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Investing in rural people

Country visits of the IFAD Executive Board 2021-2023

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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 draft rolling plan for the next three years as well as one of the three proposed dates for the 2021 Executive Board country visit.

Country visits of the IFAD Executive Board 2021-2023

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 (LDCs) 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); and (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 (RB-COSOP) within the previous two years. In addition, at least two of three country visits over a replenishment period should be to an LDC or a country with a fragile situation and adequate regional rotation should be ensured.
5. In light of the above and in consultation with the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD, the proposed plan for country visits in 2021-2023 is as follows:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Recent evaluation</i>	<i>Fragile/LDC</i>
2021	West and Central Africa (WCA)	Sierra Leone	Country strategy and programme evaluation 2019	LDC
2022	East and Southern Africa (ESA)	Uganda	Country strategy and programme evaluation 2020	LDC
2023	Near East and North Africa (NEN)	Tunisia	Country strategy and programme evaluation 2019	

6. Sierra Leone is categorized as an LDC. A country strategy and programme evaluation was carried out in 2019. The ongoing portfolio has a total value of US\$72 million, financed by IFAD. In addition, a significant amount of cofinancing

has been assembled: US\$50 million from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) (project closed in 2020); US\$10 million from the Adaptation Fund (approved in 2019); and US\$20 million from the OPEC Fund for International Development (under negotiation). The country programme in Sierra Leone has a strong focus on financial inclusion, including women and youth. The focus on youth employment is currently being strengthened through the development of a new youth strategy to guide the IFAD country portfolio, working with the National Youth Commission and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Consequently, IFAD Management seeks the Board's approval of Sierra Leone as the destination for the 2021 visit.

7. The common calendar of meetings of permanent representatives has been consulted and the following three periods are possible for the visit:
 - (i) 17-21 May 2021
 - (ii) 25-29 October 2021
 - (iii) 1-5 November 2021
8. Uganda is the proposed destination for the 2022 visit. The IFAD country programme comprises four ongoing projects, with IFAD funding of US\$265.8 million. The ongoing projects focus on value chain development (vegetable oil and oil seeds), livelihood restoration and rural finance. In particular, IFAD and the Government of Uganda have jointly invested in promoting public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps) in the vegetable oil sector for two decades. IFAD has been instrumental in operationalizing the regulatory framework for Tier 4 institutions, including Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs). Uganda is categorized as an LDC and a country strategy and programme evaluation will be carried out in 2020, providing the necessary background for a visit to this country.
9. The proposed destination for 2023 is Tunisia. A country strategy and programme evaluation was carried out in 2019 and a COSOP was approved last year. Currently, the country has the second largest portfolio in the Near East and North Africa region in terms of number of ongoing projects, with IFAD funding of US\$78.8 million. In line with the COSOP and the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources mainstreaming commitments, the newest project – the Economic, Social and Solidarity Project – is an innovative operation focused on social and economic mobility of needy families in the hilly and remote parts of the region of Kairouan, with a specific emphasis on women and youth.
10. The Executive Board is therefore invited to approve the draft rolling plan for the next three years and one of the three proposed dates for the 2021 Executive Board country visit.

Summary table of Evaluation Committee/Executive Board member visits:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>
2004	Syrian Arab Republic	NEN
2005	Indonesia	APR
2006	Mexico	LAC
2007	Mali	WCA
2008	Philippines	APR
2009	India	APR
2010	Mozambique	ESA
2011	Brazil	LAC
2012	Ghana	WCA
2013	Viet Nam	APR
2014	United Republic of Tanzania	ESA
2015	Morocco	NEN
2016	Brazil	LAC
2017	Bangladesh	APR
2018	Ethiopia	ESA
2019	Cameroon	WCA
2020	Egypt	NEN
2021	Sierra Leone	WCA
2022	Uganda	ESA
2023	Tunisia	NEN