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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-fourth session of the Evaluation Committee**

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**For: Review**

## Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-fourth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its sixty-fourth session held on 8 October 2010. The four agenda items for discussion were: (i) Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function; (ii) IFAD's Office of Evaluation's results-based work programme and budget for 2011 and indicative plan for 2012-2013; (iii) country programme evaluation for Argentina; (iv) completion evaluation of the Raymah Area Development Project in Yemen; and (v) other business.
2. All Committee members attended the session, with Egypt chairing the proceedings. The Committee welcomed Ms Regina Gurgel de Saboya from the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management in Brasilia, who participated on behalf of Mr Benvindo Belluco from Brazil. The Committee also welcomed the new representative for Ireland, Mr Jarlath O'Connor, who was attending his first Evaluation Committee session.
3. The Committee was joined by IFAD's Associate Vice-President, Programmes, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Chief Development Strategist of IFAD; the Director of the IFAD Office of Evaluation (IOE); the Secretary of IFAD; the Directors of the Near East and North Africa Division and Latin America and Caribbean Division; and other IFAD staff. Government representatives for Argentina<sup>1</sup> and Yemen<sup>2</sup> attended the discussions, respectively on the Argentina country programme evaluation and the completion evaluation of the Raymah Area Development Project (Yemen).
4. **Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function.** The Committee considered the implementation of the recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function (EC 2010/64/W.P.2), together with addendum 2, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Findings and Recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Evaluation System: Update as of 7 October 2010 (EC 2010/64/W.P.2/Add.2).
5. Regarding addendum 1 on the Legal issues raised in the Report of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function, the Committee decided to postpone the discussion of this document to a later stage, to allow it to be considered along with the draft revised Evaluation Policy.
6. The Committee considered the draft terms of reference for the proposed consultant and the overall estimated costs. The Committee agreed to the proposal, with the addition of a specific mention of the five domains in which the consultant would be active and an explicit reference to the consultant's reporting function to the Evaluation Committee.
7. Furthermore, the Committee decided to narrow down the list of possible candidates for the consultancy to two names: Mr Bruce Murray and Mr Robert Picciotto. The Committee requested IOE to approach both these candidates for feedback on their availability, the fee they would accept (with a view of achieving possible savings), and how they would approach the task in question.
8. The candidates should provide their answers not later than nine days from their being approached, and these would be circulated immediately among Committee members to allow a selection to be made within a three-day time frame.
9. Commenting on addendum 2, while welcoming the information provided, several members expressed the wish for greater clarity in some areas, including:

<sup>1</sup> Mr Jorge Neme, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Abdul Malik Al-Thawr, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation.

- (a) a more finely tuned and clearer list of deliverables;
  - (b) specific responsibilities for each deliverable;
  - (c) the role of the consultant in each deliverable;
  - (d) a more detailed and clearer timeline;
  - (e) a schedule of meetings of the Committee to discuss the Peer Review.
10. In order to expedite the process, the Committee decided to liaise more closely with IFAD Management and IOE in order to monitor the process. The Chairperson will schedule the first meeting and communicate details to the Committee.
11. **IOE's results-based work programme and budget for 2011 and indicative plan for 2012-2013.** The Committee expressed its broad agreement with IOE's proposed objectives, divisional management results, and work programme and budget for 2011. The Committee appreciated IOE's efficiency gains, which are reflected in the larger work programme and smaller budget for 2011. The Committee:
- (a) welcomed the indicators produced by IOE to track achievement of the divisional management results. The Committee suggested further fine-tuning of the indicators by introducing baselines for reaching targets;
  - (b) underlined the importance of the corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's approaches and results with respect to policy dialogue. The Committee requested that this evaluation be introduced, along with specific timelines, into IOE's forward work programme in the near future;
  - (c) recommended that this year's ratio between (i) IOE's budget and IFAD's programme of work; and (ii) IOE's budget and IFAD's administrative budget be taken as guidelines for the development of future IOE budgets; and
  - (d) emphasized the importance of its annual country visit for 2011, and invited IFAD to make adequate provisions for this activity in the budget.
12. **Country programme evaluation for Argentina.** The Committee discussed the country programme evaluation for Argentina.
13. The Government's representative from the capital stressed the economic and social constraints that Argentina faced until 2001 and the fact that the current policy environment is conducive to an effective partnership between IFAD and Argentina and to effective project implementation. He hoped to see continued strengthening of the relationship between the Fund and Argentina and voiced appreciation for the evaluation.
14. The Committee:
- (a) emphasized the fact that IFAD, through its grant support in the framework of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its work in facilitating South-South cooperation, can play a major role in achieving food security in Argentina;
  - (b) underlined the importance of promoting ownership on the part of the Government regarding policy and financial commitment to ensure success in reducing the country's rural poverty. In addition, members highlighted the need to improve portfolio performance under all circumstances;
  - (c) pointed to the need for IFAD to be more focused in its support to Argentina, especially in terms of the overall objectives pursued in the framework of the country strategy; and
  - (d) highlighted the need for further reflection on the definition of rural poverty in Argentina. Members also recommended that IFAD proceed cautiously in

deciding to establish a country office, in light of Argentina's status as a middle-income country and the limited size of the portfolio.

15. **Completion evaluation of the Raymah Area Development Project in Yemen.** The Committee discussed the completion evaluation of the Raymah Area Development Project in Yemen.
16. The Government's representative highlighted the very challenging nature of the project's implementation area. He underlined that the Government has learned from the Raymah experience and made key adjustments to its internal procedures to ensure project effectiveness. While acknowledging that the project suffered from weak management, he also emphasized that the Government has now very transparent processes for hiring project staff. Finally, he informed the Committee that the Government has streamlined the procedures for the allocation of counterpart funds, which should facilitate project implementation.
17. The Committee:
  - (a) welcomed the opportunity to discuss this weakly performing project and recognized that the project's outcomes were unsatisfactory;
  - (b) highlighted the need for all evaluations to undertake a comprehensive assessment of gender and women's empowerment and noted that this must be a regular feature in all future IOE evaluations;
  - (c) underlined the need for IFAD to pay greater attention to follow-up during implementation, including ensuring that mid-term review recommendations are implemented, especially in cases such as the Raymah project that are considered at risk. The importance of regular visits by the IFAD CPM to problem projects was emphasized by members. However, the Committee was satisfied that the situation has changed since the recent appointment of a new CPM for Yemen; and
  - (d) commented that the recommendations in the report could be made more specific and supplemented in certain areas – for example in terms of IFAD's engagement with other partners – in order to guide IFAD's future activities in the country. This will be reflected in the minutes of the session, which will be added as an annex to the evaluation report once it is published.
18. **Other business.** The Committee decided that the draft minutes of each session will be added to the provisional agenda of the subsequent Committee session for approval by members. Members were also in agreement with the Chairperson's suggestion regarding the need for regular reporting on the implementation status of the Peer Review recommendations at each Committee session. Before closing the session, on behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson conveyed his appreciation to Brazil for its constructive and useful contributions to the Committee's work over the past two years. Brazil will be replaced by Mexico on the Committee, starting from November 2010, until the end of the mandate of the current Committee.