

## INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)

### Good practice

Progress has been made in terms of incorporating gender concerns into the design of IFAD-supported projects and programs. Since 1998 all design missions have been supplied with guidelines and checklists for addressing gender issues

Seventy-two per cent of projects approved in 2001 identified some operational measures to address gender issues in all components, against 44 per cent in 2000 and only 13 per cent in 1998. The current priority for the Fund is to support gender-sensitive project implementation through focused technical assistance and policy dialogue.

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### Recent policy statements

IFAD's Strategic Framework for 2000-2006 recognizes that addressing gender inequalities and building women's capabilities are essential conditions for achieving impact on poverty and malnutrition worldwide. The Strategic Framework also points to the importance of empowerment and institutional development, which IFAD views as an integral component of poverty reduction. The Framework states that gender is an "overarching concern", namely that gender issues should be addressed in all aspects of the project cycle and in IFAD's core processes and procedures, definition of institutional responsibilities and resource allocation. The Framework also establishes the need for better targeting, of basing project design on "the needs and perceptions of the poor", and of "maximizing the participation of poor women and men... in the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities". It states that IFAD should be more systematic in measuring differential impacts (by gender and socio-economic group); and that impact should be measured against "improvement in those aspects of their lives that poor people (women and men), consider the most important".

### Programme objectives

With the aim of operationalizing the gender-related principles contained in the Strategic Framework, a workshop was held in June 2002 to lay the foundations for a multi-year Action Plan to mainstream gender in IFAD's programmatic work. The plan will articulate specific commitments, institutional responsibilities and monitoring measures. It will be finalized in the Autumn and integrated within IFAD's new multi-year plan (the current one expires in December 2002).

To implement the Strategic Framework, Regional Divisions have developed Regional Strategies which all make reference to gender concerns, with some differences in emphasis and approach. Generally they address gender as both an equality/poverty issue (since IFAD targets the poorest and most vulnerable, women are a primary target group) and from an effectiveness perspective (empowering women, increasing their incomes and well-being are instrumental for reducing poverty).

### Operational activities

IFAD's Programme Management Department, which is responsible for IFAD's field operations, has five Regional Divisions: East and Southern Africa; West and Central Africa; North Africa and the Near East (also including CIS countries); Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific. The Department also includes the Technical Advisory Division, where the focal point for gender in IFAD's programmatic work is located (one staff member out of a total of 165 professional staff). Focal point responsibilities include: screening all projects in the design phase from a gender perspective; developing minimum standards, tools and guidelines for design; policy development related to gender in IFAD's programmatic work; and facilitating information sharing and cross fertilization.

All five Regional Divisions are at different stages of implementation of special initiatives to strengthen the gender focus in their projects programmes. These

are funded through grant funds, either of IFAD itself or from donor Trust Funds. The programmes are either managed by an IFAD Headquarters-based programme co-ordinator recruited specifically for the task (in three Regional Divisions), or they are decentralized and implemented by contracting institutions in the region (in two Divisions). The ultimate aim of these initiatives is to ensure that gender dimensions are systematically and routinely addressed in design and implementation of IFAD's projects and programmes, and eventually financed through core funding.

The regional initiatives cover a wide range of activities relating both to design and implementation. These include: surveys on the status of gender mainstreaming in IFAD-supported projects; mapping of technical support requirements by projects; assistance to design/re-design of a project's gender strategy; participation of a gender specialist in project start-up workshops to ensure the gender concerns are addressed up-front; training and sensitization for project staff and other stakeholders on gender; sensitization of policy makers; special studies; inclusion of missing gender expertise in design and supervision missions; support to the development of gender-sensitive M&E systems and baselines; assistance to projects in staff selection to ensure sensitivity to gender issues; publication and web development. ■