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Executive Board retreat: Updated follow-up matrix and dates for the next retreat

Note to Executive Board representatives

Focal points:

Technical questions:

Cheryl Morden
Secretary of IFAD, a.i.
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2254
e-mail: c.morden@ifad.org

Dispatch of documentation:

William Skinner
Chief
Governing Bodies Office
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2974
e-mail: gb_office@ifad.org

Executive Board — 119th Session
Rome, 14-15 December 2016

For: Approval

Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the updated matrix and the proposed dates for the next retreat, as contained in paragraph 7.

Executive Board retreat: Updated follow-up matrix and dates for the next retreat

I. Background

1. The Executive Board held its first retreat in April 2015. Subsequently, at its 115th session in September 2015, the Board agreed to hold such retreats annually.¹ A second retreat took place in April 2016 and a synthesis of the event was shared with Board representatives. A follow-up matrix, based on the synthesis report, was reviewed by the Executive Board at its 118th session in September.
2. Board representatives agreed that the matrix would be treated as a living document, to be updated as needed. This document therefore builds on the follow-up matrix and takes into consideration the input provided by representatives. It contains follow-up actions extracted from the synthesis report of the second retreat, and information on the progress made to date in implementing these actions. The document also incorporates input from subsequent discussions with Convenors and Friends (C&F).
3. The actions highlighted in the matrix are expected to help strengthen collaboration between the Executive Board and Management, and lead to an enhanced and constructive working partnership between the Board and Management.

II. Updated follow-up matrix

4. The matrix has been updated to include the suggestions and comments provided by the Board at its 118th session. The Executive Board is hereby invited to approve the updated matrix.

| Issue | Actions | Progress made |
|--|--|---|
| Increase involvement of Convenors, including in agenda-setting | Joint preparation of the C&F meetings on a regular basis | Ongoing |
| | More frequent interactive and informal meetings with the Office of the Secretary | Ongoing |
| | C&F meetings held in more informal settings (other than the President's office) | Ongoing (meetings held now in conference rooms at headquarters) |
| | C&F documentation to be more easily accessible | Ongoing (also sent via e-mail prior to meetings) |
| | Convenors have the option to invite the chairs of subsidiary bodies and working groups of the Board to the meetings as Friends | |

¹ EB 2015/116/R.34, paragraph 2, and EB/116, paragraph 5(e).

| Issue | Actions | Progress made |
|---|---|---|
| Create a less formal atmosphere that is more conducive to open discussions | Convenors to guide the preparations for the next retreat and be more involved in the set-up | Ongoing. Selected initial input has been taken on board for organizing the second retreat and a similar process will be followed for the third retreat. |
| Strengthen focus on issues of strategic importance at the Governing Council | Convenors and Board to be more involved in the agenda-setting of the Governing Council | To start with the Governing Council in 2018 |
| Increase involvement of Convenors and Governing Council Bureau in preparations for Governing Council sessions | <p>Additional meetings closer to the Governing Council session, including with Governing Council Bureau representatives</p> <p>Ensure continuous and early involvement of Convenors in upcoming decision-making</p> | Ongoing. Meetings with the Office of the Secretary of IFAD are regularly organized in view of the fortieth session of the Governing Council. |
| Appointment of the President of IFAD | Convenors to work with the Governing Council Bureau on several matters related to the Appointment of the President | <p>Ongoing. Convenors have shared draft questions for potential candidates with the Governing Council Bureau and these have been included in the call for nominations.</p> <p>Work is ongoing on future steps leading to the Appointment of the President, in close collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of IFAD.</p> |
| Strengthen accountability and communication | <p>Representatives to proactively ask for updates on specific issues</p> <p>Management to proactively provide updates and other relevant information</p> | Ongoing. Information is shared and briefings and similar events are organized in response to members' interest and feedback. |

| Issue | Actions | Progress made |
|---|--|---|
| Improve Board sessions | Fifteen-minute breaks during the Board sessions, to be used strategically | Considered a helpful tool when needed to facilitate consensus-building and more strategic handling of the agenda to optimize time management. |
| | Clearer agendas | Ongoing. Convenors discuss provisional agenda more proactively during informal meetings. Starting in December 2016, annotations will be provided also for documents for information. |
| | List and cross-List statements conveying consolidated messages to Management on strategic issues | Ongoing. As agreed during the first Board retreat in 2015, representatives are working closely together to deliver joint List statements on various agenda items. Since last year, the number of List and joint-List statements has increased significantly, with more than 10 statements delivered at the Board session in September 2016. |
| | List C could consider having one Convenor for the List and one for each sub-List, for better coordination | List C already has three Convenors, one of whom serves as the Convenor of the whole List. |
| | More proactive use of available tools by the Convenors such as the "overview" of Board sessions | Ongoing. The overview has now a more user-friendly format and is regularly discussed with Convenors. |
| Encourage attendance at informal seminars | Hold discussions with Convenors before informal seminars | Ongoing. Convenors' feedback has been requested on additional steps that could result in enhanced participation in informal seminars, in particular on COSOPs. Convenors have suggested that telephone calls prior to the seminars would be useful as a reminder to enhance participation. |
| Increase opportunities for informal interaction and consultations among Board representatives and with Management | Increase number of informal consultation sessions (not seminars) in order to take into account the Board's views | Ongoing. Briefings and informal consultations are increasingly being organized on specific topics, with format and participation varying according to subject matter. |

| Issue | Actions | Progress made |
|---|--|---|
| | "Ask the Manager" sessions to address issues not covered through informal consultations and informal seminars | Ongoing. A learning event on impact assessment was held in July 2016. |
| Provide room for strategic discussions in order to increase the impact of deliberations | Review the frequency, timing and inter-connectedness of informal meetings and subsidiary committee, Board and Governing Council sessions | A review process is pending. |
| Induction for Member States | Develop an orientation booklet, tracing major corporate undertakings | In progress. Improved customized briefings for newly accredited Board representatives are in place. Induction sessions open to all Member States are organized on a variety of topics, including a recent session on governance and replenishment matters. |
| Ensure balance between the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE), the Board and Management | Increase interaction with IOE | The Board met with IOE during the second Board retreat. |
| Strategic direction of IFAD in the short and long run | Conduct a study outlining the contextual environment and possible future scenarios for IFAD | Pending |

5. As indicated in the matrix above, progress has been made on several issues. Convenors continue to hold informal meetings regularly with the Secretary of IFAD, and are actively involved in agenda-setting. Their suggestions to improve planning tools and make them more user-friendly have been adopted. As mentioned at the 118th session of the Board, both Management and representatives will seek opportunities to proactively request and provide information.
6. The Board has expressed appreciation for the Board retreats as a mechanism for strengthening discussion and exchange of views among members and Management, and enhancing relations and interaction among the Lists. The retreats have contributed to the creation of an environment of trust and mutual understanding, greater cohesion and opportunities for strategic discussions.
7. It is proposed that the next retreat be held immediately following the April Board session in 2017, for 1.5 days, on Wednesday, 12 April (afternoon) and Thursday, 13 April (full day). Confirmation of the proposed half-day (on Wednesday, 12 April) will be subject to completion of the Board agenda in 1.5 days. The Convenors will be invited to actively participate in the retreat's preparations. The agenda, venue and other logistical information will be shared with the Board in due course, to allow ample time for preparation and participation by members.