

Document: EB 2014/111/INF.8
Date: 1 April 2014
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Rules and procedures for the dispatch of Executive Board documents and related analysis

Note to Executive Board representatives

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Executive Board — 111th Session
Rome, 8-9 April 2014

For: Information

Rules and procedures for the dispatch of Executive Board documents and related analysis

I. Introduction

1. During the 110th session of the Executive Board, the representative for Sweden expressed his country's concern at the late distribution of documents submitted for the Board's consideration. In this respect, it was agreed that the Office of the Secretary (SEC) would prepare a note for the Board, containing the following information:
 - Rules for the dispatch of documents to the Executive Board, including the possibility for Board members to request postponement of discussions based on late dispatch;
 - Statistics regarding document distribution over the last two years; and
 - An analysis of the causes of late distribution, with possible solutions to resolve this situation, including review of sequencing of subsidiary body meetings and documentation arising therefrom.
2. The present document has been prepared in response to this request.

II. Rules pertaining to the dispatch of documents to the Executive Board

3. Rules regarding the dispatch of documentation for consideration at Executive Board sessions are set forth in the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (<http://www.ifad.org/pub/basic/eb/e/!06exboa.pdf>), and are reproduced here below.

"RULE 4 Notification of Sessions

1. Except in special circumstances, the President shall inform each member and alternate of the opening date, place and expected duration of a session no less than thirty days in advance of its commencement.

...

RULE 5 Agenda

1. The President shall prepare a proposed agenda for each session of the Board, which shall include all items requiring consideration by the Board during the session.
2. The President shall communicate the proposed agenda to all members and alternates. The proposed agenda shall normally be transmitted together with the notification referred to in rule 4.
3. Any matter not included in the proposed agenda may be presented by the President or by a member or alternate for inclusion in the agenda to be adopted by the Board at least seven days before the beginning of the session.
4. During the session the Board may revise the agenda by adding, deleting, deferring or amending items.

RULE 6 Distribution of Documents

The documents relating to a proposal to be considered by the Board shall, as far as possible, be distributed to the members and alternates at least thirty days in advance of the meeting at which such proposal is to be considered.¹

¹ At the Fifteenth Session of the Executive Board on 2 April 1982, the President assured the Executive Board that the following will be observed:

'(a) Documents are to be dispatched from six weeks to four weeks in advance of a given session of the Executive Board. However, not more than two President's Reports on projects are to be included in the last dispatch four weeks prior to the beginning of a session.

(b) The four-week dispatch limit with respect to documents presented for and requiring action by the Executive Board at a session shall not be exceeded. However, if necessary, information relating to matters that do not require decisions by the Board, or additional information regarding projects, may be provided subsequently.'

...

RULE 12 Minutes

1. The President shall have prepared draft minutes of each meeting of the Board.
2. The draft minutes shall record the decisions of the Board and shall be circulated by the President to each member and alternate as soon as possible after the meeting, specifying a period within which corrections may be requested. If no such request is received within that period, the draft minutes shall be deemed to have been approved by the Board. In the event a request for corrections is received within the specified period, the President shall submit the draft minutes, together with the corrections requested, for approval to the Board at its next meeting or through other appropriate means.⁴

⁴ At its Sixth Session on 28 June 1979, the Executive Board requested the President to dispatch in the future the Minutes of the Board's sessions within one month of the conclusion of each meeting and to allow a period of one and one-half months for the receipt of any corrections to the Minutes that may be requested."

4. In summary:
 - Documentation requiring action by the Board, i.e. those documents submitted for approval, review or confirmation by the Executive Board, should be dispatched between six and four weeks in advance of a given session of the Board;
 - Documentation presented for the information of the Board and additional information regarding project and programme proposals (e.g. addenda to project and programme proposals arising from negotiations with governments) may be dispatched to Board representatives beyond the four-week limit; and
 - Draft minutes of Board sessions should be dispatched within one month of the conclusion of the Board session in question.
5. Finally, it is to be noted that, in accordance with rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, "Arabic, English, French and Spanish shall be the languages of

the Board” and, as such, documentation should be dispatched in the official languages of the Board and within the prescribed deadlines.

6. While the Rules of Procedure do not specifically refer to late dispatch as the basis upon which Board members may request postponement of discussion of a particular item, the ability to revise the agenda by adding, deleting, deferring or amending items during the Board session itself is covered by rule 5.4.

III. Statistics on document distribution

7. During the two-year period 2012-2013, a total of 501 documents were dispatched for consideration by the Executive Board. Of these, 334 required action by the Board, 167 were submitted for the Board’s information and/or contained additional information related to project/programme proposals. For this period, approximately 80 per cent of documents submitted to the Executive Board were dispatched on time.
8. Timely distribution of documents to IFAD’s governing bodies is directly related to timely receipt of documents in SEC for language processing and subsequent dispatch. In this regard, over the two-year period 2012-2013, statistics relative to the receipt of governing body documents (Governing Council, Executive Board and subsidiary bodies) in SEC show that on average between 50-60 per cent of documents are submitted to SEC in accordance with scheduled deadlines for language processing, while approximately 80 per cent are dispatched in a timely manner.
9. Table 1 and figure 1 below show the timeliness of distribution of Executive Board documents in accordance with the established rules of procedure for the period 2012-2013.

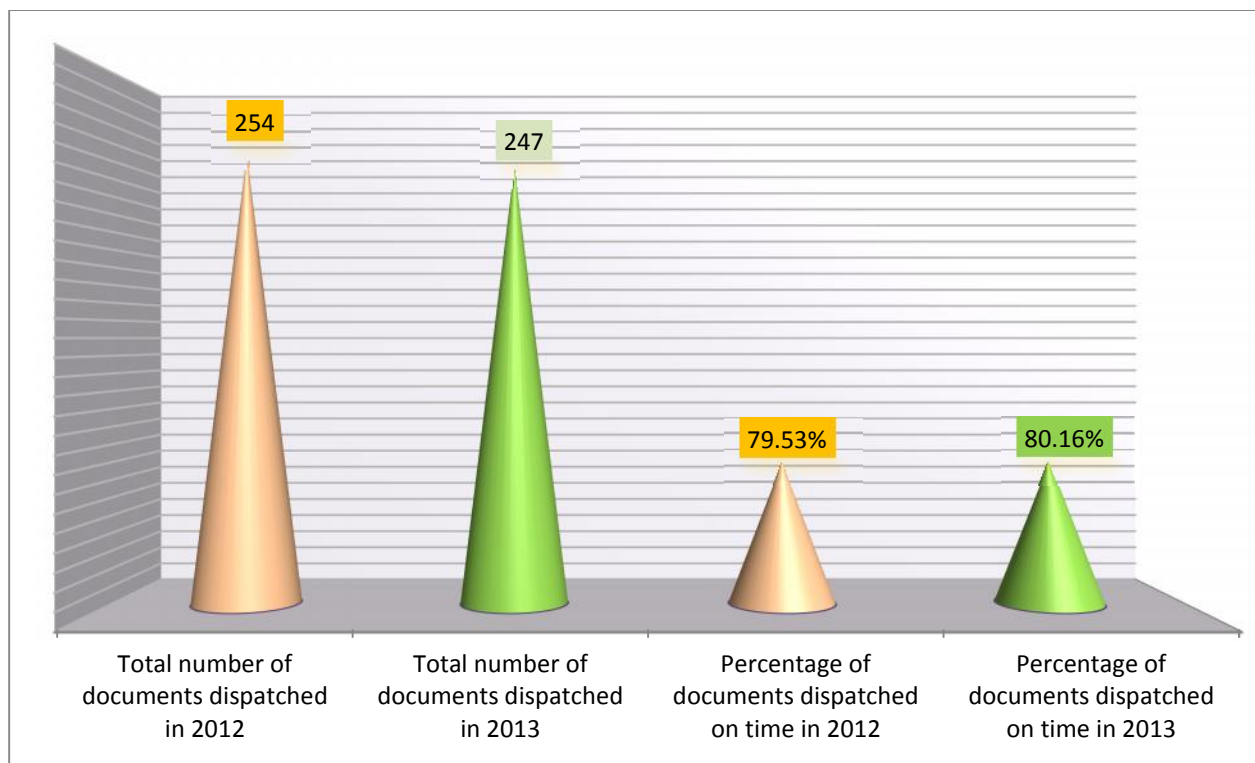
Table 1
Distribution of Executive Board documents, 2012-2013

<i>Year</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
Total number of documents	254	247
Number of documents dispatched on time	202	198
Documents for Approval/review/confirmation		
Dispatched between 6-4 weeks in advance of the relevant Board session	56	53
Dispatched beyond the 4-week rule but considered on time ^a	10	14
Dispatched beyond the 4-week rule	52	49
Documents for information ^b	90	77
Documents submitted for approval under the lapse-of-time procedure	46	54

^a Documentation arising from meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board, which, by virtue of their proximity to the Board sessions themselves, precluded timely dispatch within the four-week rule.

^b Including additional information relative to project/programme proposals.

Figure 1
Distribution of Executive Board documents, 2012-2013



10. Table 2 and figure 2 below show statistics relative to the timely receipt of documentation in SEC compared to timely dispatch. It should be noted that this analysis includes documentation submitted to all governing body (GB) meetings (Executive Board, Governing Council, Audit and Evaluation Committees, etc.).

Table 2
GB document submission and dispatch statistics, 2012-2013

<i>YEAR-QUARTER</i>	<i>Percentage of GB documents submitted on time to SEC</i>	<i>Percentage of documents distributed to GB on time</i>
2012-Q1	65.79	81.58
2012-Q2	58.33	65.00
2012-Q3	52.38	77.61
2012-Q4	33.98	75.00
2013-Q1	76.47	82.35
2013-Q2	56.34	74.65
2013-Q3	61.54	88.46
2013-Q4	44.37	86.09

Figure 2
Submission and dispatch statistics for GB documents, 2012-2013



IV. Causes of late document distribution

A. Scheduling of meetings

11. Late dispatch of certain documents may represent a force majeure situation. A case in point are reports of the subsidiary bodies dealing with proceedings of meetings held less than four weeks in advance of an Executive Board session. By virtue of their timing, these documents cannot be dispatched within the prescribed four weeks.

B. Participatory nature of operational processes

12. The participatory nature of certain processes can also have an effect on the timely dispatch of documentation. Operational documents such as project and programme proposals and country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) are the subject of intense negotiation with partner governments, cofinanciers and beneficiaries, to name but a few of the parties involved. A delay at any point in the preparatory process has a "knock-on" effect further down the line.

C. Late submission for language processing

13. Internal preparatory meetings are held for governing body meetings, at which originators agree to a schedule for submission of documents to SEC that ensures sufficient processing time to dispatch quality documentation to Member State representatives. However, despite this forward planning, delays are commonplace. The result is that the Office of the Secretary is faced with trying to recoup and dispatch governing body documentation as quickly as possible, often at the expense of quality and always at a significant financial cost.

V. Immediate next steps

14. SEC already facilitates forward planning through, inter alia, early communication of commitments with respect to provision of documents to the Board, early

communication of dispatch schedules and processing time required, and organization of regular preparatory meetings. To supplement these activities and to ensure increased efficiency and effectiveness, SEC has devised an incentive scheme to encourage timely preparation of governing body documents, and hence timely processing and dispatch. The following measures have just been put in place:

- (a) **Cost recovery.** Costs related to the editing, translation and processing of documents submitted after the agreed SEC due date has passed will be charged to the originating division. This is standard procedure at comparator organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Inter-American Development Bank.
 - (b) **Key performance indicators (KPIs).** Corporate KPIs relating to timely document submission will be mandatory for all divisional management plans. SEC will be responsible for tracking the timely submission of documents, which will then be reflected in the KPIs of other divisions. Management will receive regular reports on adherence to these KPIs and the financial implications.
15. These measures have been formalized through the issuance of a President's bulletin dated 14 March.
 16. Any document posted after the statutory dispatch date will include a footnote explaining the reason for the delay.
 17. The Executive Board will be apprised of the results of the implementation of these measures.