
**Minutes of the 119th session of the
Evaluation Committee**

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Technical questions:

Indran A. Naidoo

Director

Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

e-mail: i.naidoo@ifad.org

Nigel Brett

Director

Operational Policy and Results Division

e-mail: n.brett@ifad.org

Minutes of the 119th session of the Evaluation Committee

1. The deliberations of the Evaluation Committee at its 119th session – held both in presence and virtually on 18 October 2022 – are reflected in the present minutes.
2. The minutes approved by the Committee will be shared with the Executive Board for information.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the session

3. The session was attended by Committee members for France, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico (Chair), Nigeria and Switzerland. Observers were present from Canada, China, Dominican Republic, Germany and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The session was attended by the Director, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE); the Deputy Director, IOE; the Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department; the Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department; the Director, Operational Policy and Results Division; the Regional Director, ad interim, West and Central Africa Division; the Secretary of IFAD, ad interim; and other IFAD staff.
4. The Chair acknowledged the contribution of the representative, Mr Caka Alverdi Awal, who had returned to Indonesia to assume a new position. The Chair welcomed Mr Purna Cita Nugraha who would now represent Indonesia on the Committee. He also welcomed Ms Deirdre Mc Grenra as Secretary of IFAD, ad interim.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda (EC 2022/119/W.P.1/Rev.1 + Add.1)

5. The Committee adopted the agenda as contained in document EC 2022/119/W.P.1/Rev.1 and its addendum. The Chair noted Management's request for a brief presentation on the launch of the digital Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) 2022 under the item, other business.

Agenda item 3: Results-based work programme and budget for 2023 and indicative plan for 2024-2025 of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) (EC 2022/119/W.P.2)

Key messages:

- The Evaluation Committee commended IOE for the execution of the 2022 budget, and endorsed the proposed results-based work programme and budget for 2023 and indicative plan for 2024-2025 of IOE.
- Members looked forward to reviewing the corporate-level evaluation of decentralization in 2023.
- Members invited IOE to ensure that countries in transition for which country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) were being prepared would be subject to country strategy evaluations.
- Members invited IOE to consider undertaking an evaluation of the impact of conflict on IFAD operations.

6. The Evaluation Committee welcomed IOE's proposed results-based work programme and budget for 2023 and indicative plan for 2024-2025, as contained in document EC 2022/119/W.P.2. Members commended IOE for the implementation of the budget in 2022, and expressed no objections to the additional resources requested for 2023, which were deemed necessary to fulfil the work programme proposed.

7. Members recommended that IOE prioritize countries that may undergo the IFAD graduation process when determining country strategy and programme evaluations in 2023 and 2024. Argentina and China, two eligible countries under the IFAD Graduation Policy, were slated for evaluation in 2023.
8. It was proposed that IOE review the evidence available on the consequences of conflicts, including the current conflict in Ukraine, on IFAD operations. IOE concurred with the proposal.
9. In answer to queries regarding the forthcoming evaluation of the human resources function at IFAD, IOE clarified that the objective was to look critically at the human resources function from an independent evaluation point of view to assess whether the function is fit for purpose, policy- and principles-based, and instrumental to furthering IFAD's mandate.

Agenda item 4: Project cluster evaluation on rural enterprise development (EC 2022/119/W.P.3 + Add.1)

Key messages:

- The Evaluation Committee welcomed IOE's first project cluster evaluation report and stressed the relevance of this new type of evaluation product, which focused on lessons learned and provided timely information and feedback to Management on specific topics from ongoing projects in a cost-effective manner.
- A holistic understanding of household economic activities and the broader context and enabling environment needed for marginalized producers is key to effective project design and implementation.
- The importance of data, disaggregated by age, sex, etc. was underscored, including as a means of moving from gender-sensitive to gender-transformative interventions.

10. The Evaluation Committee welcomed the project cluster evaluation report, as contained in document EC 2022/119/W.P.3, together with Management's response, as contained in its addendum. Members agreed with the evaluation's findings and commended IOE on their continued efforts to produce innovative products. Such evaluations, which provided timely sector-specific feedback, could generate valuable inputs for the design of projects with a similar focus.
11. Members noted that in many instances, project objectives were overly ambitious, while overall project impact was relatively modest. Balancing household realities with access to markets and support such as finance, business services, land tenure, professional networks and market information was key to promoting rural enterprises. Members emphasized that IFAD should make its offer to rural enterprises more holistic so as to provide incubation and business development services, as well as technical support and financing. The impact of cultural aspects should also be taken into consideration. Reliable data, disaggregated as appropriate, would facilitate a more holistic approach that could lead to more transformational interventions.
12. Management commented that IFAD's work focused on creating new enterprises in areas where there was low private sector presence. In such instances, IFAD's support to enterprise creation was generating further demand for new enterprises in previously underserved areas. Management also emphasized the importance of undertaking market analysis, in particular demand-based analysis at project design, in order to identify relevant market segments and target groups, select the right partners and provide tailored support. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was an important partner, providing the legal framework and best practices and standards to ensure decent work and fair income. IFAD was committed to

ensuring that such standards were adhered to at the grass-roots level and given prominence in national policymaking dialogue. Work was ongoing on a revised memorandum of understanding with the ILO.

Agenda item 5: Subregional evaluation of countries with fragile situations in West and Central Africa (EC 2022/119/W.P.4)

Key messages:

- Committee members welcomed the subregional evaluation, highlighting in particular:
 - The importance of leveraging partnerships as a means of mobilizing additional resources, including climate financing.
 - IFAD’s current financing instruments did not appear to have the flexibility required for fragile situations – this could be addressed when considering IFAD’s financing model during the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources (IFAD13 Consultation).
 - The importance of Decentralization 2.0 as a means of facilitating engagement on the ground with beneficiaries, governments and partners.
 - The importance of institutional capacity-building at the local level to foster sustainability and build trust between beneficiaries and government.
 - The importance of a holistic analysis of fragility to inform design and implementation.
- An updated strategy on IFAD’s engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations, building on the findings of the evaluation, will be submitted for the Board’s consideration in 2023.

13. The Evaluation Committee welcomed the subregional evaluation and agreed with its findings and recommendations, as contained in document EC 2022/119/W.P.4. The evaluation provided valuable lessons both for the development of new COSOPs and projects in the G5 Sahel region and Nigeria (G5+1), and for the revised strategy on fragility, to be presented to the Executive Board in 2023.
14. Members welcomed the positive impact of Decentralization 2.0, noting that all of the countries covered by the evaluation, except for one, would have a country office and a dedicated country director. In-country presence was key to forging partnerships and fostering relations among stakeholders, beneficiaries and government. Strengthened partnerships with the other Rome-based agencies and other development actors such as the regional development banks was key, also as a means of unlocking additional financing. Beneficiary ownership and local capacity-building were key to sustainability and provided the basis for scaling up; as such, IFAD engaged proactively in community-driven development by working with local organizations, farmers’ organizations, religious groups, etc.
15. Members noted the absence of a holistic analysis of fragility in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. Poverty and conflict/insecurity were not being addressed holistically in IFAD-supported operations in the G5+1 context. The revised strategy on fragility would help address these issues. Improved fragility analysis and a more strategic approach would lead to a better understanding of the root causes and context-specific factors underpinning vulnerability, thus facilitating resilience-building in the target rural areas. The drivers of poverty and conflict were often interlinked and multidimensional. On a related note, the need for more work in the area of pastoralism, cross-border trade and transhumance, and a sharper

focus on land tenure, inequality and land rights, especially for women, was underscored.

16. Members noted that IFAD's current financing instruments were not fit for purpose in fragile situations. Sovereign loans did not provide the flexibility required, and resources to fund non-lending activities were needed. The positive impact of climate financing under the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) and the "green funds" had been demonstrated and more needed to be done to tailor such funding to fragile contexts. These considerations and findings should be taken into account in considering IFAD's financing model during the IFAD13 Consultation.
17. Management concurred with the findings of the evaluation and informed members that IFAD was redoubling efforts to tackle weak institutional capacity, engage at the local level and address the key issues of sustainability and scaling up. COSOP and project design guidelines were being updated and would be released at the end of the year. The objective of these updates was to enhance guidance on assessing all aspects of fragility and developing a theory of change; promote consistency across logical frameworks; and avoid complex project design. They were also intended to provide guidance on complementary initiatives such as country-level policy engagement, knowledge management and capacity-building.
18. An updated strategy on IFAD's engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations – building on the findings of the evaluation, the experience of the 2021 working group on fragility and the lessons learned from the 2019 Special Programme for Countries with Fragile Situations – would be submitted to the Board. The updated strategy would provide project delivery teams with better guidance on how to concretely operate in fragile and conflict-affected situations, adopting differentiated approaches to designing new context-specific investments.

Agenda item 6: Provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2023 (EC 2022/119/W.P.5)

Key messages:

- The Evaluation Committee welcomed and endorsed the provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2023, as contained in document EC 2022/119/W.P.5, and called for a review of the distribution of agenda items across sessions to allocate sufficient time for review of all important items.

19. IOE mentioned that the evaluation synthesis note on targeting would be made available to the Board at the December session, when the revised IFAD Policy on Targeting would be discussed. Subject to the interest of Evaluation Committee members, IOE was also available to present and discuss the note at the Committee's session in April 2023 as per the proposed provisional agenda.

Agenda item 7: Review of the process leading to the appointment of the President of IFAD

20. As requested by the Evaluation Committee at its 118th session, the General Counsel provided a brief overview of the proposal to review the process leading to the appointment of the President of IFAD. In response to feedback from Member States, initial discussions would be held with the Governing Council Bureau to present a proposal to the Executive Board that it recommend that the Governing Council task the Bureau with reviewing the process. The aim of the review would be to identify best practices to further strengthen the transparency and integrity of this process.

Agenda item 8: Other business

21. Management gave a short presentation on the launch of the digital edition of the 2022 RIDE, which conveys the report's key messages in a more visual and intuitive manner through graphical displays.
22. Members were invited to disseminate the information among their respective Lists. Members expressed their appreciation for the digital report and invited Management to translate it into the Fund's official languages.

Closure of the session

23. The Office of the Secretary would share the draft minutes of the session, inclusive of the key messages, for clearance. Once finalized, the minutes would be submitted to the Executive Board for information at its 137th session.