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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Report of the Chairperson on the country visit to Ghana**

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**For: Review**

## Report of the Chairperson on the country visit to Ghana

### I. Background and objective

1. In line with the decision taken by the Evaluation Committee at its sixty-sixth session held in March 2011, the Evaluation Committee's 2012 annual country visit was to Ghana. The team visited the country from 25 to 29 June 2012, and included representatives of Brazil, Canada, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Norway. IFAD participants included the Director, West and Central Africa Division; the Senior Portfolio Manager, representing the Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department; the Country Programme Manager (CPM) and staff of IFAD's Country Office in Ghana and the Office of the Secretary. The Deputy Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) participated in the initial briefings and the first part of the field visit, whereas a senior evaluation officer of IOE accompanied Committee members throughout the trip.
2. The aim of the visit was to gain knowledge and experience of IFAD's work in the field in a way that would enable the Committee to provide more informed guidance on evaluation matters to the Executive Board, IFAD Management and IOE. (Terms of reference for the visit are presented in appendix 1.)

### II. Overview of the programme<sup>1</sup>

3. The programme for the Committee's field visit was divided into three parts:
  - (a) On the morning of 25 June 2012, Committee members were briefed on security matters by the United Nations Security Coordinator, and on the IFAD-supported Ghana country programme by IFAD's CPM for Ghana, who is outposted in Accra.
  - (b) Following the initial briefings, Committee members flew to Tamale in northern Ghana, where they had productive meetings with the Ministers of the Northern and Upper-East Regions. They also visited several income-generating and support activities implemented under various IFAD-funded projects (the Northern Rural Growth Programme, the Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Programme, the Rural Enterprises Project, and the Northern Region Poverty Reduction Programme), speaking at length with project beneficiaries and public- and private-sector entities participating in the relevant value chains.
  - (c) Committee members returned to Accra and:
    - (i) Had intensive discussions with IFAD's key development partners in Ghana, particularly those working in the agriculture and rural sectors;
    - (ii) Met with Mr Maurice Tanco Abisa-Seidu, Chief Director of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and heads of various subsectoral departments and members of the steering committee of Ghana's Medium-term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan; and
    - (iii) Met with the Honourable Kwesi Ahwoi, Minister of Agriculture, and the Honourable Hannah Tetteh, Minister of Trade.

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<sup>1</sup> The full programme may be found in appendix 2.

### **III. Preparatory work for the field visit: Presentations on the ongoing projects, the Ghana country programme evaluation and the interim evaluation of the Rural Enterprise Project (phase II)**

4. The Project Coordinator for the Rural Enterprise Project, IFAD Management and IOE gave presentations on various facets of IFAD-funded operations and the Fund's strategy in Ghana. The presentations deepened Committee members' understanding of the key challenges and opportunities for the IFAD-supported programme in Ghana, and provided essential briefing on what they would be observing during the field visits.
5. In the afternoon, project coordinators gave presentations on five ongoing and recent projects, detailing project approaches, emerging outcomes and challenges. They also provided introductory information about the sites that the Evaluation Committee would visit and sketched out the context of particular interventions. In the subsequent discussions with project coordinators, Committee members raised issues related to farmers' organizations, the extent to which women benefited from projects, the motivation behind organizing farmers' groups, and the link between plans at the community level and those at district and regional levels.
6. During the second day, the Senior Evaluation Officer of IOE presented the key findings and recommendations of the Ghana country programme evaluation and the interim evaluation of the second phase of the Rural Enterprise Project. The CPM pointed out that the evaluation represented an excellent example of collaboration and that there had been full agreement on all recommendations. A discussion followed among Evaluation Committee members, IFAD Management and IOE staff.
7. Summarizing the discussions on the ongoing projects and evaluations presented, the Chair of the Evaluation Committee highlighted: (i) IFAD's increased attention to integrating marketing in the projects it funded, which was a relatively recent approach entailing various constraints that still needed to be addressed; (ii) the importance of countering donor fatigue among bilateral donor agencies given the widespread poverty and deprivation in Ghana, particularly in the north of the country; (iii) the need for IFAD to engage with actors with larger resources such as the African Development Bank; and (iv) IFAD's close collaboration with the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA), a government initiative promoting the sustainable economic and social transformation of the Northern Region, and the importance of this collaboration for the successful integration of IFAD-funded interventions into the country's institutional framework.
8. Committee members noted that despite IFAD's country presence and the Government's accreditation of the CPM as the Country Representative, the CPM was not part of the Heads of Cooperation Group in Ghana, an important forum furthering aid harmonization, policy discussion and inter-agency collaboration. IFAD was currently represented indirectly in this group through the United Nations resident coordinator, but the lack of direct access to information and the inability of IFAD to participate in important decision-making processes along with other donor agencies based in Accra was a serious constraint, which needed to be overcome.

### **IV. Discussion with regional authorities**

9. **Courtesy call on the Regional Minister of the Northern Region in Tamale.** Early in the field visit, Evaluation Committee members paid a courtesy call on the Honourable Moses Mabengba, Regional Minister of the Northern Region, and on Mr Alhaji Gilbert Iddi, Chief Executive Officer of SADA.
10. Recognizing that the Northern Region had the third highest incidence of poverty in Ghana, Evaluation Committee members emphasized in their remarks the need to

focus on sustaining development efforts in the post-project phase; to build appropriate institutions and pursue social development, in particular by raising people's self-esteem; and to make greater use of South-South cooperation (including cooperation opportunities between Ghana and Brazil). With respect to the overall development strategy for the Northern Region, the Regional Minister briefed Committee members on the Ministry's ongoing efforts and achievements in building public-private partnerships, including the significant opportunities that existed in the areas of fisheries, irrigation, cereals, tubers, ruminants and horticulture.

11. **Courtesy call on the Regional Minister of the Upper East Region in Bolgatanga.** In his meeting with Committee members, the Honourable Mark Woyongo, Minister of the Upper East Region, elaborated on: (i) poverty in the region, currently the second poorest on the country's ten regions; (ii) the need for arresting the aggressive expansion of the Saharan desert; (iii) the region's irrigation and flood control potential; and (iv) the Government's vision of eradicating absolute poverty by 2020. The Minister expressed his appreciation for IFAD's assistance to the Northern Region Growth Programme and emphasized the importance of IFAD's continuing to support the region in the future. In response, Committee members underscored the need for developing human potential while ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and expressed IFAD's continued commitment to its partnership with the Government and to their joint mission of reducing rural poverty.

## V. Visit to communities and decentralized public institutions

12. **Meeting communities and project participants.** Evaluation Committee members spent two days visiting communities and project beneficiaries. On the first day, they focused on agricultural value chain development activities undertaken by the Northern Rural Growth Programme and travelled to Kokobilla (in the Northern Region) to visit a feeder road and a river-pumping-based irrigation system, and to meet with the district value chain committee. On the second day, they travelled to the Upper East Region where they visited a processing site of "Potaghurt" (a blend of sweet potato and yoghurt) promoted by the Roots and Tubers Improvement and Marketing Programme and the Rural Enterprises Project, and managed by a woman's group. Committee members also visited a rural technology facility supported by the Rural Enterprises Project, which, in addition to repair services, provides training in agricultural machinery and support to master crafts persons and apprentices within the district, especially in the metal-based trades. The aim is twofold: to develop local capacities and to improve product and service quality.
13. **Meeting with the district assembly sector departments and area council representatives.** During the field visit, Evaluation Committee members travelled to Savelugu (Northern Region) where they met district assembly and area council representatives and attended a presentation on Ghana's decentralization system. Members were interested in learning about the link between the community-based planning process for social infrastructure promoted by the IFAD-funded Northern Region Poverty Reduction Project and the district planning process fostered under Ghana's decentralization programme. They noted with satisfaction that the project's approach was being scaled up by a World Bank-funded project on a country-wide basis.

## VI. Discussion with key development partners

14. On their return to Accra, Committee members, accompanied by IFAD staff, held meetings covering various topics including: the functioning and focus of the Agricultural Sector Working Group; donor coordination in implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) within the New Partnership for Africa's Development; the need for greater harmonization; and

agricultural development policy and programmes thrusts. The first meeting was attended by the Agence Française de Développement, the African Development Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Japan International Development Agency, the KfW Bank Group, the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme. The Danish International Development Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Bank had been invited but were unable to participate. At meeting start, each donor agency gave a brief presentation on its contribution to the development of the agricultural sector in Ghana.

15. Committee members learned more about IFAD's participation in the United Nations Country Team and its various subcommittees, and about the Fund's responsibilities as co-chair of the Agricultural Sector Working Group. They were pleased to note donor appreciation for IFAD's leadership in development processes in the country, and recognized that this positive outcome would not have been possible without the establishment of an IFAD country office led by an outposted CPM.
16. The meeting discussed Ghana's recently acquired middle-income country status, noting nonetheless the persistence of widespread poverty in the Northern Region. The country's new status also meant reduced donor funding for food security (particularly affecting the World Food Programme), which still was a concern despite Ghana's potential to generate surplus production even in the north. The important role played by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in ensuring coordination between agricultural sector programmes and the potential food surplus that the country could generate to support Western Africa was highlighted.
17. The Chair of the Evaluation Committee concluded the meeting by noting that Committee members had gained first-hand knowledge of the disparities in social and economic achievements between the south and north of a country that was now being considered a middle-income country. He also stressed that greater collaboration was needed among donors in order to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses.

## **VII. Discussion with the Government authorities**

18. Committee members participated in two meetings with government authorities: (i) with the Medium-term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) steering committee; and (ii) with the Minister of Food and Agriculture and with the Minister of Trade and Industry.
19. During the first meeting, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture presented METASIP's key initiatives in commercial agriculture, livestock and veterinary services, crops services, fisheries, women in agriculture, and environment management. He mentioned the private sector's role in the implementation of METASIP, and the challenges and opportunities that existed in this partnership. The Chief Director of the Ministry highlighted the close alignment between METASIP and CAADP, and the emphasis being placed on achieving competitiveness (both domestically and internationally) and on meeting food security and energy needs, while ensuring sustainable land and water management, the appropriate use of science and technology and good coordination among institutions.
20. In talks with officials of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Committee members discussed the need to achieve development on an integrated basis, to address food shortage risks in the north and to engage in regional-level dialogue and experience-sharing, particularly with the Economic Community of West African States.
21. With the Ministers of Agriculture and Trade co-chairing the meeting, Committee members engaged in intensive discussions with senior government officials working in the agriculture and trade sectors. In his opening statement, the Minister of Agriculture thanked IFAD for a long and sustained partnership with Ghana, and for

- undertaking the country programme evaluation and developing the country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) with a firm country leadership. He recognized the various challenges facing Ghana including addressing the development issues of the Northern Region (in coordination with SADA), developing stronger leadership at the district level and tackling the broad problem of youth unemployment.
22. In her opening statement, the Minister of Trade thanked IFAD for supporting the Rural Enterprise Project and its rapid expansion. She stressed that substantial demand exists for vocational and skills training, business development services and income-generating activities. In terms of policy issues, Committee members took a keen interest in the debate on interest rate policy, especially in relation to the extremely limited supply of agricultural credit in rural areas and the attractiveness or otherwise of agricultural enterprises in the context of very high nominal interest rates. It was pointed out that formal financial institutions had little interest in lending to smallholder farmers and microentrepreneurs, but that promoting subsidized credit lines was definitely not the solution. The efficiency in financial markets needed to be enhanced and financial product innovation emphasized while giving preference to non-distortive subsidies such as matching grants.
  23. In his concluding remarks, the Chair of the Evaluation Committee thanked the Government on behalf of the Committee and IFAD for the excellent arrangements it had made for the visit. He stated that the support provided for agriculture through IFAD, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the bilateral agencies was crucial but success depended on a deeply committed Government, such as that of Ghana, that is fully aware of the constraints and opportunities facing the country.
  24. **Overall conclusion and follow-up.** This year's trip to Ghana reconfirmed the importance of the annual country visits. Committee members had a unique opportunity to see the IFAD-supported country programme in action and to understand the linkages between the country programme evaluation and the development of the new COSOP. They were able to discuss rural poverty reduction issues at the central, regional, district and community levels. They also observed first-hand the process of harmonization among donors and the alignment of IFAD-funded programmes with the other national and regional government programmes.
  25. As a next step and in line with past practice, the Evaluation Committee Chair will write the Government to thank it for hosting the Committee during its country visit and for making all necessary arrangements so efficiently and effectively. In this connection, the Committee also thanks IFAD Management, especially the Programme Management Department and the Office of the Secretary, but also IOE for their participation and efforts in making the 2012 country visit of the Evaluation Committee so successful.
  26. Committee members noted with satisfaction IFAD's active role in co-leading the Agricultural Sector Working Group. They commended the Ghana Country Office for the important contribution it was making by supporting enabling public policies and programmes for agricultural and rural development. The visit underscored the clear benefit gained by outposting a country programme manager to Ghana, in terms not only of making the IFAD-supported country programme more relevant and effective, but also of establishing productive partnerships with other donors, particularly the African Development Bank. Committee members encouraged IFAD Management to intensify its efforts to strengthen partnerships with multilateral development organizations, despite the operational challenges faced in doing so. They also pointed out that, with concerted efforts, the Country Office could potentially play a more prominent role in sharing the knowledge gained by IFAD over the years, and that this would contribute to enhancing the impact of national and other donor-supported programmes.

## **Terms of Reference for 2012 Evaluation Committee Annual Country Visit to Ghana**

### **Background**

1. In line with its terms of reference and rules of procedure, the IFAD Evaluation Committee (EC) decided at its sixty-sixth session in March 2011 that it would undertake its 2012 Annual country visit to Ghana. Prior visits of the Committee since 2000 took place in Syria, Indonesia, Mexico, Mali, the Philippines, India, Mozambique and Brazil. The members of the EC are Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Finland, Indonesia, India, Luxembourg, Norway and Nigeria.

### **Overall Objective**

2. To gain knowledge and experience of IFAD 's work in the field. In doing so, the EC will be able to provide general guidance related to evaluation matters to the Executive Board, IFAD Management and the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) on a more informed basis and be more competent in its duties.

### **Objectives**

3. The main objectives of this Annual Country visit by the Evaluation Committee are: (i) to visit projects co-funded by IFAD and the Government of Ghana to increase the Committee's awareness of activities on the ground and allow committee members to meet programme clients and stakeholders; (ii) to promote dialogue with Government officials regarding , among other themes, IFAD's role in Ghana; and (iii) to gain insight on two themes addressed by the recent Ghana Country Programme Evaluation, namely: opportunities and challenges in developing agricultural value chains in Ghana, and reducing rural poverty in the North of the country.
4. During the field trip, the EC will visit selected villages of the Upper East Region and the Northern Region; the EC will have the opportunity to meet programme clients, understand their constraints and appreciate and also seek their views on the support received.
5. Further the EC will meet with the management of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and relevant private sector partners to discuss the Government vision and framework for the agricultural sector, as outlined in the Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP). In this context, the members of the METASIP Steering Committee will be invited to interact with the EC.
6. The EC, through its Chair, will report to the Executive Board from its experience during the Annual Country visit on its findings regarding the work and processes and give recommendations to IFAD Management and IOE for future field visits regarding the scope, content and logistical aspects.

## **Programme of the Official Visit of the Evaluation Committee of IFAD's Executive Board to Ghana, 25th-29th June, 2012**

### **Saturday, 23 June and Sunday, 24 June 2012**

Evening: Arrival of EC members in Accra - Welcome and transfer to Mövenpick Ambassador Hotel

### **Monday, 25 June: Briefing sessions and travel to the North**

8.30 Check-out  
 8.45 -9.15 Security briefing by UN Department for Safety and Security at the Hotel  
 9.15 - 10.30 Briefing session at the hotel: Overview of tentative programme and presentation of the Country programme and highlights of the new COSOP  
 10.30 - 11.00 Transfer to Airport  
 12.10 - 13.30 Flight to Tamale  
 13.30 - 15.15 Hotel check in and Lunch  
 15.30 - 16.15 Courtesy Call on Hon. Regional Minister and the CEO of the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA)  
 16.45 - 18.00 Introduction to the on-going projects: Presentation by Project Coordinators  
 19.00 - 20.00 Dinner

### **Tuesday, 26 June: Agricultural Value Chain Development in Northern Ghana- Northern Rural Growth Project (NRGP)**

8.00 - 9.00 Travel to Kokobilla  
 9.00 - 10.00 Feeder road and irrigated agriculture (river pumping)  
 10.15 - 11.15 Meeting with District Value Chain Committee  
 11.30 - 12.30 Meeting with Outgrower scheme supported by NRGF  
 12.45 - 13.15 Travel to Tamale  
 13.30 - 14.30 Lunch  
 15.00 - 16.30 Presentation by IOE on key findings and conclusions of the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) and interim Evaluation of the Rural Enterprise Project (REP), Phase II  
 19.00 Cocktail and dinner at the Residence of the Regional Minister of the Northern Region

### **Wednesday, 27 June: Field Visit to Value Chain Actors, Micro and Small Scale Enterprises in the Upper East Region**

7.30 - 9.30 Travel from Tamale to Bolgatanga  
 9.30 - 10.30 Courtesy call on the Hon. Minister of the Upper East region  
 10.45 - 11.15 Travel from Bolgatanga to Navrongo  
 11.15 - 12.15 Sweet potato "Potaghurt" processing group supported by Roots and Tubers Improvement and Marketing Programme and the Rural Enterprises Project



12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.45 - 14.45	Visit to a Rural Technology Facility and interaction with master crafts persons supported by the Rural Enterprises Project
15.00 - 17.30	Return to Tamale
19.00	Dinner

**Thursday, 28 June: Meeting with District Assembly and return to Accra**

09.00 - 12.00	Meeting with District Assembly Sector Departments and Area Councils representatives
12.15 - 12.45	Transfer to Tamale Airport and check in
12.45 - 13.15	Lunch snack
13.50 - 15.10	Flight to Accra
15.30 - 16.00	Transfer to the hotel
16.00	Hotel check in

**Friday, 29 June: Meetings with key development partners, stakeholders of the CAADP Compact in Ghana and debriefing with Government Authorities**

08.30 - 10.00	Meeting with key donors for agriculture as well as Rome-based agencies
10.30 - 12.00	Meeting with Ministry of Food and Agriculture Management and the METASIP Steering Committee
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch
14.30 - 16.00	Debriefing with Hon. Ministers of Food and Agriculture, Finance and Economic Planning, Trade and Industry
Evening	Airport transfer and departure