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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Report of the Chairperson on the seventy-first session of the Evaluation Committee**

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**For: Review**

## Report of the Chairperson on the seventy-first session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its seventy-first session held on 2 April 2012.
2. All Committee Evaluation members attended the session with the exception of Canada. The Committee welcomed the representative of Luxembourg, who replaced France as a member following its seventieth session.
3. Observers were present from China, Finland, Mauritius and Venezuela. 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 Director of the West and Central Africa Division (WCA); the Director of the Policy and Technical Advisory Division (PTA); and other IFAD staff.
4. There were six agenda items for discussion, as follows: (i) draft minutes of the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee; (ii) Country Programme Evaluation for Ghana; (iii) Country Programme Evaluation for Vietnam; (iv) Approach Paper for the Corporate-level Evaluation of the IFAD Policy on Supervision and Implementation Support; (v) IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, together with IOE comments; (vi) and other business.
5. To facilitate the presence of key management representatives, it was decided to shift the order of items to be discussed. Specifically, the decision was taken to anticipate the discussion on IFAD's policy on gender equality and women's empowerment, together with IOE's comments thereon, immediately after lunch, and to defer the discussion on the approach paper on the corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's direct supervision and implementation support policy later in the afternoon.
6. It was also decided to include under Other Business an update by PMD on the EC Annual Country Visit to Ghana, which will take place in June 2012.
7. **Draft minutes of the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee.** The Committee discussed document EC 2012/71/W.P.2 which contains the Minutes of the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee for approval by members.
8. The Committee approved the Minutes of its seventieth session without further changes.
9. **Country Programme Evaluation for Ghana.** The Committee discussed document EC 2012/71/W.P.3 which contains the Country Programme Evaluation of Ghana for members' review.
10. The Committee expressed appreciation for a high quality evaluation; it also acknowledged the good collaboration between IOE and PMD in undertaking this important exercise. The Committee made a number of observations, which are summarized below together with additional clarifications provided by IOE and the IFAD Management.
11. The Committee raised some questions concerning the partnering by IFAD in Ghana with other United Nations agencies in the framework of UNDAF, other multilateral entities such as the African Development Bank, the donor community at large and with the private sector, especially for, but not limited to, scaling up and infrastructure development purposes. Management noted that given the recent outposting of the CPM, partnering in Ghana is mainly taking place at the donor working group level, of which IFAD is an active member, and opportunities for collaboration are identified within such framework.
12. The Committee also addressed the issue of how Ghana's performance compares with other African countries, including those constituting ECOWAS. Management noted that, overall, Ghana is performing better in specific areas, given the country's

- solid agriculture policy and emphasis given to agriculture and rural development. In addition, given IFAD's country presence, the capacity to identify and address issues quickly is enhanced. Moreover, linking direct supervision with design activities where feedback is provided in a timely fashion, helps in reducing start-up delays.
13. With regard to innovative approaches undertaken by the Fund in Ghana, and in particular to value chains, Management noted that the current value chain approach being implemented by IFAD in the country is innovative and at the pilot stage, and the approaches adopted would benefit from close review.
  14. Regarding the assessment of economic efficiency, there were different perspectives between IOE and PMD on the methodology to be used and proxy indicators to be adopted. Participants recognized the need to further discuss the matter for clarifying purposes.
  15. **Country Programme Evaluation for Vietnam.** The Committee discussed document EC 2012/71/W.P.4 which contains the Country Programme Evaluation of Vietnam for members' review.
  16. The Committee expressed its appreciation for a good evaluation and the related consultative and participatory approach taken; it also recognized the timeliness of this evaluation, whose conclusions and recommendations have informed the preparation of the forthcoming COSOP to be discussed at the April 2012 session of the Board.
  17. The Committee made a number of observations; these are summarized below together with additional clarifications provided by IOE and the IFAD Management.
  18. The Committee asked for clarifications on the level of partnerships in the context of national policy dialogue. Management noted that IFAD's engagement with partners depends on specific circumstances; it also recognized the need for closer relationships with MDBs to pursue its scaling up agenda.
  19. In future, Management will explore opportunities for collaboration in the UNDAF context.
  20. The Committee noted the importance of anchoring COSOPs to past experience so to better identify the strategic direction the Fund should pursue in its in-country activities.
  21. On the issue of CPE reports being long in terms of pages, the Committee noted the trade-off between shortening the reports at the expense of the overall coverage of the issues to be addressed in the document.
  22. Regarding the assessment of economic efficiency, they agreed on the proposal for IOE and PMD to consult on this issue and prepare a document to be submitted for consideration and guidance by the Committee in the course of the year.
  23. As indicated by Committee members, in the future IOE will endeavour to explain more explicitly the rating methodology in its evaluation reports.
  24. **Approach Paper for the Corporate-level Evaluation of the IFAD Policy on Supervision and Implementation Support.** The Committee discussed document EC 2012/71/W.P.5 which contains the Approach Paper of the corporate level evaluation of IFAD's direct supervision and implementation support policy for members' review.
  25. Committee members expressed their appreciation for a well-prepared document and agreed with the objectives, methodology and key questions.
  26. The Committee noted the approach paper covered all important areas to be addressed by the evaluation, but also suggested that the evaluation give due attention to answering the 'why' question, as well as learn from the experiences of less successful operations.

27. **IFAD Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.** The Committee discussed document EC 2012/71/W.P.6 which contains IFAD's Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for members' review.
28. The Committee noted that the policy benefits from several inputs, including the learning generated by the Corporate-level Evaluation on Approaches and Results in Promoting Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment in IFAD Operations, as well as the comments provided by Executive Board members at the seminar on Gender held in September 2011. The Committee commended IFAD Management for participatory approach adopted in finalizing the policy which will be submitted for approval, together with IOE comments, at the 105<sup>th</sup> session of the Board in April 2012.
29. The Committee noted that the policy on gender should promote the needs of women according to the specific development context. It also acknowledged that the policy is aligned with the goal of the IFAD Strategic Framework.
30. The Committee reiterated the importance of the correlation between enhanced gender equality and reduced malnutrition. In addition, it stressed the importance of ensuring access of women to extension services and land. Moreover, it proposed the possibility of introducing additional indicators to measure gender equality, such as assets owned by women-led households, including land.
31. The Committee agreed with IOE comment that it would have been useful to have an indication of the administrative budget required for timely implementation of the policy. However, IFAD Management noted the difficulty in assessing such costs.
32. The Committee was also informed by IOE of the developments of a synthesis report on gender, a task lead by IOE in the context of the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the MDBs; the first draft of such synthesis report was presented in Luxembourg on 29 March 2012 and the final report will be launched at the Fall 2012 Meeting of the ECG.
33. **Other business.** The Committee considered the preliminary proposal and tentative programme for the country visit to Ghana prepared jointly by PMD, SEC and IOE.
34. The Committee:
  - a. Welcomed the preparations undertaken to date;
  - b. Provided a number of suggestions to be considered in finalizing the country visit proposal;
  - c. Recognized that discussions regarding the participation of Executive Board representatives not members of the Evaluation Committee in country visits were ongoing; and,
  - d. Agreed that a further briefing will be held for Committee members before the Ghana country visit.
35. The Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee expressed appreciation to all members of the Committee, given the term of the current Committee expired with the 71<sup>st</sup> session. In particular, he thanked the representatives of Burkina Faso and Ireland for their contributions, as their term on the Executive Board has also been now completed. The Committee expressed sincere appreciation to the Chairperson for his incisive leadership and facilitation role over the past year.