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Investing in rural people

Report on the measures and implementation plan for achieving greater efficiency in supporting IFAD's governance

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For: Information

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)¹ set two targets for cluster 4 for the period 2013-2015, i.e. a 25 per cent budget reduction and a 27.8 per cent reduction in staff positions. In 2013 Management proposed a set of measures and launched a plan for achieving greater efficiency in supporting IFAD's governance.
2. The goals of the plan to comply with IFAD9 commitments were as follows:
 - (a) reduce the overall volume of documentation presented to governing bodies; and
 - (b) introduce other cost reductions associated with cluster 4. The set of measures proposed – which were 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.
3. This paper reports on the progress made in 2015 on implementing the plan. It provides an update on the reduction in document length and number, language parity and interpretation for subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board, implementation of cost-recovery measures, a more balanced distribution of documents across Executive Board sessions and the reduction of costs during the three-year period.
4. As 2015 represents the final year of IFAD9, this update will be the last one covering the measures and implementation plan undertaken to comply with IFAD9 commitments for cluster 4.

II. Review of measures approved for 2013, 2014 and 2015

Reduction in document length and number

5. At the 107th session, based on the feedback provided at the 106th session, the Executive Board approved a 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. At the 110th session, the Executive Board reviewed the measures and implementation plan as contained in document EB 2013/110/R.4 and supported both the limit proposed on document length and implementation of the fit-for-purpose approach.
6. By the end of 2014, 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 body documents during 2013 and 2014 was approximately 33 per cent compared to 2011.²
7. Also, in 2014, the overall number of documents submitted to meetings of governing bodies fell by approximately 30 per cent compared to 2011 (from 525 to 364).

¹ 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.

² Annex I shows the volume of work, measured in number of words, for governing bodies documents processed during 2013 and 2014 compared to the same period from 2009 to 2012.

Language parity and interpretation for subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board

8. At its 110th session, the Executive Board agreed that language parity was key and that translation and interpretation would not be reduced, and that, as a consequence, subsidiary bodies were to agree on their own specific language regimes according to their membership. Hence, due to the current composition of the Audit and Evaluation Committees and of the Working Group on the Performance-based Allocation System, and at the request of members, it was agreed that interpretation services would be provided for these subsidiary bodies.
9. The above-mentioned decision of the Board resulted in an increase in the number of meetings for which interpretation services were to be provided, with a cost increase of 27 per cent.³ However, as a result of the efficiencies realized through the reduced volume of work, the Office of the Secretary (SEC) was in a position to absorb the extra costs related to interpretation services for the subsidiary bodies.

Cost-recovery measures

10. At the 113th session, representatives welcomed the significant efficiency gains made by IFAD in terms of reduced document length and associated production costs as a result of the measures approved by the Board to deliver on the IFAD9 commitments for cluster 4. They also strongly supported the actions that were being implemented, including cost recovery, to improve compliance with deadlines for submission of documentation to SEC, which had resulted in more timely submission to the governing bodies.
11. As a result of the cost recovery mechanism put in place in January 2014, whereby originating divisions are charged for late submission of documents, the overall process has been streamlined and the percentage of documents dispatched on time has risen, reaching 100 per cent in the first and second quarter of 2015 and 99 per cent in the third quarter.⁴

Balanced distribution of documents across Executive Board sessions

12. 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 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 during the last session of the year and thus facilitate informed decision-making.
13. At its 115th session, the Executive Board approved shifting the presentation of the Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI) and the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) from the December to the September Board session, starting in 2016.
14. Changing the timing of presentation of the ARRI and RIDE from the December session to the September session of the Executive Board will: (i) provide the Board with more current data and a fully aligned year-end reporting cut-off date, in line with best practices – September presentation of the RIDE will make it possible to move to a nine-month reporting time lag for all indicators, as opposed to different reporting cut-off dates and a time lag for many indicators of up to 12 months as at present; (ii) streamline the internal data collection and lesson learning processes to ensure timely submission of the RIDE to the Evaluation Committee, avoiding the delays that sometimes occurred in the past; and (iii) lighten the workload of the December Board.

³ Annex II presents statistics relative to the number of meetings for which interpretation services were to be provided from 2011 to 2015.

⁴ Annex III presents statistics on the timely receipt of documentation in SEC compared to timely dispatch.

Timeline for submission of documents to Member State representatives on IFAD's Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies

15. At its 115th session, the Executive Board approved the adoption of a new methodology to apply rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board on document submission, as contained in section V of document EB 2015/115/R.25 and its attachment. The new methodology will continue to ensure compliance with Board requirements while achieving further streamlining by introducing deadlines that are differentiated by document type.

PaperSmart approach

16. The PaperSmart approach – adopted by the United Nations system and being implemented at IFAD – aims to reduce the carbon footprint of the organization, reduce paper wastage through efficient use of print-on-demand services and promote the use of electronic devices to facilitate consultations and information sharing. Under this approach, IFAD has developed an effective and innovative model to provide its Member States with access to documents and other information for decision-making while using resources more efficiently and avoiding waste.
17. In accordance with the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents approved by the Executive Board at its 100th session, documents are now posted to the IFAD Member States Interactive Platform as they become available. In 2014 and during the first nine months of 2015, 90 per cent of governing body documents were available electronically. This approach, in addition to bringing significant efficiency gains, supports governance by facilitating an informed decision-making process.

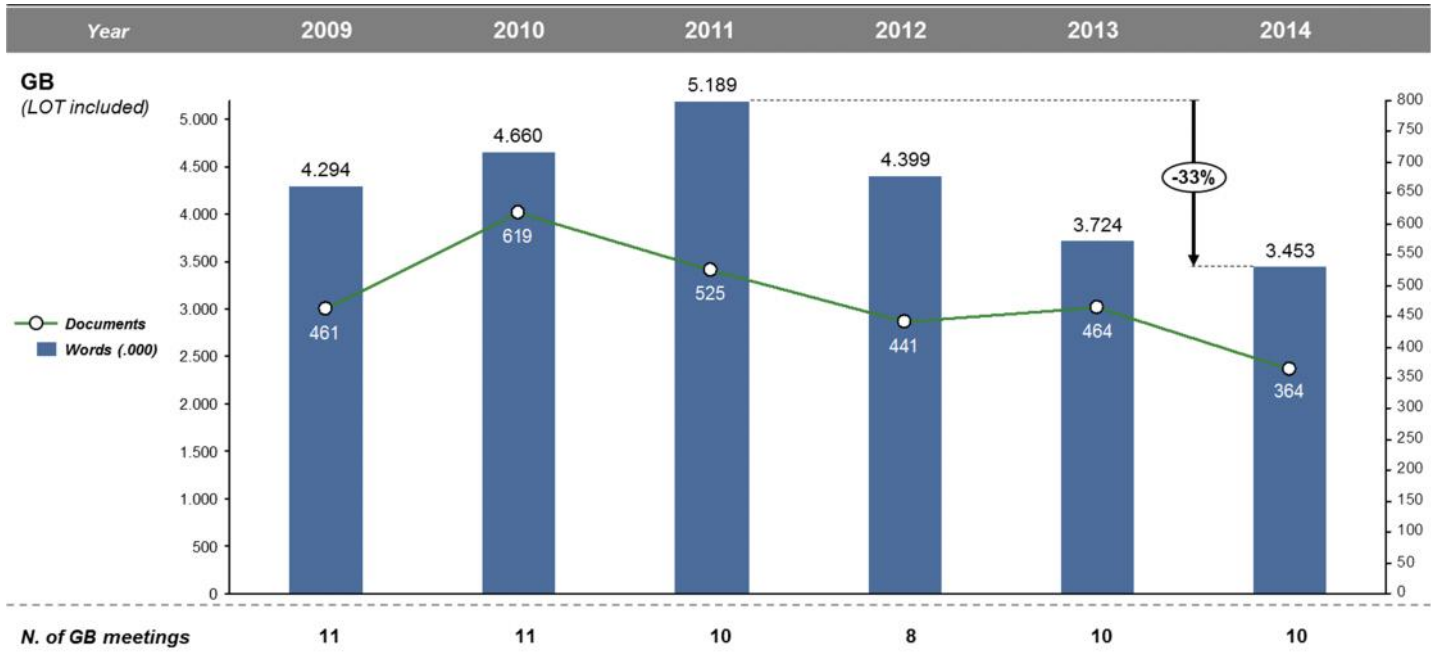
Reduction of costs during the three-year period

18. Based on the above, the overall administrative budget of SEC decreased from US\$8.4 million in 2011 to US\$6.8 million in 2015. It should be noted that the SEC budget represents 83 per cent of cluster 4. As indicated in the RIDE document (EB 2015/116/R.10) to be presented at the December Board, both of the targets set for cluster 4 have been reached.

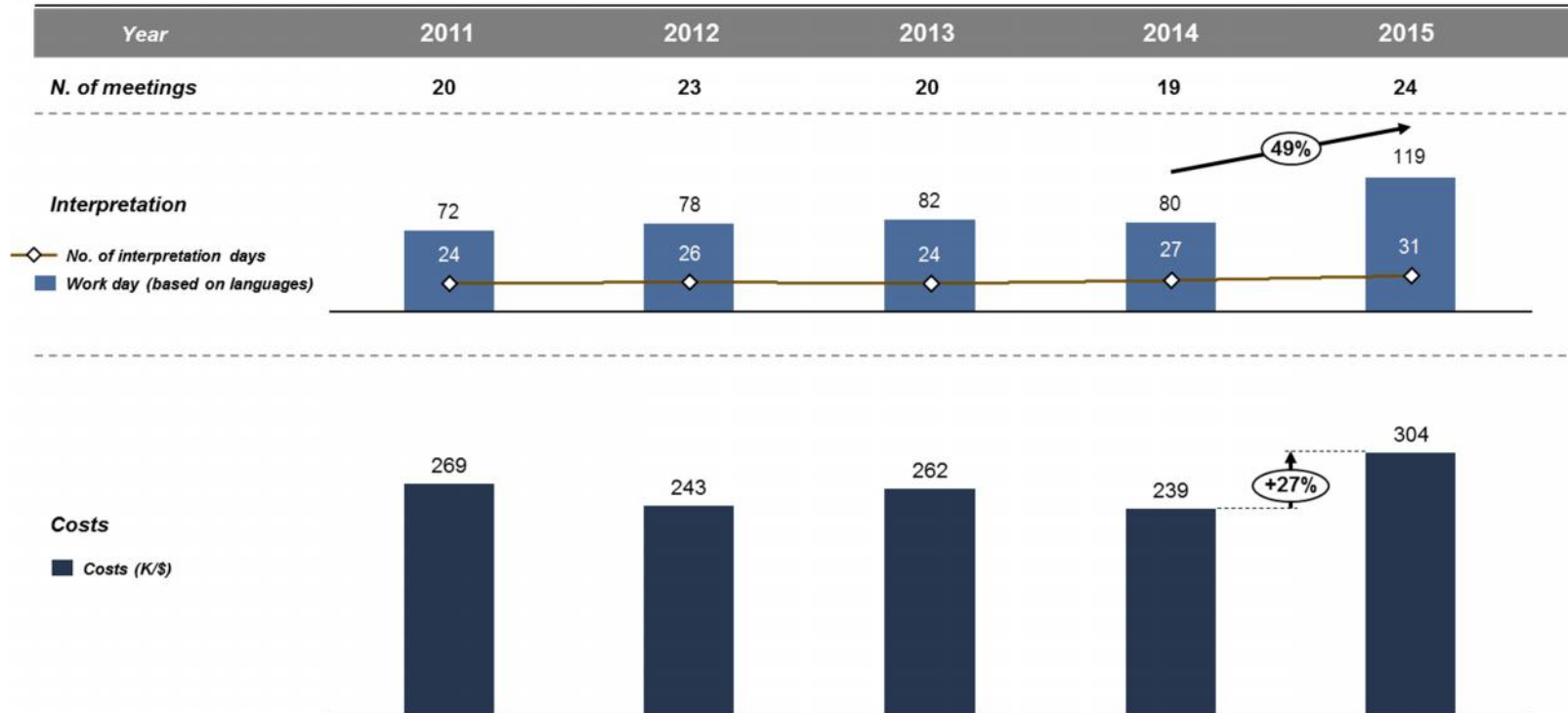
III. Conclusion

19. IFAD Management believes that the measures introduced under IFAD9 for achieving greater efficiency in supporting IFAD's governance have brought about more streamlined and effective corporate processes. They – and the additional measures outlined above – have made a significant contribution to meeting the ambitious IFAD9 targets set for cluster 4 by the end of 2015, ultimately contributing to improving the efficiency of the organization as a whole.

Volume of documents and words for governing body meetings from 2009 to 2014



Interpretation services provided from 2011 to 2015



CT

Documents submitted on time to the Office of the Secretary (SEC) and governing bodies (GB): KPIs from Q1 2012 to Q3 2015

