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Investing in rural people

President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRI SMA)

Volume I: Main report

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Abbreviations and acronyms

APR	Asia and the Pacific region
ARRI	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations
CLE	corporate-level evaluation
CLEAR	Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
CPE	country programme evaluation
DEF	Development Effectiveness Framework
ESR	evaluation synthesis report
ESA	East and Southern Africa region
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IE	impact evaluation
IFAD11	Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
KM	knowledge management
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean region
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NEN	Near East, North Africa and Europe region
ORMS	operational results management system
PBAS	performance-based allocation system
PCR	project completion report
PPA	project performance assessment
PRISMA	President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions
RIDE	Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SKD	Strategy and Knowledge Department
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
WCA	West and Central Africa region

Executive summary

1. The fourteenth edition of the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) reviews follow-up actions on recommendations made by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE).
2. Management appreciates the importance and timeliness of most IOE recommendations and the crucial role played by independent evaluation in promoting learning and accountability. It is committed to ensuring proper internalization of IOE's recommendations at project, country and corporate levels, as the knowledge generated during evaluations and the subsequent follow-up on recommended actions contribute to IFAD's operational effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Number and types of evaluations covered. The report covers a total of 20 evaluations with 180 recommendations: three of these are considered evaluations for "historical follow-up" (i.e. second- or third-round review) and 17 are new evaluations finalized in 2015 and 2016. In terms of types of evaluation, this year's PRISMA covers: four corporate-level evaluations (CLEs), three country-level evaluations, eight project-level evaluations, one impact evaluation and, for the first time, four evaluation synthesis reports (ESRs). The CLEs deal with: (i) the performance-based allocation system (PBAS), (ii) fragile states and situations (second-round review), (iii) replenishments (second-round review) and (iv) supervision (third-round review).
4. Implementation status. Management's uptake of IOE recommendations continues to be high, at 97 per cent, confirming the upward trend in performance observed in recent editions of the PRISMA. A disaggregated look at these results reveals a trend towards a greater number of corporate-level recommendations, particularly with the inclusion of ESRs. As the corporate-level recommendations made through the CLEs and ESRs have coincided with a number of key reforms put in place by Management, the 2017 PRISMA sees an increase in the number of recommendations fully followed up and a reduction in ongoing ones compared with previous years.

Historical follow-up on corporate-level evaluations

5. CLE on replenishments. The CLE on replenishments has been followed up for the second year as part of historical follow-up. Of the nine remaining recommendations, five were fully followed up, one partially followed up and three ongoing.
6. CLE on fragility. As part of the second-round follow-up, of 12 ongoing recommendations from last year, eight were fully followed up and four are ongoing, with actions expected to be completed by year-end.
7. CLE on supervision. The CLE on supervision was included for a third-round follow-up with all eight recommendations remaining. Of these, two were fully followed up and six are ongoing, with the expectation of completion by year-end.

Key actions at the corporate level

8. Following the CLE on the PBAS, Management has worked on changes to this system. These were presented in an approach paper to the Executive Board in December 2016. A revised PBAS was then presented to the Board in April 2017 for review. Following comments by the Board and the PBAS working group, further revisions were made and the final paper will be presented to the Board in September 2017 for approval.
9. The IFAD Strategy for Engagement in Countries with Fragile Situations was submitted to and approved by the December 2016 Executive Board.¹ The strategy

¹ Document EB 2016/119/R.4.

included a new definition, guiding principles for IFAD's engagement, a new classification with clear thresholds/criteria for identifying countries with the most-fragile situations, and new operational approaches to addressing fragility in these contexts.

10. Following the ESR on South-South Cooperation, in 2016 a new corporate approach for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) was presented to the Executive Board. The document articulated the various definitions of SSTC, how they relate to IFAD's mandate and comparative advantage, and how the new approach is aligned with the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025.
11. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reforms and strengthening of the overall self-evaluation architecture are ongoing through a series of interlinked processes under the Development Effectiveness Framework (DEF), approved by the Executive Board in 2016. Two noteworthy milestones at the corporate level have been achieved: revision of the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS), presented to the Board in April 2017, and development of the operational results management system (ORMS).
12. Key actions at the country level. Country programmes are increasingly internalizing evaluation lessons and recommendations. The timeliness of country programme evaluations (CPEs) prior to new country strategies resulted in an increase in the number of CPE recommendations being fully followed up. From three CPEs included in this year's PRISMA, two were followed up with new country strategies (Brazil and Turkey) in which 29 of the 34 recommendations were incorporated into the new strategies. In Bangladesh, a new country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) is planned for 2018 in which the seven ongoing recommendations are expected to be fully followed up.
13. Responding to recurrent recommendations to strengthen M&E at the country level, two complementary grant-funded initiatives are being implemented: development of a tool capable of assessing in-country M&E systems and capacities, identifying gaps and developing action plans for improving these systems; and provision to countries of systematic capacity-building for M&E in rural development through the Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR).
14. Conclusions. Management's high uptake of IOE recommendations as noted in this year's PRISMA is an acknowledgement and a reflection of appreciation of the practicality and utility of the independent evaluation function. Going forward, Management would like to engage closely with IOE to align future evaluations with the key priority areas elaborated in the business model for the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources to maximize organizational learning and assist Management in effectively delivering on IFAD's ambitious mandate.
15. Management is of the view that the upcoming part II of the harmonization agreement (2018) would be an opportune time to reassess and further strengthen the process of streamlining recommendations by engaging in a continuous dialogue between Management and IOE on the practicality and value addition of recommendations prior to their formalization.

President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA)

I. Introduction and methodology

1. The President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) serves as an important accountability and learning tool. The report responds to recommendations emerging from evaluations conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) and informs the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board of the implementation status of the recommended actions.
2. The PRISMA tracks actions taken by Management in response to the recommendations through the following tools:
 - (a) For corporate-level evaluations (CLEs), commitments are made by IFAD Management in the Management responses;²
 - (b) For country programme evaluations (CPEs), the agreements at completion point signed by IFAD and government representatives are used to track follow-up actions that signatories have agreed to implement;
 - (c) For impact evaluations (IEs), recommendations addressed to IFAD are extracted from the Management response and followed up on;
 - (d) For project performance assessments (PPAs), recommendations are extracted from the Management response. All eight PPAs followed up in the 2017 PRISMA have Management responses.
 - (e) The PRISMA also includes responses to recommendations from the 2016 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI)³ and IOE's comments on the 2016 Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE).⁴
 - (f) As a result of the discussion on evaluation synthesis reports (ESRs) at the ninety-second session of the Evaluation Committee, it was concluded that IOE recommendations and corresponding Management responses would remain in ESRs. Thus this year's PRISMA, for the first time, includes recommendations from four ESRs.
3. The 2017 PRISMA covers 20 evaluations jointly selected by Management and IOE, of which 3 were covered by previous editions of the PRISMA (i.e. historical follow-up)⁵ and 17 were new evaluations finalized in 2015 and 2016, as follows:⁶
 - (a) Four CLEs on: (i) IFAD's performance-based allocation system (PBAS);⁷ (ii) IFAD replenishments (second-round review);⁸ (iii) IFAD's engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations;⁹ and (iv) IFAD's supervision and implementation support policy¹⁰ (third-round review);

² CLEs on: IFAD's performance-based allocation system (PBAS) (EB 2016/117/R.5 + Add.1); IFAD's engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations (EB 2015/114/R.4 + Add.1 + Corr.1); IFAD replenishments (EB 2014/111/R.3/Rev.1 + add.1); and direct supervision and implementation support (EB 2013/109/R.6 + Add.1).

³ Document EB 2014/113/R.8.

⁴ Document EB 2014/113/R.11 + Add.1.

⁵ This year, the PRISMA covers the third-round historical follow-up on the CLE on supervision and implementation support policy, the second-round review of the CLE on replenishments, and the second-round review of the CLE on IFAD's engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations.

⁶ The 2017 PRISMA includes CLEs and CPEs with either Management responses prepared or agreements at completion point signed before 30 June 2016 and PPAs published before that date.

⁷ Document EB 2016/117/R.5 + Add.1.

⁸ Document EB 2014/111/R.3/Rev.1.

⁹ Document EB 2015/114/R.4 + Add.1 + Corr.1.

¹⁰ Document EB 2013/109/R.6 + Add.1.

- (b) Four ESRs on: (i) IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples;¹¹ (ii) engagement of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IFAD in pastoral development;¹² (iii) the environment and natural resource management;¹³ and (iv) non-lending activities in the context of South-South Cooperation;¹⁴
- (c) Three CPEs for: Bangladesh,¹⁵ Brazil¹⁶ and Turkey;¹⁷
- (d) Eight PPAs for projects in Brazil, China, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritania and Nigeria; and
- (e) One IE for India.¹⁸
4. In order to facilitate analysis, and in line with previous years, this report classifies the recommendations according to the following criteria:
5. Level. This refers to the entity targeted by the recommendation, and primarily responsible for implementation. The levels usually are:
- Project authorities;
 - IFAD at the country level, in partnership with government;
 - Partner country government authorities;
 - IFAD at the regional level; and
 - IFAD at the corporate level.
6. Nature. This categorizes the recommendation in accordance with the revised IFAD Evaluation Policy:
- Operational, if the recommendation proposed a specific action;
 - Strategic, if it suggested an approach or course of action; and
 - Policy, if it was related to the principles guiding IFAD.
7. Theme. This lists the recommendations by theme spread across six broad categories: targeting and gender, technical areas, project management, non-lending activities, cross-cutting themes and corporate. These are further divided into 31 sub-areas.
8. Once the country teams (and cross-departmental resource people in the case of CLEs) communicate the latest status, the degree of compliance is assessed using the following criteria:
- Full follow-up: recommendations fully incorporated into the new phase/design of activities, operations or programmes, and the relevant policies or guidelines;
 - Ongoing: actions initiated in the direction recommended;
 - Partial: recommendations followed up partially, with actions consistent with the rationale of the recommendation;
 - Not yet due: recommendations that will be incorporated into projects, country programmes or country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) or policies still to be designed and completed;

¹¹ Document EC 2015/89/W.P.5 + Add.1.

¹² Document EC 2016/92/W.P.6 + Add.1.

¹³ Document EC 2016/94/W.P.7 + Add.1.

¹⁴ Document EC 2016/92/W.P.5 + Add.1.

¹⁵ Document EC 2015/89/W.P.4 + Add.1.

¹⁶ Document EB 2016/117/R.6/Rev.1.

¹⁷ Document EC 2016/91/W.P.5/Rev.1.

¹⁸ Document EC 2015/88/W.P.4 + Add.1.

- Not applicable: recommendations that have not been complied with because of changing circumstances in country development or IFAD corporate governance contexts, or for other reasons;
 - Pending: recommendations that could not be followed up; and
 - Not agreed on: recommendations that were not agreed to by Management or the respective country team or government.
9. The first volume of the PRISMA provides a synthesis of the follow-up actions taken and flags any major emerging issues. It is structured as follows: A: coverage of evaluations; B: overall implementation status; C: key themes and examples of responses; D: summary of CLE responses; E: historical follow-up; and F: responses to IOE recommendations and comments from the ARRI learning theme. The final section (III) presents conclusions and recommendations. Comments from IOE are provided in annex I. The attached volume II lists the individual follow-up actions taken in response to each recommendation covered in the PRISMA.

II. Implementation status of recommendations

A. Evaluation coverage and contents

10. Regional distribution. Besides the four CLEs and four ESRs, this year's PRISMA covers 12 evaluations carried out at the country/project level, including one from the East and Southern Africa region (ESA), three from the Near East, North Africa and Europe region (NEN), four from the Asia and the Pacific region (APR), two from the West and Central Africa region (WCA) and two from the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region.
11. Number of recommendations from each type of evaluation. The PRISMA reviewed the implementation status of a total of 180 recommendations (seven more than last year): 44 from four CLEs; 42 from four ESRs; 41 from three CPEs; 43 from eight PPAs; and 10 from one IE. The average number of recommendations per evaluation type is 11 per CLE, 10 per ESR, 13-14 per CPE and about five per PPA. Management would like to highlight the comparable number of recommendations from ESRs and from CLEs, despite the inherently different nature of the two evaluation products.
12. In terms of CLEs, this PRISMA reports on a new CLE on the PBAS, which has not been previously reported on, with 15 recommendations. Overall, the trend observed in recent years towards fewer recommendations from IOE is confirmed, although thorough follow-up continues to entail systematic disaggregation of recommendations that IOE presents as a package.
13. With regard to historical follow-up, the PRISMA reports only on recommendations that were not yet fully followed up. A total of 29 recommendations for historical follow-up were included in this PRISMA: 9 recommendations that were not fully followed up on the CLE on replenishments, all 12 remaining for the CLE on fragility and all 8 remaining for the CLE on supervision.
14. Level assigned for follow-up. Responsibility for follow-up is split between corporate and country levels (table 1). All 86 recommendations from the CLEs and ESRs (47 per cent of total) are for follow-up at the corporate level. For the IE, it is interesting to highlight that more recommendations were addressed to IFAD's corporate level and less to the country/project level. There was a higher number of recommendations at the corporate level compared with the country level. While compliance at the corporate level remains high at over 95 per cent, Management would like to highlight the resource and staff capacity constraints on effectively internalizing the high volume of corporate-level recommendations.
15. For the CPEs and PPAs, almost all recommendations are assigned to country teams in coordination with relevant government authorities. From the PPAs, only

recommendations addressed to IFAD have been selected, thus they are all assigned to IFAD at the country or corporate level, and in no case assigned to the government alone. The few recommendations assigned to IFAD at the corporate level are almost all on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), with the exception of one on targeting. The distribution is presented in table 1.

Table 1

Number of recommendations in the 2017 PRISMA by type of evaluation and level

	<i>IE</i>	<i>PPA</i>	<i>CPE</i>	<i>ESR</i>	<i>CLE</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
IFAD corporate level	6	5	-	42	44	97	54%
IFAD country/government level	4	38	41	-	-	83	46%
Total (number)	10	43	41	42	44	180	
Total (percentage)	6%	24%	23%	23%	24%	100%	

16. Nature of recommendations. The recommendations are evenly divided between strategic and operational, with 45 per cent and 44 per cent respectively (annex II, table A). This balance is justified by the even number of evaluations between corporate (4 CLEs and 4 ESRs) and programme levels (8 PPAs and 1 IE). Eleven per cent of the recommendations dealt with policy, given the inclusion of 2 CLEs on the PBAS and supervision that recommended changes at the policy level.

B. Implementation status: extent of compliance

17. Table 2 presents the extent of follow-up for the 180 recommendations included in the 2017 PRISMA, including historical follow-up.

Table 2

Implementation status of evaluation recommendations by level

<i>Level</i>	<i>Full follow-up</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not agreed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Partial</i>	Total (number)
Country	54			18	4	76
IFAD	49	1	3	43	1	97
Project	5	1		1		7
Total (number)	108	2	3	62	4	180
Total (%)	60%	1%	2%	34%	3%	100%

Table 3

Implementation status of evaluation recommendations by evaluation type

	<i>Fully followed up</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not agreed</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Partial</i>	Total (no.)	Total (%)
CLE	23	1	3	16	1	44	24%
CPE	29			10	2	41	23%
ESR	17			25		42	23%
IE	8			2		10	6%
PPA	31	1		9	2	43	24%
Total (number)	108	2	3	62	5	180	100%
Total (%)	60%	1%	2%	34%	3%	100%	

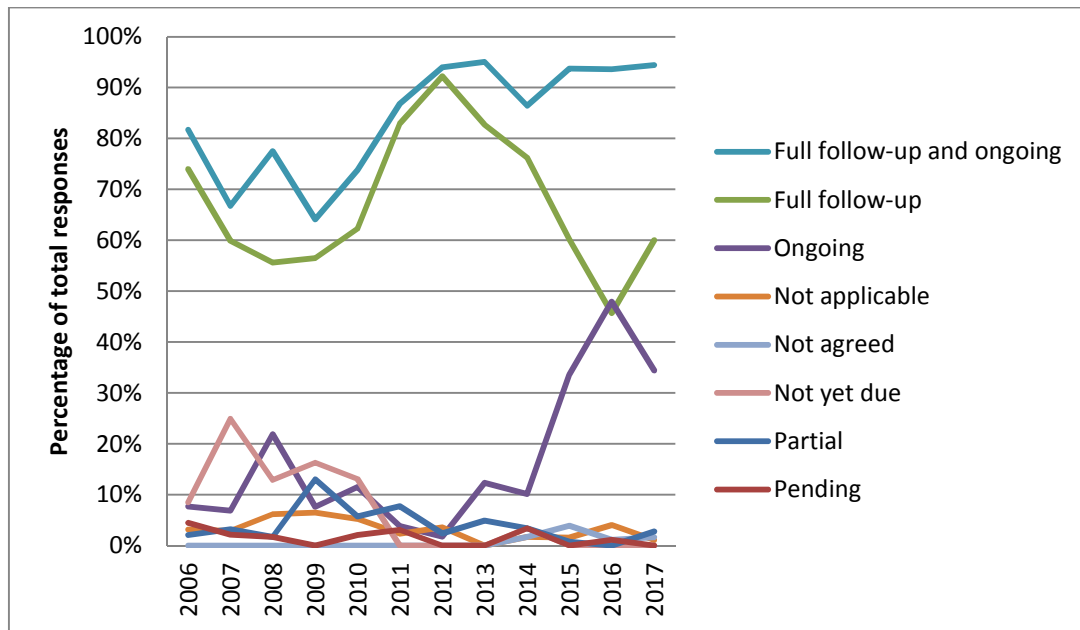
18. The upward trend in performance observed in last year's PRISMA is confirmed in this year's edition, with 97 per cent of recommendations fully followed up, ongoing or partially followed up. The number of recommendations fully followed up (108) is higher than last year (79). This can be attributed to the CLEs, including the ones for historical follow-up for a second- or third-round review, where most actions have been fully followed up on by Management. Both the "fully followed up" and "ongoing" categories reflect substantial, clear action taken, with the ongoing ones having actions initiated in the recommended direction, but requiring more time to fully implement.

19. The following graph shows the trend in compliance since 2006.

Graph

Long-term compliance trends

(Percentage of responses by implementation status)



20. There has been a decline in the number of recommendations for which implementation is ongoing compared with those fully followed up. At the corporate level, Management has introduced new reforms, policies, strategies, procedures and guidelines, some of which have been presented to the Executive Board. These have fully addressed the recommendations, in particular on fragility, the PBAS, replenishments, and through the Development Effectiveness Framework (DEF). This has resulted in an increase in the number of recommendations fully followed up and a reduction in ongoing ones compared with previous years.

21. Quality assurance mechanisms pay more systematic attention to lessons emerging from evaluations. CPEs are followed by new COSOPs, which now require the agreement at completion point for the latest CPE as a mandatory annex, encouraging greater responsiveness to evaluation recommendations in COSOPs.

22. Management would like to reiterate that, in the coming years, it will maintain a time lag of two-to-three years to allow programmes or policies to mature, thus allowing recommendations to be adequately addressed.

Examples of recommendations being followed up

23. Recommendations fully followed up. In response to the CLE on the review and updating of IFAD’s PBAS, Management has fully followed up on the recommendation to strengthen the rural poverty focus of the country needs component of the formula. It has done so by including the IFAD Vulnerability Index (IVI) in that component. Management also highlights that, in response to recurrent recommendations by IOE on strengthening IFAD’s results measurement, particularly through more robust and disaggregated indicators, Management has revised IFAD’s Results and Impact Management System (RIMS), which was re-presented to the Executive Board in April 2017.

24. Ongoing recommendations. These include actions currently under implementation, which usually entail long-term processes. In most cases, Management has initiated follow-up in the direction of the recommendations. The ESR on South-South Cooperation (SSC) recommended that IFAD explore possibilities for allocating funds to create the conditions for mainstreaming SSC. In

response to that recommendation, IFAD's Global Engagement, Knowledge and Strategy Division is preparing a concept note for a South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) fund mechanism. The note will outline the need for a pool of supplementary, in kind and staffing resources that IFAD could use to fund SSTC activities at the corporate level, and to provide incentives for mainstreaming SSTC activities in the Fund's portfolio.

25. Recommendations partially followed up. Five recommendations were partially followed up: one from the CLE on replenishments, two from CPEs and two from the PPA in Mauritania. While the Government of Mauritania and IFAD jointly decided not to follow through with a rural finance project, as recommended by the PPA, a new value chain project was designed, the Inclusive Value Chain Development Project (PRODEFI). It will provide support to local savings and credit groups to link producers with the banking system and support their investment in the value chain.
26. Recommendations not agreed on. The three recommendations not agreed on were all from the CLE of the PBAS. Management did not agree on: collecting formal feedback and approval from in-country authorities on rural-sector performance and project-at-risk scores; establishing a standing interdepartmental committee on PBAS revisions; and exploring more ways to capture IFAD's performance at the country programme level beyond the project-at-risk score.
27. No recommendations were classified as not yet due or pending.

C. Key themes: areas of focus

28. Besides assessing degree of compliance, the PRISMA also classifies recommendations by theme. This classification allows Management to identify emerging trends and areas requiring specific attention. Recommendations are classified into 31 thematic areas within six broad blocks. A new theme on allocations was introduced to match the recommendations in the CLE on the PBAS. The theme on field presence has been dropped, as IFAD has adopted a deeper approach that is better captured through the decentralization theme. The list of themes has been updated to reflect these changes.
29. Findings are summarized below and details provided in annex II.

Table 4
Evaluation recommendations by theme

<i>Thematic area</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Targeting and gender	20	11%
Technical areas (natural resource management, private sector, etc.)	24	13%
Programme management (M&E, etc.)	47	26%
Non-lending activities (partnership, policy engagement, knowledge management, South-South Cooperation)	39	22%
Cross-cutting themes (grants, efficiency, sustainability, COSOP, etc.)	28	16%
Corporate (human resources, replenishment, allocation)	22	12%
Total	180	100%

30. The most recurrent thematic areas in this year's PRISMA are "programme management" and "non-lending activities", the same as last year. Individual themes with the most recommendations are results measurement and M&E (23), targeting (10) and project design (7). Other emerging themes from the analysis are allocations (15 recommendations), partnerships (11 recommendations) and South-South Cooperation (14 recommendations).
31. Examples of follow-up on recommendations in the most recurrent themes/recommendations:

32. Monitoring and evaluation. M&E reforms and strengthening of the overall self-evaluation architecture are ongoing through a series of interlinked processes under the DEF, which was approved by the Executive Board in 2016. Two noteworthy milestones at the corporate level have been achieved: the revision of the RIMS, presented to the Board in April 2017, and development of the operational results management system (ORMS). Complementary to these, Management is in the process of updating supervision procedures, and completion procedures in light of the harmonization agreement, rolling out the revised RIMS approach and making necessary adjustments to tools to better capture IFAD's performance in non-lending activities (e.g. through client surveys).
33. Additionally, with revision of the RIMS, at the country level two complementary grant-funded initiatives are being implemented: development of a tool to assess in-country M&E systems and capacities, identifying gaps and developing action plans for improving these systems; and provision to countries of systematic capacity-building for M&E in rural development through the Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR) – to be launched in October 2017. As a majority of recommendations on M&E were focused on improved country systems and capacities, these two initiatives by Management are timely and respond fully to the IOE recommendations.
34. Targeting. Consistent with the CPE recommendations, Brazil's COSOP 2016-2021 covers two new projects that expand beyond the semi-arid area and include a focus on indigenous peoples. The project in Maranhao expands IFAD's operations to the Amazon transition area, and Pernambuco will expand IFAD's work to the Zona da Mata and Agreste. These are both areas where IFAD has not been engaged in the past, and it is also the first time IFAD is involved at the state level. Even in these areas, the target population has been carefully selected to focus on indigenous populations in Pernambuco, with the Xucuru community (30 per cent of the indigenous population of the state), and in Maranhao, with a dedicated intervention in indigenous communities in the project area.
35. Non-lending activities. Internally, a number of reforms have been introduced to increase the focus on non-lending activities as key instruments and inputs to achieving greater development results. These include: a new strategy for SSTC requiring that 50 per cent of all COSOPs outline dedicated SSTC approaches; reform of the IFAD client survey for the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11); a knowledge management (KM) action plan and tracker; a toolkit for country-level policy engagement; more systematic COSOP results; and completion reviews with deeper analysis of non-lending activities, with dedicated sections on partnership-building. Specific examples of follow-up on partnership-building and South-South Cooperation follow.
36. Through IFAD's Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), organizations such as the Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Organization have been identified as credible partners. They have supported organization of the regional consultation in preparation for the third global meeting at IFAD of the Indigenous Peoples Forum.
37. In 2015, to further IFAD's agenda for South-South Cooperation, IFAD partnered with the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) to strengthen the capacity of project technical staff from four IFAD-financed projects in Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. By building on this success, IFAD/TIKA cooperation is going to be expanded to other countries.

D. Responses to corporate-level evaluations

38. This year's PRISMA review followed up on the CLE of the PBAS for the first time.
39. PBAS. Following the CLE, Management has worked on changes to the PBAS. These were presented in an approach paper to the Executive Board in December 2016. A revised PBAS was then presented to the Board in April 2017 for review. Following

comments by the Board and the PBAS working group, further revisions were made. The final paper will be presented to the Board in September 2017 for approval. Moreover, changes proposed by Management to the PBAS have also been aligned with the IFAD11 business model being discussed during replenishment consultations. The revised approach has either fully internalized or is in the process of internalizing 11 of the 15 IOE recommendations. Of the remaining 4, 3 were not agreed on and 1 was directed towards IOE.

E. Historical follow-up on recommendations: CLEs on fragility, replenishments and supervision

40. CLE on fragile states and situations. This CLE has been followed up for the second year as part of historical follow-up. The IFAD Strategy for Engagement in Countries with Fragile Situations was approved by the Executive Board in December 2016.¹⁹ The strategy included a new definition, guiding principles for IFAD's engagement, a new classification with clear thresholds/criteria for identifying countries with the most fragile situations, and new operational approaches for addressing fragility in these contexts. In line with the CLE's recommendation on differentiated approaches to fragile situations, the strategy outlined guiding principles and approaches. Of the 12 ongoing recommendations from last year's follow-up, 8 have been fully followed up and 4 are ongoing, with action expected to be completed by the end of 2017.
41. CLE on replenishments. This CLE has been followed up for the second year as part of historical follow-up. Of the nine remaining recommendations, five were fully followed up, three ongoing and one partially followed up. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Governance presented its report to the Governing Council in February 2017. The Governing Council's February resolution on IFAD11 was revised to reflect the working group's recommendation on representation of List C in Replenishment Consultations.
42. Following approval of IFAD's Sovereign Borrowing Framework in 2015, further borrowing has been sought and a borrowing agreement with the Agence Française de Développement for EUR 200 million was approved by the Board in April 2017. IFAD11 foresees acceptance of core contributions, Debt Sustainability Framework compensation contributions and possibly unrestricted complementary contributions.
43. CLE on supervision and implementation support. This CLE has been followed up for the third year as part of historical follow-up. Management is currently in the testing phase for the logframe tool of the ORMS, which when finalized will enable IFAD to align the indicators used for project M&E with those used by the RIMS and to monitor outputs throughout the project cycle. In parallel, Management is working on development of the project implementation module of the ORMS, a component of which is expected to be finalized in September 2017. The ORMS will be the information source for project outputs and performance data, as well as the storage location for all project-related information (with linkages to other existing systems as relevant).

F. Responses to IOE recommendations and ARRI learning theme

44. A comprehensive account is provided in annex IV of follow-up to the recommendations from the 2016 ARRI and IOE comments on the 2016 RIDE.
45. With regard to the learning theme of KM in the 2016 ARRI, Management notes the key constraints and areas for further improvement identified through the ARRI analysis and looks forward to continued engagement with IOE to ensure that IFAD fulfils its mandate as a knowledge institution.
46. Management has made significant progress on some IOE recommendations on KM. In the 2016 report by the Joint Inspection Unit – Knowledge Management in the

¹⁹ Document EB 2016/119/R.4.

United Nations System – IFAD’s KM strategy was highlighted as the most comprehensive among United Nations organizations. In line with this strategy, the Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD) has developed a KM action plan with cross-divisional collaboration. A KM coordination group has been established to promote organization-wide collaboration on KM and to ensure better coordination of KM-related activities. It is comprised of staff with specific KM responsibilities in various IFAD divisions, and meets regularly to follow up on the actions laid out in the action plan.

III. Conclusions

47. In all, the 2017 PRISMA covers 180 recommendations from 20 different evaluations, including historical follow-up of 3 CLEs. Substantial action has been taken on 97 per cent of the recommendations, of which 60 per cent have been fully implemented and 37 per cent have been initiated or partially followed up. The high figures for follow-up on recommendations reflect Management’s commitment to internalize IOE recommendations.
48. First, Management appreciates the importance, timeliness and practicality of IOE’s recommendations, which is evident through the number of reforms at the corporate level that have coincided with key evaluation recommendations. Going forward, Management would like to continue to engage with IOE to align future evaluations with the key priority areas elaborated in the IFAD 11 business model to maximize organizational learning and assist Management in effectively delivering on IFAD’s ambitious mandate.
49. Second, while Management highly values the independent analysis and recommendations made by IOE, it notes that recommendations remain complex and tend to combine a large number of sub-actions, with multiple recommendations bundled into a single recommendation. For example, the eight evaluations at the corporate level (ESRs and CLEs) followed up in this year’s PRISMA had a total of 43 recommendations presented by IOE, but when unbundled, the number of recommendations doubled to 86.
50. Third, this is the first year that Management has followed up on recommendations stemming from ESRs. While Management has provided a comprehensive follow-up on these recommendations, it would like to observe that the number of recommendations from ESRs is comparable to that from CLEs, with 11-12 on average. Management suggests that, given the nature of ESRs as learning products – and as noted by the Evaluation Committee members during the ninety-second session of the Evaluation Committee – the recommendations made should be strategic and add value beyond the recommendations contained in the reports on which the synthesis was based.
51. Lastly, with a view to facilitating the implementation of recommendations and maintaining a high level of transparency, accountability and objectivity in the follow-up of management actions, Management is of the view that the upcoming part II of the harmonization agreement (2018) would be an opportune time to reassess and further strengthen the process of streamlining recommendations by engaging in a continuous dialogue between Management and IOE on the practicality and value addition of recommendations prior to their formalization.

IOE comments on 2017 PRISMA

I. General observations

1. In accordance with the IFAD Evaluation Policy,²⁰ the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) hereby provides its comments on the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) for consideration by the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board. As in previous years, IOE welcomes the PRISMA as a key instrument to strengthen organizational accountability and learning for better institutional and development effectiveness.
2. The 2017 PRISMA is clear and concise. It reports on the implementation status of the recommendations contained in 20 independent evaluations released in previous years. It also includes Management's responses to recommendations from last year's Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD operations (ARRI) and to IOE's comments on the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE). For the first time, the PRISMA reports on follow-up action taken by Management on recommendations contained in evaluation synthesis reports (ESRs).
3. IOE acknowledges the continued, strong follow-up on independent evaluation recommendations reported in the 2017 PRISMA, which reflects Management's sustained efforts to enhance organizational and operational performance. IOE also appreciates Management's recognition of the importance, timeliness and practicality of IOE's recommendations and their contribution to recent corporate reforms. IOE agrees with the importance of further engagement with Management to align future evaluations with the key priority areas under IFAD11 to optimize organizational learning, while noting that the selection of the exact evaluation topics needs to remain independent of Management to safeguard the fundamental accountability objective of independent evaluation.

II. Specific comments

4. Evaluations included in PRISMA. This year's PRISMA covers 20 evaluations, with recommendations agreed prior to 30 June 2016: four corporate-level evaluations (CLEs), of which three were covered by previous editions of the PRISMA (i.e. "historical" follow-up); three country programme evaluations (CPEs); eight project performance assessments (PPAs); one impact evaluation (IE); and four ESRs. The sample of evaluations covered by the PRISMA was agreed between IOE and Management.
5. Quality of follow-up reporting. IOE considers that Management reporting on follow-up on evaluation recommendations is generally clear, comprehensive and to the point. IOE does not have the resources to verify the accuracy of reporting, but overall the explanations provided are credible and convincing. In a few cases, however, reporting was incomplete or did not really address the recommendation. This may be due to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the recommendation.
6. For instance, the PRISMA response to the Turkey CPE recommendation to introduce specific initiatives and new partners, to ensure that the more disadvantaged are not left out, is that institutional mapping for farmer and rural-based organizations is taking place. This seems beside the point. The Bangladesh CPE recommends strengthening of the IFAD Country Office, and that the Bangladesh CPM be outposted from Rome to Dhaka as soon as possible. The recommendation is marked as ongoing, while, in the words of the PRISMA, outposting of the CPM is not foreseen in the near future. It would have been more accurate to mark the recommendation as only partially agreed on. The PPA for the China Environment Conservation and Poverty-Reduction Programme in Ningxia and Shanxi

²⁰ See paragraphs 11 and 31(i) of the revised IFAD Evaluation Policy (EC 2011/66/W.P.8).

recommends continued focus on chronic poverty in areas that have potential for agricultural production, but are environmentally fragile and mainly inhabited by ethnic minorities. The PRISMA reports that IFAD will focus on poor areas with productive potential, but without guaranteeing that these areas will be environmentally fragile. No mention is made of ethnic minorities. This recommendation is nonetheless marked as fully followed up.

7. Historical follow-up. IOE appreciates that a second round of follow-up was done on the implementation of recommendations of the CLE on IFAD's engagement in conflicted and fragile states and situations and the CLE on replenishments, considering the corporate importance of these evaluations. In future, given the strategic nature of the recommendations in CLEs, and to allow sufficient time for follow-up, IOE agrees that historical follow-up on outstanding recommendations of CLEs is not conducted every year, but rather every second year.
8. Follow-up on project-level evaluations is limited to recommendations addressed to IFAD. For project performance assessments (called project performance evaluations since 2016), the PRISMA only reports on follow-up on recommendations addressed directly to IFAD. The implementation status of recommendations assigned to project management units or, more broadly, to government is not monitored. The argument in favour of this practice is that only IFAD has committed to implementing project evaluation recommendations through the management response. However, Management does have an important role to play in engaging with governments and project teams on the implementation of project evaluation recommendations addressed to the latter. It should report on efforts made in this regard in the PRISMA, as well as on the implementation status of those recommendations.
9. Recommendations from the 2016 ARRI. Follow-up by Management on the 2016 ARRI recommendations appears satisfactory overall. Last year the ARRI addressed 10 recommendations to Management, of which five were fully implemented, three are ongoing and two were not agreed on in the Management response. IOE is pleased to note that, for the two recommendations not agreed on, Management is making appropriate efforts to resolve the underlying issues.
10. Follow-up to CLE and ESR recommendations. Management reporting on follow-up on CLE and ESR recommendations is generally comprehensive and convincing. Even in those cases where IFAD Management did not agree with IOE recommendations, Management introduced measures to act on the shortcomings identified by the evaluation.
11. Apparent complexity of recommendations. In paragraph 52, Management notes that recommendations remain complex and tend to combine a large number of subactions, with multiple subrecommendations bundled into one recommendation. There are cases in which it is useful to organize recommendations in clusters around a common aspect or issue to make the link between recommendations and their underlying purpose clearer, and to enhance the structure of the recommendations section. The number of subactions contained under one recommendation is often related to the nature of the recommendation, and tends to increase when recommendations are more operational and concrete, rather than broader and more strategic.

Evaluation recommendations by theme and nature (2017 PRISMA)

Table A
Evaluation recommendations by level and nature

<i>Level</i>	<i>Operational</i>	<i>Strategic</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Total (number)</i>
IFAD corporate level	45	33	19	97
IFAD regional level	-	-	-	-
IFAD country/government	29	47	-	76
Government authorities and institutions	-	-	-	-
Project	6	1	-	7
Total (number)	80	81	19	180
Total (percentage)	44%	45%	11%	100%

Table B
Evaluation recommendations by theme

<i>Block</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Targeting and gender	Targeting	10		
	Gender	2		
	Beneficiaries	3		
	Organizations of the poor	5	20	11%
Technical areas	Private sector and markets	2		
	Natural resource management	4		
	Analysis, studies and research	5		
	Rural finance	4		
	Training and capacity-building	9	24	13%
Project management	Project design and formulation	7		
	Decentralization	7		
	Project management and administration	1		
	Results measurement, M&E	23		
	Supervision	9	47	26%
Non-lending activities	Partnerships	11		
	Policy engagement	6		
	Knowledge management	8		
	South-South and Triangular Cooperation	14	39	22%
Cross-cutting	Sustainability	3		
	Innovation	3		
	Replication and scaling up	3		
	Grants	2		
	COSOP	6		
	Strategy	11	28	16%
Corporate	Human resources	1		
	Replenishment	6		
	Allocation	15	22	12%
Total		180	180	100%

Long-term follow-up trends

Table A
Implementation status of recommendations by level (PRISMA reports 2006-2017)

<i>Level</i>	<i>Full follow-up</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not agreed</i>	<i>Not yet due</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Partial</i>	<i>Pending</i>	Total (no.)	Total (%)
Ctry	773	25	2	69	142	32	12	1055	50%
Gov	75	4		27	20	7	18	151	7%
IFAD	220	11	9	1	137	13	3	394	19%
Proj	326	22		66	31	21	4	470	22%
Reg	25	6		3	8		1	43	2%
Total (no.)	1419	68	11	166	338	73	38	2113	100%
Total (%)	67%	3%	1%	8%	16%	3%	2%	100%	

Table B
Implementation by regional division (PRISMA reports 2006-2017)

<i>Regional division</i>	<i>Full follow-up</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not agreed</i>	<i>Not yet due</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Partial</i>	<i>Pending</i>	Total (no.)	Total (%)
APR	337	23		37	65	18	15	495	28%
ESA	273	9		13	43	8	4	350	20%
LAC	222	6		47	63	14	4	356	20%
NEN	179	8	1	10	20	9	6	233	13%
WCA	222	16	2	58	21	12	6	337	19%
Total (no.)	1233	62	3	165	212	61	35	1771	100%
Total (%)	70%	4%	0%	9%	12%	3%	2%	100%	

Note: The number of recommendations by level does not match the number by region because evaluations addressed to the corporate level are not included in the regional classification.

Responses to recommendations from 2016 ARRI and IOE comments on 2016 RIDE

I. ARRI 2016 recommendations

1. Last year the ARRI addressed ten recommendations to Management. Of those, five were fully implemented, three are ongoing and two were not agreed on in the Management response. The Management position and update on ARRI 2016 recommendations are presented below.

A. Targeting

- (a) Project approaches and activities to be adapted to contexts and target groups. IFAD prioritizes the addressing of the needs and priorities of specific groups among the rural poor through the work of thematic experts on gender equality and women's empowerment, youth, indigenous peoples and producer organizations. Management is committed to devoting more attention to the profiling of potential beneficiaries and to tailored project activities to develop better targeting strategies and closer monitoring of these during implementation. To this end, targeting is reviewed during supervision missions as well as at completion. Action ongoing.
- (b) Increased attention to vulnerable groups. Management is exploring the possibility of reviewing the current IFAD policy on targeting to ensure alignment with IFAD's strategic framework and to increase attention to youth, gender and other vulnerable groups as appropriate. Action ongoing.
- (c) Better development of M&E systems, including disaggregation of data. Management presented IFAD's revised RIMS to the Executive Board in April 2017. The revised RIMS includes indicators disaggregated by gender and youth and specific indicators for indigenous peoples. This will enable IFAD to better track the participation of vulnerable groups. Action fully followed up.

B. Food security and nutrition

- (a) All new projects, when relevant, should be nutrition sensitive with explicit nutrition objectives, activities and indicators. The Action Plan for Mainstreaming Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (2016-2018) presents a comprehensive, practical approach to mainstreaming nutrition in IFAD's investments, advocacy and KM activities. It provides a framework to guide IFAD's actions in this area and to achieve the organization's commitment that all COSOPs and at least one third of projects be nutrition sensitive by the end of IFAD10. The nutrition team was closely involved in the revision of RIMS, and adequate indicators for nutrition have been included in this RIMS and will be mainstreamed into new projects when relevant. Additionally, given Management's commitment to internalize and act on this issue, nutrition was selected as a key theme for the corporate portfolio stocktaking in June 2017. The review of the portfolio showed that 46 per cent of projects in 2016 were nutrition sensitive, with adequate attention to nutrition objectives, activities and indicators, which exceeds the 33 per cent target. Action fully followed up.
- (b) Supervision missions and midterm reviews to look at opportunities to ensure that, when appropriate, projects contribute to improved nutrition. Management disagrees with this recommendation. While Management would like to point out that, where possible and relevant to the project, a nutrition expert participates in supervision and/or midterm review to ensure nutrition aspects are enhanced, doing so systematically in the ongoing portfolio of 200 or so projects would not be an efficient use of limited dedicated resources. Recommendation not agreed on.

- C. Partnerships at the country level for learning and scaling up of results
- (a) Strong partnerships with the Rome-based agencies, the private sector and technical ministries at the national level to be clearly articulated in COSOPs and implemented through country programme activities. Revised COSOP procedures issued in 2015 require that all COSOPs elaborate the work on non-lending activities and adequately demonstrate the linkages between investments and non-lending. To this end, the annotated COSOP outline requires a specific section on partnership-building. This must also be reflected in the COSOP results frameworks reviewed at midterm and completion. Progress on partnership-building at the country level feeds into the final assessment of the COSOP completion review. While non-lending activities are not required to be separately rated in COSOP reviews, in accordance with the harmonization agreement between Management and IOE, their assessment feeds into the overall assessment and ratings for COSOP relevance and effectiveness. Action fully followed up.
 - (b) Performance in partnership-building to be closely monitored and reported in the RIDE. Management requires all COSOPs to have results frameworks, which are updated at midterm and assessed at completion. As part of the completion review of COSOPs, self-assessment ratings will be provided on relevance and effectiveness. However, in the harmonization agreement between Management and IOE, it was agreed that self-evaluations would not rate non-lending activities separately at the country programme level, but their assessment would feed into the overall assessment ratings for COSOP relevance and effectiveness. Partnership-building is an input or occasionally an output that contributes to better outcomes at the programme level. Thus close monitoring and reporting on partnership-building in isolation in the RIDE does not serve the purpose of assessing progress towards results. Action not agreed on.
- D. Knowledge management
- (a) Better alignment of incentive system with KM strategy to provide clarity to staff on their accountability for learning and positive motivation to participate actively in KM efforts. SKD, with cross-divisional collaboration, has developed a KM action plan to implement key priorities of the KM Framework 2014-2018. The action plan also captures pre-existing major KM initiatives, and underlines that KM is an organization-wide set of activities involving all divisions and departments. A corresponding KM action tracker is also being developed to ensure sufficient tracking and updating of KM commitments. The KM coordination group, which meets actively, has been a welcome entry point for staff from diverse divisions to internalize their roles in accountability and learning. Action ongoing.
 - (b) Enhancement of M&E systems and development and measurement of performance indicators for KM. With the increasing focus on non-lending activities as tools to achieve results at the country/project level, adjustments are being made to procedures, templates and processes to adequately capture KM activities. The KM action plan has accompanying roles and responsibilities spread across IFAD's divisions to ensure adequate tracking of knowledge across the organization. Other complementary initiatives to improve the measurement of performance indicators include: the revised RIMS framework; the M&E curriculum for the IFAD/CLEAR initiative that includes a module on KM in projects; revisions to IFAD's client survey to include a knowledge dimension; and use of KM performance as a measure of certain outcomes in completion reporting for projects and COSOPs and in the IFAD11 Results Measurement Framework (RMF). Action ongoing.

- (c) Enhancement of staff KM skills. As part of the IFAD Operations Academy, training is being planned to build staff KM skills at project, country and corporate levels to include facilitation, analysis and documentation of lessons learned. Action ongoing.
- (d) More investment in documenting the innovative solutions to rural poverty emerging from IFAD operations; process to be more clearly anchored in COSOPs and projects. The new COSOP guidelines systematically embed the knowledge required to meet COSOP objectives. Moreover, SKD has launched a new knowledge series, Results from the Field. The purpose of the series is to document key results and lessons emerging from a selection of IFAD-funded projects and programmes, and to make them easily accessible to policy- and decision makers, development practitioners, researchers and others. Through Management's revised procedures for the process of completion reporting, project completion reports (PCRs) have become more timely, and they more systematically capture knowledge generated and lessons learned, which are shared through dedicated PCR learning events organized by the regional divisions. Two global grant programmes provide capacity-building for project staff and partners on capitalizing on, documenting and sharing lessons learned. Action fully followed up.

II. IOE's comments on 2016 RIDE

A. Management's response to IOE's comments on the 2016 RIDE:

- (a) Methodology. In line with IOE's recurrent recommendation on elaborating the methodology of the RIDE analysis, this year's RIDE includes a section on methodology to enhance the transparency and reliability of the report.
- (b) Internal and external benchmarking. With regard to internal benchmarking, regional and corporate portfolio stocktaking discussions are held biannually by Management for regular follow-up on recurrent issues across the portfolio. Moreover, the quarterly corporate performance reports prepared by SKD also serve the purpose of internal benchmarking and reporting on an ongoing basis. As the RIDE is meant to provide a holistic and corporate analysis of IFAD's results, Management believes that internal benchmarking is adequately addressed through these processes. The 2018 RIDE will include benchmarking with external organizations.
- (c) Cross-cutting and systemic issues. The 2017 RIDE includes a section on cross-cutting and recurrent issues drawn from an analysis of all previous editions of the RIDE, as well as the IFAD9 impact assessment initiative. Some recurrent issues noted are efficiency and sustainability of benefits – in line with IOE's analysis in the ARRI.
- (d) Assessment of performance. While disaggregating ratings further is not a practice in other international financial institutions with an annual report comparable to the RIDE, a disaggregated analysis has been conducted for key indicators in level 2 of the RMF.
- (e) Assessment of non-lending activities (KM, partnership, policy dialogue). The 2017 RIDE includes a deeper analysis of non-lending activities, in line with IOE's recommendation. Additionally, a new In Focus chapter has been introduced that will cover thematic non-lending activities – in this year's RIDE it will focus on South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Moreover, a number of reforms have been introduced in IFAD to increase the focus on non-lending activities as key instruments and inputs in achieving greater development results. These include reforming the IFAD client survey for IFAD11, the KM action plan and tracker, the toolkit for country-level policy

engagement and more systematic COSOP results and completion reviews, with deeper analysis of non-lending activities.

- (f) Reporting on results from IFAD's impact assessment initiative. This will be relevant when the IFAD10 impact assessment report is available and the results are reported in a future edition of the RIDE.
- (g) Structure of the report. The 2017 RIDE has made structural adjustments compared with previous editions. It effectively captures the key highlights of IFAD's results and leaves room allowing for a deeper narrative on other topics such as SSTC, IFAD's architecture and recurring issues in development effectiveness. The more succinct structure of the report allows better embedding of results reporting in the overall narrative, analysis and conclusion, which are all adequately captured in the main report. However, certain thematic priorities requiring more in-depth review are covered in annexes, such as progress in the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) and IFAD's progress on gender issues.