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Investing in rural people

## Country visits of the IFAD Executive Board 2018-2020

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For: Approval

## Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve one of the two proposed dates for the 2018 Executive Board country visit, the proposed destination and the draft rolling plan for the next three years.

## Country visits of the IFAD Executive Board 2018-2020

1. The Office of the Secretary, with the assistance of the Programme Management Department, is responsible for managing the field visit programme for the Executive Board in accordance with the recommendation contained in the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function, which was endorsed by the Executive Board at its ninety-ninth session (EB 2010/99/R.6).
2. In December 2012, the Executive Board approved a new modality for country visits, which required the Board to decide on the destination of future annual visits. Under the new procedures, country visits would be open to participation by Executive Board members that were not members of the Evaluation Committee. Nine members would participate in the visits: four from List A, two from List B and three from List C. The Lists would decide on the participation, and the visits would be fully funded by IFAD. The Board also stipulated that a maximum of three additional members of the Executive Board that were not members of the Evaluation Committee could join the country visits on a self-financing basis. These new rules were to be applied for the annual country visits from 2014 onwards.
3. In September 2015, the Executive Board recommended a revision of the country selection criteria to include a higher number of least developed countries in future proposals.
4. Based on the above, Management recommended the following criteria in selecting destinations for Board visits to widen the range of potential countries: (i) an ongoing country programme is present (ideally with a mix of lending and non-lending activities); (ii) the country has been subject to a country-level evaluation or a completion report has been produced on the results-based country strategic opportunities programme within the previous two years; (iii) at least two of three country visits over a replenishment period should be to a least developed country (LDC) or fragile state; and (iv) adequate regional rotation must be ensured in country selection.
5. In light of the above and in consultation with Ifad's Office of Evaluation, the proposed plan for country visits in 2018-2020 is the following:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Recent evaluation</i>	<i>Fragile/LDC</i>
2018	East and Southern Africa (ESA)	Ethiopia	Country programme evaluation 2016	LDC
2019	West and Central Africa (WCA)	Cameroon	Country strategy and programme evaluation 2017	
2020	Near East and North Africa (NEN)	Sudan	Country strategy and programme evaluation 2018	Fragile

6. Of the countries proposed, Ethiopia has the largest portfolio in ESA, with a current portfolio of US\$327.6 million. IFAD investments are significant in rural finance, irrigation, pastoral development and community-based natural resource management. A country programme evaluation was carried out in 2016 and a country strategic opportunities programme completion report was done in December 2016. Ethiopia is also categorized as a LDC. Consequently, IFAD Management seeks the Board's approval of Ethiopia as the destination for the 2018 visit.
7. The common calendar of meetings of permanent representatives<sup>1</sup> has been consulted and the following two periods are possible for the visit:
  - (i) 14-18 May 2018
  - (ii) 26-30 November 2018
8. Cameroon is the proposed destination for the 2019 visit. The IFAD country programme comprises three ongoing projects, with IFAD funding of US\$58.4 million, and a project under design for approval this year. The ongoing projects focus on commodity value-chain development, supporting youth agroentrepreneurship and rural finance. A country strategy and programme evaluation is being carried out and will be completed in 2017, providing the necessary background for a visit to this country.
9. The proposed destination for 2020 is Sudan. The country has four ongoing projects, with IFAD funding of US\$93.2 million, and a project under design for approval in 2018. Under the current country strategic opportunities programme period, access to microfinance in IFAD intervention areas, off- and on-farm, has increased considerably, and the pipeline programme, as well, has a strong focus on microfinance. A country strategy programme evaluation is scheduled for 2018, and the state is considered fragile.
10. Accordingly, the Executive Board is invited to approve one of the two proposed dates for the 2018 Executive Board country visit, its proposed destination and the draft rolling plan for the next three years.

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<sup>1</sup> Maintained by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, IFAD and the World Food Programme.

## Summary table of Evaluation Committee/Executive Board member visits:

Year	Country	Region
2004	Syrian Arab Republic	NEN
2005	Indonesia	APR
2006	Mexico	LAC
2007	Mali	WCA
2008	Philippines (the)	APR
2009	India	APR
2010	Mozambique	ESA
2011	Brazil	LAC
2012	Ghana	WCA
2013	Viet Nam	APR
2014	United Rep. of Tanzania	ESA
2015	Morocco	NEN
2016	Brazil	LAC
2017	Bangladesh	APR (to be held in Nov)