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Investing in rural people

## **Increasing Transparency for Greater Accountability Action Plan**

### **Annual Progress Report – 2019**

#### **Addendum**

#### **Note to Executive Board representatives**

##### Focal points:

##### Technical questions:

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Executive Board — 129<sup>th</sup> Session  
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**For: Information**

## I. Comments from Sweden

1. Sweden welcomes IFAD's continued commitment to improving the **availability, relevance, accessibility and timeliness** of information provided to IFAD's stakeholders. Information about how development aid is being spent should be easy to access and understand, in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative.
2. In this regard, we appreciate Management's efforts in providing annual progress reports on the Transparency for Greater Accountability Action Plan. Furthermore, we applaud IFAD for having initiated action on all the 22 areas in the report and we look forward to future updates.
3. The disclosure of IFAD's **whistle-blower protection** procedures as well as **publicly available information on financing** are examples of important instances of information provided to IFAD staff, partners and general public alike.
4. That said, we believe some information would benefit from being **more accessible and easier** to find. As an example, we are not able to find the Corporate Dashboard under the Transparency and Accountability area of IFAD's website, as stated under Action no. 6.
5. An important issue going forward is how to address the findings of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report that IFAD's **knowledge assets need to be supported by a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation**. Following up on the effects of knowledge- and information-sharing is reasonably as important for accountability, as the actual sharing.
6. We would furthermore like to take the opportunity to comment on the information provided to IFAD's governing bodies. As we all know, IFAD has been engaged in a substantial transformation to become *bigger, better and smarter*. Naturally, this has translated into a heavier burden for the governing bodies with an increased amount of documentation, not seldom with a high level of complexity. We would therefore like to urge IFAD to continue to **provide Board documentation in a timely and consistent manner**, in line with the agreed Governance and Working Methods Action Plan (2019).
7. Lastly, it is clear that IFAD has internalized that transparency is key to accountability and trust. **Next steps should be monitoring the impact of these efforts, as well as fine-tuning the selection of items presented to the Board for information.**
8. Thank you for your attention.

### Response

9. Management appreciates the positive comments on IFAD's continued commitment to transparency and accountability, and provides the following responses to the specific questions or suggestions made by Sweden:
 

**Sweden:** "we believe some information would benefit from being **more accessible and easier** to find. As an example, we are not able to find the Corporate Dashboard under the Transparency and Accountability area of IFAD's website, as stated under Action no. 6."
10. The publicly accessible IFAD Operations Dashboard, presenting data from IFAD operations and financial systems, is accessible on IFAD's website: ("Who we Are" > "Transparency and Accountability" > click on the hyperlink in the following text to open the Dashboard): **"In 2014, IFAD began publishing a wide range of [information on projects](#) financed by IFAD and is committed to full compliance to the standard"**.

11. In addition, a direct link to the Dashboard has now been added: [View the Operations Dashboard for up-to-date information on the performance of IFAD-supported country strategies and projects/programmes.](#)
12. As part of the annual review of progress, IFAD's Office of Audit and Oversight (AUO) also assesses ease of access to information and recommends improvements where required. AUO and the reporting divisions will continue paying particular attention to this aspect.
 

**Sweden:** "An important issue going forward is how to address the findings of the MOPAN report that IFAD's **knowledge assets need to be supported by a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation.**"
13. The exact issue raised by MOPAN was: measurement of knowledge work needs to be enhanced; IFAD's rapidly expanding focus on the deployment of its own knowledge assets should be supported by a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation of the Fund's knowledge role, outputs and influence.
14. Some ways in which this is addressed in the Knowledge Management Strategy and Action Plan are:
  - A comprehensive monitoring and learning system based on IFAD's Knowledge Management Strategy and Results Measurement Framework is in place, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.
  - IFAD is improving the quality, relevance and accessibility of its knowledge products. We are expanding our outreach to ensure our knowledge products reach the right audiences through more targeted dissemination, and that they have a high profile in the global development community, in particular through strategic use of social media.
  - IFAD is using a simple dashboard approach based on Google Analytics to monitor page views and downloads of knowledge products on IFAD's website, and is tracking citations. This is being combined with initial use of qualitative methods such as readership surveys to **build a deeper understanding of the public's use of IFAD knowledge resources**, and of user perceptions of quality and relevance.
  - From 2020, IFAD will also report on data gathered through the **revised client survey** on the timeliness, relevance and usefulness of knowledge products.
  - As regards monitoring **the longer-term influence and effectiveness of our knowledge work**, the revamped client survey will provide useful feedback at country level (through questions related to policy engagement, partnership building, South-South Triangular Cooperation and knowledge-intensive services).
  - Additionally, monitoring implementation of the Knowledge Management Action Plan will focus strongly on gathering evidence that can be used to demonstrate the relevance and value of knowledge management initiatives in terms of efficiency gains and return on investment. That will serve to justify investment of time and financial resources.

**Sweden:** “We would therefore like to urge IFAD to continue to **provide Board documentation in a timely and consistent manner**, in line with the agreed Governance and Working Methods Action Plan (2019).”

15. Management has discussed the Governance and Working Methods Action Plan with Convenors and agrees with the plan’s proposal that all documentation for Board review and approval should be submitted to Board members at least two weeks in advance, in accordance with Board-approved procedure (EB 2015/115/R.25). It should be borne in mind, however, that there may be some exceptions, mainly due to the timing of subsidiary body meetings.

16. Management is fully cognizant of the importance of facilitating review of documentation by Member State representatives, and the impact on achieving consensus, building trust and ensuring good governance and decision-making. Accordingly, Management is committed to providing quality documentation to the Board in a timely and consistent manner.

**Sweden:** “it is clear that IFAD has internalized that transparency is key to accountability and trust. **Next steps should be monitoring the impact of these efforts, as well as fine-tuning the selection of items presented to the Board for information.**”

17. Management notes and agrees with this statement. Indeed, several parallel efforts are being made to strengthen accountability and trust. These include strengthened policies on conduct, prompt reporting to Member States of allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse, clearer and more substantial delegations of authority, improved enterprise risk management and risk reporting, and substantial and timely information of programme results and impact. IFAD will continue to publish data, complete commitments and report on indicators, as agreed with Members in the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources and outlined in the Results Management Framework.

18. The various aspects of accountability, aimed at addressing often different needs, involve various functional subjects and reporting channels to the governing bodies. Currently, information documents presented to the Executive Board are based on commitments made with the Board to ensure continuous and up-to-date information. As proposed in the Governance and Working Methods Action Plan, information items have been removed from the agenda of the Executive Board. Instead, representatives are provided with a link to where information documents can be found on the Member States Interactive Platform although, on request, such items may be included on the Board’s agenda for discussion. Management nevertheless takes note of the suggestion for fine-tuning the selection of items presented to the Board for information and will keep this in mind for subsequent Board sessions.