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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Report of the Chairperson on the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee

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Executive Board — 104th Session
Rome, 12-14 December 2011

For: Review

Report of the Chairperson on the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its seventieth session held on 9 December 2011.
2. Canada, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico and Norway attended the session, with Nigeria chairing the session on behalf of India, whose representative was unable to attend due to his unexpected absence from Rome for consultations with the Government of India in New Delhi.
3. Observers were present from Egypt, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Sweden. The Committee was joined by IFAD's Associate Vice-President, Programmes, Programme Management Department; the Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE); the Secretary of IFAD; the Head of the Replenishment Secretariat; the Director of the Policy and Technical Advisory Division; and other IFAD staff.
4. There were seven agenda items for discussion, as follows: (i) draft minutes of the Evaluation Committee's sixty-ninth session; (ii) 2011 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations; (iii) Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE); (iv) the IFAD Private-Sector Strategy; (v) draft IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; (vi) provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2012; and (vii) other business.
5. **Draft minutes of the sixty-ninth session of the Evaluation Committee.** The Committee discussed the minutes of the sixty-ninth session of the Evaluation Committee and approved them without further changes.
6. **Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI).** The Evaluation Committee discussed the ninth ARRI prepared by IOE and the IFAD Management Response to the document.
7. Members commended IOE for a well-prepared document, which this year included new features such as new types of project evaluations (the Project Completion Report Validation and the Project Performance Assessment), a clearer summary of the "why factor" and lessons, comparison of IOE's results with Management's self-evaluation results and a dedicated section on gender.
8. Members were informed that there was an encouragingly small disconnect between results reported through Management's self-evaluation system and the findings of IOE's independent evaluations.
9. Members recognized the improvement in performance of IFAD-funded projects across several evaluation criteria, including the performance of IFAD as a partner. At the same time, members expressed concern about the performance in some evaluation criteria, such as efficiency, natural resource management (NRM) and sustainability. They underscored the need for continued efforts to improve performance in these areas.
10. With regard to sustainability, members noted that efforts to address the challenges in this area by Management had been ongoing since 2007, the year in which the topic was addressed as a learning theme by the ARRI. Members noted that efficiency in projects remains an issue and that the forthcoming corporate-level evaluation on efficiency could help in providing explanations and finding solutions to enhance the Fund's performance in this area. On the low performance in NRM, Management responded that IFAD was now implementing the newly approved Environment and Natural Resource Management Policy, which should help improve performance in this area.
11. Members noted that there may be a trade-off when assessing efficiency and other criteria, which needed to be considered in the future.

12. Members discussed the IOE findings regarding the limited analytical work underpinning COSOP preparation and project design. In this regard, one measure to enhance IFAD's performance would be through partnership with other agencies, including local and international think-tanks and research institutions.
13. In response to enquiries from members, IOE clarified the findings related to partnerships with other international financial institutions (IFIs), especially the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank. IOE, together with Committee members, encouraged Management to review and possibly widen the scope of partnership with these organizations. Management replied that a partnership strategy would be submitted for Board approval in 2012, which, inter alia, would cover partnership with a broad range of institutions including the IFIs.
14. Clarifications were provided on the benchmarking exercise. In this regard, IOE noted that in the next year's ARRI – the tenth edition – the division would attempt to undertake a more comprehensive benchmarking study with the IFIs and other development organizations to obtain a deeper understanding of how IFAD performs compared with other development actors.
15. Members commented on the evolution in the IOE evaluation methodology over the past decade. They suggested that this be highlighted in the next ARRI, given the impact of methodology on the assessment and reporting of results.
16. Regarding improving quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), several members urged for the development of mechanisms to further encourage partner governments to incorporate more effective M&E into projects.
17. With regard to the issue of formulating guidelines or principles for counterpart funding from governments for IFAD-funded projects, members encouraged further reflection on this subject in order to promote greater ownership by governments and ensure wider impact on poverty.
18. **Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE).** The Committee discussed the RIDE, together with the comments provided by IOE, which was for subsequent consideration by the Executive Board in December 2011.
19. Both IOE and IFAD Management agreed that there was considerable synergy between the substance, recommendations and comments of this year's ARRI and those of the RIDE. Some instances of this were partnering with other institutions, and the efficiency and effectiveness of IFAD projects.
20. Members asked for clarification on partnership arrangements and certain corporate performance indicators, for example changes undertaken in response to internal audit recommendations and gender representation at senior staff level at IFAD.
21. **Provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2012.** The Committee discussed the proposed provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2012 (see annex).
22. IOE clarified that the dates of the forthcoming annual country visit to Ghana would be 25 to 29 June 2012, subject to the agreement of the Government of Ghana and IFAD's West and Central Africa Division.
23. In the context of the country visit to Ghana, the Committee underlined the importance of facilitating dialogue with the United Nations Rome-based agencies at the country level.
24. The Committee noted that the discussion on increasing the participation of Board members that are not on the Evaluation Committee in country visits would be undertaken in the context of the forthcoming Convenors and Friends meeting.
25. **IFAD Private-Sector Strategy.** The Committee welcomed the Private Sector Strategy, together with IOE's comments thereon.

26. Members underlined the importance of such a strategy for engaging with the private sector, given its central role in promoting agriculture and rural development especially in the context of IFAD operations.
27. Members noted that it was important for IFAD to assess how the private sector views the potential of partnering with the Fund. In addition, the Committee acknowledged Management's intention to build on IFAD's existing instruments and to continue developing the expertise, including in the country offices, for engaging more actively with the private sector in accordance with the IFAD Strategic Framework 2011-2015.
28. Members suggested that the issue of conducting an in-depth feasibility study be addressed during the discussion of the private-sector strategy at the Board.
29. Members also emphasized the importance of IFAD grant activities not causing market distortions. On this issue, it was recalled that under the revised IFAD Policy on Grant Financing of 2009 all proposed grants to the private sector are submitted to the Board for approval.
30. **IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.** The Committee discussed the draft IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment submitted by IFAD Management for preliminary consideration by the Committee.
31. Members welcomed the policy and suggested developing concrete mechanisms for resource allocation and accountability, including identifying possible bottlenecks for implementation. Members reiterated that the process needed to be overseen by a senior member of the IFAD Management Team.
32. Members noted the importance of the relationship between gender and nutrition and the correlation between enhanced gender equality and reduced malnutrition. In addition, members stressed the importance of ensuring access to extension services for women and control over land.
33. Members suggested holding further discussions or an informal seminar on the proposed gender policy and soliciting written contributions from Board members as soon as possible, and prior to submission of the policy to the Board in April 2012.
34. Members also discussed the possibility of holding a workshop with participation by the Rome-based agencies on the United Nations system-wide action plan (SWAP) on gender.

Proposed dates and provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee in 2012

Seventy-first session (Tuesday, 3 April 2012)	
Item 1	Minutes of the seventieth session
Item 2	Country programme evaluation for Ghana
Item 3	Country programme evaluation for Viet Nam
Item 4	Approach paper on the corporate-level evaluation of direct supervision and implementation support
Item 5	Status of agreements at completion point of evaluations undertaken by IOE
Item 6	Strategy on Partnership and Collaboration at IFAD with IOE comments
Seventy-second session (Tuesday, 17 July 2012)	
Item 1	Election of the chairperson of the Evaluation Committee
Item 2	Minutes of the seventy-first session
Item 3	Preview of the IOE's results-based work programme and budget for 2013 and indicative plan for 2014-2015
Item 4	Country programme evaluation for Jordan
Item 5	Project performance assessment of the Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot (Cambodia)
Item 6	President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) with IOE comments
Seventy-third session (Tuesday, 2 October 2012)	
Item 1	Minutes of the seventy-second session
Item 2	IOE's results-based work programme and budget for 2013 and indicative plan for 2014-2015
Item 3	Corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's institutional efficiency and the efficiency of IFAD-funded operations
Item 4	Project performance assessment of the Rural Recovery and Development Programme in Burundi
Seventy-fourth session (Thursday, 22 November 2012)	
Item 1	Minutes of the seventy-third session
Item 2	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD's Operations
Item 3	Evaluation syntheses on the country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) as an instrument, including its structure, development and implementation process
Item 4	Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) with IOE's comments
Item 5	Country programme evaluation for Nepal
Item 6	Provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2013