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Investing in rural people

## **2021 President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA)**

### **Comments by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD**

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For: **Review**

## **I. Comments by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD**

1. In accordance with the IFAD Evaluation Policy,<sup>1</sup> the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) provides 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.
2. Evaluation recommendations aim to strengthen IFAD's ability to achieve development results in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. Implementing evaluation recommendations is an important milestone in IFAD's use of evaluations to fulfil its accountability for achieving development results. As such, IOE welcomes the PRISMA as an important instrument within IFAD's evaluation architecture for promoting accountability. It analyses the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations and organizational learning by identifying recurring findings emerging from these evaluations.
3. IOE appreciates PRISMA's clear analysis of the implementation status of recommendations, the recurring issues in these recommendations and the efforts under way to implement the suggestions contained in IOE's comments on PRISMA 2020.
4. In particular, IOE welcomes Management actions in response to IOE comments on PRISMA 2020 to transform PRISMA into a dynamic tool for adaptive management during the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources period. The envisaged changes will provide universal coverage (implementation status of evaluation recommendations) in real time, which will have significant implications for the coverage and scope of analysis of PRISMA 2022 and beyond.
5. **Coverage of PRISMA 2021.** PRISMA 2021 presents the implementation status of two sets of evaluation recommendations: (i) recommendations of all nine new IOE evaluations completed during the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020; and (ii) recommendations of selected earlier IOE evaluations whose implementation status was not reviewed recently (three corporate-level evaluations were included). PRISMA 2021 tracks the implementation status of the 48 recommendations generated by these 12 evaluations (see table below). It also includes IOE's comments on the 2020 Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE).

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<sup>1</sup> Revised IFAD Evaluation Policy, document EC 2021/112/W.P.6.

Table 1  
**Evaluation coverage of PRISMA 2021**

<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Year of Completion</i>	<i>Number of Recommendations</i>
1 CSPE Mexico	April 2020	6
2 CSPE Nepal	March 2020	7
3 CSPE Sierra Leone	May 2020	7
4 IE Niger (Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region)	Dec 2019	3
5 PPE Botswana (Agriculture Services Support Project)	June 2020	2
6 PPE Haiti (Small Irrigation Development Project – Phase II)	June 2020	4
7 PPE Liberia (Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project)	March 2020	3
8 PPE Malawi (Rural Livelihoods Economic Enhancement Programme)	May 2020	6
9 PPE Sierra Leone (Rehabilitation and Community-based Poverty Reduction Project)	March 2020	4
10 CLE Replenishment	2014	2
11 CLE Performance-based Allocation System	2015	1
12 CLE Financial Architecture	2018	3
<b>Total Recommendations</b>		<b>48</b>

6. **Implementation status and IOE verification.** IOE is pleased to note that Management agreed with all 48 of IOE’s recommendations and provided responses to all (100 per cent). Of these 48 recommendations, 28 were deemed fully implemented by IOE (58 per cent). Of the ongoing responses, seven were deemed as not fully addressing the issues flagged by the recommendations (14.5 per cent).
7. When a recommendation calls for future projects to address specific issues, it is important to ensure that these issues are addressed in both design and implementation. For this reason, the implementation status of the recommendation related to the Haiti Project for Strengthening the Resilience of Small Farmers to the Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic (PURRACO) was assessed as ongoing by IOE (deemed as fully implemented by PRISMA).
8. **Learning from recommendations.** It is a challenge to draw meaningful inferences based on 12 evaluations. When PRISMA becomes an online database, it opens up the possibility of analyses going beyond the present year and involving multiple years. This expands the number of evaluations that enter the analysis and thereby makes findings of such analyses (e.g. recurring themes in recommendations) more robust.
9. **Use of PRISMA.** It would be helpful for PRISMA to go beyond presenting the recurring issues in evaluation recommendations and identify specific examples where these issues were used to strengthen the design of new projects and the oversight and support provided to ongoing projects.
10. **Online PRISMA.** In its forthcoming multi-year strategy, IOE envisages conducting periodic, systematic reviews of the online PRISMA to assess the quality and timeliness of Management response updates.
11. The proposal put forward by PRISMA to integrate the planned online PRISMA under IFAD12 into a one-stop platform containing the evidence base for design, implementation, oversight, monitoring and evaluation will advance IFAD’s overall evaluation architecture by creating learning loops. This platform will provide opportunities for IFAD Management and IOE to collaborate.
12. **In conclusion, IOE recognizes the usefulness of PRISMA and the efforts under way to modernize it.** This includes a user-friendly, dedicated online database of recommendations, Management responses and status of implementation of Management responses. Such a database will enrich the learning and accountability actions of PRISMA and promote a more broad-based use of evaluations. This database will provide a sound basis for learning opportunities, including identifying recurring themes in recommendations. PRISMA’s value addition will become greatly visible when it demonstrates that its use of evaluations

contributed to strengthening the design of new projects and the support to ongoing ones.

## **II. Ongoing follow-ups that may require further review**

### **A. Responses that partially address the issues raised by recommendations**

13. At the project level, recommendation 3 of the project performance evaluation (PPE) in Haiti called for targeting those affected by extreme poverty, promoting agricultural diversification while pursuing an approach that combines the development of value chains with the protection and improvement of natural hydro-agricultural water resources. The response stated that the new project PURRACO will target areas covered by the Small Irrigation Development Project – Phase II while no mention is made of agricultural diversification. Moreover, the project has yet to be implemented. As such, the status of implementation was changed from fully implemented to ongoing.
14. Responses to PPE Liberia. The status of recommendations 2 and 3 are changed from fully implemented to ongoing for the following reasons.
  - (i) Recommendation 2 called for all new projects to address challenges related to policy and regulatory environment. Actions were taken to identify policy priorities with the Ministry of Agriculture in relation to cocoa value chain development. However, the PPE recommendation was specific in stating that farmer unions, and civil society and private sector organizations should be involved in the cocoa policy processes – an aspect that remains to be addressed.
  - (ii) Recommendation 3 calls for enhanced support to the development of women’s entrepreneurship in upstream and downstream nodes of the cocoa value chain. Actions taken relate to sensitization and awareness-raising on gender equality and child labour (e.g. through community dialogue and training). However, the PPE recommendation was specific about supporting the development of women’s entrepreneurship, and addressing power dynamics within value chains by forming women’s cooperatives, building bargaining skills and facilitating access to credit (also for youth). These actions do not yet appear to have been taken.
15. Responses to PPE Sierra Leone. Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 do not fully address the recommendation as follows:
  - (i) Recommendation 1 calls for promoting effective and efficient market participation as well as strengthening the institutional expertise and financial capacity of marketing organizations. Capacity-building is only one aspect of this recommendation; access to sustainable sources of financing is the second part. Further clarifications are needed as to interventions to enhance the financial linkages of agricultural business centres and farmer field schools.
  - (ii) Recommendation 2 calls for awareness-raising and effective participation of youth and women through specific strategies and needs assessment at the project design phase. The response focuses on the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) household methodology. Reaching women through specific methodologies such as GALS is one part of the recommendation. The other part relates to inclusion of youth. IFAD should lay out targeting strategies to mainstream youth participation and empowerment.
  - (iii) Recommendation 3 calls for making exit strategies a central part of project designs and for monitoring the strategies during implementation in fragile contexts. Here, memorandums of understanding are just one example of how to build sustainability. It would be useful to elaborate on how multi-stakeholder platforms will ensure sustainability and what kind of

sustainability is being achieved through these platforms (such as economic sustainability, technical sustainability).

**B. Responses that do not directly address the issues raised by recommendations**

16. In the case of country strategy and programme evaluation for Mexico, recommendation 2 called for improved technical quality of design and contribution to innovation. However, the response is generic and does not clearly address the issue of improving the technical quality of project design. Similarly, in the same evaluation, recommendation 3 called for improved monitoring and capitalization of lessons learned, while the response does not directly address the issue of raising the quality of monitoring and evaluation.

**C. Follow up to IOE comments on 2020 RIDE - alignment of ARRI and RIDE methodologies**

17. IOE acknowledges the collaboration and discussions to ensure better alignment between Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations and RIDE methodologies to assess project performance. As the 2021 PRISMA points out, RIDE now uses a three-year moving average to assess annual performance and a long-term trend analysis (presented in the annexes) to better situate recent project performance. The three-year moving average allows spurious changes in a given year to be smoothed, offering a more realistic estimate of performance. As such, these two steps represent significant improvements to the RIDE methodology.
18. However, challenges remain. Use of performance ratings from independent evaluations would help conform with international practices and provide more credibility to the RIDE's analysis. In addition, the argument that RIDE's approach provides more recent performance data does not hold, particularly when dealing with three-year moving averages.