-transformative Approaches at IFAD).

¹²⁹ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

Implementation Manual for extension workers and local facilitators,¹³⁰ and cascaded HHM training from national, to district and local-level facilitators. However, data for household coverage of HHM was not readily available. FARMSE is at an early stage of introducing the HHM and this is not yet uniformly applied among implementing partners. HHM interventions by PRIDE have started the roll-out, with 50 facilitators working in nearly 250 peer households in Phalombe, Rumbi and Zomba.¹³¹

150. Reportedly, HHM has attempted to close some gender gaps at the household level, and contributed to some level of women's empowerment, especially in their capacity to influence decisions regarding farming and the household. However, the approach still needs to be rolled out to the ongoing projects. There is a need to strengthen gender mainstreaming capacity in FARMSE Project Implementation Unit and especially among the FSPs. It was apparent from the CSPE field visits that some FARMSE FSPs did not have the right set of skills or the capacity to carry out gender-responsive interventions. Some of the banks, for example, were purely focused on bank operations, without a strategy for community entry and engagement to successfully mobilize and engage with the CBFOs and VSLAs.
151. **Overall gender performance.** The IFAD programme portfolio contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment. Positive contributions were particularly noted in: (i) women's participation in country programme activities; (ii) increased focus on addressing economic challenges of women-headed households; and (iii) implementation of household methodologies that have the potential for supporting women's equality and empowerment in decision-making. Changes in gender division of labour and women's workloads were not yet visible. Household methodologies show some promising results, but these have to be brought to scale to be truly transformative. The CSPE rates gender as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

G. Sustainability and scaling up

152. The closed projects provide a mixed picture on sustainability. Projects achieved sustainability for some activities, but others could not be sustained beyond the loans' life. Technologies were not replicated beyond project sites. Sustainability was weak due in part to the unrealistic exit strategies built on the assumption that local governments would continue to provide institutional support and take over the programme's activities (IRLADP, RLEEP). Participation of the private sector was also insufficient to ensure sustainability.
153. **Socio-economic sustainability.** In the context of the Malawi country programme, socio-economic sustainability greatly depends on the extent to which smallholders are able to balance food security, market opportunities and climate resilience. In the past, interventions were often lopsided. RLSP evaluation showed that focus on maize production did not ensure food security in the medium and long term, nor did it foster a business-oriented mindset. Other RLSP components, however, have functioned in the aftermath of the project: the goat and dairy cow pass-on system is having a significant positive impact on farmers' resilience to climate change and other sources of vulnerability. The limited sustainability of agricultural productivity under IRLADP has been discussed under impact.¹³²
154. The RLEEP PPE conducted two years after the project closed realized that "the positive changes found with regard to group formation and increased productivity had already started eroding due to weak market linkages and low prices."¹³³ Apart from dairy groups, farmer groups were not able to aggregate and sell their produce after the end of the programme. Certain technological choices also proved to be socially unsustainable, such the approaches introduced in the honey and the dairy value chains that were soon abandoned by the farmers.

¹³⁰ IFAD. 2016. SAPP Mid-term Review report. Main report and appendices. (Mission dates: 01 – 21 May 2016).

¹³¹ PRIDE Annual report, and Gender and Youth Targeting report.

¹³² IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

¹³³ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW (p.25).

155. The SAPP endline study showed that crop diversification improved on-farm resilience and food security, thus reducing the need for coping strategies, such as wage work.¹³⁴ At the same time, SAPP smallholders were not better than others at recovering from climate-related shocks and they were less likely to recover from non-climate-related shocks. The midline survey asked if the benefits provided by the GAPs actually exceeded the losses in production, shedding doubts on the longer-term sustainability of the GAPs.¹³⁵
156. **Institutional sustainability.** IFAD programmes have invested in trainings for group strengthening and operations such as management of VSLAs. The level of engagement for self-mobilized groups was high and is likely to be self-sustaining. Where rural groups and institutions have been linked to financial services providers or farmer's groups are linked to seed companies, the relationship is likely to continue. However, the endline evaluations of the closed projects often raised concerns about the sustainability of institutions created or supported by IFAD.
157. The activities of the VDCs supported by RLSP were hampered by the limited and uncertain funding available to the local governments after the programme closed. Most WUAs created under IRLADP were not able to formalize their status. In addition, the MoA did not provide effective backstopping to WUAs for them to undertake operations and maintenance involving bigger works, thereby limiting the WUAs to deal with smaller jobs only.¹³⁶
158. RLEEP had limited success in sustaining institutional capacity at the subnational level. For example, following the end of IFAD funding¹³⁷, district councils could not continue sustaining infrastructure projects and farmer groups were not able to utilize the market warehouses fully, either because of insufficient production or because they ceased to function. The PPE observed that the benefits already started eroding due to weak market linkages and low prices. There were also unresolved institutional issues, such as ownership and management of the warehouses.
159. The institutional sustainability of ongoing projects raises concerns too. For instance, though good district and subdistrict structures exist to facilitate the implementation, coordination and monitoring of IFAD-supported interventions, they do not always meet, thereby undermining their performance and functionality. Also, it is questionable if newly created groups, such as the new CBFOs in FARMSE, will continue to operate once the programme ends.
160. **Technical sustainability.** For infrastructure, technical sustainability was often a challenge since it required capacities and funding at the district level. In RLSP, which took a highly decentralized approach, small infrastructures such as bore wells, rural roads, and marketplace and school blocks constructed were well maintained after the end of the project. In RLEEP, on the other hand, there was no agreement in place that district governments would take over the maintenance of the roads and bridges built.¹³⁸
161. Issues of poor quality and insufficient attention to maintenance also undermined the roads constructed under IRLADP.¹³⁹ At the same time, prospects for the sustainability of irrigation schemes seemed good since they were initiated by farmers, who were involved in all stages of the projects.¹⁴⁰ However, the assumption that the government's system for service delivery was sufficiently resourced and staffed to

¹³⁴ Only 63.5 per cent of the survey respondents however reported to have done wage work in 2020, and only about 15 per cent conducted non-agricultural wage activities.

¹³⁵ SAPP Impact Assessment: Midline found that smallholders' decisions to adopt GAPs were not related to their exposure to drought and to general poor climatic conditions. Furthermore, variables like cash and labour constraints, gender of the head of the household and educational levels also did not affect the decision of adopting GAPs.

¹³⁶ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

¹³⁷ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW (p.26).

¹³⁸ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

¹³⁹ IFAD. 2014 *Documenting Lessons Learned of IRLADP*.

¹⁴⁰ D. H. Ng'ong'ola et al. 2013. IRLADP Independent Impact Assessment Survey. Final report submitted to Project Coordinator.

provide assistance to farmers and WUAs in operation and maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure proved to be unrealistic.¹⁴¹

162. **Financial sustainability.** Among the ongoing projects, only SAPP had a clear exit strategy. Government has yet to allocate resources for continuing or scaling up IFAD-supported activities after project completion. The involvement of SPs and the private sector by FARMSE would suggest that the programme's activities may continue beyond the programme's end, although it is not yet confirmed that the Government will continue its collaboration with the FSPs.
163. Recently extended to 2023, SAPP has supported the development of "soft" infrastructure. For example, SAPP strengthened the government extension system, by covering the costs of additional extension workers. As a result, many new positions have been filled at project costs and the new staff have also been trained. The Government has since put these staff on its payroll. The second pillar of SAPP's extension approach are the lead farmers, which has built-in considerations of sustainability. SAPP farmers consistently reported the success of the lead farmer and FFS approach. Lead farmers in SAPP have been working on a purely voluntary basis. The number of FFS graduates who maintained their learning over time is not reported.
164. **Overall sustainability.** The country programme invested heavily into institution-building. Farmers groups and WUAs were usually very active as long as the projects continued. However, once socio-economic benefits started to erode, many of the local organizations also failed to continue their business. Sustainability has met institutional and financial challenges, including insufficient funds and capacities at decentralized levels, low government ownership and insufficient integration of project activities into Government's annual work plans and budgets. For the ongoing projects, it is too early to confirm institutional and technical sustainability. The CSPE rates sustainability as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Scaling up

165. Projects approved and implemented under COSOP 2016–2022 built on practices from previous initiatives, in some cases at a larger scale, and they generally embedded lessons learned from closed projects (e.g. TRADE builds upon RLEEP and PRIDE builds on IRLADP). But in all cases, thematic continuity and geographic roll-out were funded through follow-up loans from IFAD. There is no evidence of up-taking from other development partners, nor Government's commitment to provide financial support for scaling up besides co-funding into IFAD projects.¹⁴²
166. RLSP's livestock pass-on system has demonstrated that it could be implemented on a large scale as an effective means of reaching the very poor. On the other hand, RLSP's operations in microfinance were unsuccessful and unsustainable, and thereby unsuitable for scaling up. The results achieved by IRLADP and RLEEP, albeit delivering pockets of success, have not been expanded from project sites. This was due to the scarce engagement in policy dialogue to overcome some structural issues affecting the programmes' outcomes, but also to the absence of a scaling up strategy.¹⁴³
167. The ongoing projects have learned from those failures, and they identified mechanisms which may enable successful practices to be scaled up in the future. For example, SAPP's HHA, which is being already mainstreamed by district extension units, and the MICF, a multi-donor supported fund of which PRIDE is part of. The Sustainable Agriculture Trust Platform is another mechanism, which may enable the scaling up of CA and related GAPs. The GAPS promoted under SAPP may spread to other extension planning areas and districts with time, and the MoA facilitates

¹⁴¹ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

¹⁴² According to IFAD definition, scaling up implies the proactive role of other actors (government, donors, private sector and so on) in adopting, mainstreaming and/or replicating an initiative or an approach.

¹⁴³ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

increased collaboration across ministries and other organizations.

168. **Overall scaling up.** Evidence on successful scaling up is scarce. Projects approved and implemented under COSOP 2016–2022 continued practices from previous initiatives, in some cases at a larger scale; they generally embedded lessons learned from closed projects. In all evaluated cases, thematic continuity and geographic scaling up of operations have been funded through follow-up loans from IFAD. There is no evidence of up-taking from other development partners at the community level, nor Government’s commitment to provide financial support for scaling up besides co-funding IFAD projects. Scaling up is rated **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Environment and natural resources management and climate change

169. **ENRM.** COSOP 2010–2015 strategic objectives were in line with the sustainable intensification narrative but failed to set a truly integrated approach to farming and NRM. Projects designed under this COSOP (RLSP, RLEEP) did not yet pay sufficient attention to NRM and climate change adaptation.¹⁴⁴ RLSP “interventions towards enhancing the sustainability of agricultural production and NRM were largely marginal and not sustainable post the closure of the programme. The programme did not systematically facilitate integration between cropping systems (e.g. maize and pigeon peas) or facilitate crop-livestock integration and for most part focused on interventions as isolated economic activities”.¹⁴⁵ The emphasis on maize monocropping may undermine soil fertility overtime, eroding the environmental sustainability as well as farmers’ economic returns. Also, the afforestation sub-projects were largely unsustainable, ultimately neglecting the fuel requirements of the target population that continued to use maize stocks with the consequent deprivation of soil organic matter.
170. IRLADP beneficiaries reported that there was environmental degradation along rivers and a reduction in water resources for irrigation, attributing these problems to the increased number of irrigation schemes along the rivers. This indicated that deforested catchment areas and non-IRLADP irrigation schemes without catchment conservation measures were contributing to silting and dwindling water supply in irrigation schemes supported by the project. The impact survey called for a deliberate and concerted effort to curb this challenge as the sustainability of the schemes hinges on this. Additionally, the Project Performance Assessment Report pointed out that the project did not provide incentives for catchment conservation in the upper-stream parts of the water source, and thus compromised the steady and sustained availability of water for irrigation.¹⁴⁶
171. PRIDE activities had a greater focus on NRM and catchment management. The programme established and revamped the Village Natural Resources Management Committees, some of which have already been capacitated and have developed Village-Level Action Plans at a micro-catchment level in collaboration with the VDCs. Capacity building activities are demand-driven, resulting in a concentration of “non-regret activities” such as tree planting, nurseries and assisted natural regeneration.
172. SAPP is promoting GAPs, including measures for improved ENRM, e.g. conservation agriculture (CA), soil fertility improvement techniques, agroforestry promotion practices and in situ water harvesting. Agroforestry practices in cropping systems have shown environmental benefits also on crop production, for example, by promoting the use of fertilizer trees with higher nutrient levels, which support low-income farmers while reducing the use of expensive inorganic fertilizers. Soil fertility mapping has been completed in six SAPP districts and anecdotal evidence of improved yields demonstrates improvements in the land resources base and the reduction of erosion rates.

¹⁴⁴ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

¹⁴⁵ IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW, p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

173. **Climate change adaptation.** CCA has been worryingly absent in the portfolio for a long time. The closed projects did not have a systematic approach to promote CCA practices (RLSP and RLEEP). Among the ongoing projects, FARMSE did not have CCA included in the design. While some implementing partners have been supporting CCA practices, especially through the graduation component, insufficient attention to climate change also presents a financial risk for FARMSE. Climate change severely affects Malawi's rainfed agriculture and will eventually reduce the efficiency of financial services for the agriculture sector.
174. PRIDE and SAPP directly support CCA. SAPP has promoted climate-resilient practices, including sustainable land management (minimum tillage, crop rotation, and agroforestry), livelihood diversification and improved cooking stoves. However, some practices, such as permanent soil cover and mulching are not well adopted.¹⁴⁷ Promotion of rocket stoves reduces wood harvesting and reduces CO² emission. Supervision missions of PRIDE and ERASP saw noticeable improvements in land, forestry and water resource management, with a reduction in sediment yield being observed – although not quantitatively measured. The combined efforts may ultimately reduce pressure on the resource base if the practices are fully rolled out and adopted.
175. **Compliance with environmental and social safeguards** was not appropriate under the previous COSOP. For instance, IRLADP did not pay adequate attention to climate change risks and, hence, did not have enough focus on building resilience to these risks. In addition, its focus on intensive support for specific irrigation schemes came at the expense of a more comprehensive catchment or landscape approach to irrigation development and contribution to higher-level resilience. Even in the case of RLEEP, very little was achieved: FBS training did not include land management techniques, and CCA approaches and technologies were not systematically integrated throughout the programme – a matter that was also noted by farmers themselves during the PPE field visits.¹⁴⁸
176. The evaluation noted that PRIDE produced reasonably high-quality environmental and social impact assessments and environmental and social management plans, as requested by the relevant components. PRIDE is classified as a Category A programme, i.e. the highest risk category with respect to potential social and environmental impacts. To ensure that the required social and environmental safeguards are in place, PRIDE's design has followed the most recent IFAD Social, Environment, and Climate Assessment Procedures (2017 SECAP). The project design report includes an extensive appraisal on the status of CCA, NRM and climate-smart agriculture, alongside a description of the related activities (appendix IV). In addition, an Environmental and Social Management Framework has been produced that details the potential environmental and social impacts as well as the environmental and social management plans.
177. **Lack of tenure security** is an additional risk factor for smallholder farmers which does not seem to be adequately addressed by the current COSOP, and which may severely hinder the sustainability of the environmental benefits, as smallholders do not have incentives to invest in restoration and conservation. There is a need to heighten the sensitization of customary landowners who enter in WUAs to register their land and thus improve the sustainability of their tenure rights.
178. **Overall ENRM and CCA.** Efforts to address ENRM and CCA were insufficient in the closed projects. Attention to ENRM and CCA has increased under the current COSOP, but achievements are insufficiently measured, and their sustainability is uncertain. The significant environmental and climate change issues that Malawi has been facing (including floods, droughts, dry spells and extreme temperatures) render what has

¹⁴⁷ According to FGDs with the community, mulching for instance, has had some challenges such as the plant debris being used as animal fodder; others burn for the plant debris to facilitate catching of mice – which is a delicacy while still others use the debris for fuel.

¹⁴⁸ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

been done inadequate in the face of environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation. ENRM and CCA is rated **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Key points

- Government's increased emphasis on agricultural commercialization is reflected in IFAD programme's shift from an explicit focus on poverty reduction to an approach that aims to reduce rural poverty by transforming smallholder farming through cash crops, access to financial services, and value chain development.
- The country programme has progressed over the evaluation period, adjusting to evolving demands and incorporating lessons from closed projects. COSOP 2016–2022 had strong emphasis on nutrition and climate change. However, the resources allocated for ENRM and climate change are still inadequate.
- Shortcomings in project design persisted, including lack of a preparatory phase in project design, gaps in M&E and low targets set at design. Larger project budgets, new mainstreaming themes and the involvement of a large number of stakeholders often overstretched implementation capacities in the recent projects.
- High turnover, with consequent periodic vacuum of the country director, posed challenges to project implementation. Lack of country presence also limited IFAD's engagement with policy forums and working groups at the national level, including with relevant development partners such as FAO, WFP and IFPRI.
- Coherence of the country programme was strengthened under the COSOP 2016–2020, with several grants well integrated into the loan portfolio, but at the district level there was limited overlap and coordination of operations.
- Achievements under COSOP 2010–2015 were moderate in terms of increasing smallholder productivity and sustained market access. The objectives for COSOP 2016–2022 are reportedly on-track, driven by progress on inclusive rural finance and increased productivity through GAPs.
- Project management performance has improved at a slow pace with the gradual execution of actions recommended by supervision missions. Cost-effectiveness was compromised by long delays in disbursements, which particularly affected infrastructural components and implementation.
- The programme's impact on poverty and food security has been limited. Achievements of past projects' on productivity were short-lived and local organizations such as farmers' groups, FBS and WUAs were often not able to graduate into more stable institutions and enterprises.
- Women's participation in country programme activities was high and there was an increased focus on women's practical and strategic needs. However, projects did not sufficiently realize results in their bid to pursue a truly transformative approach, with aspects of gender division of labour and women's workloads insufficiently addressed.

IV. Performance of partners

A. IFAD performance

179. In general, IFAD performed well during the CSPE period. Supervision missions were generally effective in improving project performance, particularly of ongoing projects. Finally, IFAD was flexible in dealing with unexpected issues, for example when it supported the recruitment of 200 plus community-level extension staff under SAPP or repurposed project funds in response to the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁴⁹
180. **IFAD's project designs** demonstrated continuity in the thematic focus and attention to mainstreaming themes, but also had some persistent shortcomings (discussed in section III.A), such as unrealistic targets and timelines. IFAD's appreciation of the governance context and partner capacities was insufficient. The issue became even more obvious when project budgets became larger (and implementation times shorter). The increasingly complex and unwieldy design overwhelmed project partners with too many innovations and pilots delivered by an increasing number of service providers, which made them difficult to coordinate and supervise – and ultimately diminished the programmes' impact.
181. **Supervision missions** (SMs) were conducted once a year and were often complemented by the implementation support missions. SMs could have been more frequent during the start-up phase, when start-up and implementation were lagging. Issues and recommendations identified by SMs were appropriate in their focus on project management and financial management, such as fiduciary aspect and procurement, which gradually improved the performance of implementation. The composition and technical expertise of the SM teams were not always adequate to guide implementation. For example, earlier SMs did not include an infrastructural specialist.¹⁵⁰ SMs in PRIDE did not include a land expert; in addition, the same expert has been assigned to different positions or a combination of positions in different missions, raising doubt on whether issues could be handled comprehensively. The composition of supervision missions changed frequently, and with this, so did the technical focus of the reporting. Inconsistencies in supervision findings and feedback were also noted by programme implementing partners.¹⁵¹
182. **Monitoring fiduciary risks.** IFAD's performance in programme design and supervision has improved during the time of this CSPE. Under COSOP 2010–2015, fiduciary risks were rated high, and relevant mitigation strategies were not sufficiently identified and incorporated into the programme design. For example, RLSP SMs could not address the gaps in a coherent manner, especially in light of the capacity constraints of financial management (FM) staff at the district level.¹⁵² In 2014, IFAD launched a new Financial Management Dashboard¹⁵³ to monitor and track financial management risks, FM performance and mitigation actions during the whole cycle of the programme. Once this function began during COSOP 2016-2020,¹⁵⁴ the performance of financial management recovered at a slow pace.
183. Recent projects such as PRIDE and FARMSE were designed with a sound fiduciary risk assessment framework; proposed fiduciary risk mitigation actions included lessons from SAPP, IRLADP or RLEEP. IFAD's SMs included financial specialists who could timely identify and address key issues representing fiduciary risks, although frequent changes in SM composition meant that areas reported on were not always consistent.¹⁵⁵ In ongoing programmes, fiduciary risk has been controlled at moderate

¹⁴⁹ In the e-survey, 87 per cent of respondents agreed that IFAD/PMU supervision during project implementation was adequate. Same with positive feedback on IFAD systems and procedures were adequate to support effective implementation of project activities and attainment of results.

¹⁵⁰ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

¹⁵¹ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

¹⁵² IOE. 2017. RLSP Project Performance Evaluation Report 4389-MW.

¹⁵³ <https://intranet.ifad.org/group/guest/-/launch-of-fmd-s-new-system-financial-management-dashboard-fmdb->

¹⁵⁴ It is worth noting that the Financial Management Assessment Questionnaire has been embedded into the Project Fiduciary Risk Assessment Framework as a coherent guidance for finance officers in country project management teams and financial management specialists in the supervision mission.

¹⁵⁵ IOE. 2020. RLEEP Project Performance Evaluation Report 5404-MW.

or low level with well-identified fiduciary risk mitigation actions, contributing to improved overall financial management quality.

184. **Turnover of country directors.** During the period 2015-2017, the Malawi portfolio suffered from periodic vacancies and high turnover of country directors. This was a challenge for programme continuity and implementation, for example in the consistency of supervision recommendations or timely provision of “no objection.” At times, country directors were insufficiently involved in supervision. For RLEEP, the midterm review and project completion report were outsourced to consultant companies, and supervisions were maintained with support from Policy and Technical Advisory Division in IFAD from 2014.
185. **Approval and replenishment of funds** were timely according to project accounting staff, with some exceptions from SAPP and PRIDE. In SAPP, the delayed approval of the additional financing had slowed down the implementation of seasonal activities in agriculture development districts. Slow processing of withdrawal applications was primarily an issue in PRIDE, where approval took 15 days on average; SAPP and FARMSE had eight and seven days, respectively (ESA average: 13 days, see figure 23 in annex V).
186. More recently, IFAD’s **capping of annual financial resources** for the country portfolio makes it difficult for project partners to implement their activities according to project planning. Fewer resources will be disbursed for project activities, including for those already agreed to by IFAD and SPs, risking potential controversies arising around contracts. Capping of resources may affect the reliability of IFAD as a partner and may ultimately erode The Government’s trust.
187. **COVID-19 response.** IFAD responded quickly to the COVID-19 crisis. It approved a project financed from the Rural Poor Stimulus facility (US\$685,150). In addition, it repurposed funds (US\$1.5 million) from the ongoing projects (SAPP, PRIDE and FARMSE) to include additional measures, such as virtual communication and messaging tools and a mobile marketing app. FARMSE was also able to support beneficiaries by front-loading cash transfers; it also increased the number of UPG beneficiaries by 2,600.
188. **IFAD’s overall performance.** Overall, IFAD performed well with regard to several aspects: timely approvals; supervision missions; flexibility to respond to Government’s requests aimed at improving project performance; and progressive reduction of fiduciary risk. However, for the larger part of the evaluation period, inadequate visibility of IFAD at the country level has hindered its involvement in national policy forums with other development partners. More recently, participation and visibility of the country director has increased. Other areas that need improvement include shortcomings in project designs, such as the insufficient assessment of institutional capacities and gaps in M&E systems, and timely approval and replenishment of funds. The CSPE rates IFAD performance as **moderately satisfactory (4)**.

B. Government performance

189. The Government has fulfilled the obligations laid out in the loan agreements, which included: disbursement of adequate counterpart funding to the IFAD-supported projects (albeit with some delays, see section III.D on Efficiency); flexibility in providing IFAD-supported projects with an enabling environment;¹⁵⁶ and good predisposition to respond to the issues raised by SMs, albeit with some gaps, especially in the provision of data, such as in SAPP.
190. **Steering committees did well** in delivering activities and providing strategic oversight, as highlighted in RLEEP PPE and IFAD SMs in FARMSE. Also, the CSPE stakeholder survey conducted in August 2021 gave programme/project steering

¹⁵⁶ This is exemplified by SAPP’s negotiated agreement to have a dedicated officer in the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) offices to deal with counterpart funding issues through VAT rebates; as well as by the change in SAPP’s project management structure after an IFAD SM.

committees the highest score for institutional performance arrangements, compared to other institutions assessed such as independent PMUs and NGO SPs (see annex VI).

191. While the Government has made good strides in fulfilling some of its project implementation obligations, more fundamental structural conditions for agricultural sector transformation have been given inadequate attention. First, there has been a lack of commitment to restructure the Farms Input Subsidies Programme, in spite of evident inefficiencies and the resulting considerable losses. Secondly, decentralization has not been fully carried out, with consequent gaps in project implementation due to weak structures. Thirdly, the recent downward revision of conditions of service for project staff by the Government has had several consequences, such as staff attrition (PRIDE and FARMSE) and the missing renewal of staff contracts in FARMSE (with the result that payment of salaries was suspended for around three months until the time of this report). The slow recruitment of TRADE staff resulted in further delays in the project start-up.
192. **Government ownership** remains inadequate, as it can be detected from two major areas of (in) action. *First*, the inadequate commitment by The Government to roll out decentralization has negatively affected project implementation performance due to capacity gaps at district and subdistrict levels. Secondly, the Government has not allocated adequate resources to support the continuity of IFAD-supported activities following project completion. This was the case with all three closed projects. Likewise, for the ongoing projects, there is no evidence that the Government is supplying adequate complementary funding for scaling up well-performing activities.
193. **Weak coordination.** Although structures exist at both district (e.g. District Stakeholder panels) and subdistrict levels (Area and Village Stakeholder panels; Area Development Committees; Village Development Committees) that could facilitate the implementation and coordination of IFAD-supported interventions, their capacities were not adequately assessed and supported. District-level structures did not always meet as per schedule, causing delays and gaps in the implementation process.
194. The Government was not proactive and did not perform its **M&E responsibilities** adequately. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD) has a dedicated department with the mandate for monitoring and evaluation of all development interventions. However, the MEPD did not produce any evidence or data related to M&E of IFAD-supported projects. Government structures at district and subdistrict level mandated with M&E functions had capacity gaps and logistical challenges which undermined their performance.
195. **Government's fiduciary oversight** was mixed. The overall quality of financial management, current timeliness of submission of withdrawal applications, timeliness of audit and compliance with loan covenants were satisfactory. The PMUs implemented most of the fiduciary recommendations from the supervision missions and audit reports. However, bottlenecks remained at the district level with poor FM capacity, slow disbursement rates, counterpart funds issues, and weak procurement management.
196. **Financial Management Staff** capacity at the district level was inadequate and the supervising function from the central lead agency was not sufficient. For instance, in the first phases of IRLADP, funds struggled to flow from the centralized PCU account to district offices because of weak FM capacity and reporting delays in districts.¹⁵⁷ In some districts, the capacities for accounting and procurement were rather weak until IRLADP provided district staff with training. SAPP FM team's lack of experience led to the delayed posting of transactions in accounting software, irregular bank reconciliations, and unqualified reports. In addition, poor budget monitoring caused excessive overruns, leading to the requirement of reallocation. In PRIDE, the high turnover of district accounting staff continues to be a challenge.

¹⁵⁷ IEG. 2021. IRLADP Project Performance Assessment Report 155283.

197. **Counterpart funds.** In all projects, value-added tax (VAT) had been pre-financed with programme funds, but refunds from the Government appeared to be slow. There is a need for the Government to engage the Malawi Revenue Authority to ensure that VAT refunds are timely budgeted and released to the programmes. Generally speaking, IFAD pre-financing of the government contribution related to duties and taxes is not a best practice and can lead to ineligibility of expenditures.
198. **Procurement management.** Attention to contract administration and management was inadequate. In the case of PRIDE, the essential procurement processes, such as procurement planning, evaluation process, record keeping and collaboration with other services within the PCU, are still deficient. This inefficiency caused significant delays in the submission of withdrawal applications and the implementation of programme activities. For FARMSE, the procurement module with functionality of contracts and commitments management in the accounting software is yet to be implemented.
199. **Government's overall performance.** The Government made good efforts to fulfil its obligations, including: disbursement of adequate counterpart funds (though with some delays); positive responses to IFAD supervision missions' recommendations; its positive stance in handling tax rebates; and good performance of the project steering committees. Areas that need further improvements include M&E and fiduciary oversight performance (with regard to FM skills, disbursements, handling of counterpart funding, and procurement management). In some cases, providing district FM staff with training has improved capacity, but it should have been conducted earlier and more consistently throughout the programme. The CSPE rates government performance as **moderately unsatisfactory (3)**.

Key points

- IFAD performance was good with regard to: timely disbursements of financial commitments; use of feedback from supervision missions; flexibility to respond to Government's requests aimed at improving project performance; and progressive reduction of fiduciary risk. Participation and visibility of the country director have increased.
- Lapses in project designs (including recurring gaps in M&E) and timely approval and replenishment of funds are two areas in need of further improvement.
- The Government made good efforts to fulfil its obligations, including: disbursement of adequate counterpart funds (though with some delays); positive responses to IFAD supervision missions' recommendations; its positive stance in handling tax rebates; and good performance of the project steering committees.
- Government performance can be improved in M&E and fiduciary oversight performance (especially regarding FM staff's skills, disbursements, handling of counterpart funding, and procurement management).

V. Overall achievement of IFAD’s country strategy and programme

200. Overall achievement of IFAD’s country strategy and programme was moderately satisfactory. A consistent strength of the country programme was its focus on poor and marginalized communities and decentralized service delivery. Performance under COSOP 2010–2015 has been largely unsatisfactory. The country programme has since been on a positive trajectory. The CSPE has noted positive achievements, particularly in the relevance and coherence of the country programme, the enhanced focus of the lending programme on COSOP priority themes – including climate change adaptation and gender – and the increased attention to non-lending activities. Persistent challenges were related to weak capacities on the side of implementing partners, which led to long delays and undermined the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the operations. The ambitious and complex nature of the recent programme designs will remain a challenge for implementation, given the existing capacities at national and local levels. Table 11 below summarizes the CSPE ratings according to the evaluation criteria.

Table 11
CSPE ratings

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Rating</i>
Relevance	4
Coherence	4
• Knowledge management	4
• Partnership development	4
• Policy engagement	4
Effectiveness	4
○ Innovation	4
Efficiency	3
Rural poverty impact	4
Sustainability	3
• Scaling up	3
• Natural resource management and climate change adaptation	3
Gender equality and women’s empowerment	4
OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT	4
Partner performance	
• IFAD performance	4
• Government performance	3

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

201. **Over the evaluation period, the country programme has shown continuity and progression.** Following the unsatisfactory performance under COSOP 2010–2015, overall, the country programme has significantly enhanced its relevance and delivery of results. While the programme maintained its thematic focus, it has integrated lessons from the past. Areas of thematic focus were sharpened, more importantly with enhanced focus on ENRM and CCA, and mainstreaming themes, such as nutrition and gender, were consistently followed up. The programme has enlarged collaboration with non-government service providers, and there was good outreach to an increasing number of poor women and men.
202. **Larger and more complex projects have supported a multitude of initiatives and practices.** IFAD's financial allocations have almost doubled over the period. Projects became larger and included an increasing number of stakeholders and service providers to deliver the expected results. The country programme supported a large number of initiatives, innovations, pilots and practices; many of them supported by additional grants. Each project has promoted a broad range of interventions and activities. There were similar activities in different projects. Activities delivered by different projects and service providers were often not well coordinated and connected on the ground.
203. **The programme initiated many positive practices that would need to be sustained and scaled up.** This included the graduation approach targeting ultra-poor people and the partnerships with MFIs under FARMSE; the sustainable farming practices (GAPs) promoted under RLSP, SAPP and PRIDE; and community seed production and farm radio under RLEEP. The country programme has shared and continued some of these practices, but for most of them levels of adoption and scale are not well documented. There were many practices that were adopted, but not continued or scaled up.
204. **The programme had good pro-poor and gender focus but has yet to demonstrate transformative results.** Strategies for targeting poverty have not been consistent throughout the period, but they have sharpened in recent projects, namely through pilots on ultra-poor graduation (FARMSE), precise targeting (SAPP) and more pro-poor value chains (TRADE). The programme has yet to assess whether these strategies were sufficient to transform the livelihoods of very poor smallholder farmers. The programme also reached large numbers of women. Household Methodologies were mainstreamed as a transformative approach, but projects are yet to overcome women's high workloads, traditional norms and gender division of labour. While women are most active in savings groups, they still experience difficulties accessing formal financial services and using digital financial services. Female farmers are more involved in food production and less remunerative value chains.
205. **Smallholder farmers are facing multiple challenges and trade-offs, which the country programme has yet to address in a comprehensive manner.** Trade-offs exist between smallholders' concerns about food self-sufficiency and the transition to market production. Past operations had overly focused on maize monocropping, neglecting market access, and environmental and climate resilience. Recent operations tried to address the multiple challenges through complementary designs, but in practice overlaps and synergies were too few to make a step change. Additional climate change finance will be required to mainstream sustainable agricultural practices. The programme has yet to address the issue of tenure insecurity which may undermine the durability of the environmental benefits. Community organizations were successfully linked with financial service providers, but the issue of MFI liquidity needs to be resolved.
206. **Government's insufficient engagement and capacities in knowledge management, including M&E, were also reasons for the limited scaling up of**

successful practices. Until now, innovation, continuation and roll-out was entirely dependant on IFAD-financed loans and grants. The programme has invested heavily in M&E. Common weaknesses in M&E included: insufficient focus on programme outcomes and impact indicators; insufficient feedback on implementation quality and performance of service providers; and insufficient use of innovative M&E tools financed through grants. In order to support learning from success and failure, the systems should have tracked the extent to which practices were adopted or discontinued.

207. **Institutional capacities were the main bottleneck that undermined the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.** The programme used different institutional arrangements, in line with what was required for effective implementation. Overall, these arrangements worked for the purpose for which they were set up; but all of them had their capacity challenges, and all of them had their costs attached. Common issues included: low efficiency – due to long delays during start up; insufficient capacities for management and coordination; and low-cost effectiveness – in particular of infrastructure investments. Decentralized implementation approaches have met clear limitations with regard to impact, sustainability and scaling up, due to the limited capacities and funds at district levels largely on account of stalled government-led decentralization during both COSOPs.
208. **Food security and climate change resilience are the paramount challenges that the country programme has to address more effectively.** IFAD would have to further enhance its support to sustainable and diversified production systems. On-farm irrigation would be important for farmers to adapt to irregular rainfalls, but IFAD would need to collaborate with international development partners to ensure effective and efficient provision of irrigation infrastructure. IFAD will need to take decisive steps to resolve the ongoing implementation challenges, through realistic implementation planning and effective oversight.

B. Recommendations

209. **As part of its ongoing decentralization, IFAD will establish a stronger country presence.** For the new COSOP, this will open opportunities for enhanced engagement with Government, development partners and other stakeholders and address performance issues through continuous follow-up with implementing partners. During the preparation of the new COSOP IFAD needs to engage with its partners in the development of concrete strategies that would address the persistent performance bottlenecks and enhance the results, sustainability and impact of its operations in the country.
210. **Recommendation 1. Adopt an explicit approach to address chronic food insecurity and malnutrition through diversified and sustainable production systems as COSOP objective.** The programme would need to pursue this objective through a multi-pronged approach: policy engagement, partnerships and practices on the ground. Malawi's Food Systems Dialogue outlines priorities and pathways for partners to align their support.¹⁵⁸ IFAD should work with the Rome-based agencies to identify bottlenecks that prevent wider adoption of diversified production systems. The programme would need to develop methodologies to understand the reasons behind the partial adoption or discontinuation of sustainable agricultural practices and address them effectively to ensure long-term positive impacts. At the implementation level, the programme should apply a two-track approach: supporting cash crops and market access for small-scale commercial farmers and diversified nutritious food production for subsistence-oriented farmers. This would require a differentiated targeting approach, similar to the one developed for SAPP. The role of community-level organizations and farmers networks should be further strengthened, to support them in their key role as multipliers and social safety mechanisms. Digital technologies (mobile networks and apps) may enable farmers

¹⁵⁸ <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/National-Pathway-Report-Malawi.pdf>

to connect with information and institutions that can decrease uncertainty and mitigate risk for food-insecure farmers.

211. **Recommendation 2: Develop a strategic approach for enhancing the impact and scale of successful practices and initiatives.** The new COSOP should include a clear strategy on how it will enhance the impact of successful practices, support coherent roll-out across districts and use the lessons learned to enhance the effectiveness and impact of upcoming initiatives and operations. The individual projects should provide fewer mechanisms of support, but implement them well, supported by strong monitoring. The CSPE provides the following sub-recommendations that should guide the strategy:
- (a) **Continue rolling out good practices and successful initiatives but enhance support of institutional mechanisms for sustainability and scaling up.** Partnerships with national structures such as the value chain platforms (RLEEP/TRADE), the national extension services (SAPP) and platforms and apex institutions (FARMSE) could provide avenues for scaling up. Districts will require direct support in scaling up practices. At the district level, the programme should focus on fewer support mechanisms, which are coordinated with other development partners, to promote synergism among their interventions and ensure financial sustainability.
 - (b) **Deepen promising approaches and practices that are not yet consistently implemented and link them into coherent approaches.** This includes themes such as household methodologies and nutrition. The COSOP should include an approach to monitor implementation by different service partners, draw lessons from strengths and weaknesses and support (and monitor) a more consistent roll-out of the approaches. The programme should also include measures to reduce the drudgery and demand on women's labour, and more youth-specific activities that address interests and needs of youth.
 - (c) **Review performance of new initiatives on an ongoing basis and identify solutions to swiftly address bottlenecks.** This includes, for example, resolving the issue of MFI liquidity, which is holding up access to finance in FARMSE. Solutions might include more complex and time-consuming instruments, such as a guarantee fund or refinancing facility. Other options for consideration could include an apex fund; and/or innovation fund supporting partnering of banks, MFIs and CBFs.
 - (d) **Step up efforts to monitor the adoption and scale of practices from loans and grants, and track results as part of a comprehensive approach to knowledge management at country programme level.** IFAD would need to step up its technical assistance, to enhance the performance of the M&E systems (including data quality) and lessons learning from success *and* failure. In addition, the programme might consider external studies to provide more sophisticated and unbiased methods for monitoring the impact and sustainability of IFAD's interventions. External expertise would be required for climate-related interventions reporting and impact measurement, which should follow international standards (e.g. from IPCC), to enable a more accurate interpretation of the results in projects such as SAPP and PRIDE.
212. **Recommendation 3: Address implementation bottlenecks through targeting specific capacity constraints at various levels.** The COSOP should include concrete solutions to address capacity gaps within specific institutional set-ups. Specific strategies to address recurrent delays in implementation would include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (a) **Project coordination units (PCUs)** will require a preparatory phase for recruiting external project staff. The PCU should provide the required management skills, but also specialized staff with the technical skills to support implementation, such as M&E, gender and specialization in relevant areas such as agricultural production systems, value chains, financial services and others.

Further expertise would also be needed to link the data provided by financial service providers into a comprehensive reporting system in FARMSE. PCUs also need to be provided with tools for assessing implementation capacities and monitoring their performance of service providers.

- (b) **Project offices in Government** will need to develop incentives to attract and retain project management staff. Project offices should include dedicated staff to ensure implementation of cross-cutting issues such as gender, nutrition and climate change.
- (c) **District-level coordination** will require a donor-harmonized approach. In addition, the COSOP should identify mechanisms to support the Government in the implementation of decentralization, for example through the National Local Government Finance Committee, which has a mandate to coordinate donor support to decentralization.
- (d) **Infrastructure investments** will require a preparatory phase, to allow time for government approval and technical design. Furthermore, Government *and* IFAD will need to mobilize the technical expertise required for quality assurance and supervision.

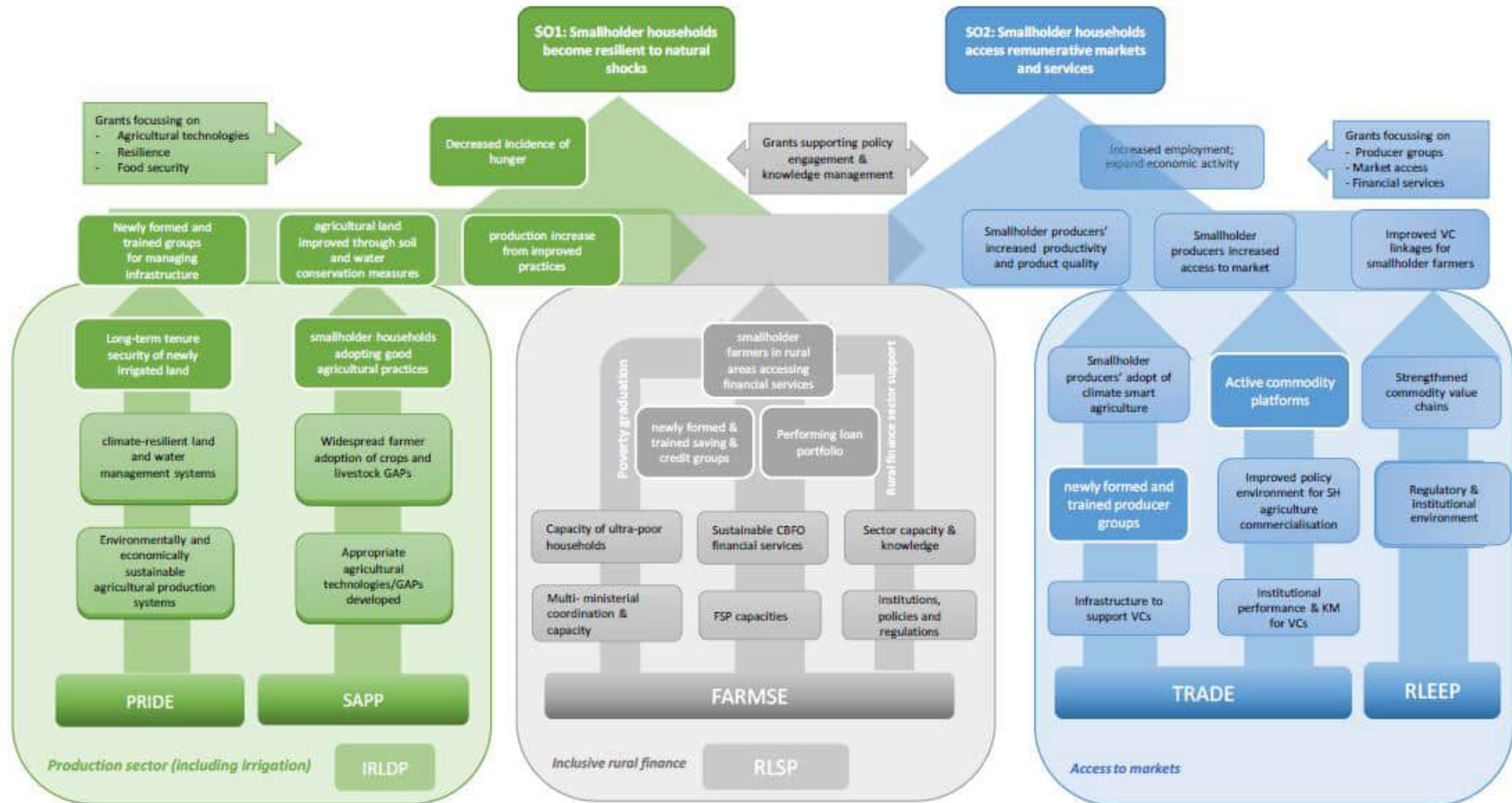
Definition of the evaluation criteria used by IOE

Evaluation criteria	Ratings
<p>Relevance The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the /country strategy and programme are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies ; (ii) the design of the strategy, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the adaptation of the strategy to address changes in the context.</p>	Yes
<p>Coherence This comprises two notions (internal and external coherence). Internal coherence is the synergy of the intervention/country strategy with other IFAD-supported interventions in a country, sector or institution. The external coherence is the consistency of the intervention/strategy with other actors’ interventions in the same context. Non-lending activities are specific domains to assess coherence.</p>	Yes
<p>Knowledge management The extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge.</p>	Yes
<p>Partnership building The extent to which IFAD is building timely, effective and sustainable partnerships with government institutions, private sector, organizations representing marginalized groups and other development partners to cooperate, avoid duplication of efforts and leverage the scaling up of recognized good practices and innovations in support of small-holder agriculture.</p>	Yes
<p>Policy engagement The extent to which IFAD and its country-level stakeholders engage to support dialogue on policy priorities or the design, implementation and assessment of formal institutions, policies and programmes that shape the economic opportunities for large numbers of rural people to move out of poverty.</p>	Yes
<p>Effectiveness The extent to which the country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups. A specific sub-domain of effectiveness relates to Innovation, the extent to which interventions brought a solution (practice, approach/method, process, product, or rule) that is novel, with respect to the specific context, time frame and stakeholders (intended users of the solution), with the purpose of improving performance and/or addressing challenge(s) in relation to rural poverty reduction.¹</p>	Yes Yes
<p>Efficiency The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way. “Economic” is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. “Timely” delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).</p>	Yes

¹ Conditions that qualify an innovation: newness to the context, to the intended users and the intended purpose of improving performance. Furthermore, the 2020 Corporate-level Evaluation on IFAD’s support to Innovation defined transformational innovations as “those that are able to lift poor farmers above a threshold, where they cannot easily fall back after a shock”. Those innovations tackle simultaneously multiple challenges faced by smallholder farmers. In IFAD operation contexts, this happens by packaging / bundling together several small innovations. They are most of the time holistic solutions or approaches applied of implemented by IFAD supported operations.

<p>Partner performance (assessed separately for IFAD and the Government) The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) ensured good design, smooth implementation and the achievement of results and impact and the sustainability of the country programme.</p> <p>The adequacy of the Borrower's assumption of ownership and responsibility during all project phases, including Government, implementing agency, and project company performance in ensuring quality preparation and implementation, compliance with covenants and agreements, establishing the basis for sustainability, and fostering participation by the project's stakeholders.</p>	Yes
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CSPE theory of change



Evaluation framework

Evaluation questions	Methods	Data sources
1. Relevance		
The extent to which: (i) the objectives of the intervention/ strategy are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities and partner and donor policies; (ii) the design of the interventions / strategy, the targeting strategies adopted are consistent with the objectives; and (iii) the intervention / strategy has been (re-) adapted to address changes in the context.		
1.1 Is the country programme relevant and coherent as contribution to the Government's approach to reduce poverty and malnutrition in Malawi?	Review designs for ongoing projects	Programme documents including:
1.2 Are the allocated resources adequate and in line with the COSOP priorities and objectives?	Synthesize findings from project evaluations (closed projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSOP, November 2009 and COSOP, November 2016
1.3 Are the investments into climate change (in terms of size and scale) in line with the aspirations of the COSOP? Are they adequate given the challenges experienced by famers in Malawi? How significant is the contribution of the grants programme?	Review (geographic and social) targeting strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank Project Performance Assessment Report, Malawi, Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project, January 2021
1.4 Are IFAD priority themes (e.g. gender, youth, climate change, and nutrition) sufficiently addressed in the COSOP?	Gender strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design documents (ongoing projects)
1.5 Did the programme have clear criteria and strategies to target the poorest areas and groups? Did the programme/projects have gender strategies?	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio review – various documents
1.6 Are geographic focus and targeting criteria of different projects/programmes (and interventions) sufficiently aligned?	Triangulation/ validation	Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with Government officials, implementing partners, other cooperating partners
1.7 How was the quality of project designs? Were there recurrent or common design issues? Did assumptions hold during the programme period?		GIS data
1.8 Were the institutional arrangements for programme management, coordination and oversight relevant and appropriate for the interventions? What were the common issues related to the working relationship and coordination of programme activities between the PMU at the central level and the DPISTs? Were the roles of PMUs vis-à-vis the lead agency sufficiently clear (e.g. in PRIDE)?		Triangulation (using methods, data sources, questions)
1.9 How relevant (and important) was the choice of SPs for achieving the objectives of the country programme? What was the value added of engaging SPs?		
1.10 Were government capacities (at central and district levels) adequately considered in programme designs? What are the reasons for the continued capacity gaps?		
1.11 To what extent and how did the country programme identify and integrate innovations that are responsive to the country's needs? To what extent were grants used to promote innovation?		
2. Coherence		
This comprises two notions (internal and external coherence). Internal coherence is the synergy of the intervention/country strategy with other IFAD-supported interventions in a country, sector or institution. The external coherence is the consistency of the intervention/strategy with other actors' interventions in the same context. Non-lending activities are specific domains to assess coherence.		

<i>Evaluation questions</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
2.1 How complementary are the IFAD-supported interventions with those supported by other development partners working on similar themes (e.g. climate change adaptation, value chains, rural finance)?	Document review	Programme documents (COSOP, November 2009 and COSOP, November 2016; World Bank Project performance assessment report, Malawi, Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project, January 2021: KIIIs (Government officials, implementing partners, other cooperating partners) Agriculture DPs mapping of interventions Triangulation (using methods, data sources, etc.)
2.2 How coherent were IFAD's investments into community capacity building with approaches supported by other development partners?	Interviews	
2.3 How did IFAD position itself and its work in partnership with other development partners?	Stakeholder survey	
2.4 What mechanisms exist for promoting complementarity, harmonization and coordination with other actors working in the same space?	Triangulation/ validation	
2.5 What contribution did international co-finance make to IFAD's development effectiveness?		
2.6 How coherent are the non-lending activities with the lending portfolio and the overall objectives of the programme and strategy?		
2.7. Are climate-smart technologies (financed by ERASP) being scaled up (or likely to be scaled up) by projects such as PRIDE?		
2.9. Did IFAD contribute to policy discussion drawing from its programme experience?		
2.10. To what extent lessons and knowledge have been gathered, documented and disseminated?		
3. Effectiveness		
The extent to which the country strategy achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results at the time of the evaluation, including any differential results across groups.		
3.1 Did the IFAD country programme (including lending and non-lending activities) achieve the COSOP objectives at the time of this CSPE?	Synthesis of findings from project evaluations (closed projects)	<i>Review of various documents and related sources</i>
3.2 What were the key achievements of the country strategy programme, i.e. what would not have happened, or happened as quickly without the country strategy programme?	MIS data for ongoing projects (progress on outputs and outcomes)	Project reviews and evaluations Project completion reports
3.3 To what extent did the country strategy programme contribute to the intended outcomes? What worked well and why? What did not work well and why?	Interviews	IFAD's Results and Impact Management System ratings.
3.4 To what extent did the non-lending activities contribute to the achievement of the COSOP objectives? What worked well and why? What did not work well and why?	Triangulation/ validation	MIS data from project management office
3.5 Are implementation timelines (of different projects/programmes and interventions) sufficiently synchronised to deliver the expected synergies and complementarities?	Observations from site visits (tbc)	Annual and quarterly progress reports Project Monitoring & Evaluation systems and reports
3.6 What coordination mechanisms are in place for implementing partners to realise the expected synergies and complementarities?		Project supervision reports
3.7 Given the insufficient focus in earlier projects, is the programme on track in achieving the expected results on CCA?		Community visits (tbc)
3.8 What was the contribution of SPs in achieving the COSOP objectives? What was the contribution of SPs financed through grants (AGRA) to loan projects (SAPP)		KIIIs (Information from implementing partners and project participants) Focus Group Discussions – FGDs (Beneficiaries' perceptions/ opinions)

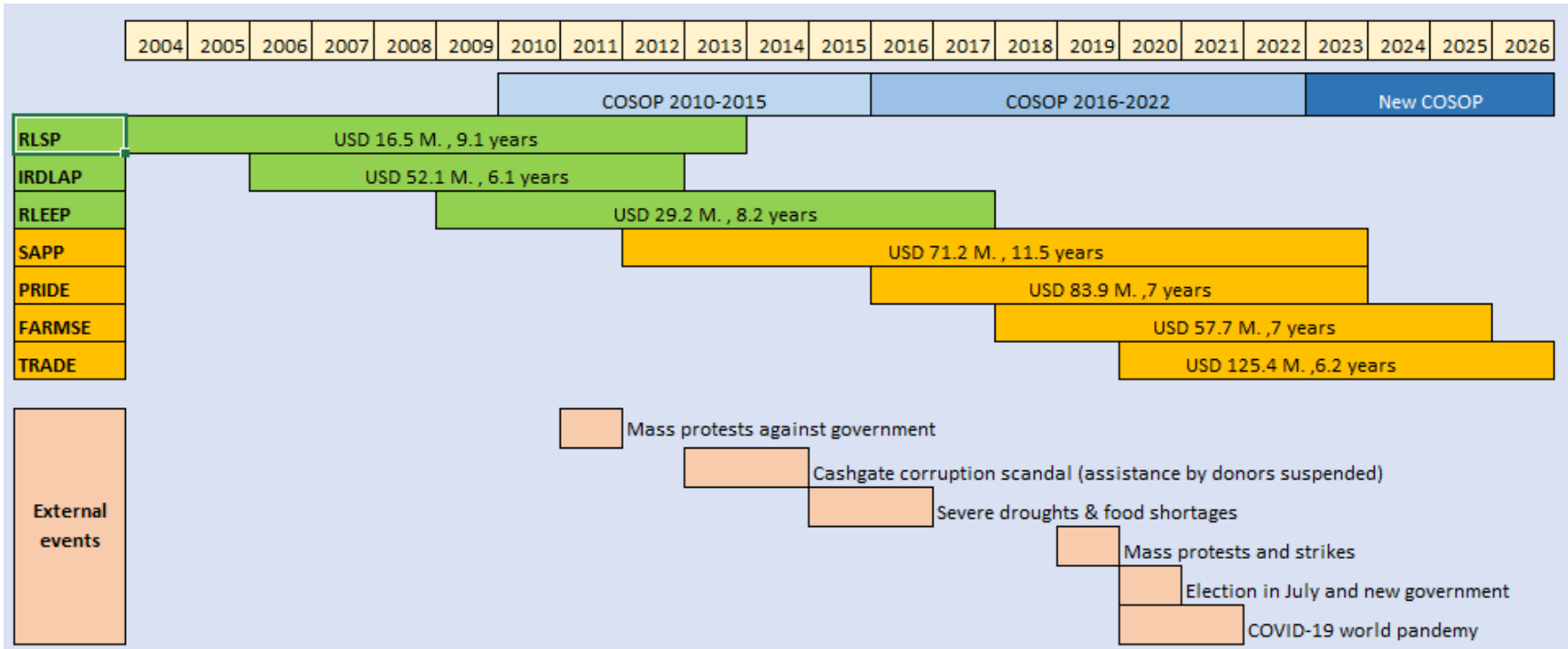
<i>Evaluation questions</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
3.9 What innovations were successfully introduced and scaled up? What factors contributed to the successful introduction and scaling up of these innovations? Which innovations did not do well and why? What could have been done differently to make such innovations succeed?		Triangulation (using methods, data sources, questions)
3.10 To what extent did the programme reduce the vulnerabilities of poor men and women (environmental and economic)? What factors contributed to the success? What were the key challenges? What efforts were employed to address the key challenges and what results did such efforts yield?		
3.11 What factors in the programme/project design had a bearing on effectiveness? Were there changes in the programme/project context, which affected effectiveness? If so, what changes were these and in what way(s) did they affect effectiveness?		
4. Efficiency		
The extent to which the intervention or strategy delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.		
4.1 How well did IFAD and Government manage risks related to capacities and fiduciary management?	Document review	Financial reports
4.2 What are the common reasons for the continued delays during start-up? What were the reasons for the delays in implementation readiness? What are the lessons for IFAD and Government to prevent similar delays in the future?	Financial data analysis Interviews	Audit reports Reviews of other similar projects
4.3 Were the financial, human and technical resources adequate and mobilised in a timely manner? Did funds from co-financing partners arrive in time?	Triangulation/ validation	KIIs
4.4 Were project management offices sufficiently staffed and effective in the execution of tasks?	Cost comparison with other similar projects (comparison of project outputs with those of similar projects)	
4.5 To what extent were district governments able to fulfil the expected roles and responsibilities? What were the main capacity gaps?		
4.6 Was the programme able to use the allocated IFAD resources (PBAS) as expected? What were the main financing instruments and how effective were they used?		
4.7 How was IFAD's human resource deployed and organized to supervise and support the lending portfolio and to engage in non-lending activities?		
4.8 How efficient and effective were grant facilities (as financing instruments) for service delivery?		
4.9 To what extent was value for money achieved during the implementation of COSOP?		
5. Impact		
The extent to which an intervention/country strategy has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.		
5.1 Is there sufficient evidence of farmers benefitting from multiple (IFAD) operations?	Synthesis of evidence from available project evaluations	Project evaluation/review reports
5.2 What contribution did the country programme make to the reduction of poverty in target areas?		MIS/RIMS data
5.3 Did the interventions have the anticipated effects on target groups (including the poorest smallholders, women, youth, persons with disability etc.)?	Survey data from ongoing projects, as available Interviews	Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions
5.4 What changes have taken place in household food security and nutrition and what explains such changes?		

<i>Evaluation questions</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
5.5 What gender-specific results did the programme achieve?	Triangulation/ validation	A few case studies
5.6 To what extent and in what ways did the country programme contribute to more responsive and pro-poor institutions and policies?		Direct observations
5.7 To what extent did the country programme contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment? What climate change adaptation and mitigation measures have been seen at farmer level, community level, institutional level and government policy level as a result of the country strategy and programme? Did the country programme contribute to more responsive and pro-poor institutions and policies?		
6. Sustainability and scaling up		
The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention or strategy continue and are scaled-up (or are likely to continue and be scaled-up) by government authorities, donor organizations, the private sector and other agencies.		
To what extent did the country strategy and programme contribute to long-term institutional, environmental and social sustainability?	Synthesis of evaluation findings (closed projects)	Project evaluation/review reports
6.2 How sustainable are the community organizations (CBOs, VDCs, VNRMCs) supported by the programme?	review of exit strategies (ongoing projects)	Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions
6.3 Is there a clear indication of government commitment in scaling up IFAD's interventions and approaches, for example, in terms of provision of funds for selected activities, human resources availability, continuity of pro-poor policies and participatory development approaches, and institutional support?	Interviews	
6.4 What is the level of engagement, participation and ownership of local communities, grassroots organizations and the rural poor, and are adopted approaches technically viable?	Triangulation/ validation	
6.5. How sustainable were the mechanisms for support? For example, did the lead farmers selected in SAPP continue to fulfil their functions?		
6.5. Do local governance institutions have the capacity to sustain the services and assets?		
Partner performance		
The extent to which IFAD and the Government (including central and local authorities and executing agencies) supported the design, implementation and achievement of results and impact, and the sustainability of the intervention/country programme.		
7. IFAD Performance		
7.1 How well did IFAD assess and manage fiduciary risks? Did IFAD have a consistent approach to monitor and report fiduciary risks, e.g. through supervision?	Document review	Project evaluation/review reports
7.2 How well did IFAD perform in the design, support and supervision of the programme?	Financial data analysis	OBI database
7.3 Did IFAD deploy the required financial and technical resources in an adequate and timely manner?	Interviews	IFAD mission reports
7.4 How effective was IFAD in addressing bottlenecks and supporting the performance of the programme?	Triangulation/ validation	Key Informant Interviews
7.5 How effectively did the IFAD Country Office (where applicable) and the regional team provide support to the country programme and individual operations?		

<i>Evaluation questions</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
7.6 How effectively did IFAD integrate and support non-lending activities as part of the country strategy and programme?		
8. Government performance	Document review	Project evaluation/review reports
8.1. Did Government perform its fiduciary responsibilities? Did it have adequate mechanisms for fiduciary oversight? What were the main bottlenecks at the central and district levels?	Financial data analysis	OBI database
8.2 Did Government demonstrate sufficient ownership in the design and implementation of the country programme?	Interviews	Key Informant Interviews
8.3. How well did Government perform in the execution of loans? Did it perform the required oversight and management functions? Did it mobilise the required resources? Did it address implementation bottlenecks in a timely manner?	Triangulation/ validation	IFAD Mission Reports
8.4 Did the Government consistently support and maintain policies, initiatives and systems that are generally in support of and do not hinder the attainment of project objectives?		

Timeline and list of IFAD-supported operations in Malawi

Timeline of IFAD-supported interventions



Source: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports.

IFAD-supported interventions (a)

ID	Project		Dates				Programme financial data (at approval - US\$ million)	
	Name	Type	Approval	Effective	Completion	Closing		
1100001164	Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP)	Rural Development	12/09/2001	30/08/2004	30/09/2013	31/03/2014	Total programme costs	16.6
							TOTAL IFAD (100% loan)	14.8
							Government of Malawi	1.2
							Beneficiaries	0.5
1100001334	Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP)	Irrigation, Livelihood and Agricultural Development	31/12/2005	24/05/2006	30/06/2012	31/12/2012	Total programme costs	52.1
							TOTAL IFAD (100% loan)	8.0
							Government of Malawi	2.8
							Beneficiaries	1.3
1100001365	Rural Livelihoods Economic Enhancement Programme (RLEEP)	Value Chain	13/12/2007	01/10/2009	31/12/2017	30/06/2018	World Bank International Development Association grant	40.0
							Total programme costs	29.2
							TOTAL IFAD (of which 8.3 loan; 8.4 DSF* grant)	16.7
							Government of Malawi	0.4
1100001534	Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP)	Research / Extension / Training	13/12/2011	24/01/2012	31/03/2021	30/09/2021	Beneficiaries	2.0
							OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	10.0
							Royal Tropical Institute of Netherlands	0.1
							Total programme costs	72.4
1100001670	Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)	Irrigation	17/12/2015	20/12/2016	31/12/2023	30/06/2024	TOTAL IFAD (50% loan; 50% DSF)	60.0
							Government of Malawi	7.1
							Private sector	1.4
							Supplementary funds grants	0.6
1100001670	Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)	Irrigation	17/12/2015	20/12/2016	31/12/2023	30/06/2024	Beneficiaries	3.3
							Total programme costs	84.0
							TOTAL IFAD (of which 26.5 loan; 26.5 DSF; 7.1 ASAP**)	60.1
							Government of Malawi	13.1
1100001670	Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)	Irrigation	17/12/2015	20/12/2016	31/12/2023	30/06/2024	Beneficiaries	7.3
							Private sector	3.0

							Department for International Development (DFID)	0.5
2000001501	Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)	Credit and Financial Services	11/12/2017	06/06/2018	30/06/2025	31/12/2025	Total programme costs	57.7
							TOTAL IFAD (50% loan; 50% DSF grant)	42.0
							Government of Malawi	9.6
							Private sector	6.1
							Total programme costs	125.4
							TOTAL IFAD (of which 5.1 loan; 18.19 DSF grant)	70.0
2000001600	Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme (TRADE)	Value Chain	11/12/2019	28/07/2020	30/09/2026	31/03/2027	Government of Malawi	15.3
							Beneficiaries	8.3
							OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	20.0
							Private sector	11.7

* DSF = Debt Sustainability Framework; **ASAP = Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme Grant.
Source: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports.

IFAD-supported interventions (b)

ID	Project name	Type	Location	Components	Implementation arrangements (from PDRs)	Total cost (million US\$)	Status
1100001164	Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP)	Rural Development	Chiradzulu, Thyolo, Nsanje	<p>Component 1. Investment in human capital, by establishing and strengthening village-level governance structures and training individual beneficiaries in off- and on-farm livelihood activities;</p> <p>Component 2. Village investments, under which initiatives such as agriculture extension services, community water development, rural financial services, small business development were undertaken;</p> <p>Component 3. Programme and policy coordination.</p>	The Ministry of the Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD) was the programme lead agency. A Programme Facilitation Unit (PFU) was established within the MoLGRD to oversee RLSP implementation. In the Districts, the programme operated within the District Assemblies.	16.6	Closed
1100001334	Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP)	Irrigation, Livelihood and Agricultural Development	Chitipa, Lilongwe, Nkhatabay, Phalombe, Rumphu, Dedza, Zomba, Salima, Chikwawa	<p>Component 1. Irrigation rehabilitation and development;</p> <p>Component 2. The Farmer Services and Livelihoods Fund;</p> <p>Component 3. Institutional development and community mobilization; (Revised during the Second Additional component 3 continued under a new title, "Institutional Development and Capacity Enhancement.")</p> <p>Component 4. Project coordination unit and monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Component 5. Contingency financing for disaster risk response. (New component added during the second additional financing)</p>	The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) was the IRLADP lead agency. The Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) and the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) were the project implementing agencies. A dedicated project coordination unit (PCU) was established under the MoAFS to oversee project implementation. Outreach Offices were established in each region, while IRLADP activities at the district level were coordinated by the desk officers in the District Agricultural Development Offices.	52.1	Closed
1100001365	Rural Livelihoods Economic Enhancement Programme (RLEEP)	Value Chain	Chitipa, Karonga, Lilongwe, Nkhatabay, NTCHISI, MCHINJI, DEDZA,	<p>Component 1. Value chain mobilization and organization;</p> <p>Component 2. Agricultural productivity and commercialization;</p> <p>Component 3. Programme facilitation and management.</p>	The MoLGRD was the programme lead agency. An autonomous Programme Support Unit (PSU) within MoLGRD consisting of externally recruited staff, managed programme activities, which were delivered through contracted service providers. At the district level,	29.2	Closed

ID	Project name	Type	Location	Components	Implementation arrangements (from PDRs)	Total cost (million US\$)	Status
			Kasungu, Thyolo, Blantyre		RLEEP was coordinated through the district councils. RLEEP also introduced the District Planning and Implementation Teams, responsible for coordination and implementation of the programme at the local level.		
1100001534	Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP)	Research / Extension / Training	Balaka, Chiradzulu, Chitipa, Lilongwe, Nkhhotakota, Blantyre	Component 1. Adaptive research and knowledge management; Component 2. Farmer adoption of GAPs; Component 3. Programme management and coordination.	MoAIWD is the SAPP Lead agency. SAPP design was fully integrated within the Agricultural Sector Wide Approach ASWAp framework by the ASWAp Secretariat in the MoAIWD and activities were implemented through Government systems. The Executive Management Committee of the ASWAp was the Programme Steering Committee, responsible for providing strategic direction and guidance. SAPP assigned responsibility for field operations to the Agricultural Development Divisions and District Councils.	72.4	Ongoing
1100001670	Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)	Irrigation	Chiradzulu, Chitipa, Karonga, Machinga, Nkhata Bay, Phalombe, Rumphu, Zomba	Component 1. Irrigation development and catchment management; Component 2. Agriculture and market linkages; Component 3. Programme management and coordination.	The MoAIWD is the programme lead agency. The Department of Irrigation (DOI) within MoAIWD oversees the day-to-day coordination of programme activities. The Programme has been implemented by a stand-alone programme coordination office (PCO) responsible for overall programme implementation and coordination. The PCO closely collaborates with local offices of MoAIWD and district coordination structures of the MoLGRD.	83.9	Ongoing
2000001501	Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)	Credit and Financial Services	Malawi	Component 1. Ultra-poor graduation model development and scaling up; Component 2. Support to Financial Innovation and Outreach. Component 3. Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Generation, and Policy.	The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD) is the programme lead agency and the Pensions and Financial Sector Policy division (PFSPD) in MoFEPD is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the programme. The Project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for day-to-day management and coordination of FARMSE activities	57.7	Ongoing

<i>ID</i>	<i>Project name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Components</i>	<i>Implementation arrangements (from PDRs)</i>	<i>Total cost (million US\$)</i>	<i>Status</i>
					hosted by the PFSPD. The PMU operates as an autonomous entity. At district level FARMSE is implemented through the set-up of the district councils.		
2000001600	Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship Programme (TRADE)	Value Chain	Malawi	<p>Component 1. Sustainable Producer-Private Partnerships;</p> <p>Component 2. Enabling environment for Smallholder Commercialization;</p> <p>Component 3. Institutional Support and Programme management.</p>	The MoLGRD is the programme lead agency. The day-to-day implementation and coordination of the programme have been undertaken by the Programme Management Unit (PMU) within MoLGRD. At the local level, the district councils are the main implementing partners of the programme through the Government's decentralized structures. District Planning and Implementation Teams established and capacitated under RLEEP are responsible for coordination and implementation at the local level.	125.4	Ongoing

Sources: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports, project documents, IFAD PDRs.

Full list of IFAD-supported grants that include Malawi as a target country

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
20000003 10	HER Farm Radio	Farm Radio International	GLRG	GR-SM	12/12/2014	01/01/2015	31/03/2017	Thomas, Jessica	170 000	-	170 000	Malawi, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda
20000018 50	IAP GEF Regional_5_ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre	GEF	FULL	04/05/2017	29/05/2017	31/12/2022	Tenou, Yawo Jonky	-	5 723 934	5 723 934	Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Malawi
20000018 48	IAP GEF Regional_3_UNDP	United Nations Development Program	GEF	FULL	04/05/2017	24/04/2018	31/12/2022	Tenou, Yawo Jonky	-	4 500 000	4 500 000	Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Malawi
20000013 25	IAP GEF Regional_1_FAO (Cross-Cutting Capacity Building, Knowledge Services and Coordination Project for Food Security)	Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations	GEF	FULL	04/05/2017	23/04/2018	31/12/2022	Tenou, Yawo Jonky	-	4 407 442	4 407 442	Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Malawi
20000018 47	IAP GEF Regional_2_UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme	GEF	FULL	04/05/2017	23/05/2018	01/01/2022	Tenou, Yawo Jonky	-	3 510 000	3 510 000	Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Malawi
20000018 49	IAP GEF Regional_4_CI	Conservation International	GEF	FULL	04/05/2017	01/04/2018	31/12/2022	Tenou, Yawo Jonky	-	3 510 000	3 510 000	Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Malawi
20000016 28	Scaling up HHM	Stichting Oxfam Novib	GLRG	GR-LG	07/12/2017	07/05/2018	30/06/2022	Jonckheere, Steven	2 250 000	484 000	2 734 000	Malawi, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
20000009 74	Strengthening Capacity for Local Actors on Nutrition Sensitive Agri-	McGill University-Public University in Montreal	GLRG	GR-LG	30/12/2015	21/04/2016	31/12/2019	Cordone, Antonella	2 000 000	-	2 000 000	Malawi, Eritrea, Zambia

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
	Food Value Chain in Zambia and Malawi											
2000003140	Sparking disability	Light for the World International	GLRG	GR-LG	28/10/2020		02/04/2024	Jonckheere, Steven	2 500 000	976 000	3 476 000	Burkina Faso, India, Mozambique, Malawi
2000003438	CPI Sustainable Agri-Lab	Climate Policy Initiative	GLRG	GR-LG	11/09/2020	13/11/2020	01/03/2023	Subsol, Sebastien Pierre Eugene		524 000	524 000	Global (43 countries)
2000001855	Supporting AEW	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services	GLRG	GR-SM	18/09/2017	19/09/2017	31/12/2018	Anyonge, Tom Mwangi	350 000	-	350 000	Global (40 countries)
2000001346	Enhancing the Resilience for Agro-Ecological Systems (ERASP)	Ministry for Finance	GEF	FULL	07/04/2017	30/10/2017	30/09/2022	Barros, Ambrosio Luis Nsingui	-	8 765 963	8 765 963	Malawi
2000002818	AGRF Top-Up	Alliance for A Green Revolution in Africa	CONTRIB	CNTRB-SM	05/09/2019	21/10/2019	27/02/2023	Mukonyora, Bernadette	300 000	-	300 000	Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi
2000001302	Strengthening Landscape-Level Baseline Assessment and Impact Monitoring in East and Southern Africa Project	World Agroforestry Centre	GLRG	GR-LG	21/12/2016	08/05/2017	30/06/2021	Chileshe-Toe, Paxina	2 000 000	-	2 000 000	Malawi, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda
1000004260	Programme for Alleviating Poverty and Protecting Biodiversity	Phytotrade Africa Trust	GLRG	GR-LG	05/05/2012	21/06/2012	30/06/2015	Livingston, Geoffrey	1 500 000	-	1 500 000	Malawi, Botswana, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, South

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
	Through Biotrade Esa (Phytotrade Africa)											Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
2000000829	Up Scaling Interactive ICVT to Increase Uptake for Agricultural Innovations in Tanzania	Farm Radio International	GLRG	GR-LG	12/09/2015	19/10/2015	31/12/2018	Juma, Mwatima	1 500 000	-	1 500 000	Malawi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, United Republic of
2000001303	Agra's Developing and Delivering High Impact Agricultural Technologies Adoptable by Smallholder Farmers (AGRA Agricultural Technologies)	Alliance for A Green Revolution In Africa	GLRG	GR-ARFD	21/12/2016	30/05/2017	30/06/2021	Nyathi, Putso	1 000 000	(documents mention 1 000 000 from recipient but not appearing in OBI)	1 000 000	Malawi, Ethiopia, Mozambique
1000003215	Technical Support for Women Advancement and HIV/Aids Prevention in the Southern Districts of Nsanje, Thyolo and Chiradzulu in Malawi	Ministry for Finance	CSPC	CS-SM	09/10/2008	09/10/2008	30/06/2011		-	209 450	209 450	Malawi
1000004163	LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE TENU	United Nations Human Settlements Programme	GLRG	GR-SM	18/10/2011	31/10/2011	30/04/2013	Liversage, Harold William	200 000	-	200 000	Malawi, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, United Republic of
1000004165	Development for an Innovative Baobab Mobile Unit Technology for Replication Across Southern Africa to Improve the Processing for Baobab Fruit Powder	Phytotrade Africa Trust	GLRG	GR-SM	20/12/2011	22/12/2011	30/09/2013	Livingston, Geoffrey	70 000	-	70 000	Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwe
2000002380	Leveraging SSTC	Alliance for A Green Revolution in Africa	GLRG	GR-SM	29/11/2018	22/01/2019	31/03/2022	Brandford-Arthur, Regina	500 000	599 750	1 099 750	Malawi, Burkina Faso, China, Ethiopia, Ghana,

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
								Ama Baisawah				Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Rep, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Viet Nam
2000001375	ILC: NES 1511 LANDNET MALAWI	Landnet Malawi	ILC	ILC	17/11/2015	20/11/2015	20/11/2016	Mauro, Annalisa	-	150 000	150 000	Malawi
2000001859	ILC NES 1703 LANDNET MALAWI	Landnet Malawi	ILC	ILC	18/05/2017	19/05/2017	19/05/2018	Fiorenza, Andrea	-	150 000	150 000	Malawi
2000000774	ILC: NES 1408 LANDNET MALAWI	Landnet Malawi	ILC	ILC	15/07/2014	24/07/2014	31/07/2015	Mauro, Annalisa	-	80 000	80 000	Malawi
2000002456	NES 1813 LANDNET MALAWI	Landnet Malawi	ILC	ILC	01/08/2018	01/08/2018	30/04/2019	Mauro, Annalisa	-	69 994	69 994	Malawi
2000003578	AFRICA 2004 WOLREC	Women's Legal Resources Centre	ILC	ILC	11/10/2020	14/10/2020	08/09/2022	Mekonen, Yonas	-	69 150	69 150	Malawi
2000000734	ILC: NFC 1407 TSP	Training Support for Partners	ILC	ILC	18/06/2014	08/07/2014	01/07/2015	Mauro, Annalisa	-	29 343	29 343	Malawi
2000001213	ILC: CBA 1503 LANDNETMALAWI	Landnet Malawi	ILC	ILC	04/08/2015	25/08/2015	19/11/2015	Pallas, Sabine	-	25 000	25 000	Malawi
2000000904	ILC NES 1412 LANDNET MALAWI	Landnet Malawi	ILC	ILC	04/11/2014	11/12/2014	28/11/2015	Pallas, Sabine	-	23 650	23 650	Malawi
1000004002	"Leading the Field" Initiative for The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	Food and Agriculture Organization for The United Nations	GLRG	GR-LG	04/05/2011	16/11/2011	31/12/2014	Alcadi, Rima	1 500 000	5 000 000	6 500 000	Ethiopia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Zambia, Malawi
2000000482	Ecosystems in Africa	International Water Management Institute	GLRG	GR-LG	28/01/2014		30/04/2017	Belhamissi, Amine	-	3 700 000	3 700 000	Malawi, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
												Leone, Tanzania, United Republic of
2000003053	SACAU-FO4ACP SUPP IMPL.PHASE	Southern African Confederation for Agricultural Unions	GLRG	GR-LG	23/10/2019	28/10/2019	30/11/2023	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	1 500 000	516 000	2 016 000	Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi
2000002969	FO4ACP_IFAD_SACAU	Southern African Confederation for Agricultural Unions	GLRG	GR-SM	23/07/2019	28/10/2019	30/11/2023	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	1 500 000	1 712 800	3 212 800	Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi
1000004492	Farmers fighting poverty, Food security initiatives of farmers' Organizations in a regional perspective (Africa)	Agricord	GLRG	GR-LG	20/11/2012	27/12/2012	27/12/2016	Longo, Roberto	-	15 230 600	15 230 600	Malawi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia
1000004055	TAF for African Agriculture	Technoserve Construction Company, Inc.	GLRG	GR-LG	19/08/2011	26/09/2011	24/02/2015	Kherallah, Mylene William	-	13 962 200	13 962 200	Malawi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
2000002847	Red meat value chains	International Livestock Research Institute	GLRG	GR-LG	12/08/2020	14/12/2020	23/03/2025	Rota, Antonio	200 000	-	200 000	Zimbabwe, Malawi
2000001537	Time for Action _Land Gov	International Land Coalition	CONTRIB	CNTRB-LG	26/02/2016	01/04/2016	28/02/2019	Liversage, Harold William	-	5 503 000	5 503 000	Global (35 countries)
1000004488	SFOAP EC Contribution	Southern African Confederation for Agricultural Unions	GLRG	GR-LG	12/12/2012	27/03/2013	21/12/2018	Longo, Roberto	-	4 080 736	4 080 736	Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi
1000002813	Programme for Alleviating Rural Poverty by Improving Rice Production in Eastern and Southern Africa	International Rice Research Institute	GLRG	GR-LG	18/04/2007	20/09/2007	30/09/2010	Wholey, Douglas	1 500 000	1 712 800	3 212 800	Burundi, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi
1000004347	Strengthening Country Level Agricultural Advisory Serv. AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services	GLRG	GR-LG	28/09/2012	12/12/2012	31/12/2014	Anyonge, Tom Mwangi	1 000 000	2 022 609	3 022 609	Malawi, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda
1000002906	Programme for Integrated Innovations for Improving Legume Productivity, Market Linkages and Risk Management in Eastern and Southern Africa	International Crops Research Institute for Semiarid Tropics	GLRG	GR-LG	12/09/2007	14/11/2007	31/12/2011	Wholey, Douglas	1 400 000	1 600 000	3 000 000	Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi
2000001317	Improving Rural Financial Inclusion Through Cooperatives	Canadian Cooperative Association: Uganda	GLRG	GR-LG	10/12/2016	14/03/2017	31/03/2021	Hurri, Sauli Matias	2 660 000	-	2 660 000	Malawi, Ethiopia, Tanzania, United Republic of
2000001635	Green Technologies to Facilitate Development	SunDanzer	GLRG	GR-LG	11/12/2017	22/06/2018	30/06/2021	Chitima, Mawira	2 200 000	440 000	2 640 000	Malawi, Mozambique,

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
	for Value Chains Perishable Crops and Animal Products											Rwanda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe
2000000095	Land and Natural Resource Tenure Security Learning Initiative for East and Southern Africa Phase 2 (TSLI-ESA-2)	United Nations Human Settlements Programme	GLRG	GR-LG	07/07/2013	30/10/2013	31/12/2017	Liversage, Harold William	1 425 000	950 000	2 375 000	Malawi, Burundi, Eswatini, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia
2000002830	ILC People-centered_2019	International Land Coalition	GLRG	GR-LG	16/10/2019	07/11/2019	31/12/2020	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	2 200 000	-	2 200 000	Global (26 countries)
1000002727	Programme for Facilitating the Adoption of Conservation Agriculture by Resource Poor Smallholder Farmers in Southern Africa	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center	GLRG	GR-LG	14/12/2006	11/07/2007	30/09/2010	Delve, Robert James	1 500 000	516 000	2 016 000	Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi
2000001053	Land Governance ILC	International Land Coalition	GLRG	GR-LG	06/11/2015	10/12/2015	31/12/2017	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	2 000 000	-	2 000 000	Malawi, Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Congo, The Democratic Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo
2000001792	Land Governance ILC	International Land Coalition	GLRG	GR-LG	19/08/2017	03/11/2017	30/04/2019	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	2 000 000	-	2 000 000	Global (28 countries)

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
1000004250	Programme for scaling up BIOLO	International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology	GLRG	GR-LG	05/05/2012	06/08/2012	30/09/2015	El Khoury, Wafaa	1 000 000	449 975	1 449 975	Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Zambia
2000000671	SFOAP_PAFO	Network for Farmers' and Agricultural Producer Organisations for West Africa	GLRG	GR-LG			21/12/2017	Longo, Roberto	-	1 051 047	1 051 047	Global (41 countries)
1000004065	Understanding the Adoption and Application of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center	GLRG	GR-LG	29/08/2011	27/10/2011	30/06/2014	Delve, Robert James	750 000	227 000	977 000	Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe
1000004390	SFOAP_SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions	GLRG	GR-LG	30/11/2012	27/03/2013	21/12/2018	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	500 000	-	500 000	Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi
2000000145	Mainstreaming Land Policy and Governance in CAADP National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSI Ps)	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	GLRG	GR-SM	25/11/2014	03/09/2015	30/09/2018	Liversage, Harold William	325 000	-	325 000	Malawi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania
1000003539	Ex ante impact assessment OF R	Worldfish Center	GLRG	GR-SM	29/09/2009	29/09/2009	31/03/2012	Rota, Antonio	200 000	-	200 000	Bangladesh, Mali, Malawi
2000000857	AFD-SFOAP	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions	GLRG	GR-LG	13/10/2014	13/10/2014	21/12/2018	Longo, Roberto	-	149 541	149 541	Malawi, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South

Project Id	Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Sub-window	Approval	Entry into Force	Current completion	Manager name	IFAD funds USD	Other funds USD	Total funds USD	Countries
												Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
2000002691	FOACP Inception SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions	GLRG	GR-SM	04/01/2019	20/05/2019	31/07/2019	Audinet De Pieuchon, Jean-Philippe	-	102 740	102 740	Malawi, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
2000002045	Inclusive Global Agrifood Supply Chains: Going behind the Brands; from Commitments to Uptake and Impact	Oxfam America	GLRG	GR-LG	03/08/2018	23/10/2018	31/10/2020	Marquez, Carmina	500 000	1 185 000	1 685 000	Malawi, Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia
2000001515	ICT tools and Plantwise	Cab International	GLRG	GR-LG	03/12/2016	16/03/2017	31/03/2021	Songsermsawas, Tisorn	1 700 000	1 114 000	2 814 000	Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia
2000001514	Linking Research to Impact	Bioversity International	GLRG	GR-LG	03/12/2016	31/07/2017	31/03/2022	Songsermsawas, Tisorn	2 520 000	-	2 520 000	Malawi, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Rep, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria
2000001376	Collecting data development	World Bank: Center for Development Data	GLRG	GR-LG	21/12/2016	09/03/2018	09/03/2022	Garbero, Alessandra	2 300 100	-	2 300 100	Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda
2000001373	MIX METHODS STUDY	Institute for Development Studies	GLRG	GR-LG	03/12/2016	20/03/2017	31/03/2021	Garbero, Alessandra	1 500 000	-	1 500 000	Malawi, Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda
2000000694	Africa to Asia	International Water Management Institute	GLRG	GR-ARFD	01/12/2014	17/03/2015	31/03/2019	Ndavi, Malu Muia	1 200 000	-	1 200 000	Malawi, Afghanistan, Ghana, Uganda

<i>Project Id</i>	<i>Project name</i>	<i>Recipient institution</i>	<i>Window</i>	<i>Sub-window</i>	<i>Approval</i>	<i>Entry into Force</i>	<i>Current completion</i>	<i>Manager name</i>	<i>IFAD funds USD</i>	<i>Other funds USD</i>	<i>Total funds USD</i>	<i>Countries</i>
20000001 65	3ie - Impact evaluations	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation-USA	GLRG	GR-SM	10/12/2013	13/12/2013	27/12/2017	Garbero, Alessandra	500 000	-	500 000	Malawi, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Rep, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia
20000002 74	IFPRI - Impact Evaluation	International Food Policy Research Institute	GLRG	GR-SM	18/12/2013	10/03/2014	31/10/2015	Garbero, Alessandra	500 000	-	500 000	Malawi, Bangladesh, Peru
20000002 75	IIASA - Impact Evaluation	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis	GLRG	GR-SM	18/12/2013	19/12/2013	31/12/2016	Garbero, Alessandra	500 000		500 000	Malawi

Source: IFAD - Oracle Business Intelligence.

Selection of IFAD-supported grants for rapid grant review

Project name	Recipient institution	Window	Approval	Entry into force	Current completion	Grant amount	Focus countries	Theme
Enhancing the Resilience of Agro-Ecological Systems (ERASP)	Ministry of Agriculture	GEF	07/04/2017	30/10/2017	30/09/2022	GEF: US\$ 7 155 963; National Government: US\$ 1 610 000	Malawi	Biodiversity, NRM, climate change
Agra's Developing and Delivering High-Impact Agricultural Technologies Adoptable by Smallholder Farmers (AGRA Agricultural Technologies)	AGRA	IR-ARFD	21/12/2016	30/05/2017	30/06/2021	IFAD: US\$ 1 000 000; Recipient: US\$ 1 000 000	Ethiopia, Mozambique	Malawi, Agronomy
Strengthening Landscape-Level Baseline Assessment and Impact Monitoring in East and Southern Africa Project	ICRAF	GR-LG	21/12/2016	08/05/2017	30/06/2021	IFAD: US\$ 2 000 000	Regional – Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Eswatini	KM/NRM
Green Technologies to Facilitate Development of Value Chains for Perishable Crops and Animal Products	SunDanzer	GR-LG	11/12/2017	22/06/2018	30/06/2021	IFAD: US\$ 2 200 000; SunDanzer 440 000	Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania	Malawi, Rwanda, Farm technology
Improving Rural Financial Inclusion through Cooperatives	CCA: Uganda	GR-LG	10/12/2016	14/03/2017	31/03/2021	IFAD: US\$ 2 660 000; Recipient: US\$ 620 000	Ethiopia, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania	Rural finance
Inclusive Global Agrifood Supply Chains: Going 'Behind the Brands' from Commitments to Uptake and Impact	Oxfam America	GR-LG	03/08/2018	23/10/2018	31/10/2020	IFAD US\$ 500 000; co-funding 1 185 000	Brazil, India, Malawi, Ghana, Guatemala	Policy engagement
Strengthening Capacity of Local Actors on Nutrition Sensitive Agri-Food Value Chain in Zambia and Malawi	McGill University	GR-LG	30/12/2015	21/04/2016	31/12/2019	IFAD: US\$ 2 000 000	Malawi and Zambia	Nutrition
Up Scaling Interactive Information and communications technology to Increase Uptake of Agricultural Innovations in Tanzania	Farm Radio Int.	GR-LG	12/09/2015	19/10/2015	31/12/2018	IFAD: US\$ 1 500 000, Recipient: US\$ 561 564	Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania	Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Farm technology
Mainstreaming Land Policy and Governance in Comprehensive Agriculture Development Plan National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (Nafsi Ps)	UNECA	GR-SM	25/11/2014	03/09/2015	30/09/2018	IFAD: US\$ 325 000; Recipient US\$ 125 000	Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania	Madagascar, NRM
HER Farm Radio	Farm Radio Int.	GR-SM	12/12/2014	01/01/2015	31/03/2017	IFAD: US\$ 170 000	Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda	Social Inclusion
Programme for Alleviating Poverty and Protecting Biodiversity Through Biotrade Esa (Phytotrade Africa)	Phytotrade Africa	GR-LG	05/05/2012	21/06/2012	30/06/2015	IFAD: US\$ 1 500 000; AFD EUR 1 000 000; FFEM EUR 900 000; Local contributions EUR 100 000	South Africa, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe	Biodiversity

<i>Project name</i>	<i>Recipient institution</i>	<i>Window</i>	<i>Approval</i>	<i>Entry into force</i>	<i>Current completion</i>	<i>Grant amount</i>	<i>Focus countries</i>	<i>Theme</i>
"Leading the Field" Initiative of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	FAO	GR-LG	04/05/2011	16/11/2011	31/12/2014	IFAD: US\$ 1 500 000	Global (Ethiopia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Zambia, Malawi)	Biodiversity conservation
Strengthening Country Level Agricultural Advisory Services	AFAAS	GR-LG	28/09/2012	12/12/2012	31/12/2014	IFAD: US\$ 1 000 000 Co-financing: US\$ 2 022 609	Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda	Knowledge transfer/farm technology
Understanding the Adoption and Application of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa	CIMMYT	GR-LG	29/08/2011	27/10/2011	30/06/2014	IFAD: US\$ 750 000, co-financing other donors 227 000	Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Conservation
Development of an Innovative Baobab Mobile Unit Technology for Replication Across Southern Africa to Improve the Processing of Baobab Fruit Powder	Phytotrade Africa Trust	GR-SM	20/12/2011	22/12/2011	30/09/2013	IFAD: US\$ 70 000	Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana	Farm technology
Programme for Integrated Innovations for Improving Legume Productivity, Market Linkages and Risk Management in Eastern and Southern Africa	ICRISAT	GR-LG	12/09/2007	14/11/2007	31/12/2011	IFAD: US\$ 1 400 000	Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi	Agronomy
Technical Support for Women Advancement and HIV/Aids Prevention in the Southern Districts of Nsanje, Thyolo and Chiradzulu in Malawi	Malawi MoF	CS-SM	09/10/2008	09/10/2008	30/06/2011	External funding: 209.450	Malawi	Gender and social inclusion

Source: IFAD - Oracle Business Intelligence.

Supporting tables and graphs

Table 1
Achievements of country programme targets (2010 – 2020)

COSOP objectives	Pathway	Programme/ project	Narrative summary	Key performance indicators*	Cumulative results*	Achievement	
SO1: Smallholder households become resilient to shocks and enhance food and nutrition security	Environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural production systems	SAPP <i>*Key performance indicators: President's report and MTR;</i> <i>Cumulative results and achievement: 2020 Supervision Mission Report and SAPP Midline Impact Assessment</i>	Increase production from improved practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of targeted farmers reporting an average yield increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% (52% women-headed) 	Partially achieved. Improved productivity for maize, soya beans, pigeon peas, and especially beans, widespread farmer adoption of GAPs; but variable adoption of GAPs due to rainfall and temperature shocks.	
			Appropriate agricultural technologies/GAPs developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 20 GAP technologies adapted and released by DAR disaggregated by commodity and area of focus (cover production, storage practices minimizing losses); • 50% of farmers reporting adoption of at least one of the new technologies developed/released by DAR; • 50% of farmers participating in the evaluation of GAPs in on-farm trials are women and at least 70% of them indicate that GAPs respond to their concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 GAP technologies adapted; • 61% of farmers had planted beans, 60% soya beans and cowpeas and 51% pigeon peas in the 2018/19 cropping season which exceeds the target of 50%; • 40% of SAPP beneficiaries indicated that they participated in on-farm trials against a programme target of 60% 		
			Widespread farmer adoption of crops and livestock GAPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 80,000 smallholders adopting GAPs in the Programme area; • 40% of households continue to apply GAPs after Programme support is ended; • At least 50% of target group households receiving extension services on GAPs; • 10,000 lead farmers trained and improved knowledge and skills in GAPs (50% women). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,870 lead farmers have been trained; • The AOS of 2018/19 cropping season found that 33% of SAPP farmers received extension support from extension agents and 12% from lead farmers. 		
			Nutrition support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25,000 households provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition (60% women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26,371 households provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition (60% women) 		
	Climate-resilient land and water management systems	PRIDE <i>*Key performance indicators were revised by MTR</i> <i>Cumulative results: 2019/2020 Annual report</i>	Long-term tenure security of newly irrigated land (Irrigation Development and catchment management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of 9 WUAs managing infrastructure formed or strengthened; • A number of 9 Irrigation schemes with completed land use agreements and water rights certificate; • 3115 ha farmland under water-related infrastructure constructed/rehabilitated with land consolidation and tenure arrangements being completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 land-use agreements have been signed out • 0 Irrigation scheme has been constructed • 0 WUA has registered as independent legal entities 		Off track. Due to several delays, none of the planned irrigation schemes has been constructed as of July 2021; WUAs have not been registered as legal.
			Mainstreaming Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Household Farms established to enhance household nutrition to reach 8190 households; • 13650 households provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1866 households have been supported with nutrition activities and improved nutritional intake; • Activities under this component were 		On track. The share of women has exceeded the target; the identification and

COSOP objectives	Pathway	Programme/ project	Narrative summary	Key performance indicators*	Cumulative results*	Achievement
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19500 households trained in practices to improve their nutrition. 	restricted to the irrigation schemes/sites with feasibility studies	promotion of GAPs are on track.
			Promote Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 GAPs identified and promoted under PRIDE • 19500 households trained in production practices and/or technologies (30% women) • 19500 households provided with climate information services (30% women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 GAPs identified and promoted • 687 households trained in production practices and/or technologies (48% women) • 1080 households provided with climate information services (52% women) 	
		IRLADP <i>*Evidence from IEG Report No. 155283</i>	Increase agricultural productivity of poor rural households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRLADP achieved yield increases of 112.5% of the target for irrigated maize and 230% of the target for irrigated rice • However, government's official production estimates do not show sustainable increases in agricultural productivity over time or across districts in Malawi. 	Partially achieved. The achieved yield increase does not show to be sustainable.	
			Strengthen institutional capacity for long-term irrigation development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRLADP's success in providing infrastructure and the legal framework for irrigation development was substantial, especially the contribution to strengthening WUAs for the successful and sustainable operation of irrigation schemes. • The IRLADP laid the foundation for the registration of WUAs to the Trustees Incorporation Act and the legal framework to manage water resources and to penalize non-members in case of violation. • The IRLADP led to the creation of 91 WUAs, but only 15% of them are formally registered as independent legal entities because of the complex and tedious registration process, undermining their legal and institutional effectiveness. 	Mostly achieved. The contribution to strengthening WUAs for the successful and sustainable operation of irrigation schemes shows to be substantial.	
SO2: Smallholder households access remunerative markets and services	Smallholder farmers in rural areas accessing financial services	FARMSE <i>*Key performance indicators: President's report; Design report</i> <i>Cumulative results: Quarterly reports from IPs; Updated LogFrame as of June 2020</i>	Improve the capacity of ultra-poor households to graduate from poverty, food security and secure livelihood opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,000 persons reached with graduation activities (30% women) • 15,000 persons in rural areas trained in financial literacy and/or use of financial products and services (30% women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20,539 persons reached with graduation activities (75% women) • 20,539 persons in rural areas trained in financial literacy and/or use of financial products and services (75% women) 	On track. The target has achieved with share of women exceeding the target.
			Improved access to structured and sustainable CBFO financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16,143 of existing CBFOs restructured • 5,000 new CBFOs formed • 380,574 retrained CBFO members (30% women) • 90,000 increment rural CBFO members (30% women) • 13,000 of CBFO groups linked to formal financial institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,106 existing CBFOs restructured • 2,908 new CBFOs formed • 158,208 retained CBFO members (78% women) • 66,109 increment rural CBFO members (78% women) • 157 CBFO groups linked to formal financial institutions 	Partially on track. CBFOs have been reconstructed and formed on track; good share of women; however, only 1% CBFOs linked to FFIs
			Enhanced capacity of FSPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37,200 incremental rural clients accessing formal financial services or products by partner FSPs (30% women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 132,717 incremental rural clients accessing formal financial services or products by partner FSPs (41% women) 	On track. The access of rural clients to formal

COSOP objectives	Pathway	Programme/ project	Narrative summary	Key performance indicators*	Cumulative results*	Achievement	
			Multi-ministerial coordination and capacity; Institutions, policies and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 functioning graduation multi-stakeholder platforms supported • 2 existing/new laws, regulations, policies or strategies • 10 rural finance support organizations with improved rural inclusive finance good practice knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 functioning graduation multi-stakeholder platforms supported 	financial services or products has been significantly increased	
		RLSP <i>*Evidence from PPE Report No. 4389-MW</i>	Improve individual and community organizational capacities and capabilities to access resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 478 Village Development Committees (VDC) members have been trained in project and financial management • 4,672 beneficiaries were trained in credit, savings and business management • 132 small businesses accessing rural finance • 1,750 borrowers availed of loan funds from the Opportunity Bank of Malawi • However, there is no evidence that the beneficiaries continued receiving loans from Opportunity Bank after the closure of RLSP. 		Partially achieved. The achieved increased access to finance resources does not show to be sustainable.	
	Smallholder producers increased access to market	TRADE <i>*Key performance indicators: President's report</i>	Smallholder producers increased access to mkt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100,000 small holder producers with improved access to markets (55% women, 50% youth) 			Off track. Activities have not yet started due to several delays.
			Smallholder producers' increased productivity and product quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62,300 households reporting an increase in production 			
			Smallholder producers' adoption of climate-smart agriculture enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% target households reporting adoption of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices 			
			Enabling environment improved for commercialization of smallholder agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of smallholders producers reporting improved agri-business environment • 4 functioning multi-stakeholder commodity platforms supported • 68 storage facilities constructed/rehabilitated • 1,000 km roads constructed, rehabilitated or upgraded 			
	RLEEP <i>*Evidence from PPE Report No. 5403-MW</i>	Strengthen commodity value chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 key constraints in value chain action plans substantially resolved • 75% enterprises handling priority commodities still operational after 3 years • 75% of enterprises reporting profitable operations after 3 years • Strong likelihood of sustainability of enterprises (RIMS) • 75% proportion of all processing facilities still operational after 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 constraints substantially resolved • 78.5% enterprises still operational after 3 years • 78% of enterprises reporting profitable operations after 3 years • Strong likelihood of sustainability of enterprises (RIMS) • 75% proportion of all processing facilities still operational after 3 years 	Mostly achieved. Enterprises reporting operational and profitable.		

COSOP objectives	Pathway	Programme/ project	Narrative summary	Key performance indicators*	Cumulative results*	Achievement
			Enhance regulatory & institutional environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness: improved performance of service providers (RIMS) rated satisfactory 75% of proposed changes to the regulatory/legislative framework enacted 75% of beneficiaries who report improvement in the rules, regulations and administrative systems they have to deal with Effectiveness: promotion of pro-poor policies and institutions (RIMS) rated satisfactory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly satisfactory 55% achieved 22% achieved Unsatisfactory 	Partially achieved. Regulatory and institutional environment still unsatisfactory.
			Improve VC linkages for smallholder farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% increase in volume of produce sold by farmer groups (all produce) 50% increase in sales prices (nominal) of priority commodities sold by farmer groups 75% proportion of new farmer groups still operational after 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12% increase in volume of produce sold by farmer groups (all produce) 15% increase in sales prices (nominal) of priority commodities sold by farmer groups achieved 85% achieved 	Partially achieved. Increase in volume of produce sold by farmers and increase in sales prices unsatisfactory.

* Figures marked in red cannot be verified by the CSPE.

Table 2
COSOP projects coverage by district (2010-2020)

<i>Region</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Cumulative number of COSOP programmes</i>	<i>COSOP programmes (2010-2020)*</i>	<i>2020 MPI</i>	<i>Food insecurity</i>
Central Region	Salima	3	IRLADP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.331	0.637
Southern Region	Machinga	3	PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.329	0.777
Central Region	Dedza	4	IRLADP, RLEEP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.325	0.718
Southern Region	Mangochi	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.322	0.728
Southern Region	Chikwawa	3	IRLADP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.315	0.776
Southern Region	Phalombe	4	IRLADP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.313	0.756
Southern Region	Neno	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.304	0.664
Central Region	Mchinji	3	RLEEP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.301	0.728
Southern Region	Nsanje	3	RLSP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.290	0.710
Central Region	Ntchisi	3	RLEEP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.285	0.630
Central Region	Dowa	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.278	0.635
Southern Region	Mulanje	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.272	0.617
Southern Region	Mwanza	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.256	0.750
Southern Region	Thyolo	4	RLSP, RLEEP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.252	0.680
Central Region	Kasungu	3	RLEEP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.252	0.661
Southern Region	Balaka	3	SAPP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.250	0.715
Southern Region	Zomba	4	IRLADP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.249	0.482
Northern Region	Nkhatabay	5	RLEEP, IRLADP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.230	0.487
Central Region	Ntcheu	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.226	0.670
Central Region	Nkhotakota	3	SAPP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.221	0.539
Southern Region	Chiradzulu	5	RLSP, SAPP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.218	0.699
Central Region	Lilongwe	5	IRLADP, RLEEP, SAPP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.217	0.659
Northern Region	Karonga	4	RLEEP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.189	0.473
Northern Region	Rumphi	4	IRLADP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.175	0.375
Northern Region	Mzimba	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.172	0.577
Southern Region	Blantyre	5	IRLAP, RLEEP, SAPP, FARMSE, TRADE	0.168	0.441
Northern Region	Chitipa	6	IRLAP, RLEEP, SAPP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE	0.142	0.304
Northern Region	Likoma	2	FARMSE, TRADE	0.121	0.459

* Ongoing projects: SAPP, FARMSE (nationwide), PRIDE; Closed projects: RLSP, RLEEP, IRLADP; Upcoming project: TRADE (nationwide).

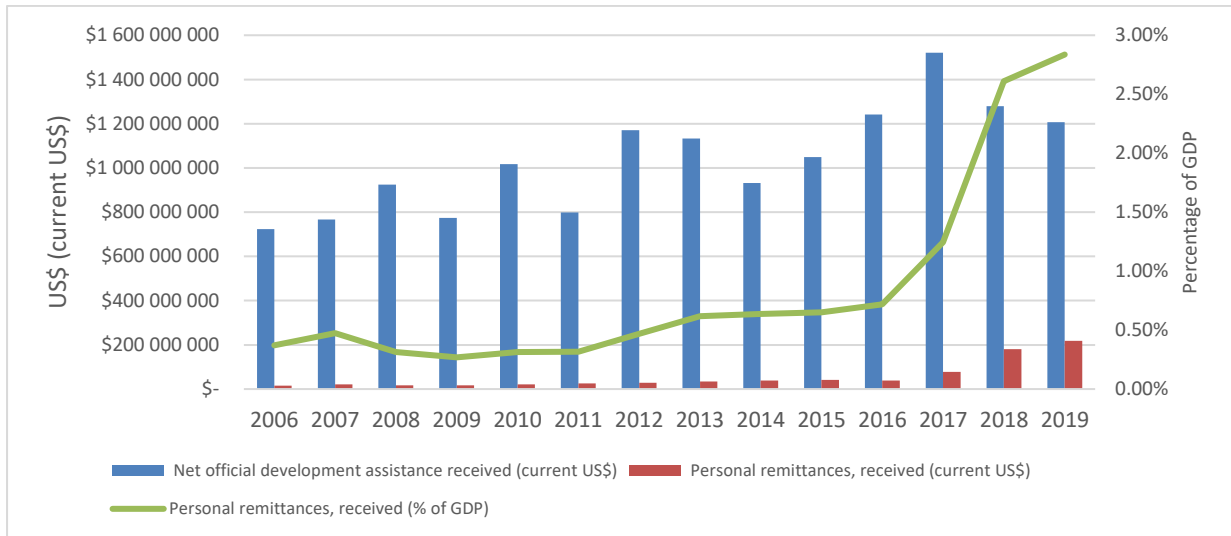
Sources: 2020 MPI; IHS5; project documents.

Table 3
Relevance of project activities to smallholder farmers needs

<i>Issues faced by smallholder farmers</i>	<i>Examples of activities</i>	<i>Projects</i>
High vulnerability to weather-related shocks and resulting food insecurity	Conservation Agriculture (CA); Climate-smart GAPs; Contingency financing for disaster risk response	IRLADP, SAPP, PRIDE
Insecure ownership, land degradation, declining soil fertility and erratic rainfalls	Small-scale irrigation schemes, reservoirs, rainwater harvesting and catchment conservation; Land and water governance; irrigation system development; soil and water conservation; Secure land allocations for irrigated land by WUAs	RLSP, IRLADP, PRIDE
Maize-based subsistence farming system, food insecurity	Agriculture and livestock production; productivity enhancement, soil fertility enhancement; Adaptive research; on-farm trials; promotion of GAPs; Nutrition mainstreaming, homestead food production; improved cooking stoves	RLSP, RLEEP, SAPP, PRIDE
Lack of access to basic infrastructure and finance	Off-farm IGAs; community infrastructure development; VC infrastructure; Ultra-poor graduation (seed capital, financial literacy training) CBFOs support with training and linkages to formal financial institutions and market; support FSPs to expand services in rural areas	RLSP, RLEEP, PRIDE, FARMSE
Lack of access to inputs and markets	Farmer-based organizations (FBOs) procurement support; Inputs for Assets (IFA) Programme; marketing and post-harvest assets support; VC mapping, capacity-building; formation of VC networks; Seed certification and maintenance; seed multiplication and distribution; engagement with agro-dealers; Support business plans of producer organizations; commodity platforms; market information and market intelligence.	IRLADP, RLEEP, SAPP, PRIDE, TRADE
Weak Institutional capacities	Capacity-building for district and NGO personnel, farmer groups; publicity and awareness campaigns; technical and business training for input suppliers, traders and processors Support Poverty Graduation Policy and Systems; development and/or review of broader and inclusive Rural Finance Policies/Strategy. Support community planning and implementation.	RLSP, RLEEP, IRLADP, FARMSE, TRADE
Gender inequality	Use of Household approach Gender Action Learning System (GALS) tools training and implementation.	SAPP, PRIDE, FARMSE, TRADE

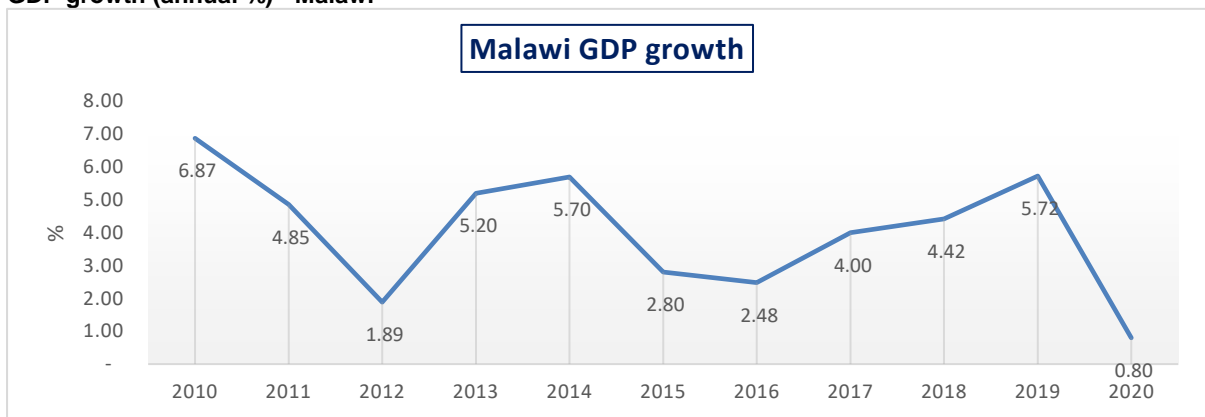
Source: Project documents.

Figure 1
Bilateral ODA commitments and remittances to Malawi in absolute terms (current US\$) and proportional to GDP, between 2006 and 2019



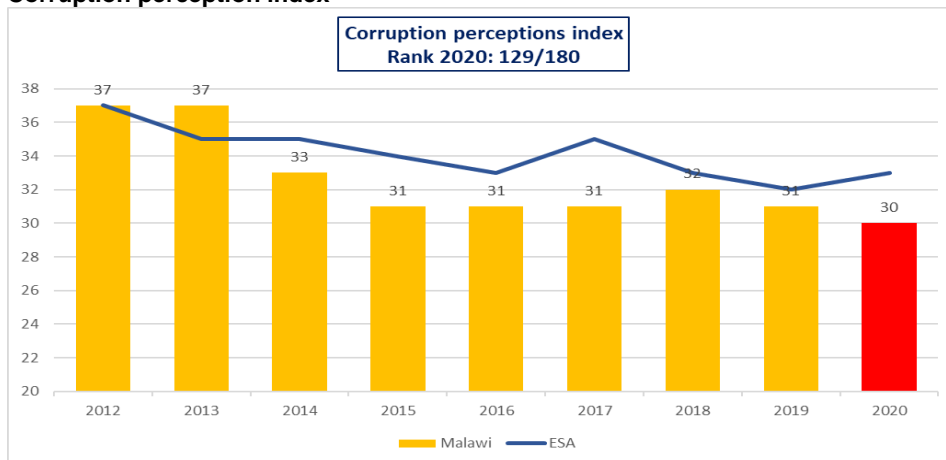
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators Database. 2021.

Figure 2
GDP growth (annual %) - Malawi



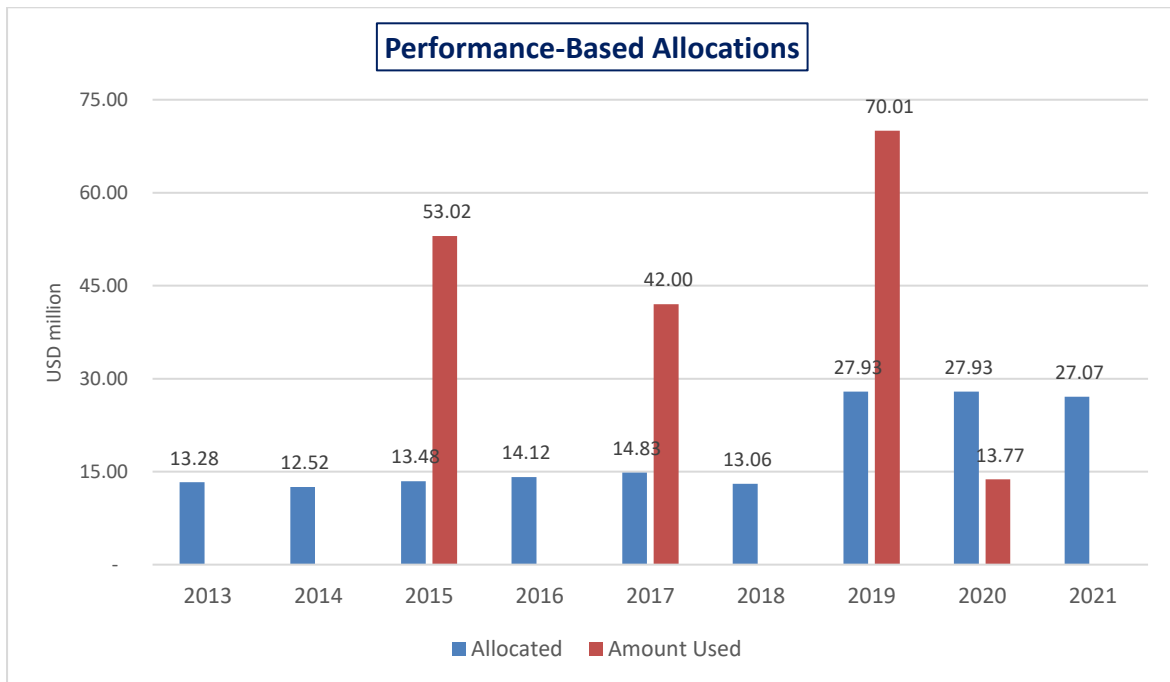
Source: World Bank data.

Figure 3
Corruption perception index



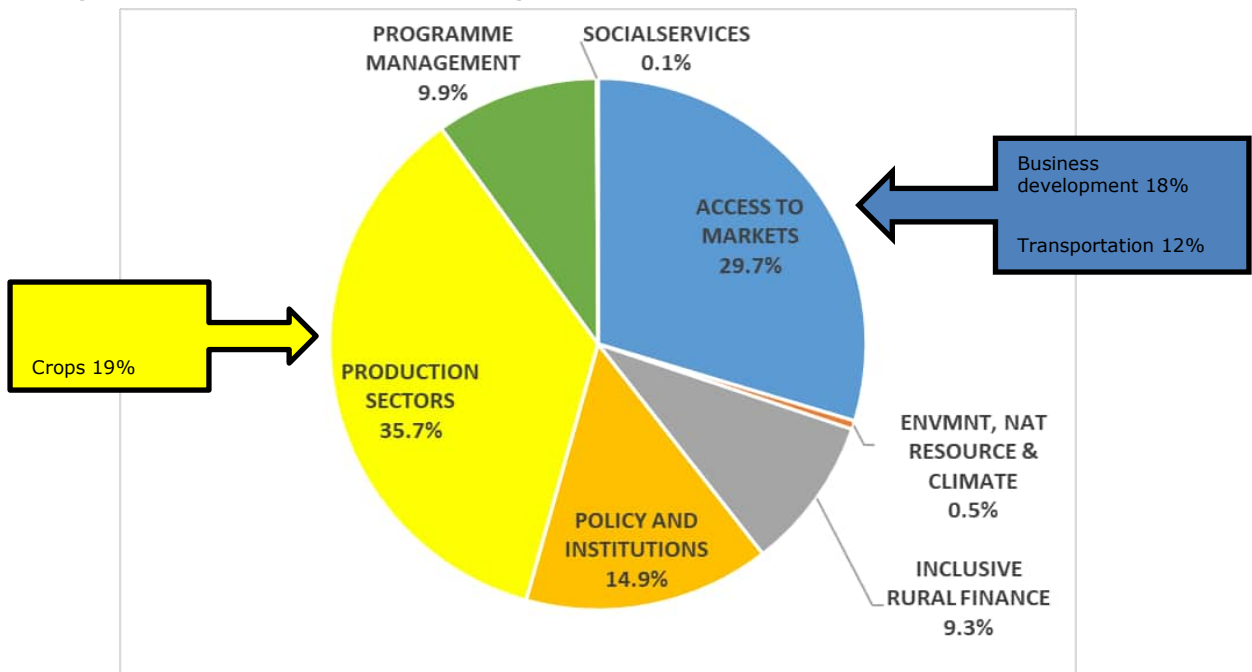
Sources: Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2020: Annual FMD Analysis. February 2020.

Figure 4
PBAS annual allocations over review period



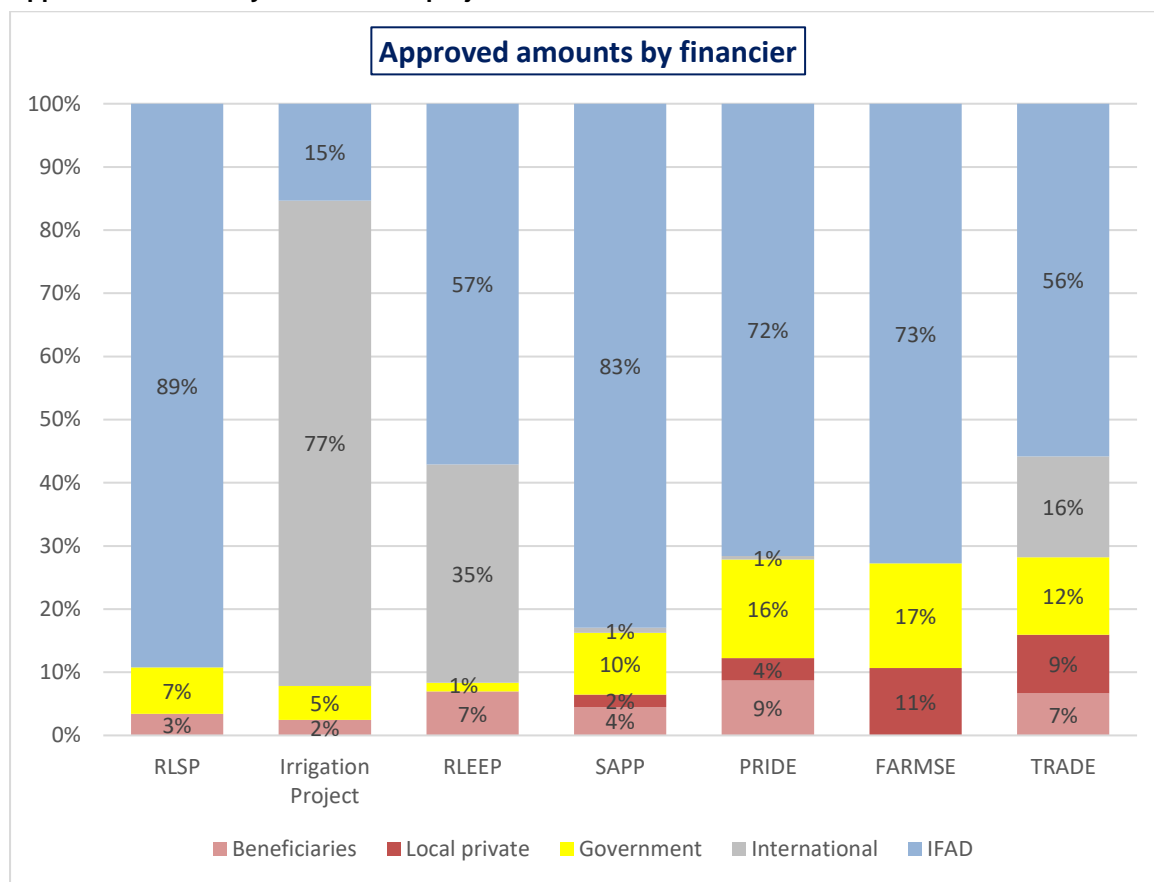
Source: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports.

Figure 5
Lending portfolio structure – investment categories (2010-2020)



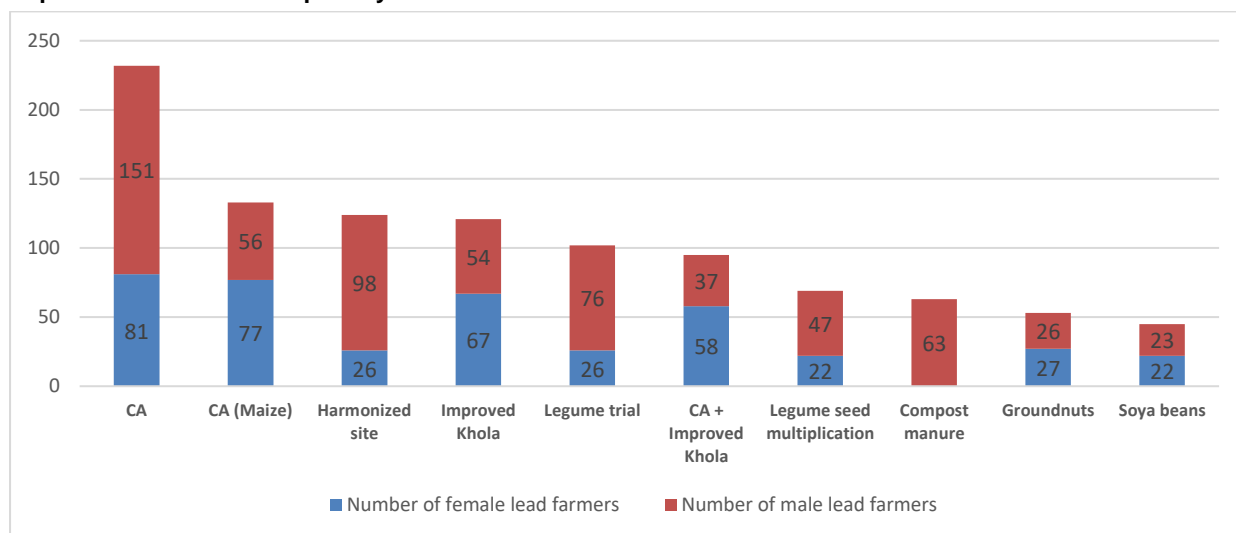
Source: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports.

Figure 6
Approved amounts by financier and projects



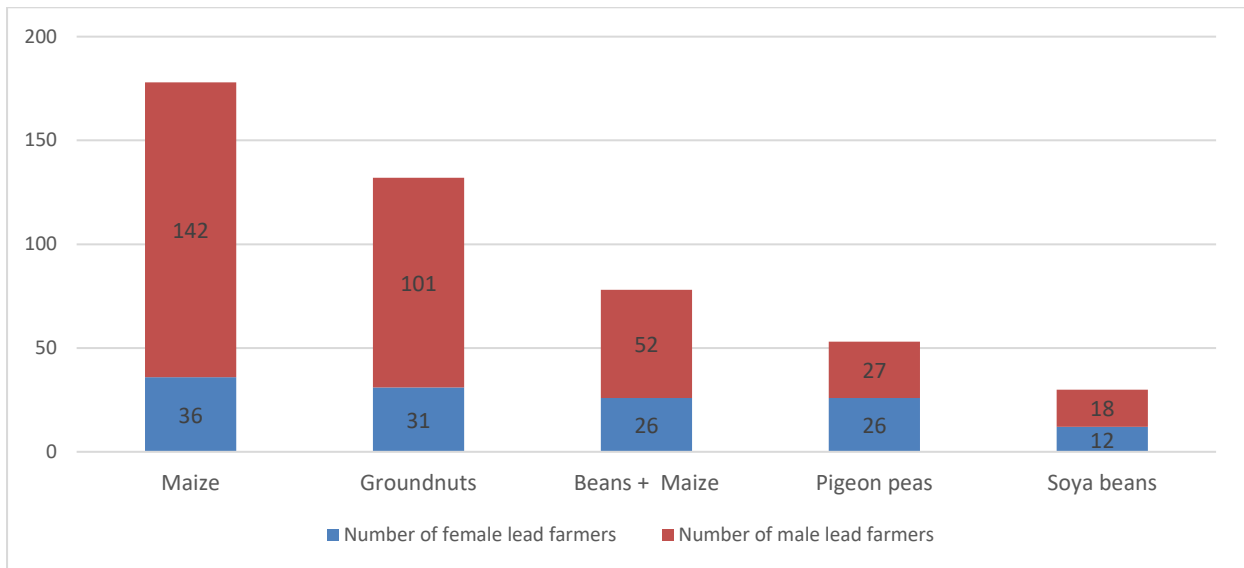
Source: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports.

Figure 7
Top ten interventions adopted by SAPP lead farmers



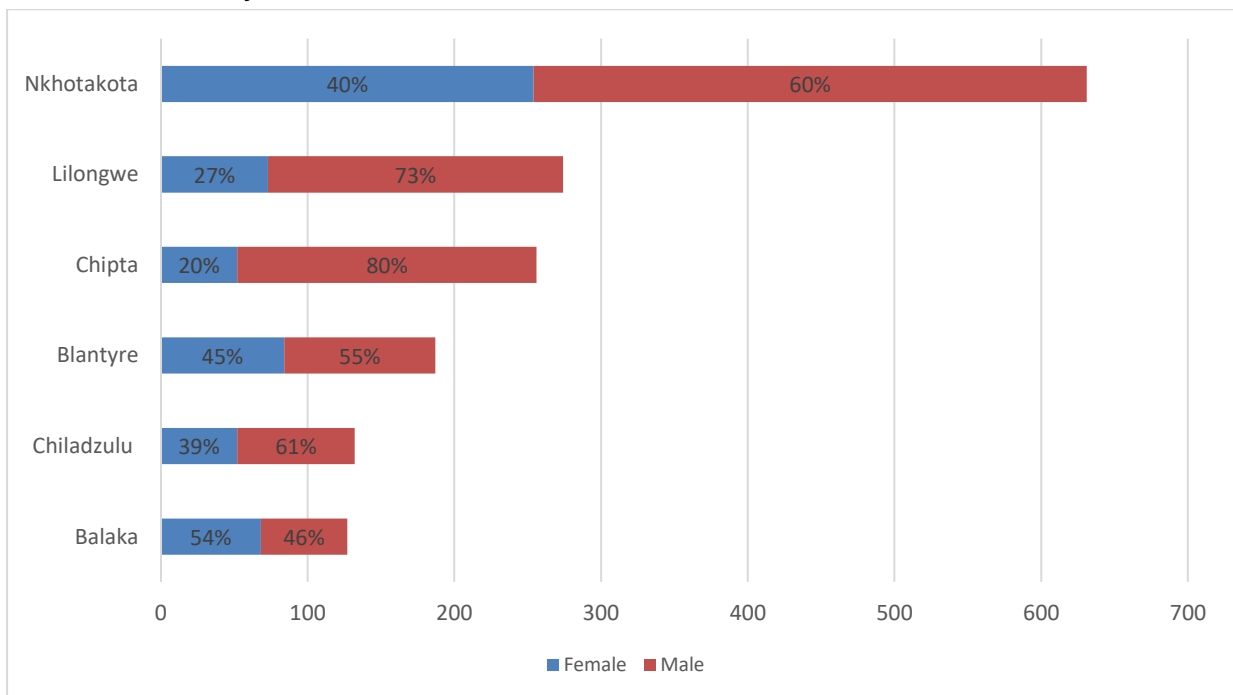
Source: Georeferenced data provided by PMU.

Figure 8
Top five legumes adopted by SAPP lead farmers



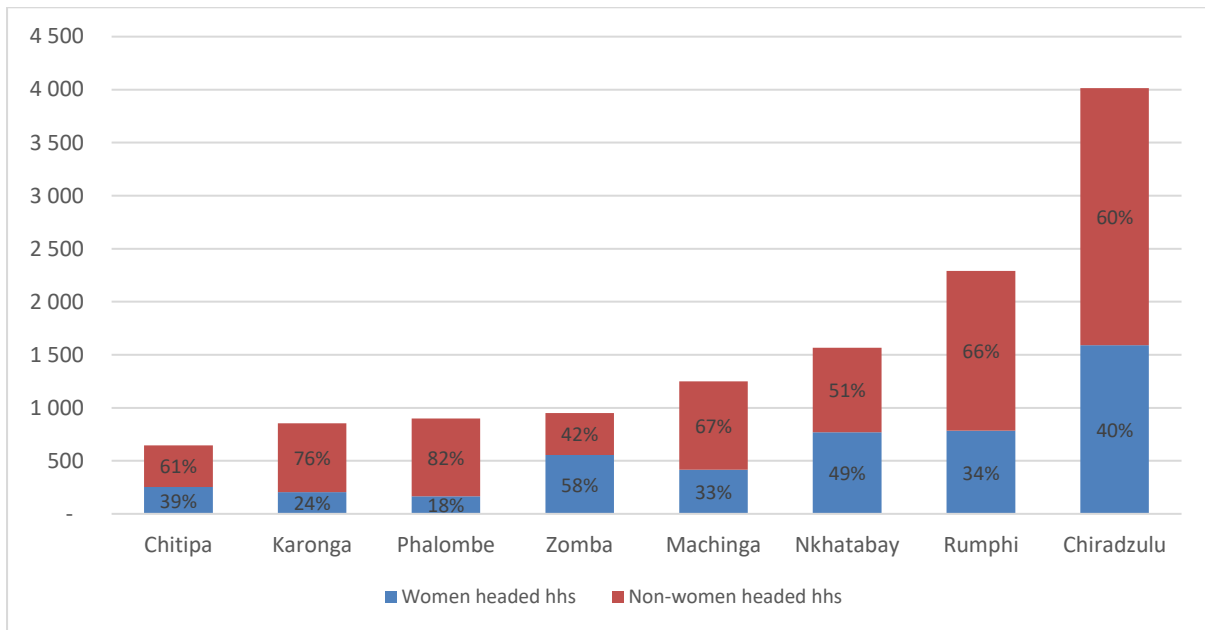
Source: Georeferenced data provided by PMU.

Figure 9
SAPP lead farmers by district



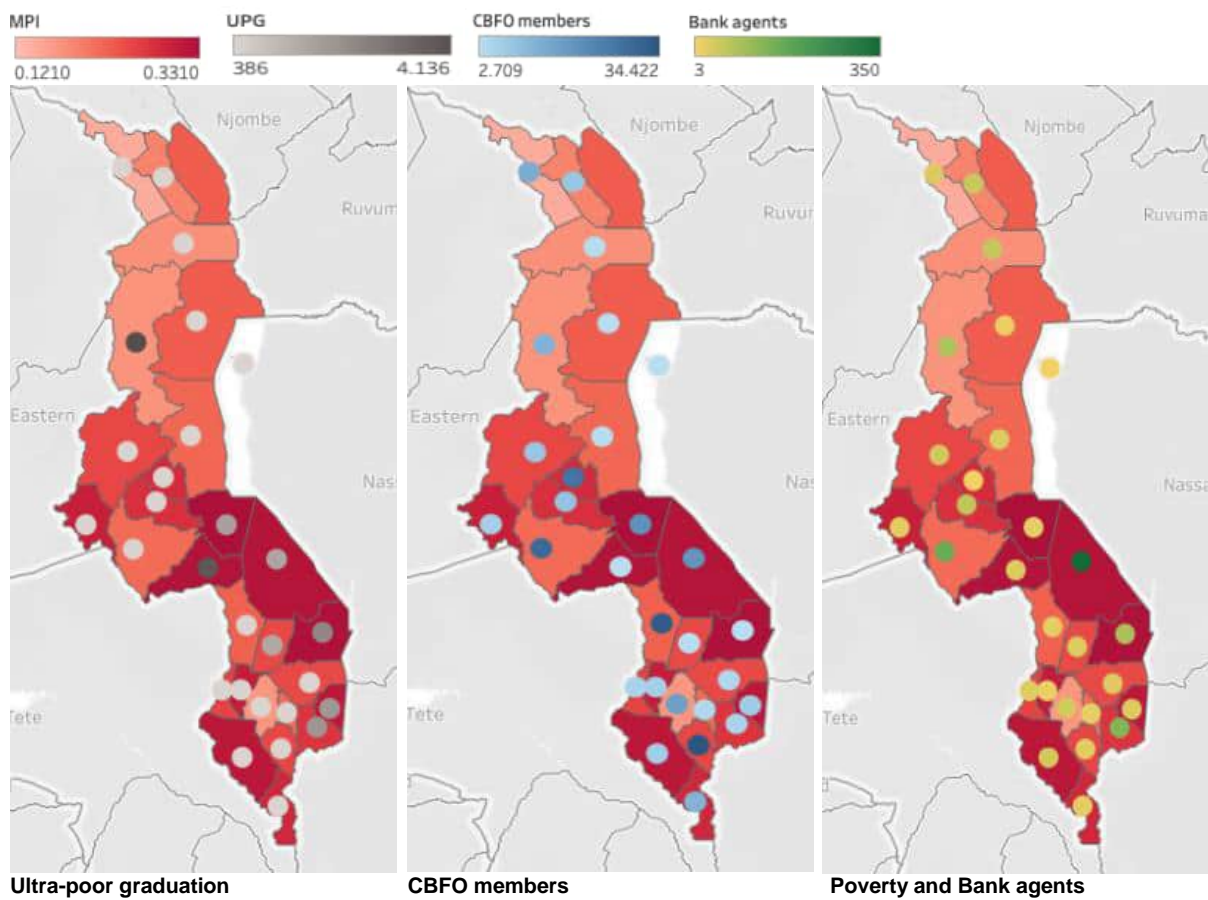
Source: Georeferenced data provided by PMU.

Figure 10
PRIDE household beneficiaries by district



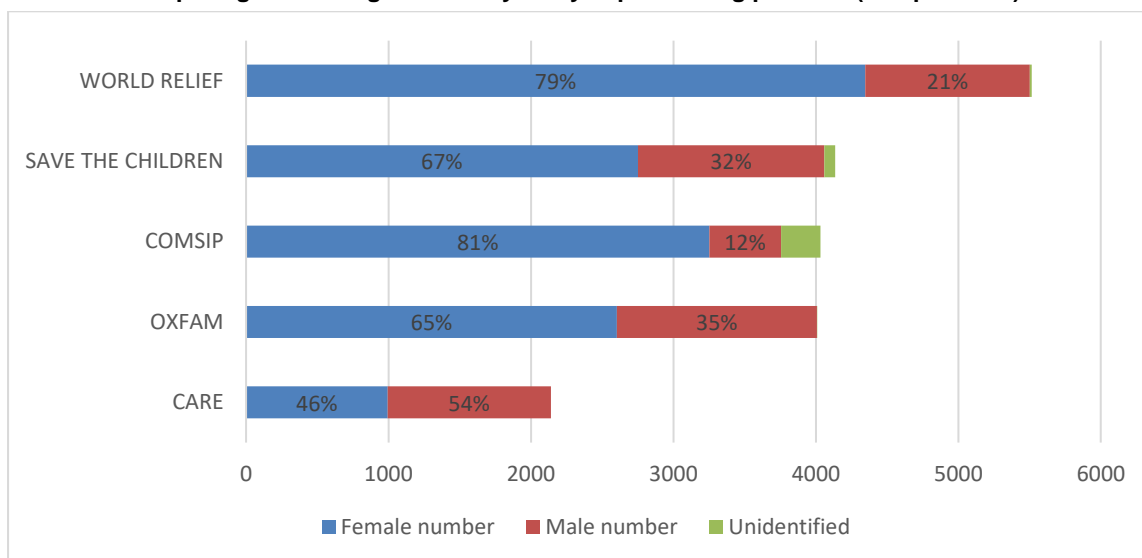
Source: PRIDE annual report 2019/2020.

Figure 11
FARMSE nationwide distribution



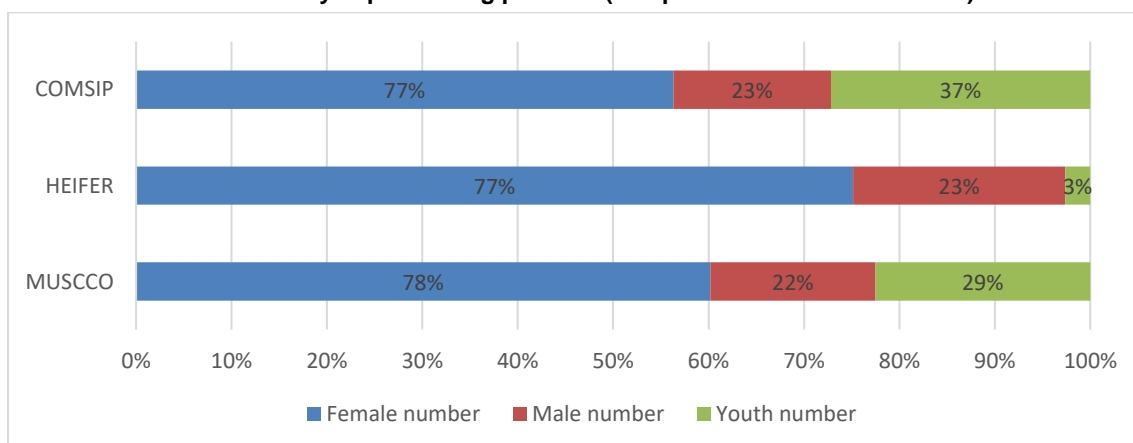
Source: Ultra-poor graduation list; Implementing partners' quarterly reports; FARMSE Annual Progress Report; 2020 MPI

Figure 12
FARMSE ultra-poor graduation gender analysis by implementing partners (component 1)



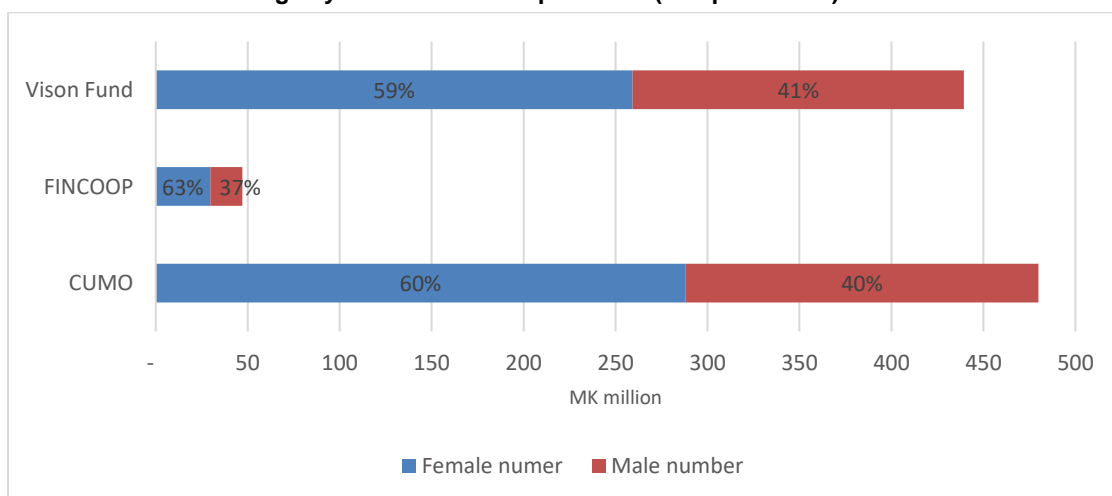
Source: Ultra-poor graduation list provided by PMU.

Figure 13
FARMSE CBFO members by implementing partners (component 2.1 as of June 2020)



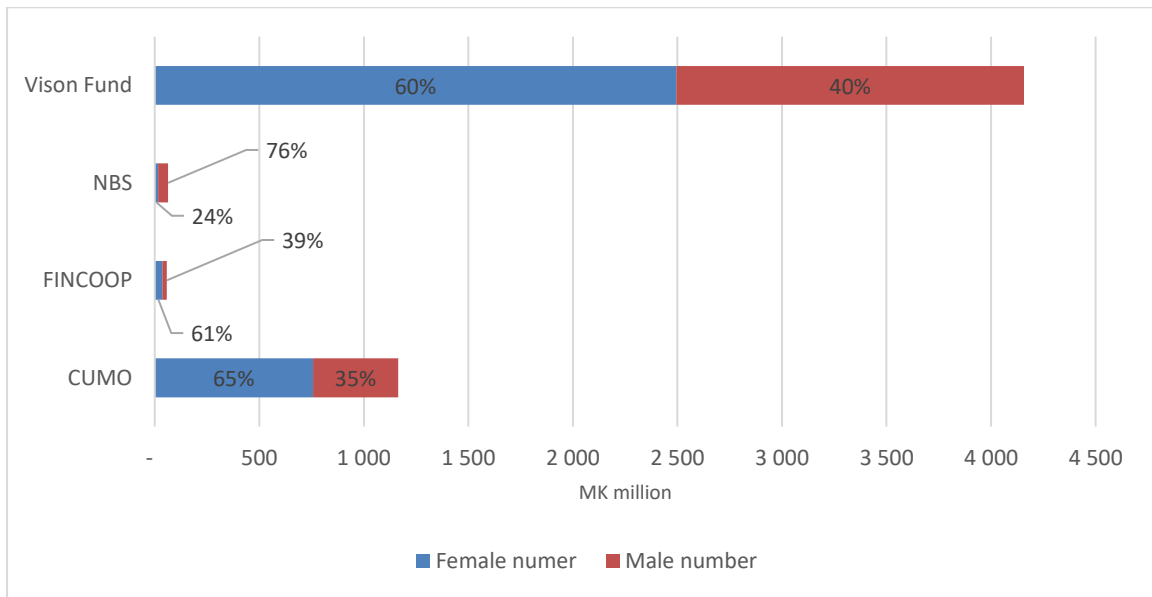
Source: Implementing partners' quarterly reports provided by PMU.

Figure 14
FARMSE value of savings by financial service providers (component 2.2)



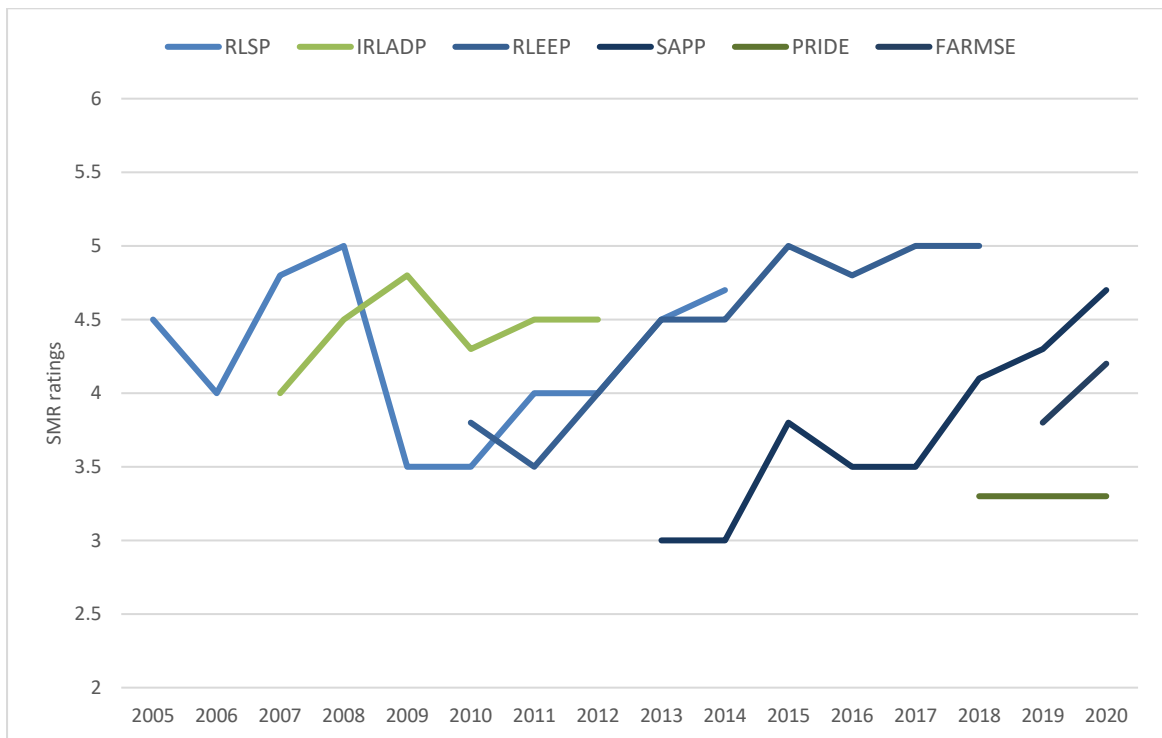
Source: FARMSE Annual Progress Report 2020-2021.

Figure 15
FARMSE value of loans by financial service providers (component 2.2)



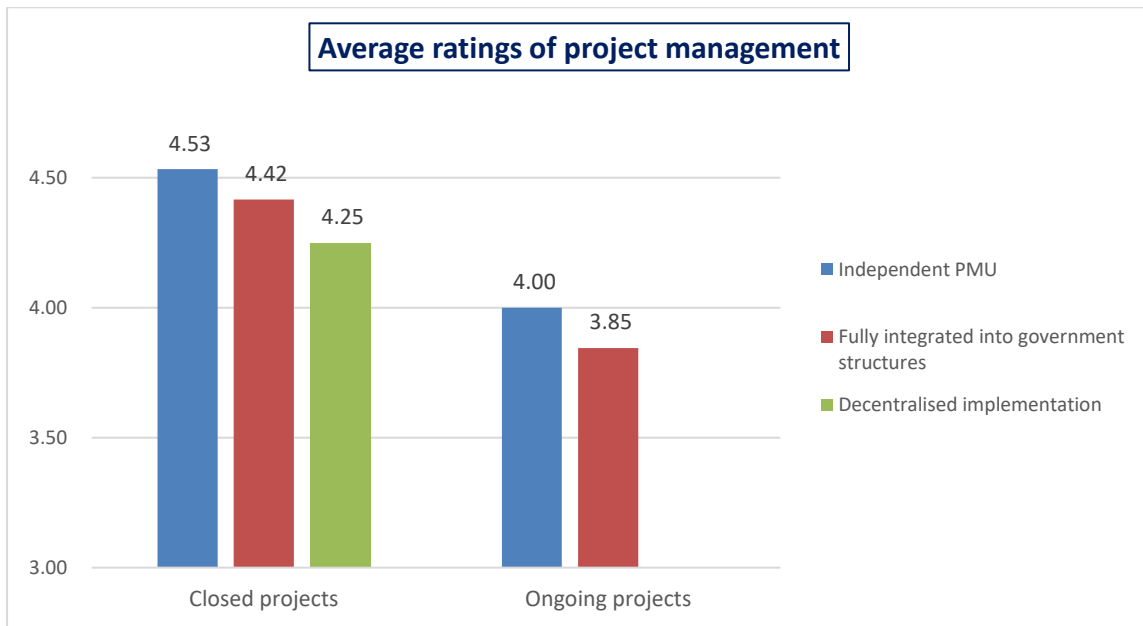
Source: FARMSE Annual Progress Report 2020-2021.

Figure 16
Project management performance over time



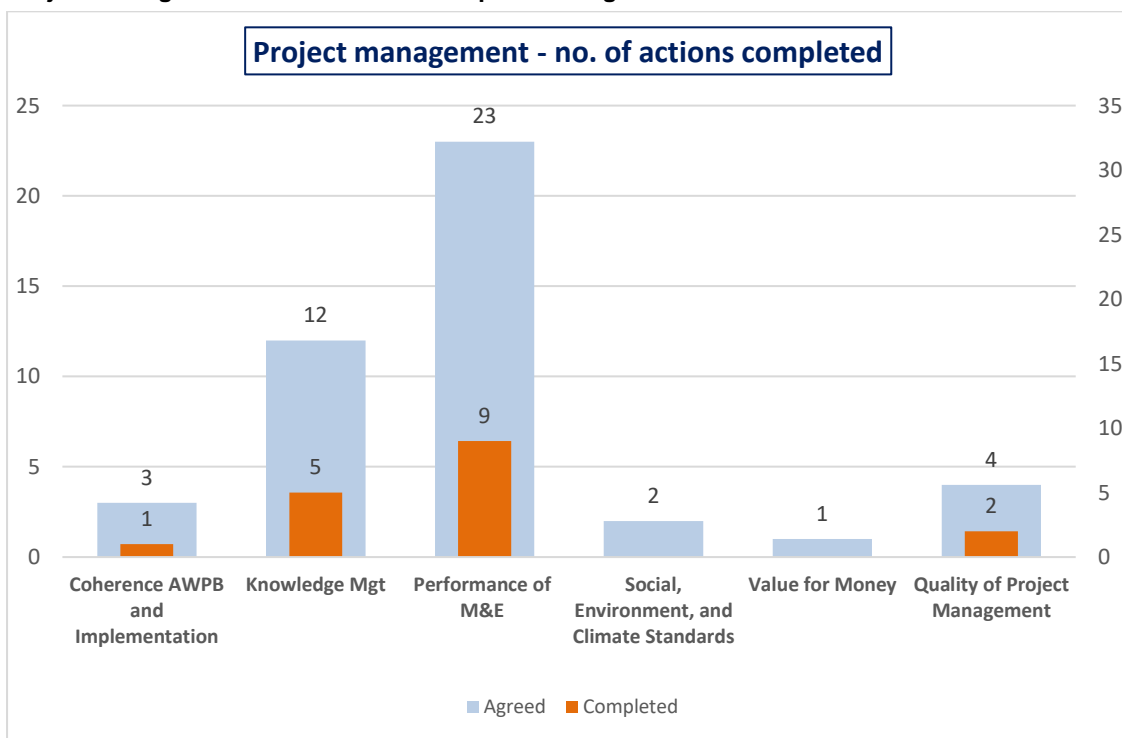
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 17
Project management by type of institutional arrangements



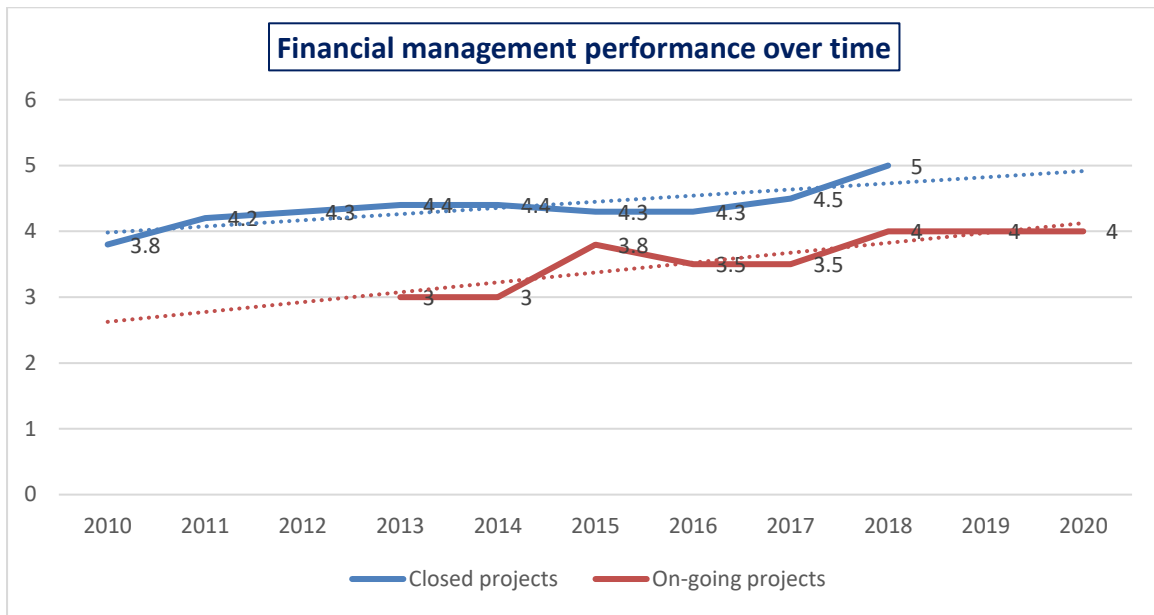
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 18
Project management action tracker - completed vs agreed



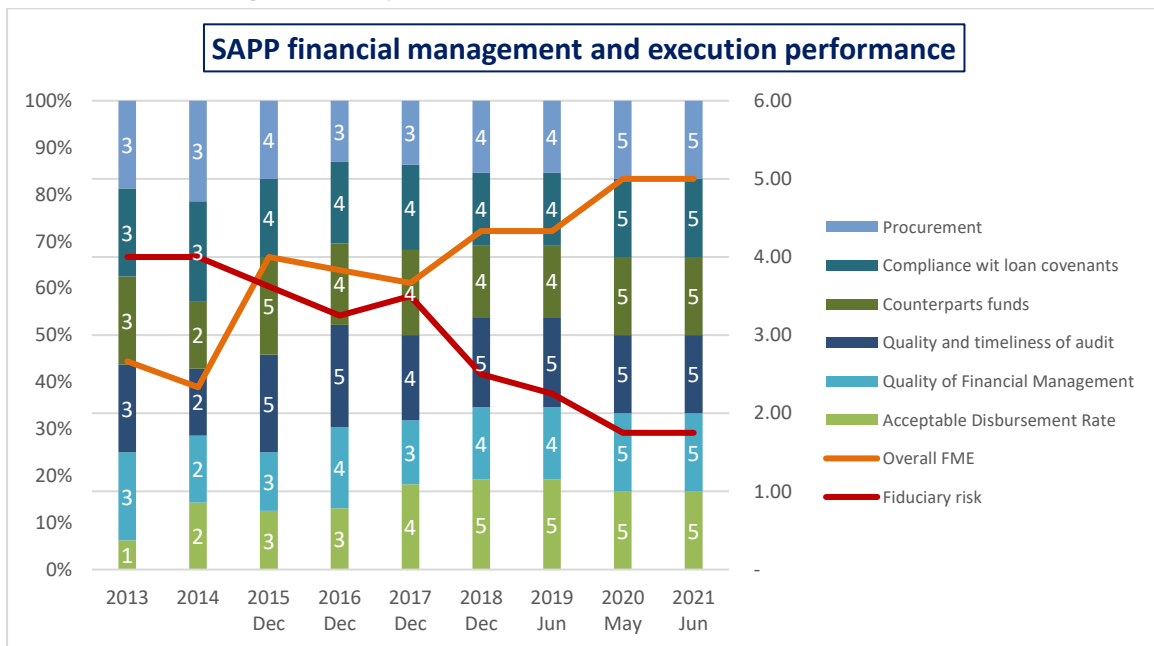
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 19
Financial management performance over time



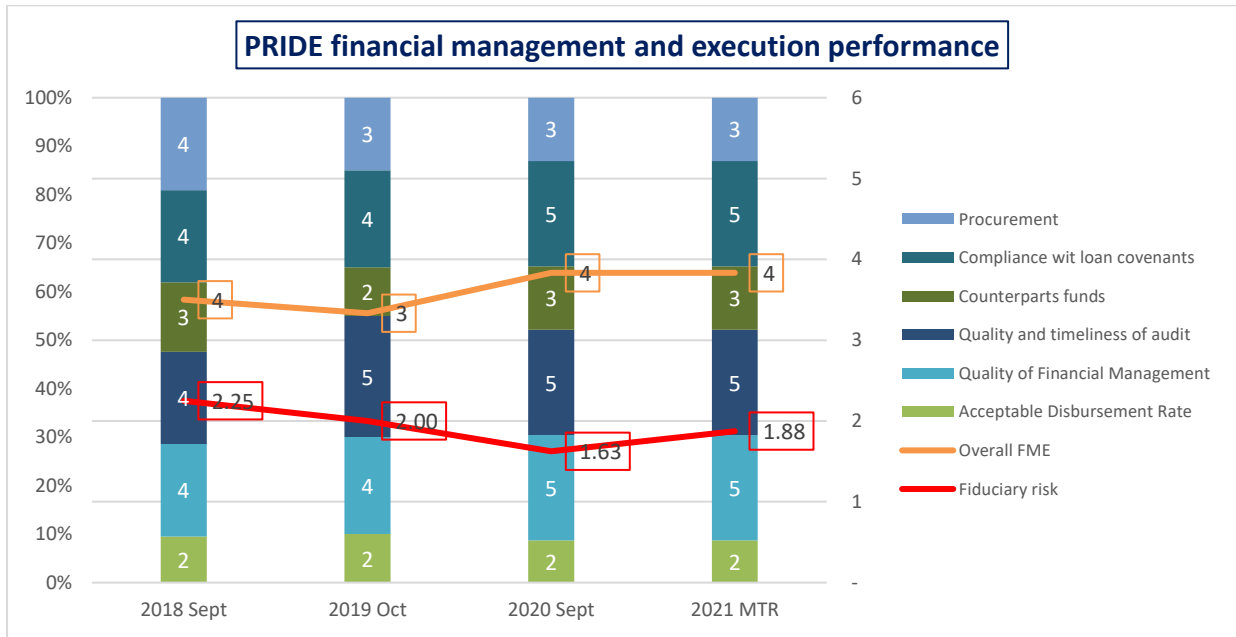
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 20
SAPP financial management analysis



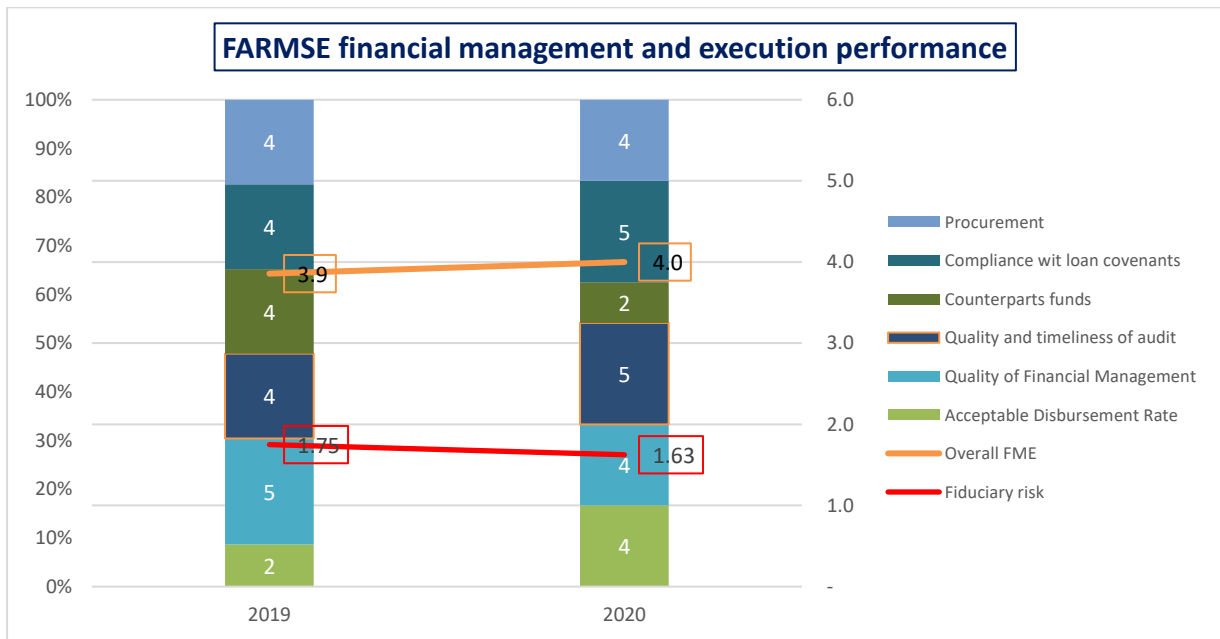
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 21
PRIDE financial management analysis



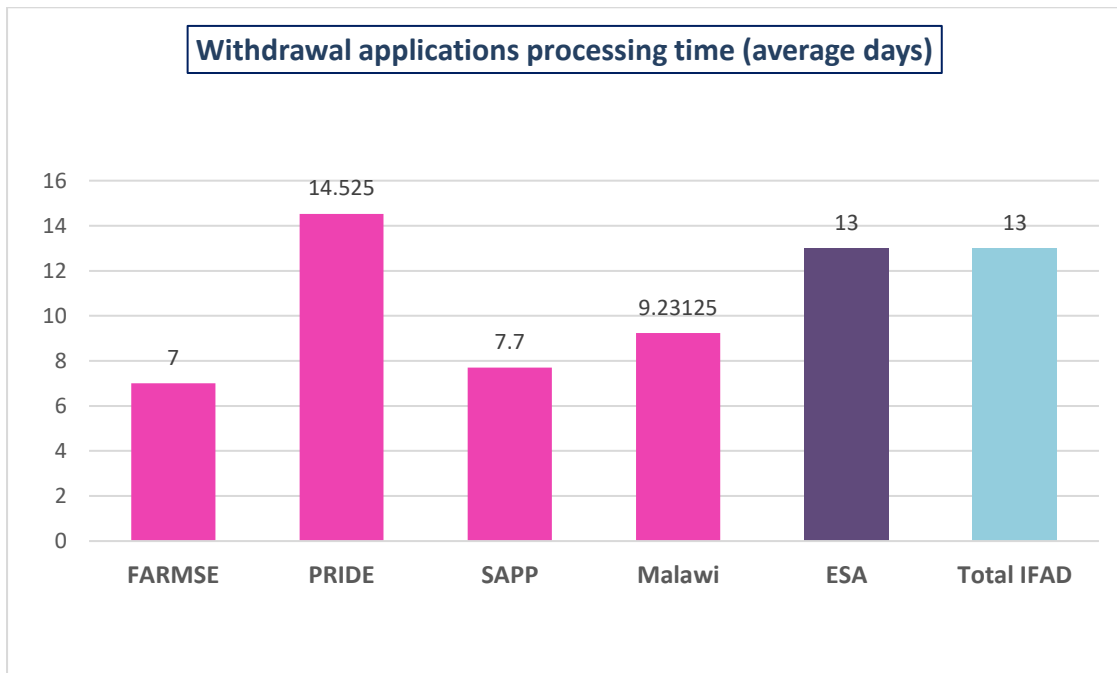
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 22
FARMSE financial management analysis



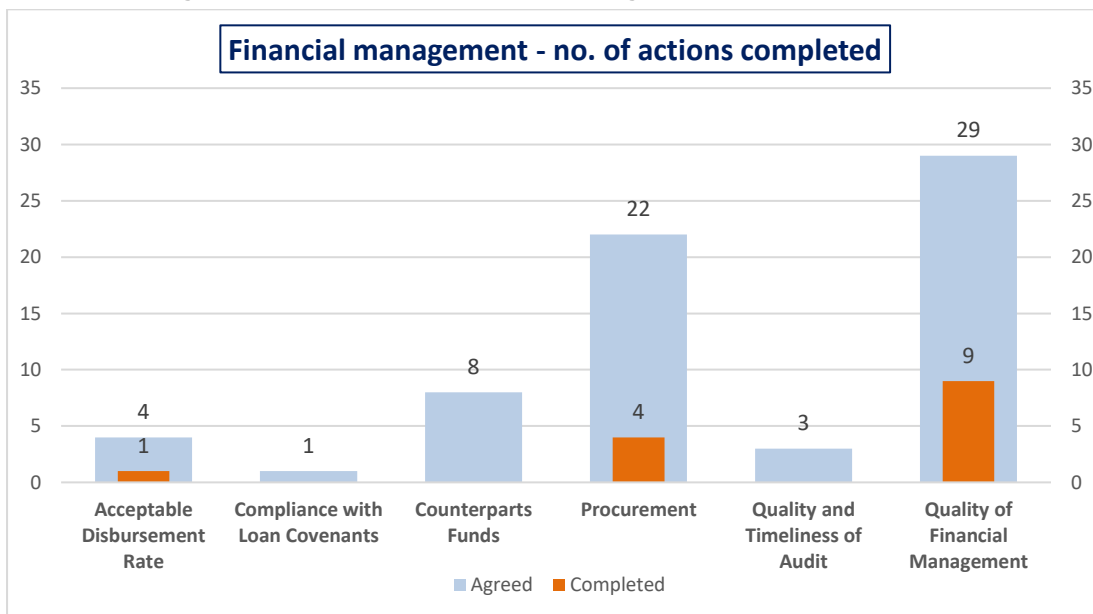
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 23
IFAD withdrawal applications processing time



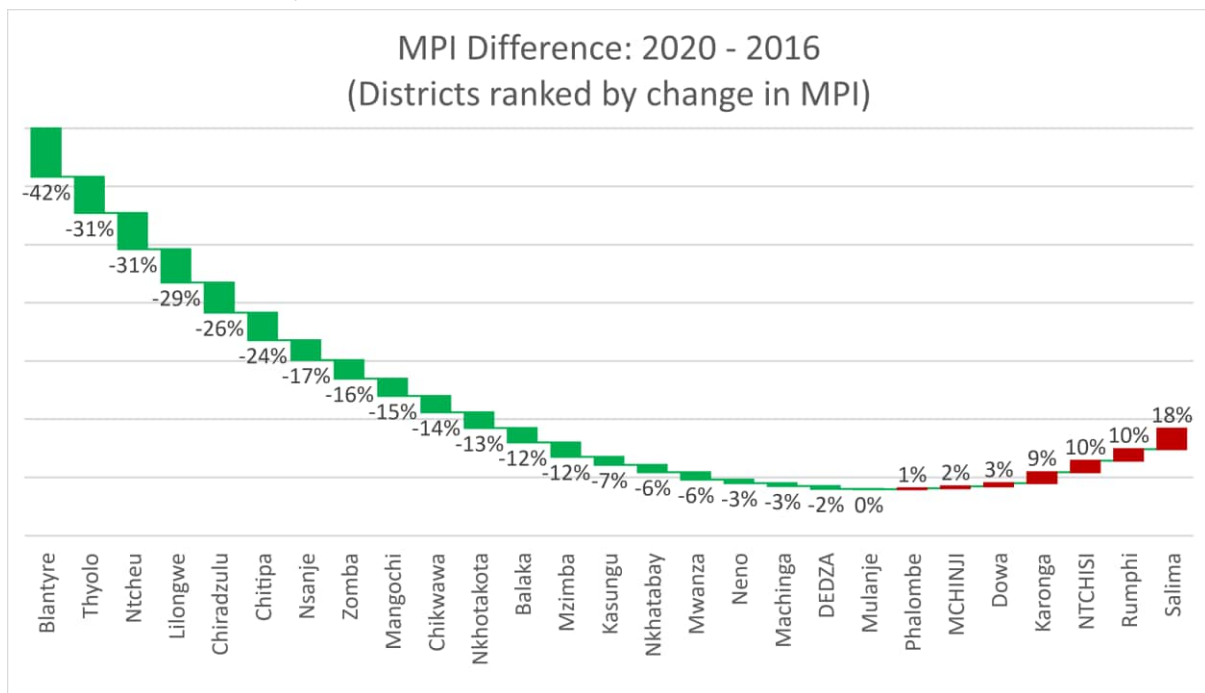
Source: IFAD Oracle Business Intelligence reports.

Figure 24
Financial management action tracker - completed vs agreed



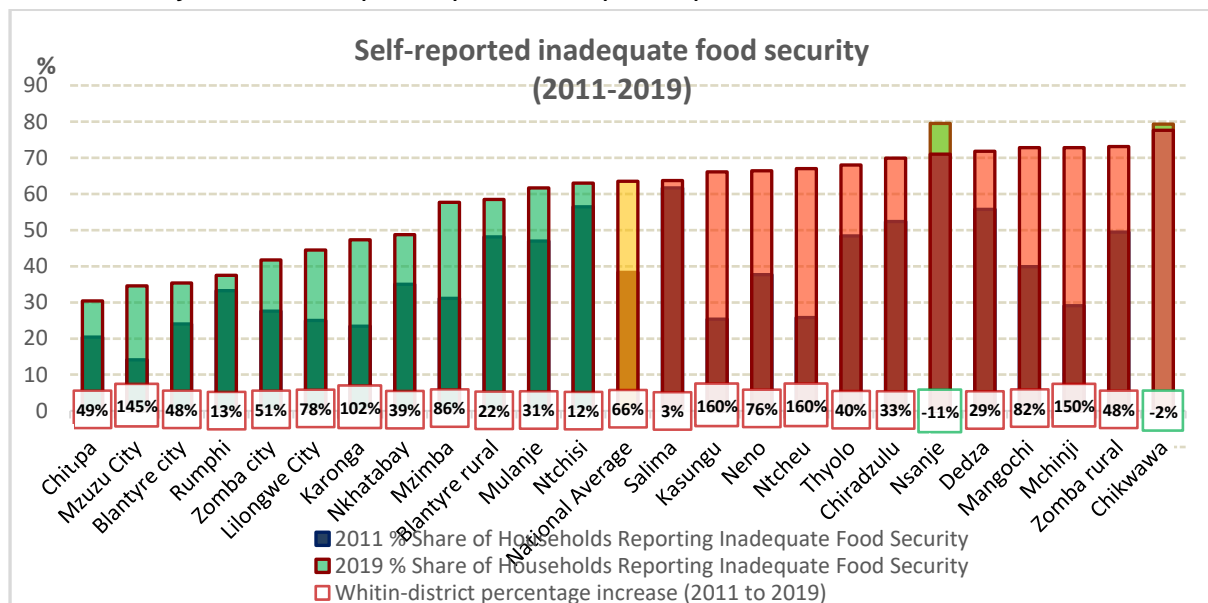
Source: CSPE analysis of supervision ratings from ORMS.

Figure 25
Multi-dimensional Poverty Index from 2016 to 2020



Source: 2020 MPI.

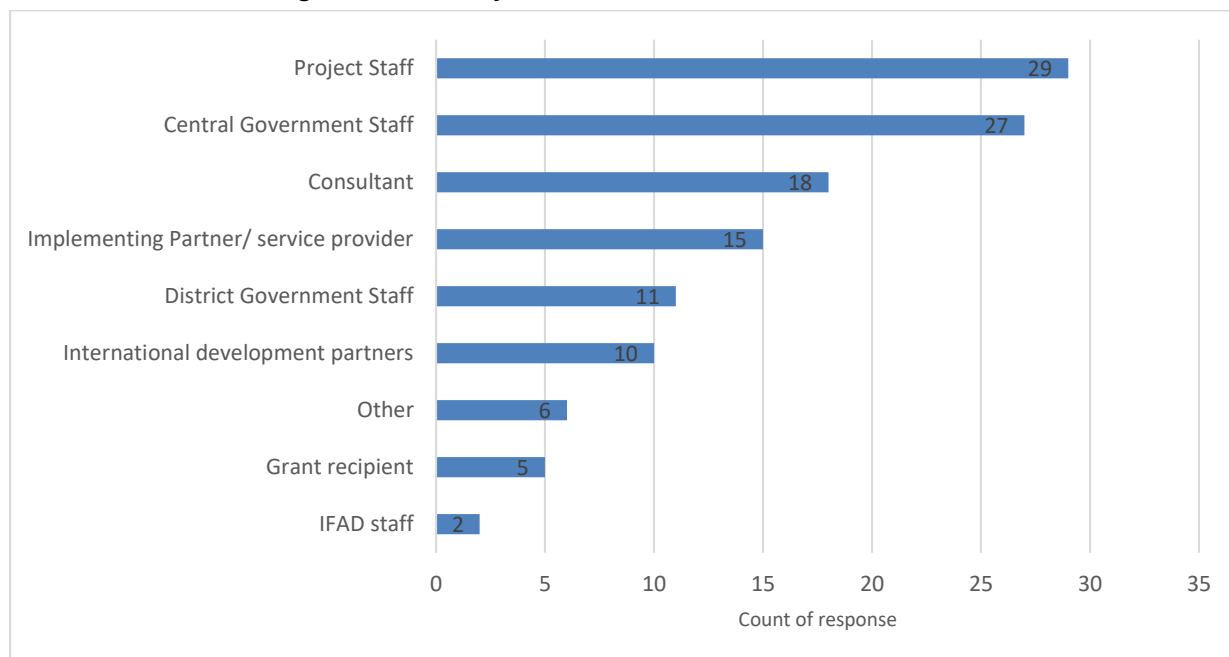
Figure 26
Food insecurity from the IHS3 (2010/11) to the IHS5 (2019/20)



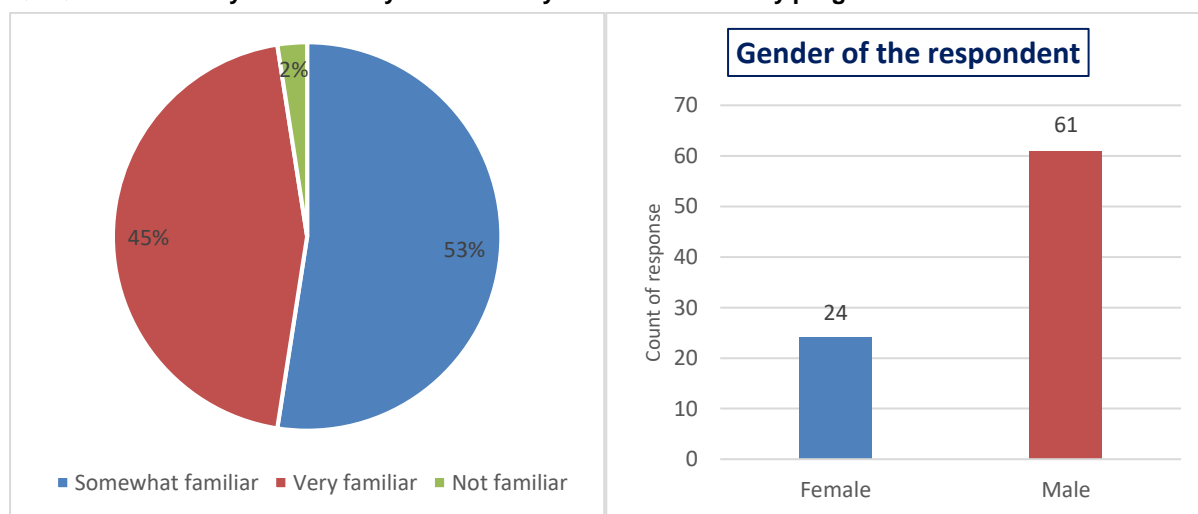
Source: IHS3, IHS5.

Key results of online stakeholder survey

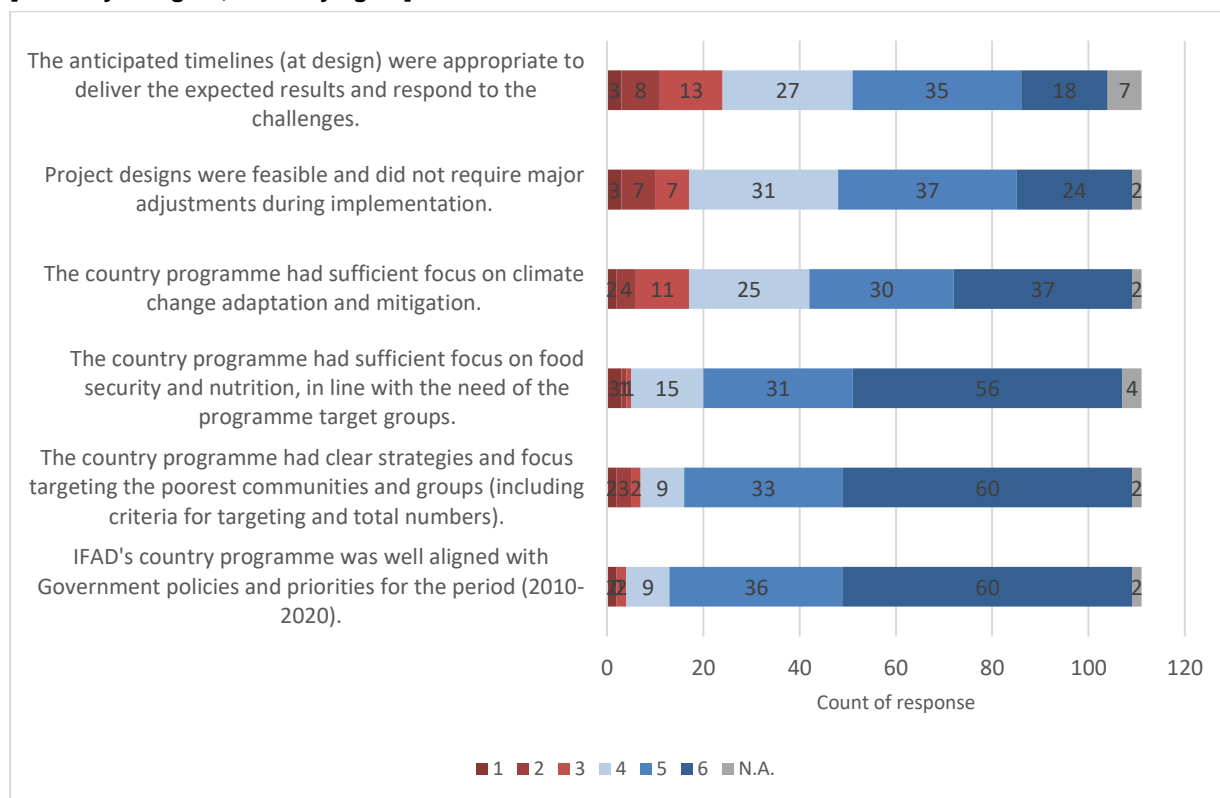
Q1. Which of the following best describes your work status?



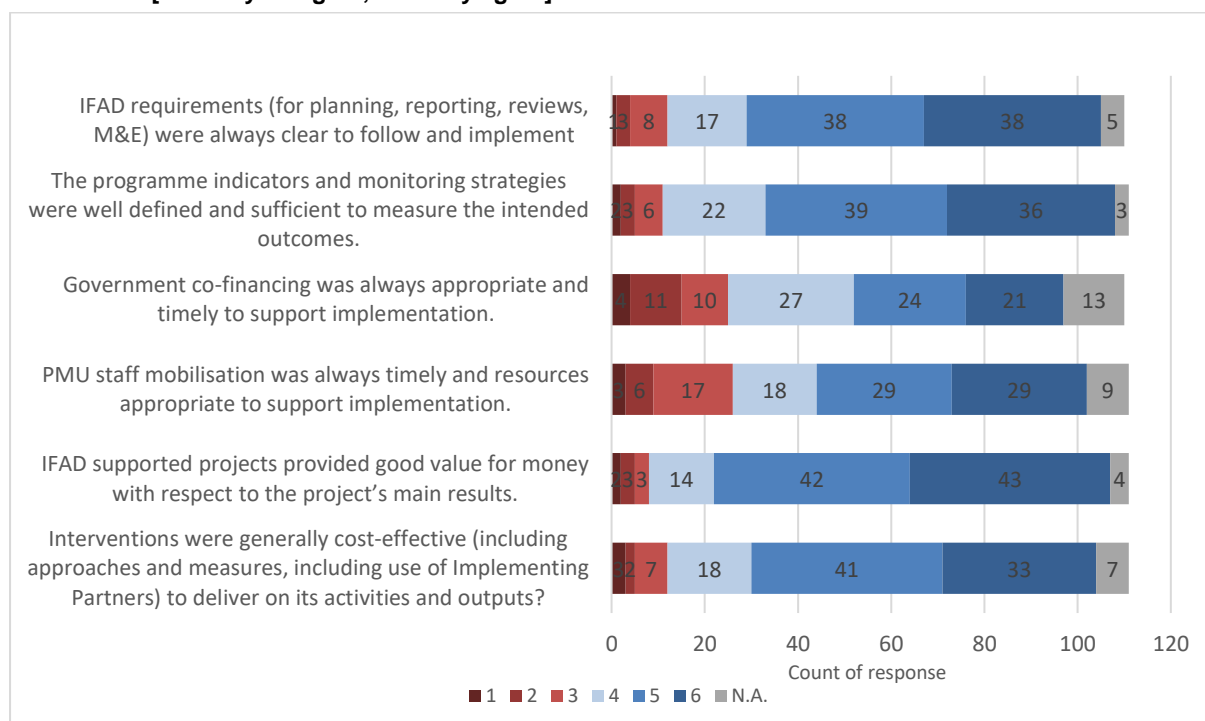
Q2-Q3. How would you describe your familiarity with IFAD's country programme?



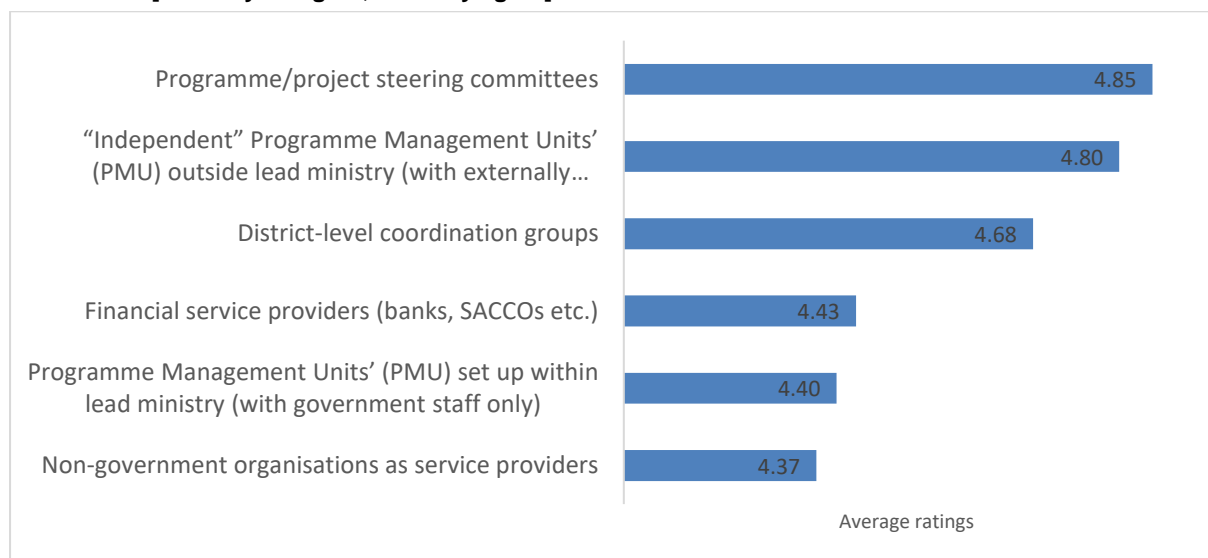
Q4. Programme design: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements: [1=totally disagree, 6=totally agree]



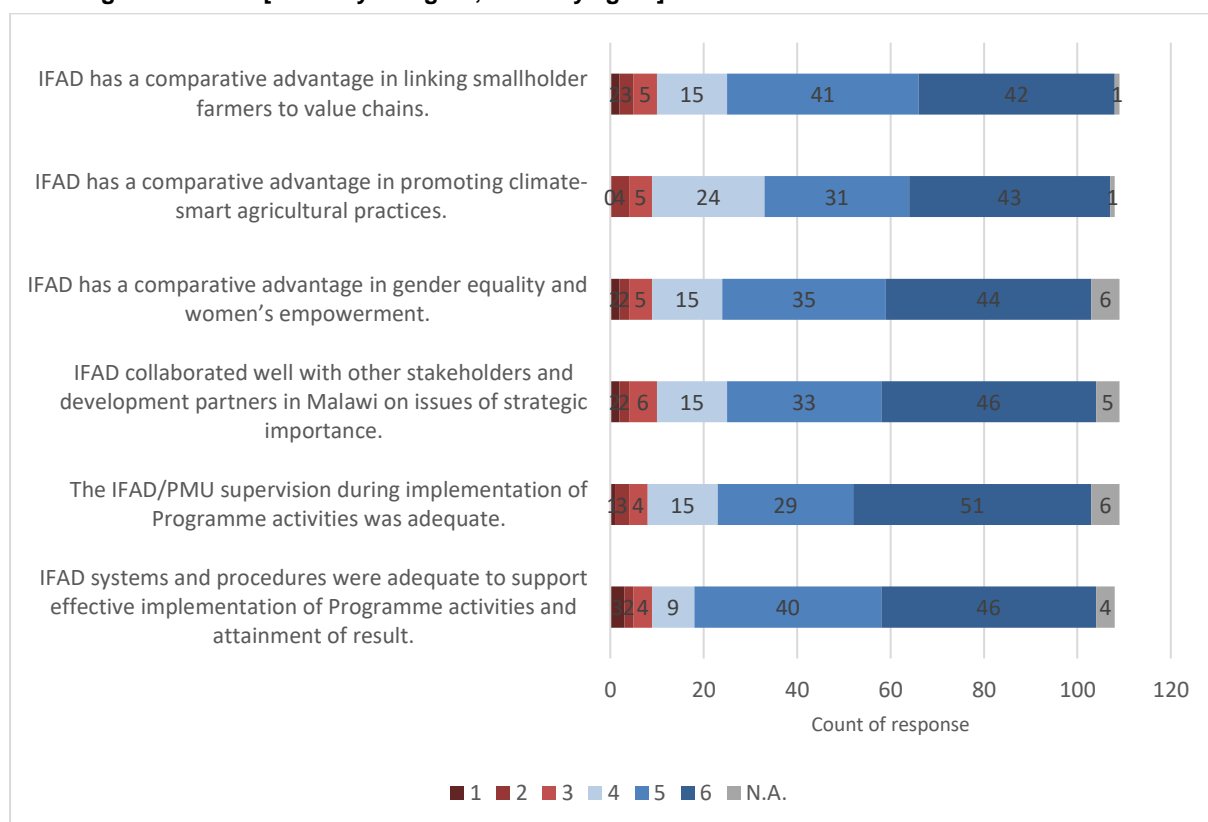
Q5. Programme efficiency: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements: [1=totally disagree, 6=totally agree]



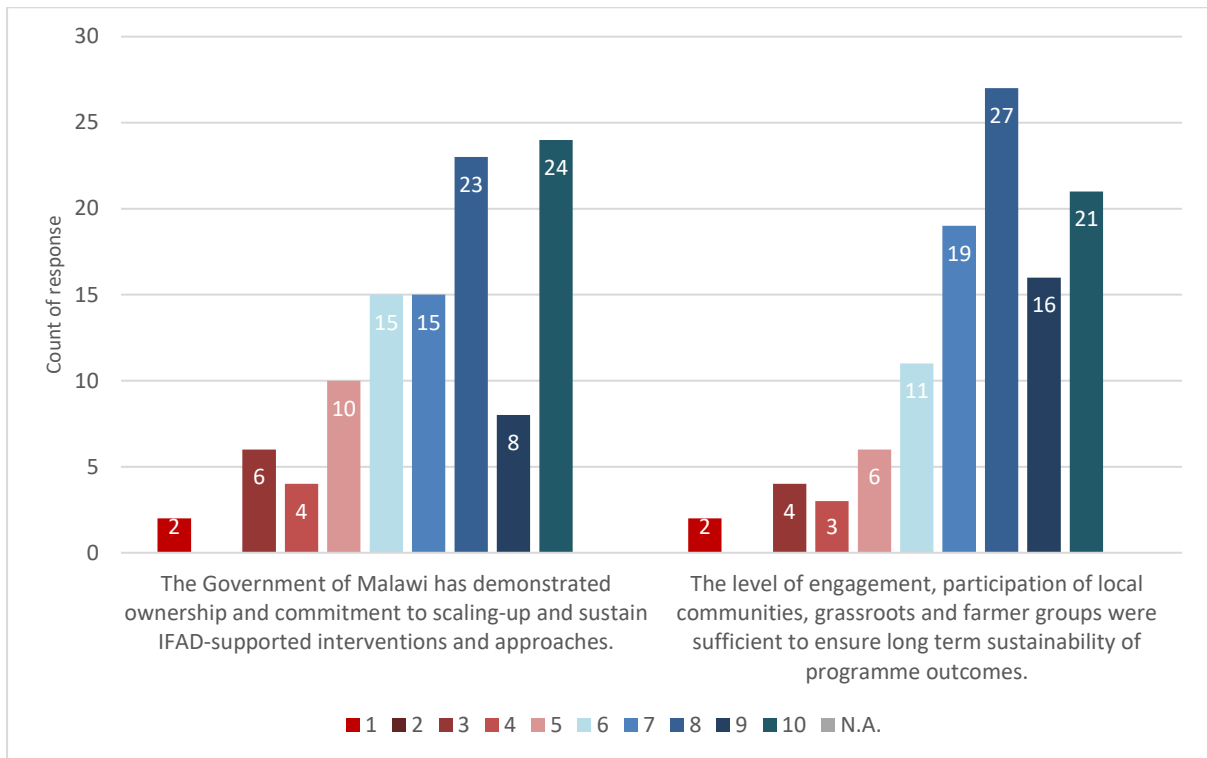
Q6. Institutional agreements: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements: [1=totally disagree, 6=totally agree]



Q7. IFAD’s role and comparative advantage: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements: [1=totally disagree, 6=totally agree]



Q8. Sustainability: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements [Rank using a scale of 10: 1 to 10/N.A]



Qualitative responses from stakeholder survey

Q9. What IFAD should do less under the new country strategy (starting 2022)?	Q10. What should IFAD do more under the new strategy (starting 2022)?
Should do less on software activities and do more on hard aware activities like implementation of small-scale livestock production like pass-on production. Should do more on value addition and not forgetting processing and utilization.	
The strategies and mode of operations are adequate, however, there is a need to reduce on focusing on government structures alone in implementation. The synergy between Government and NGOs provides balance.	IFAD should continue to support Ultra Poor Graduation work and should increase engagement of NGOs in country to implement the work alongside government structures.
IFAD should focus less on supporting smallholder farmers and start to focus more of medium scale and progressive farmers.	IFAD should focus on support to extension, research, livestock, fisheries sectors which have been completely neglected but are also the backbone of the agriculture sector.
Less support to maize production-related interventions.	Increase grant amount in its financing arrangements. Also, do more on irrigation and even more on value addition, producing products that would be competitive within the regional and international arena. Involvement of marginalised groups, especially people with disabilities.
Less investment in providing recurrent agriculture inputs.	More investment in promoting transformation towards resilient and sustainable agriculture and food system.
Too much investing for smallholder farmers.	IFAD should support more smallholder farmer technology interventions, it should support more irrigation to enable Malawi move away from a rainfed agriculture and support resilience building to enable farmers produce high value and highly nutritious crops even under prevailing drought conditions, it should support with mechanization services and private extension support and input delivery through incentive-based mechanisms that increase the incomes and benefits for all along the value chain.
IFAD, through SAPP, has supported household farmers for several years in the provision of farm inputs. By now, the farmers would have been supporting themselves without relying upon inputs from SAPP. In view of this, should IFAD do less on farmer support?	Climate adaptation. Linking farmers to the private sector to buy produce, financial literacy, encourage growing quality and quantity of produce demanded by the market. Allow adequate time in the first 2 years to establish PMU and financial and M&E/KM systems and give support to building adequate capacity. Landownership and size of holdings are major challenges which need to be addressed to facilitate farmers moving from subsistence and food shortages to farming as a business. Partner with donors able to provide infrastructure like better rural roads to enable producers to get their goods to market.
Provide less vehicles and funds for Government employees.	Do more on capacity-building to reinforce more on mindset change. Infrastructure development should also be encouraged in order to create an enabling environment for field officers so that they stay closer to

Q9. What IFAD should do less under the new country strategy (starting 2022)?	Q10. What should IFAD do more under the new strategy (starting 2022)?
	farmers. Electrification and institutional houses maintenance. The current state is not motivating for field officers.
	Focus on innovative ways and technologies to support farmers that are more easily scalable. Strengthening the enabling environment, such as infrastructure developments, to lower transport costs.
	Focus more on climate-smart interventions. We need interventions that bring impact to farmers. We need to focus on building resilience among farming communities. We need to focus on agroforestry and conservation agriculture.
	IFAD should encourage more peer-learning among country programs. Sharing of experiences between country program teams or among country program teams will ensure common problems are solved or avoided, quality achievement of milestones and efficient use of resources as mistakes will be minimized.
Less focus on building capacity in line ministries. Poor remuneration and high staff turnover tend to reduce impact of spending on capacity building in line ministries. Staff tend not to be motivated to take full ownership of funded projects and tend to still view these as "donor" funded.	Ensure that more of the resources get down to the community level. Empower communities as capacity building at this level will tend to last longer and have more impact on rural development efforts by IFAD and other donors.
	Encourage participatory decision-making; higher involvement in the Government and stakeholders; and involving strong technical experts and environment; and creating an environment where everyone can express their views freely.
	Incorporate SMEs at all levels of the value chain in the country strategy
	Invest more in the development of productive value chains that benefits rural communities (more especially at the marketing level). Another important area is afforestation programmes (the rate of deforestation is more than the investments in afforestation).
	Focus on skills development and seed capital for ultra poor households because of the long-term impact and sustainability of interventions. Partnerships involving private sector contributions should be encouraged.
Overreliance on Project Steering Committees should be scaled down so that other project management levels are frequently engaged during the implementation of projects.	Continue working with Malawi Government but work more with the Private Sector and Civil Society (NGOs).

Q9. What IFAD should do less under the new country strategy (starting 2022)?	Q10. What should IFAD do more under the new strategy (starting 2022)?
	Focus more on private sector/NGOs supporting communities/farmers on extension nutrition. The Government will not for many years have adequate funds to provide the necessary services to support farmers move to a business model away from subsistence and food shortages.
Reduce changes that come midway or towards the end of a work process. They delay the achievement of some key milestones. Example will be changes on what the office should do to procure services of a contractor and the changes that come when the process of procuring the services of a contractor is already kicked off.	Put more emphasis on building the capacity of the different stakeholders; capacity has been and continues to be a big limiting factor in government and non-government institutions in Malawi. Against that background, there is a need for more focused implementation support during project implementation.
Avoid the top-down decision-making and CPM-driven programme designing.	Coordinate with other donors and development partners active in the same priority areas.
Continuous changing of supervision team as continuity and consistency is affected.	Creating linkages between the different projects.
Reduce monitoring teams - too many reporting levels are cumbersome and sometimes confusing. Also, consider the provision of seed capital for non-deposit-taking microfinance institutions.	Increase coordination and collaboration with other donors; also, consider join and parallel financing in line with sector strategy and plan e.g. join multidonor trust fund.
Reduce the number of standardized M&E indicators in log-frames that have little connection to the individual programmes. Rather design indicators at the level of the programme and then define umbrella indicators at IFAD level to capture the data. A solution is thus further decentralization of M&E.	Intensify learning between Programmes/projects.
Withhold money from programmes based on the new budget cuts affecting the institutions resulting in a loss of trust from both beneficiaries and country programmes. Clear and transparent communication about budget restraints on the side of the donor is necessary.	

Mission itinerary

CSPE in-country field mission

<i>District</i>	<i>Projects/Partner/Stakeholder</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>
BALAKA 30 August – 2 September 2021	FARMSE – Oxfam	09.00 – 11.00	Project staff
	FARMSE – Oxfam	13:00 – 16:30	5 Beneficiary Groups – Ultra Poor Graduation Program
	FARMSE – FINCA	09.00 – 11.00	Project staff
	FARMSE – FINCA	13:00 – 16:30	2 beneficiary Groups (bank groups)
	PRIDE	09:00 – 12:00	Project staff and field visit – Talandira Seed Multiplication Farmers Group
	District Local Government	13:00 – 16:30	Government officials - Agriculture extension officers
	SAPP	09:00 – 12:00	Project staff and field visit – 2 farmer groups
CHITIPA 31 August – 2 September 2021	SAPP	09.00 – 11.00	Project staff
	SAPP	13:00 – 16:30	3 farmer groups
	District Local Government	09.00 – 11.00	Government officials - agriculture extension officers
	SAPP	13:00 – 16:30	4 farmer groups
	FARMSE – NBS	09:00 – 15:00	Project staff
LILONGWE 3 September – 6 September 2021	FARMSE - FINCOOP	09.00 – 11.00	Project staff
	FARMSE - FINCOOP	13:00 – 16:30	Beneficiary groups – 5 VSLAs
	FARMSE – FDH bank	09.00 – 11.00	Project staff
	FARMSE – FDH bank	13:00 – 16:30	4 FDH bank agents
NKHATA-BAY 3 September – 6 September 2021	FARMSE – MMPA	09:00 – 11:00	Project staff and beneficiary groups – 2 VSLAs
	FARMSE – OIM	13:00 – 16:30	Project staff and beneficiary group – 1 VSLA
	District Local Government	09:00 – 11:00	Government officials - agriculture extension officers
	PRIDE	13:00 – 15:00	Project staff and field visit
MZIMBA 7 September – 8 September 2021	FARMSE- SAVE THE CHILDREN	09.00 – 11.00	Project staff
	FARMSE- SAVE THE CHILDREN	13:00 – 16:30	Beneficiary groups – Ultra Poor Graduation Program (1 cluster with 15 individual beneficiaries)
	District Local Government	09.00 – 11.00	Government officials - agriculture extension officers
	FARMSE – Heifer International	13:00 – 16:30	Project staff and beneficiary groups – 2 VSLAs
CHILADZULO 8 September – 11 September 2021	FARMSE – Heifer International	09:00 – 11:00	Project staff
	FARMSE – Heifer International	13:00 – 16:30	Beneficiary groups – 5 VSLAs
	FARMSE – CUMO	09:00 – 11:00	Project staff
	FARMSE – CUMO	13:00 – 16:30	Beneficiary groups - 4 VSLAs
	SAPP and PRIDE	09:00 – 11:00	Project staff and field visit – Lirangwe Farmer Field School; Talandira Seed Multiplication Farmers Group
	FARMSE – NBS	13:00 – 16:00	Project staff and 1 NBS bank agent
	NKHOTAKOTA	FARMSE - DAPP	13:00 – 16:30
9 September – 11 September 2021	SAPP	09:00 – 11:00	Project staff
	SAPP	13:00 – 16:30	3 farmer groups

Source: CSPE team.

Stories from the field

Gender

Women benefitting from improved productivity and nutrition. One of the groups in Chiradzulu interviewed by the CSPE team had a majority of women at 73 per cent and men at 27 per cent, with a youth composition 33 per cent. The group reported that each member had received 15kgs of CG9 groundnuts seed for multiplication, totalling to 225kgs for all the 15 members. According to the interview, the group harvested a total of 1,438kgs of good quality seed and had an offtake agreement with Multi seed Company (MUSECO), at Malawi Kwacha 1,200 (\$1.500) per kg. Improved nutrition was reported in 64 per cent of the targeted women-headed households, and 36 per cent of the non-women-headed households.

Findings from 11 FARMSE groups (82 per cent women) visited by the CSPE field team in three districts of Chiladzulu, Balaka and Lilongwe reported a number of assets procured by the members. Solar power was reported in two groups, house improvements in 7 groups and over 90 per cent of the members reported livestock purchase in 10 groups, agricultural inputs in 8 groups and investment in small businesses in 10 groups, and payment of school fees in all the 11 groups. With increased food and income status, children are kept in schools because parents can afford school fees and school-related expenditures.

Decision making. One of the farmers in an FGD held in Nkhotakota put it this way: "I was one person who controlled decision-making over agriculture proceeds to the exclusion of my wife, I used to sell groundnuts cheaply to vendors while still on the farm, behind my wife's back, but following the gender training I have stopped this practice. We now make decisions jointly with my wife" (FDG Thandwe cluster, Mwansambo EPA, TA Mwansambo, Nkhotakota).

Group modality confronting with cultural norms, who is the winner in Nkhotakota? The group modality (VLSAs/SACCOs/CBFOs) of inclusive rural finance successfully developed the leadership skills of women in groups. Therefore, women are moving into public spaces where their voices can influence the agenda setting in the community. Changes are also observed in gender relations at the household level. Blessings Kaipa, an older man in his 70s, underscored this by stating: "we see younger men getting busy with household chores, we wonder what has come over them. We suspect their wives have put juju (a spell) on them; our generation does not get involved in household chores, those are reserved for our wives that's why we are married" (FGD - Mthyoka Model Village – Mphonde EPA, Nkhotakota District). However, the custom of marriage is still patrilocal, and the district is predominantly a Muslim community, where religious norms limit women's freedoms. Women are preoccupied with gender roles that constrain their effective engagement in the program; men may still dominate decision-making at the household level, such as the type of house to build. Cultural beliefs that men should control household income have caused women to be patronised in Nkhotakota. Even with VLSAs, sometimes, women default on loans due to loan misuses by their husbands.

Source: CSPE field visits.

Rural finance

Example of improved living conditions coexisting with the predicament under FARMSE.

With the income generated from VSL groups and selling surplus agricultural produce, beneficiaries have improved their living conditions. Some have upgraded their houses with bricks, concrete and iron-roof; some have connected their houses to the national electricity grid (Mzimba North under FARMSE/Heifer International). However, the need for loans was continuously echoed in all groups visited. FARMSE project officers in Nkhotakota and Mzimba (North) mentioned that the project is linking VSL groups to formal financial institutions like NBS bank, but the rate at which the linking of the groups to formal institutions is very slow. Group members have an idea of how to come out of poverty, but packages of financial products are not well suited for poor smallholder farmers. Groups highlighted some problems, such as the slow process of getting loans, collateral conditions with small loans being tied to savings, high interest rates. "In order for a group to qualify for a loan, that group needs to deposit half the amount of loan they are looking for. We managed to borrow K200,000 from NBS bank against savings of K100,000, but even this took too long to be given to us. From this, we bought rice and will only make a small profit of K20,000. We believe if we got a bigger loan of K1,000,000 to invest in the rice business and K3,000,000 to invest in goat farming, we can have better returns." (Mainja VSL Group, TA Mphonde in Nkhotakota district)

Youth inclusion: reforming from delinquency and becoming a responsible community member. "I used to drink irresponsibly, if I did not have money I would pick anything of value from my parent's house and go sell it cheaply for that matter just so I could get money for drinking. I have now become responsible. I got K50,000 from the group as a loan and bought my first pig for pork barbecue. I have never looked back. I have continued to run the pork business where I make money every day. I have now become a responsible member of the community" (Nobert Kanyenda, Tayambapo Youth VSL group; TA Jalavikuwa, Mzimba North – FARMSE supporting Heifer International)

Source: CSPE field visits.

Climate change adaptation

A successful story of increased resilience to climate change. Smallholders have become resilient to climate change through improved uptake of climate-smart agriculture practices, such as mulching, manure making and application, making marker ridges and training farmers on the correct spacing when planting and pit planting. One of the farmers in an FGD exemplified the statement: "My garden had such poor soils, and out of ignorance I used to burn the crop residues but that was in the past; I have since learnt through the project about soil and water conservation. Instead of burning crop residues, I use them for mulching my whole garden; I also make and apply manure with good spacing of ridges. With these efforts, I doubled my harvest from 22 bags of maize I used to get during my days of ignorance. I harvested 75 pails of groundnuts in addition." (Frackson Chibisa (male) FGD Thandwe Cluster, Ncholi Section, Mwansambo EPA TA Mwansambo Nkhotakota.)

Source: CSPE field visits.

List of key persons met

Government Republic of Malawi

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Water Development

Erica Maganga, Principal Secretary for Agriculture
Rodwell S. Mzonde, Director of Agricultural Planning Services
Jeromy C. Nkhoma, Ministry Officer
Godfrey Ching'oma, Director of Crop Development
Geoffrey Mamba, Director of Irrigation
Getrude Kambauwa, Director of Land Resources
Friday Likwinji, Director of Finance
Nelson Mataka, Head of National Agriculture Investment Plan
Alexander Bulirani, Controller of Agricultural Services
Gloria Bamusi, Deputy Director of Human Resources
B. Chilemba, Deputy Director of Administration
Wilkson Makumba, Director of Agricultural Research Services
Aggrey Kamanga, Programme Manager
Chimwemwe Bomba, Chief Agricultural Officer, District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO)
Lloyd Nyirenda, Planning Officer
Adreck Benati, Programme Manager
Valens Mphezu, Agricultural Gender Roles Extension Systems Officer, Ministry of Agriculture (Malawi)

Ministry of Local Government

Charles Makanga, Director of Chiefs
Rose Kayange, Agri-gender Officer for Lilongwe
Lovemore Kachala, Community Development Officer in the Government office of District Community Development
Fortunate Chiwona, Village Savings and Loans Desk Officer in the Government office of District Community Development
Haddy Mulenga, District Community Development Officer

Ministry of Finance

Richard Zimba, IFAD focal point at the Ministry
Twaib Ali, Ministry Officer

Project staff Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)

Dixon Ngwende, Project Coordinator
Fletcher Chilumpha, Technical Advisor
Golie Nyirenda, Communication and Knowledge Management Officer
Kumbukani Rashid, Community Based Organizations Coordinator
Manuel Mang'anya, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
O'Brien Mandala, Ultra poor graduation coordinator
Raphael Nkane, Grant Management Officer
Samuel Elisa, Financial Controller
Rodgers Mbekeani, Rural and Micro Finance Specialist
Zamatchecha Mbekeani, Specialist, Project Team Lilongwe
Grace Kabaghe, Specialist
Macdonald Buleya, Project Facilitator in Traditional Authority Kalembo (Balaka district)
Francis Kasawala, Project Facilitator in Traditional Authorities Phalula and Amidu (Balaka district)
Duncan Jamali,

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Lauryn Nyasulu, Assistant Planning M&E specialist
Tsilizani Mseu, planning M&E specialist
Benjamin Kamanga, Regional Evaluation Expert
Victor Kasuzweni, Regional Environmental Expert
Isaac Muntali, Specialist
Chipaso Nkhonjera, Gender and Targeting Specialist
Gomani Limbani, Irrigation Engineer
Hendricks Mlendo, Procurement Specialist
Chaitali Mukherjee, GIS Expert
Felix Malamula, Knowledge Management Officer
Eric Chiwala, Accountant
Pemphero Mchucu, Nutrition Specialist
Mkondana Chimbalu, Financial Management Specialist
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Julia Qoto, District Irrigation Officer and Desk Officer
Edward Mjiku, Irrigation Engineer
Keneth Msukwa, Agricultural Extension Development Committee
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Stewart Chauluka, Irrigation Agronomist
Never Mulungu, Environmental Officer
Davister Chirwa, Agricultural Extension Development Committee
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Limbani Gomani, Irrigation Engineer Programme Coordination Office, PRIDE
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Gloria Livata, WUA Specialist, PRIDE

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Lawrent Pungulani, Chief Agronomist Dept. Agricultural Research
Kondwani Makoko, Scientist (M&E) Dept. Agricultural Research
Kefasi Kamoyo, Senior Land Resources Conservation Officer Dept. of Land Resources Conservation
Kenneth Chaula, Assistant Chief Agriculture Extension Officer, Dept. of Agricultural, Extension Services
Godfrey Liwewe, Senior Agribusiness Officer, Dept. of Agricultural, Extension Services
Ganizani Nkhwanzi, M&E Officer Dept. of Agricultural Extension Services
Aone Kumwenda, Principal Crops Officer, Dept. Crop Development
Gregory Alinafe, M&E Officer, Dept. Animal Health and Livestock Dev.
Geofrey Onsewa, Accountant
Charles Chinkhuntha, Chief Economist, Dept. Agricultural Planning Services
Daudi Chinong'one, M&E Specialist
Pearson Soko, FIDP Imprest Admin
Dalitso Chandire, Desk Officer
Linda Msiska, Desk Officer
Glyn Chitete, District Desk Officer
Setrida Mlamba, Desk Officer
Denis Zingeni, Chief Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Officer
Joel Phiri, Head of Livestock Section
Charles Nyirenda, Desk Officer
Chimwemwe Hara, Land Resource Officer
Philemon Nguluwe, Planning Officer
Dorothy Luka, Extension Officer

Innocent Milanzi, Livestock Officer
Serah Baluwa, Crops Officer
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Paul Luwe, Agriculture Extension Officer, Dept. of Agricultural, Extension Services
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Joseph Manda, Agriculture Communication Officer
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Steria Mangochi, Crops Officer
Luke Zgambo Kamende, Agricultural Gender Roles Extension Support Services Officer

International and donor institutions

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAO Country Office Malawi

Mr George Phiri, Technical Coordinator
Mr Kirichu Samuel, Monitoring and Evaluation

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Programme Management Department (PMD), East and Southern Africa Division

Sara Mbago, Director
Ambrosio Barros, Country Director, Malawi
James Kennedy Ntupanyama, Implementation support, IFAD consultant
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Zainab Semgalawe Project Task Leader for TRADE, Lead Regional Technical Specialist, Institution

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD) Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI)
Sauli Hurri, Senior Regional Technical Specialist, Rural Finance, Markets and Value Chains (Nairobi)

World Food Programme (WFP), WFP Country Office Malawi

Mr Marco Cavalcante, Deputy Country Director, Miss Maribeth Black, Head of Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM); Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E); and Gender, Protection, and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)
Nicole Carn, Head of Programme

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, GIZ Malawi
Kansungwi Andrew, Unit Coordinator – Institutional & Capacity Development|Agri. Colleges & Smallholder Farmers. Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture & Food Sector (GIAE)

EU, EU Delegation in Malawi

Beatrice Neri, Team Leader for Sustainable Agriculture in the EU Delegation in Malawi

UNDP, UNDP Malawi Country Office

Agnes Chimbiri, UNDP Malawi Country Office
Julie Vandassen, UNDP Malawi Country Office

Non-governmental organizations and research institutes

Wongani Mugaba, Project Manager, Action Aid
Johnstone Chitupira, Project Manager, Development Aid from People to People (DAPP)
Duncan Jamali, District Project Coordinator, Development Aid from People to People (DAPP)
Richard Kadongola, Heifer International
Kondwani Kawonga, Programmes Director, Head Office, Heifer International
Wedson Moyo, Project Officer, based at Chiladzulo Office, Heifer International
Cecelia Mzuza, Project Extension officer, Heifer International
Jan Duchoslav, Research Fellow and Acting Country Program Leader
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
Richard Chongo, Project Manager, Opportunity International
Wezi Lungu, Programme Officer, Opportunity International
Tennyson Magombo, Director and Expert on Climate Change Adaptation, Tingadalire Organic Food Products
Michihiro AOKI, Project Formulation (successor of Yosuke Kato), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Fredrick Munthali, Chief Research Officer, Engineering, Design, Industry and Energy, National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST)
Winfred Chanza, Head of Programmes, Trustees of Agricultural Promotion Programme (TAPP)
Evelyn Mkandawire, Project Coordinator, Eagles Relief and Development Program, Balaka Office
Denzel Nsangwa, Project Coordinator, Save the Children
Emily Mkandawire, Field Coordinator, Save the Children
Onnis Kasambala, District Project Coordinator, Malawi Milk Producers Association (MMPA)

Private sector - financial institutions/microfinance institutions in Malawi

Sophie Sikwese, Project Manager, CUMO Microfinance
Chisomo Kapusa, Business Area Supervisor, CUMO Microfinance Chiradzulu
Rose Kapale, Financial Services Officer, based at Traditional Authority Nkalo, CUMO Microfinance Chiradzulu
Daniel Makata Project Manager, FINCA Malawi
Mada Kazembe, Project Officer, FINCA Head Office
Zebedia Chirwa, Balaka FINCA Branch Manager
Ruth Bema, Project Manager, NBS Bank
Thumbiko Soko, Agent Support Officer, Agency Banking Section, NBS Bank Head Office
John Kumwenda, Team Leader – Karonga / Chitipa, NBS Bank
Humphreys Majoni, Sales Agent – Limbe NBS Bank Branch (Chiradzulu)
Innocent Manda, Project Manager, FDH Bank
Henry Mpase, Channels Manager, FDH Bank LILONGWE
Ellen Chipendo, Account Relationship Officer – Digital, FDH Bank LILONGWE
Madalitso Chamba, Fin. Literacy Program, Reserve Bank of Malawi
Leroy Banda, Head of Projects and Cooperatives, Malawi Union of Savings Credit Cooperative (MUSCCO)
Samson Mwalungira, Vision Fund
Mc Millan Nankhonya, General Manager, Based at Head Office, FINCOOP Savings and Credit Cooperative Ltd.
Batwell Kamenya, Member Services Officer, FINCOOP Savings and Credit Cooperative Ltd.

Beneficiary groups (virtual group meetings)

Beneficiaries from the Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP)

SAPP 01 Groundnut seed multiplication Farmers' group Nankhwanzi (6 attendees)

SAPP 02 Maize Farmers Group (6 attendees)

SAPP 03 CA Plot Farmers' group "Chilengedwe" (8 attendees)

Beneficiaries from the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)

FARMSE 01 Zomba district RTC/ Vision Fund (10 attendees)

FARMSE 02 Thyolo district District Community Development Office (DCDO) / FINCOOP (18 attendees)

FARMSE 03 Ntcheu district District Community Development Office / COMSIP (12 attendees)

FARMSE 04 Ntcheu district District Community Development Office (DCDO) / MUSCCO (10 attendees)

FARMSE 05 Kasungu district District Community Development Office (DCDO) / Concern Universal Microfinance Operations (CUMO) (17 attendees)

Beneficiaries from the Project staff Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)

District of Zomba (Mlooka and Mato irrigation schemes) (20 attendees)

District of Phalombe (Wowo irrigation scheme) (18 attendees)

District of Rumphi (Chipogya irrigation scheme) (23 attendees)

Beneficiary groups (field visit)

Beneficiaries from the Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprise Programme (FARMSE)

Balaka district, Mwayiwathu Group (14 attendees)

Balaka district, Chisomo Group (11 attendees)

Balaka district, Tikondane Group (10 attendees)

Balaka district, Titukulane Group (10 attendees)

Balaka district, Itsimuke Group (12 attendees)

Balaka district, Unity Nkhalango Village Bank Group (8 attendees)

Balaka district, Tiyamike Mangengele Village Bank Group (4 attendees)

Balaka district, FINCA Bank agents (5 attendees)

Lilongwe district, Tipindule Group (14 attendees)

Lilongwe district, Tiyanjane Group (12 attendees)

Lilongwe district, Thandizo Group (10 attendees)

Lilongwe district, Pemphero Group (11 attendees)

Lilongwe district, Ubale Group (10 attendees)

Lilongwe district, FDH Bank agents (5 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Mafuno Group (14 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Talandira Group (8 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Mgwirizano 'A' Group (12 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Tadala Group (10 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Mwayiwathu Group (7 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Tiyamike Group CIZ 399 (7 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Tikondane Group CIZ 401 (9 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Tipindule Group CIZ 402 (8 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, Tikondane Group CIZ 413 (7 attendees)

Chiradzulu district, NBS Bank agent, Makitosi Shoppings Bank Agency

Mzimba district, Tayambapo Youth VSL (15 attendees)

Mzimba district, Tiwonge Women VSL (All female group) (7 attendees)

Mzimba district, Mzimba South Save the Children individual cluster (15 attendees)

Chitipa district, NBS Bank agents (4 attendees)

Nkhotakota district, Mayinja VSL (20 attendees)

Nkhata Bay district, Tiyanjane 2 Group (12 attendees)

Nkhata Bay district, Tiyanjane Group (9 attendees)
Nkhata Bay district, Chilimbikiso Group and Khumbilachita Group (35 attendees)

Beneficiaries from the Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE)

Chiradzulu district, Talandira Seed Multiplication Farmers Group (10 attendees)
Nkhata Bay district, Mandezo Catchment Area Group (12 attendees)

Beneficiaries from the Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme (SAPP)

Balaka district, Makikenzi Village Lead Farmers (16 attendees)
Balaka district, Kachere Club (11 attendees)
Chiradzulu district, Lirangwe Farmer Field School (9 attendees)
Chitipa district, Masangano Group (27 attendees)
Chitipa district, IFinda Group (13 attendees)
Chitipa district, Malengwe Group (30 attendees)
Chitipa district, Sekwa Group (11 attendees)
Nkhotakota district, Mthyoka Site (18 attendees)
Nkhotakota district, Matchipisa Site (9 attendees)
Nkhotakota district, Mkhonje Site (13 attendees)

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