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Investing in rural people

IFAD's 2020 Investment Policy Statement

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Contents

Preamble	ii
Recommendation for approval	1
I. Scope and purpose	1
A. Definition of investor and assets	1
B. Actors and their roles	1
II. Governance	2
A. Responsibilities for determining, executing and monitoring the investment policy	2
B. Process for reviewing and updating the investment policy	2
C. Responsibilities for approving investment guidelines and changes thereto	2
D. Responsibilities for engaging and discharging external investment managers, the custodian bank(s) and other financial advisers	2
E. Responsibilities for monitoring external investment managers, the custodian bank and financial advisers	3
F. Responsibilities for internally managed investments	3
III. Investments, return and risk objectives	3
A. Overall investment objective	3
B. Risk tolerance	3
C. Return on investment requirements	3
D. Eligible asset classes	3
E. Environmental, social and governance principles	4
F. Foreign currency management	4
G. Tax considerations and other privileges and immunities	4
IV. Risk management of the investment portfolio	4
A. Risk reporting	4
B. Performance reporting	6
C. Monitoring of compliance	6
V. Asset allocation and tranching of portfolio	6

Preamble

1. The Investment Policy Statement (IPS) is designed to establish fundamental directives for the placement or investment of IFAD cash funds not needed immediately for operations or administrative expenditures. Such directives also aim at ensuring that financial counterparts abide, as far as possible and within the objective and functions set forth in the Agreement Establishing IFAD, by the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact.
2. The responsibility to set the IPS rests with the Executive Board, within the parameters established by the Governing Council, whereas the President remains responsible for ensuring the implementation of the IPS.

Recommendation

The Executive Board is invited to review IFAD's 2020 Investment Policy Statement, as contained in this document.

IFAD's 2020 Investment Policy Statement

I. Scope and purpose

1. The Investment Policy Statement (IPS) provides a framework for management of the investments of the Fund. The purpose of the IPS is to:
 - (a) Identify key roles and responsibilities relating to the governance of IFAD's investment portfolio (section II);
 - (b) Set forth IFAD's investment objectives for risk and return, including eligible asset classes (section III);
 - (c) Establish a risk management framework (section IV); and
 - (d) Define the approach to asset allocation and tranching of the investment portfolio (section V).

A. Definition of investor and assets

2. IFAD is a specialized agency of the United Nations. It came into existence on 30 November 1977, when the Agreement Establishing IFAD (AEI) entered into force. Membership in the Fund is open to any State member of the United Nations – or any of its specialized agencies – or the International Atomic Energy Agency.
3. This IPS governs the investments of the Fund's resources that are derived from regular replenishments and/or are used for commitments of loans and grants under IFAD's regular programme. It will also serve as a framework for investments of other cash funds entrusted to and managed by the Fund and will complement any gaps left uncovered by separate policies and guidelines established to govern such other assets.

B. Actors and their roles

Governing Council

4. The Governing Council is IFAD's highest decision-making authority. Each Member State is represented in the Governing Council and all the powers of the Fund are vested in the Governing Council. Subject to the limitations stated in the AEI, the Governing Council may delegate powers to the Executive Board.

Executive Board

5. The Executive Board is responsible for the conduct of the general operations of the Fund and exercises the powers given to it by the AEI or delegated to it by the Governing Council.

Audit Committee

6. The Executive Board has established a subsidiary body, the Audit Committee, to which it refers, among other matters, questions concerning the investment of IFAD's resources in preparation for decisions by the Executive Board.

The President

7. Under the control and direction of the Governing Council and the Executive Board, the President heads, organizes, appoints and manages the Fund's staff, and is responsible for conducting the business of the Fund. Based on his/her authority to organize staff, the President may reconfigure IFAD's organizational structure. The President may place or invest cash funds not needed immediately for the Fund's operations or administrative expenditures.

- In order to discharge functions related to financial management and investments, the President has established a management committee to provide investment and financial advice.

The Chief Financial Officer

8. The President may delegate the responsibilities outlined in the IPS to the Chief Financial Officer.

II. Governance

A. Responsibilities for determining, executing and monitoring the investment policy

9. The President will ensure implementation and monitoring of all aspects of the investment policy.

B. Process for reviewing and updating the investment policy

10. The appropriateness of the investment policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Board at the last session of each calendar year on the basis of a report submitted to it by the President. Having considered the report, the Executive Board may amend and update the IPS accordingly.

C. Responsibilities for approving investment guidelines and changes thereto

11. Acting under regulation XIV of the Financial Regulations of IFAD and in implementation of regulation VIII thereof, the President shall approve and adopt investment guidelines for managing each investment portfolio with due regard to the IPS.

D. Responsibilities for engaging and discharging external investment managers, the custodian bank(s) and other financial advisers

12. The President is responsible for the appointment and dismissal of external investment managers, the custodian bank(s) and other financial advisers required to execute the Fund's investments.
13. External investment managers must fulfil the following initial requirements in order to be considered for the selection process:
 - (a) Investment managers must clearly articulate the investment strategy that they will follow and document that such strategy has been adhered to over time;
 - (b) Investment managers must, in all countries in which they operate, adhere to the governing legislation and regulations concerning financial services, including the authority of the competent regulatory bodies;
 - (c) Investment managers should endeavour to comply with the Global Investment Performance Standards and to provide at least historical quarterly performance data calculated on a time-weighted basis, based on a composite of fully discretionary accounts or similar investment style, and reported net and gross of fees; and
 - (d) Investment managers must provide detailed information on the history of the firm, key personnel, key clients, fee schedule and support personnel.
14. External investment managers are formally appointed through the signing of an investment management agreement by the President. The agreements outline in detail the responsibilities of the managers.

15. A copy of this IPS is provided to each external investment manager retained to provide investment services to IFAD. Each manager will acknowledge receipt of the document and acceptance of its content in writing as part of the agreement.

E. Responsibilities for monitoring external investment managers, the custodian bank and financial advisers

16. The President will ensure that properly equipped organizational units are made responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with external investment managers, the custodian bank(s) and financial advisers.
17. These units will ensure that appointed investment managers fulfil their mandates within the contractual obligations outlined in the relevant investment management agreement, including the investment guidelines incorporated in each agreement.

F. Responsibilities for internally managed investments

18. The President will ensure that internal investment portfolios are managed appropriately by the relevant organizational unit in line with this IPS and the specific investment guidelines.

III. Investments, return and risk objectives

A. Overall investment objective

19. Regulation VIII(2) of the Financial Regulations of IFAD forms the basis of IFAD's investment objectives, which for the purpose of this IPS are:

- (a) **Security** - preservation of the value of invested assets.
- (b) **Liquidity** - resources must be readily available if and as required by operations; and
- (c) **Return** - the highest possible return within the above conditions in a non-speculative manner.

B. Risk tolerance

20. The level of risk taken should be consistent with the investment objective of the Fund. Consequently, IFAD will only accept non-speculative risk in order to achieve its investment objectives. The risk tolerance level for the portfolio is set at a conditional value at risk of 3 per cent.

C. Return on investment requirements

21. The primary objective of IFAD's investments, as stated above, is to maintain the security and liquidity of funds invested. Subject to these two parameters, IFAD seeks to maximize prudently the total return on its investments.

D. Eligible asset classes

22. The following asset classes are eligible within IFAD's asset allocation (see table 1 below for asset class rating floors):

Money market instruments

- (a) Time deposits, certificates of deposit, commercial paper, treasury bills and money funds

Fixed-income securities

- (b) Government and government agencies, at national or subnational level
- (c) Supranationals
- (d) Asset-backed securities (only agency-issued or guaranteed)
- (e) Corporates
- (f) Callable bonds

(g) Covered bonds

Derivatives are allowed only for hedging purposes:¹

(h) Currency forwards

(i) Exchange-traded futures and options

(j) Interest rate swaps

(k) Cross currency swaps

(l) Credit default swaps

(m) Asset swaps

23. IFAD can enter into securities lending agreements as well as repurchase and reverse-repurchase transactions

24. IFAD does not use any form of leverage and does not use derivatives contracts to leverage positions in the investment portfolio.

E. Environmental, social and governance principles

25. Responsible investing is, in addition to more traditional financial factors, the consideration of environmental, social and governance factors in the choice of financial investments.

26. IFAD aims to be a responsible investor, and therefore adheres to the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). Only investments that comply with the UNGC are considered by IFAD as eligible for investment.

F. Foreign currency management

27. IFAD aims to ensure that its assets are held in the same currency composition as its future commitments.

G. Tax considerations and other privileges and immunities

28. Pursuant to article 10 of the AEI, the Fund "shall enjoy in the territory of each of its Members such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the exercise of its functions and for the fulfilment of its objective".

29. IFAD may freely transfer funds, gold or currency from one Member State to another, or within any Member State, and convert any currency held into any other currency. The Fund is exempt from all direct taxes on its assets, income and property.

IV. Risk management of the investment portfolio

30. The President will ensure that risk tolerance levels are constantly monitored and reviewed by the relevant organizational unit. Through the report on IFAD's investment portfolio, the Executive Board will receive updates on overall portfolio and individual investment portfolio risk levels and will be informed of any adjustments to be made to align these with agreed risk levels.

31. Any risk-mitigating measure(s) taken will be reported to the Executive Board as part of the report on IFAD's investment portfolio.

A. Risk reporting

32. The President will ensure that analyses are performed and reports prepared on the following financial risks emanating from the investment portfolio by the relevant organizational unit.

¹ This restriction does not apply to call options embedded in fixed income instruments, e.g. callable bonds.

Market risk

33. Market risk is monitored for the overall portfolio and for single mandates based on measures provided on a monthly basis by the global custodian or by another external risk management company.

Credit risk

34. Credit risk relating to securities classified as eligible asset classes is managed through the establishment of a minimum rating floor in the investment guidelines and, in line with paragraph 36 below, a specified percentage of investments is allocated to higher-rated companies. The eligibility of individual securities and issuers is determined on the basis of ratings by major credit rating agencies. For investment management purposes, credit analyses by security and by issuer will be performed – for all internally managed investments and, on a selective basis, for externally managed assets, and for commercial and central banks – using financial information systems, credit analysis provider(s) and other sources. All other credit analysis will be performed and reported as an integral part of risk management.
35. The following table shows the rating floors for each eligible asset class.

Table 1

Asset class rating floors

	Credit rating floors (Minimum of two out of the three agencies: Standard & Poor's, Moody's or Fitch) <i>(For Moody's ratings, the equivalent rating scale shall apply)</i>
Money market instruments	Single A-
Fixed-income securities: both nominal and inflation linked	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government and government agencies fixed-income securities at national or subnational level 	Single A-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supranationals 	Single A-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset-backed securities (only agency-issued or guaranteed) 	Triple A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered bonds 	Single A-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate bonds 	Single A-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Callable bonds 	Single A-
Derivatives: for hedging purposes only	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currency forwards Exchange-traded futures and options Interest rate swaps Cross currency swaps Credit default swaps Asset swaps 	Single A- counterparty rating
Repurchase and reverse-repurchase transactions	Single A- counterparty rating

36. The share of fixed-income investments in rating category AA- and above should be at least 60 per cent.

Counterparty risk

37. Counterparty risk is managed for all investments through the establishment of a minimum rating for certain eligible counterparties, as set out in paragraph 38 below. Counterparty risk will also be managed by capping exposure to each issuer/bank. Counterparty risk analyses are performed for the purpose of investment management using financial information systems, credit analysis providers and other sources. All other counterparty risk analysis will be performed and reported as an integral part of risk management.

38. Counterparties for fixed-income trading purposes shall be rated at minimum investment grade by at least one of the following: S&P, Moody's or Fitch, and the Fund's exposure to any such counterparties will be capped on a case-by-case basis at an appropriate limit approved by the President.
39. Counterparties for operational cash and cash management purposes (including payments and short-term investments) may be rated non-investment grade by any of the following: S&P, Moody's or Fitch, provided that the Fund's exposure to any such counterparties is capped on a case-by-case basis at an appropriate limit approved by the President.

Country risk

40. Country risk is a collection of risks associated with investing in a particular country. These risks include political risk and sovereign risk. Country risk is managed for all investments through the establishment of maximum country exposure concentrations within the guidelines of every individual investment portfolio. Country exposures are monitored on a daily basis.

Currency risk

41. IFAD manages the currency risk that results from any mismatch between the currency composition of its assets and the currency composition of its future commitments.
42. The risk is managed by monitoring any mismatches and implementing a realignment strategy if any deviations become significant.

Interest rate risk

43. Interest rate risk is monitored on the overall investment portfolio and on the individual portfolios. Risk measurements include duration, value at risk and conditional value at risk.

Liquidity risk

44. Sufficient liquidity must be readily available to ensure IFAD's ability to meet its disbursement obligations.

Legal risk

45. The President will ensure that any legal risk is assessed by the Office of the General Counsel.

Operational risk

46. Operational risk includes all risk sources other than those stated above. The President will ensure that operational risk is addressed by establishing a clearly defined framework of responsibility and accountability within IFAD's financial structure.

B. Performance reporting

47. The overall portfolio and benchmark performance in local currency terms will be reported semi-annually to the Executive Board. The report will include comparative performance figures for the previous quarters and previous year.

C. Monitoring of compliance

48. The President will ensure that the relevant organizational unit monitors the external and internal investment managers' compliance with IFAD's investment guidelines on a daily basis. Should a compliance breach arise, it will be analysed and any necessary action taken.

V. Asset allocation and tranching of portfolio

49. As the investments are fully committed, management of investments and their risk tolerance need to be linked to, and guided by, IFAD's short-term liquidity needs.

50. In order to ensure that the IFAD investment portfolio is structured appropriately to meet its objectives of security and liquidity, IFAD follows a "tranching" approach to asset allocation.
51. IFAD's investment portfolio is therefore split into tranches, as follows:
 - **Liquidity tranche.** Used for immediate cash disbursements;
 - **Buffer tranche.** Should the liquidity tranche be temporarily depleted due to an unforeseen spike in disbursements, funds in the buffer tranche will be used to fund these outflows. The size of the tranche is determined by the parameters set forth in IFAD's Liquidity Policy.
 - **Surplus tranche.** These funds are considered excess liquidity and are invested to provide return enhancement.