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Investing in rural people

## **Progress report on the measures and implementation plan for achieving greater efficiency in supporting IFAD's governance**

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**For: Review**

# **Progress report on the measures and implementation plan for achieving greater efficiency in supporting IFAD's governance**

## **I. Background**

1. The Consultation on the Ninth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD9) set two targets for cluster 4<sup>1</sup> for the period 2013-2015:
  - (a) a 25 per cent budget reduction; and
  - (b) a 27.8 per cent reduction in staff positions.
2. At the 106<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board, Management presented a paper (document EB 2012/106/R.3) containing a set of broad proposals aimed at achieving the IFAD9 commitments, including: (a) reduce the overall volume of documentation presented to governing bodies; and (b) introduce other cost reductions associated with the cluster 4. The set of measures proposed –which are consistent with the directions agreed under the IFAD9 Consultation – sought to increase efficiency without undermining the Board's capacity to perform its functions. In addition, these measures were designed to provide a strategic approach to servicing IFAD's governing bodies.

## **II. Review of the measures approved for 2013 and 2014**

### **Reduction in length and number of documents**

3. At the 107<sup>th</sup> session, based on the feedback provided at the 106<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Board approved the reduction in document length as set out in paragraph 7(a), points (i) to (x), of document EB 2012/107/R.4, while urging Management to ensure that the substance and quality of the documents were maintained.
4. At the 110<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Board considered the review of the measures and implementation plan as contained in document EB 2013/110/R.4 and supported the limit proposed on the length of documents and the implementation of the fit-for-purpose approach.
5. By the end of 2013, the approved word limits had effectively reduced the length of documents and the associated production costs to the institution. The resulting decline in the volume of work to produce governing bodies documents during 2013 was approximately 25 per cent compared to 2011, with a reduction of 13 per cent compared to 2012. Accordingly, the overall administrative budget of the Office of the Secretary decreased from US\$8.4 million in 2011 to US\$7.0 million in 2014.
6. Annex I shows the volume of work, measured in number of words, for governing bodies documents processed during 2013 compared to the same period from 2009 to 2012.
7. In the first nine months of 2014, the overall number of documents submitted to meetings of governing bodies also fell by approximately 8 per cent (from 258 to 238).

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<sup>1</sup> Cluster 4 includes the cost of holding meetings of the governing bodies (Executive Board, Governing Council and subsidiary committees, etc.), and the associated documentation, translation, interpretation and other services. It also includes support services provided by other divisions. The administrative budget of the Office of the Secretary presently accounts for about 83 per cent of cluster 4.

### **Translation and interpretation for subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board**

8. At its 110<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Board agreed that language parity was key and that translation and interpretation would not be reduced, and as a consequence, this issue need not be revisited in 2015 unless raised by Board representatives or deemed necessary by IFAD Management because of financial implications. The Board further noted that "With regard to the measures related to the provision of translation and interpretation services for subsidiary bodies, foreseen for 2015, [...] subsidiary bodies agreed on their own specific language regimes, dependent on their compositions, and that these arrangements were subject to change."<sup>2</sup> Hence, due to the current composition of the Audit and Evaluation Committees, and at the request of some members of the Committees in question, it was agreed that translation and interpretation would be provided for these subsidiary bodies.
9. While the above-mentioned decision of the Board resulted in an increase in the amount of documents to be translated and the number of meetings for which interpretation services were to be provided, this was offset by a reduction in the number of words – hence volume of work – as a result of the application of word limits as approved by the Board. The volume of work thus remained unchanged for the first nine months of 2014 with respect to the same period in 2013. Furthermore, as a result of the efficiencies realized through the reduced volume of work, the Office of the Secretary was in a position to absorb the extra costs related to interpretation services for the subsidiary bodies.

### **Cost-recovery measures**

10. Also critical for internal efficiency is adherence to the deadlines for document delivery, as this allows for effective planning and avoids the cost overruns associated with late submission. Furthermore, late submission is not merely an administrative matter: it also hampers timely provision of services to Member States, creating a major impediment in the governance process that affects the quality of decision-making. Accordingly, in March 2014, Management introduced a system to recover costs from non-compliant document originators. In addition, corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) related to timely document submission became mandatory for all divisional management plans. These internal measures were designed to both improve timeliness and result in lower costs to the organization.
11. Annex II presents statistics relative to the timely receipt of documentation in the Office of the Secretary (SEC) compared to timely dispatch. The introduction of cost recovery has improved the overall process, as the average percentage of documents submitted to SEC on time rose from approximately 50 per cent in 2012 and 2013 to 70 per cent during the first nine months of 2014. This improvement allowed the Office of the Secretary to submit, during the same period of 2014, approximately 90 per cent of documents to governing bodies on time.
12. The difference between the two figures above – the gap between 70 per cent timely submission to SEC and 90 per cent timely submission by SEC to governing bodies – reflects faster turnaround time in language processing as a result of internal efficiencies. The new Language Services business model implemented in 2012, which follows the practice of other international organizations (i.e. each language is supported by one staff reviser/translator), has improved timeliness in the delivery of documents while ensuring that quality standards are upheld. This analysis covers documentation submitted to all governing body meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> Draft minutes of the 110<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board.

**Language parity**

13. In addition to achieving a reduction of US\$1.4 million in its administrative budget, the Office of the Secretary has managed to respond to the need to ensure language parity among Member State representatives. Dialogue between IFAD Management and Member State representatives has been facilitated by introducing interpretation services for the President's biannual meetings with permanent representatives and for induction briefing meetings for Member State representatives, also held biannually.

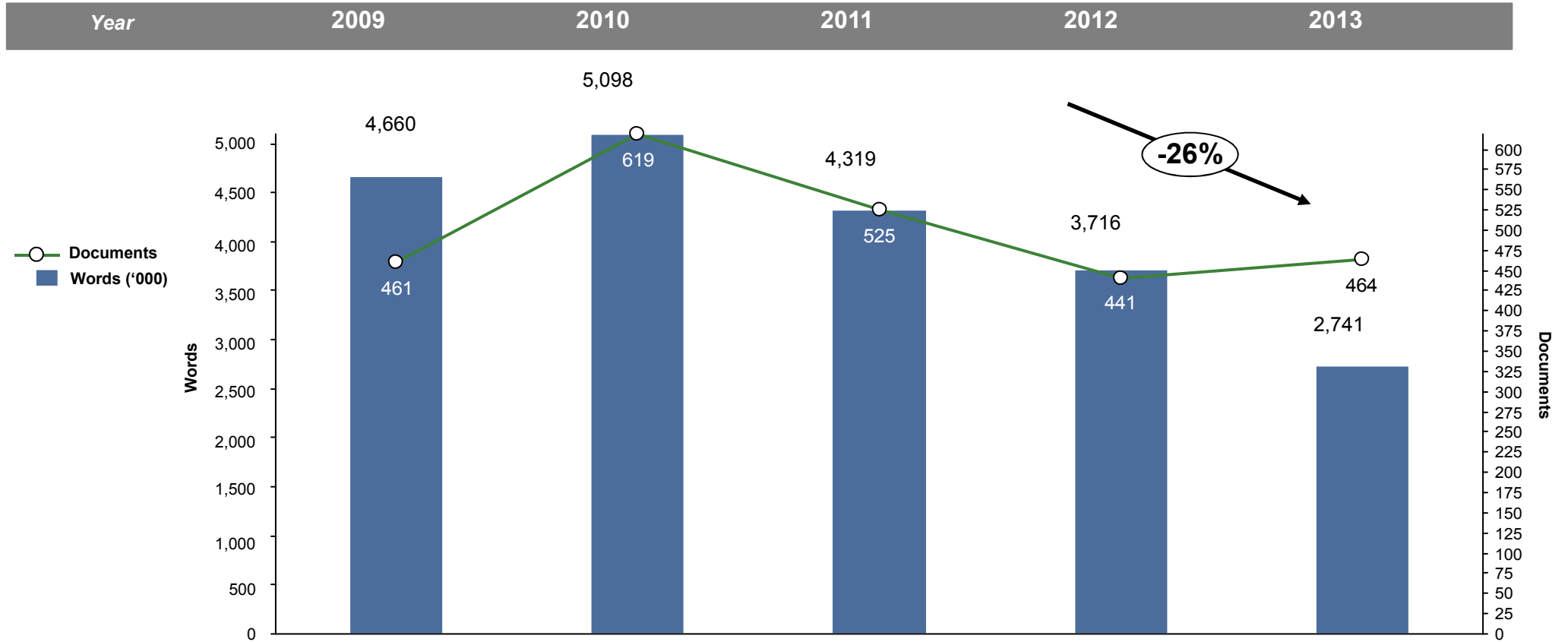
**III. Other process efficiencies**

14. **Balanced distribution of documents across Executive Board sessions.** One of the recommendations of the corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's institutional efficiency and the efficiency of IFAD-funded operations (CLEE) is that Board agendas should be reviewed to ensure that they are focused on results, policy, strategy, evaluation and lessons learned. Such a focus would be facilitated by organizing Board agendas in such a way as to ensure a balanced distribution of documentation across the three Board sessions. This would avoid the "bunching" of key corporate documents at the last session of the year and thus facilitate informed decision-making.
15. **Documentation arising from subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board.** In cases where a document is to be reviewed by a subsidiary body and subsequently by the Executive Board, the same document will be dispatched simultaneously to both bodies. Any recommendations, observations or revisions proposed by the subsidiary body will be included in the report of the Chair to the Board, for consideration together with the original document.
16. Discussions are under way with relevant departments and divisions on the foregoing, and concrete proposals may be submitted to the Executive Board at future sessions as agreement is reached on details.

**IV. Conclusion**

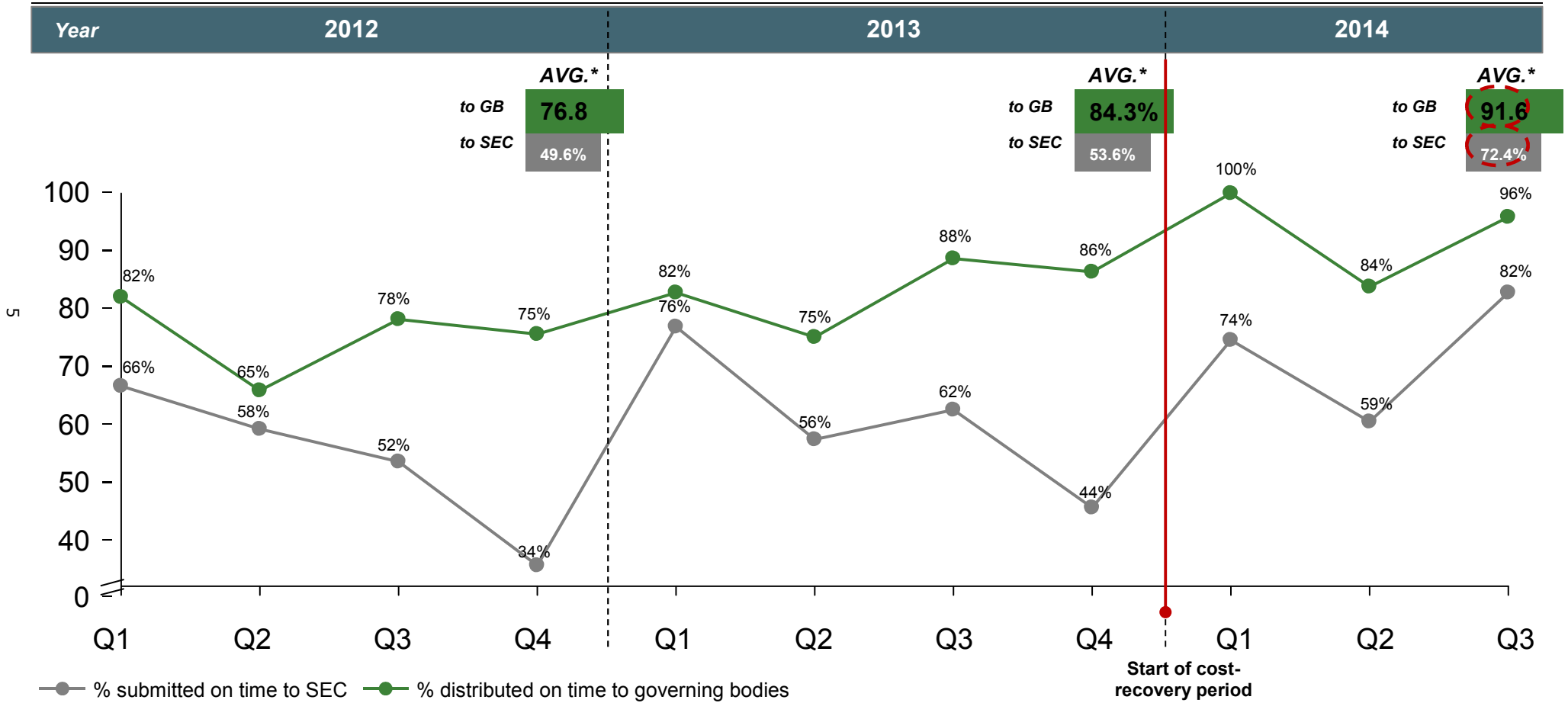
17. IFAD Management believes, based on the statistics presented above, that the measures introduced thus far have brought about a more streamlined and effective process. Provided that they continue to be implemented successfully, these measures – and the additional proposals outlined above – will make a significant contribution to meeting the IFAD9 targets for cluster 4 by the end of 2015.

### Volume of documents and words for governing body meetings from 2009 to 2013



Note: Including documents submitted under lapse-of-time procedure.

## Documents submitted on time to the Office of the Secretary (SEC) and governing bodies (GB): KPIs from Q1 2012 to Q3 2014



(\*): averages calculated only on Q1, Q2 and Q3