

Document: EB 2020/129/R.27
Agenda: 9(a)
Date: 23 March 2020
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Investing in rural people

Attendance of Observers at Executive Board Sessions during Consideration of Project, Programme and Grant Proposals

Note to Executive Board representatives

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Executive Board — 129th Session
Rome, 20-21 April 2020

For: Approval

Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in paragraphs 9 to 11.

I. Background

1. At the 128th session of the Executive Board in December 2019, the sub-List C1 Convenor proposed that representatives of Member States not on the Board be allowed to participate in Board sessions as silent observers when project, programme and grant proposals for their countries are being considered.
2. The proposal was further discussed at the Convenors and Friends meeting held on 4 February 2020 and supported by all List Convenors. At the meeting it was agreed that the Office of the Secretary would draft a proposal for the consideration of the Executive Board at its 129th session.

II. Current rules and practice

3. The rules relevant to attendance of Member States as observers at Executive Board sessions can be found in the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.¹ Generally speaking, those Member States wishing to attend Executive Board sessions are allowed to follow the Board's proceedings in the *salle d'écoute*, limited to one representative per Member State. Non-Member States at an advanced stage of their membership process are also allowed to follow the Board proceedings from the *salle d'écoute*.²
4. With specific regard to attendance of observers when operational matters are being discussed, the following rules and practice are currently implemented.
5. **Items pertaining to country strategic opportunities programmes.** In December 2002, at its seventy-seventh session, the Executive Board considered the document Procedure for the Review of Country Strategic Opportunities Papers (COSOPs) by the Executive Board. The document notes that the Board had expressed the view that "when a COSOP is discussed by the Board while the country in question is not a Board member, a country representative should be invited to the specific Board session on that COSOP." Thus "A 'non-Executive Board' country will be allowed to take part in Board discussion on the COSOP for the country in question, at no cost to IFAD."³ The maximum time allocation for interventions by these representatives is three minutes.
6. As of March 2019, in order to streamline deliberations during Executive Board sessions, consultations on COSOPs and country strategy and programme evaluations (CSPEs) included on a Board agenda are held in advance of formal Board sessions. Non-Board members are invited to participate in these consultations. In addition, permanent representatives of those countries for which a COSOP and/or CSPE is on the agenda are invited to attend the relevant Executive Board session for that item and to deliver a statement of up to three minutes.
7. **Project, programme and grant proposals.** As decided by the Board in 2010, and given space limitations in the meeting venue at the time, a single representative from a "non-Executive Board country" from each of the five regions covered by IFAD's operations would be allowed to take part in Board discussions as a silent observer for the duration of items pertaining to project, programme and

¹ Rule 8 of [the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board](#).

² See document [EB 2013/108/R.28](#).

³ See document [EB 2002/77/R.12](#).

grant proposals under consideration.⁴ The names of said representatives must be communicated to the President by the Convenors.

8. In November 2019, further to the positive feedback received on the consultations held on COSOPs and related CSPEs, and as proposed by the List Convenors, this format was extended to include the project, programme and grant proposals on the Board agenda. Permanent representatives of non-Board members are invited to attend these consultations.

III. Recommendation

9. In line with IFAD's efforts to enhance transparency, the Executive Board is invited to approve that when a project, programme or grant proposal for a Member State not represented on the Executive Board is under consideration, a single representative for such Member State be invited to follow the proceedings for that item as a silent observer in the Board room. The reconfigured meeting venue would accommodate the additional participants.
10. These representatives would be accorded the following rights, as silent observers, as approved by the Executive Board in October 2018⁵ and reproduced here below:
 - (i) **Right to speak.** Pursuant to rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the President, as Chair of the Board, accords the right to speak at each session. Silent observers would not normally be allowed to speak at the Board sessions to which they are invited, unless their interventions were solicited with a view to contributing to the achievement of IFAD's objectives and mandate.
 - (ii) **Access to documents.** In accordance with the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents, all Executive Board documents (with certain exceptions) are posted on the public website. As such, silent observers already have access to the majority of Board documents.
11. Should the Board approve the foregoing proposal, the current footnote 3 contained in the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board will be modified to read as follows (text to be added is underlined):

On 23 October 2018, the Executive Board approved through a vote by correspondence the recommendations contained in document EB 2018/125/V.B.C.4 authorizing the President: (i) to invite any entity/individual that fulfills the requirements set out in paragraph 7 of said document to attend an Executive Board session as a silent observer, subsequent to an informal no-objection process with Board members; (ii) to accord the related access rights to silent observers, as set out in paragraph 9 of the document. This decision does not affect: (a) the current power of the Executive Board to invite representatives or persons to present views before the Board and the power of the President to determine which staff members may attend Board sessions (rule 8); (b) the 2010 decision to allow a single representative from each of the five regions covered by IFAD's operations to attend as a silent observer for items pertaining to country strategic opportunities programmes, project and programme proposals, and grant proposals under consideration (EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1); (c) the observers that are currently allowed to follow the Board proceedings by closed circuit television from the *salle d'écoute*, adjacent to the meeting room, i.e. representatives of Member States that are not members of the Board (EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1), and non-Member States at an advanced stage of their membership process (EB 2013/108/R.28); and (d) the access of additional members of a delegation of Board representatives to follow the session from the *salle*

⁴ See document [EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1](#).

⁵ See annex III of [EB 2018/125/INF.3/Rev.2](#).

d'écoute (EB 2010/100/R.38). In May 2019, in the spirit of mutual collaboration among the Rome-based agencies, the President requested – and the Executive Board approved – that FAO and WFP be invited on a regular basis by the President to Executive Board sessions as silent observers without requiring further approval by the Board. Document EB 2018/125/V.B.C.4 was therefore revised as EB 2018/125/V.B.C.4/Rev.1 and is contained as annex III of document EB 2018/125/INF.3/Rev.2. (e) At its 129th session, the Executive Board approved that when a project, programme or grant proposal for a Member State not represented on the Executive Board is under consideration, a single representative for such Member State be invited to follow the proceedings for that item as a silent observer in the Board room.