



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Executive Board - Sixty-Third Session
Rome, 22-23 April 1998

REPORT OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

1. The Eighteenth Session of the Evaluation Committee (the Committee) was held on 9 September 1997. The President of IFAD attended part of the session. As decided at the preceding session, the Eighteenth Session was devoted to a general discussion on crucial aspects of the evaluation function and thus no documentation was submitted. The discussion concerned Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs), Follow-up Round Table Conferences, field visits by members of the Committee, lessons learned from evaluation, and the role of the Committee. The list of participants is attached as Annex I and the agenda of the meeting as Annex II.
2. The first part of the session focused on the dissemination of lessons learned from evaluation. The experimental Internet site developed by the Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE) was presented to the Committee. In addition to displaying a number of lessons learned, the session was informed that the IFADEVAL site contained a general evaluation forum that allowed for exchanges of knowledge on rural poverty alleviation with Internet users, and a specialized evaluation forum known as the United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Evaluation Knowledge Web. It was noted that, when the ACC Sub-Committee on Rural Development was transformed into the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, IFAD was requested to assume responsibility for the Network's evaluation activities. As the Network is organized around thematic groups at the country level, OE proposed the establishment of an Internet forum which would make it possible for all United Nations agencies, World Bank, regional banks, bilateral aid organizations and non-governmental organizations to exchange evaluation findings on rural poverty alleviation. This concept of knowledge exchange was well received by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank and others. OE was entrusted with the responsibility for establishing the ACC Evaluation Knowledge Web and for managing it.
3. Members of the Committee expressed appreciation of the IFADEVAL presentation and commended the initiative taken. Once the required clarification on the site's use and features had been provided, a lively discussion took place on the languages used. At the present time, all lessons which were originally in French and Spanish are available both in those languages and in English. The same solution had been used for the internal Evaluation Knowledge System (EKSYST) established by OE on the IFAD Local Area Network. While the use of three languages in IFADEVAL was commended by Committee members, it was suggested that Arabic be included although no consensus was reached on this subject. The Fund was requested to investigate the matter



further in terms of technical parameters, potential use and additional costs, in order that a decision could be arrived at taking into consideration FAO's experience in this field.

4. The members of the Committee who took part in field visits and Evaluation Round Tables emphasized their usefulness. It was suggested that members of the Executive Board might wish to consider participating in Evaluation Round Tables and field visits at their own cost. It was also suggested that, following such field visits and/or participation at the Round Table discussions, the persons concerned might address any observations and/or comments to the President of IFAD.

5. The President of IFAD spoke of the importance he attached to evaluation. He also stressed the usefulness of baseline information, of strengthening monitoring systems and drawing practical lessons of experience through evaluation. In his view, all these aspects should be given particular emphasis in the projects directly supervised by the Fund. With regard to the role of the Committee, the President stressed its importance not only for the management of IFAD but also for the Executive Board. The Committee should set standards, and ensure that the Fund drew lessons from its experience to improve project design and implementation. Evaluation should be an independent process as checks and balances are necessary for continuous improvement and, in this respect, the Committee performs a very important check role. The President of IFAD stated that it was the joint responsibility of the Fund and the Committee to learn from experience.

6. The President of IFAD indicated that whenever the Committee's recommendations required a response from management, that response should be provided and form part of the relevant documentation. He underlined the importance of learning from experience as a general rule, but particularly from the projects directly supervised by the Fund. He felt that one of the main purposes of direct supervision was both to test and follow-up innovative methods and to learn from them. That knowledge could be passed on to other projects. For this purpose, the President stressed the need for strict monitoring and evaluation systems for the purpose of improving project against clear benchmarks.

7. During the second part of the session, the Committee discussed lessons learned from six Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPE) undertaken by OE in Yemen, The Sudan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Honduras and Ghana, in that order. The Senior Evaluation Officers in charge of the CPEs shared their observations and insights with the Committee.

8. The CPEs were initiated in response to the Fund's need to understand, from a long-term perspective, the extent to which the organization is fulfilling its mandate. In practice, the CPEs serve a multiplicity of users, both within and outside IFAD. To meet these expectations, it had been necessary to conduct comprehensive indepth assessments within the context of the CPEs. The method used, which was based on a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a portfolio of projects, had proved effective as the CPEs contributed extensively to institutional memory-building, provided a better understanding of the relationship between national policies and project performance, put forward proposals for strategic orientations for future country programme development, and drew lessons on a range of themes. The approach followed consisted in thorough desk studies of available documentation, extensive field visits to project areas, and an analysis and synthesis of the information collected.

9. The value of the CPE exercise depends on the ownership of the results by governments, adoption of the recommendations and follow-up by IFAD. The organization of Evaluation Round Tables with the participation of Committee members had been critical in this regard. In particular, this procedure had greatly enhanced government commitment to the implementation of CPE recommendations and adherence to the lessons learned. The more recent CPEs had continued to



innovate by introducing a number of new dimensions: the involvement of bilateral cooperation agencies; incorporation of regional dimensions; and contributing to pipeline development, project design orientation and implementation strategy. Overall, the CPEs are evolving as a powerful tool to improve IFAD's effectiveness in alleviating rural poverty.

10. Following presentation of the CPE lessons, four Committee members expressed appreciation for the information provided. One member stated that the extent and type of strategic thinking and related documentation to be undertaken by IFAD might be usefully discussed during the Executive Board. Another member, who had participated in the Ghana Evaluation Round Table, underlined the seriousness with which the Ghanaian authorities had discussed the Ghana CPE and, as a result, its distinct sense of national ownership of the resultant lessons and recommendations.

11. Under the agenda item "Other Business", clarification was provided on the composition of the Committee and on the status of the evaluation of the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification.

12. In conclusion, the Chairman expressed his appreciation for the presentations made.



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Evaluation Committee - Eighteenth Session

Rome, 9 September 1997

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION
OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS À LA DIX-HUITIÈME SESSION
DU COMITÉ DE L'ÉVALUATION

LISTA DE LOS PARTICIPANTES EN EL DECIMOCTAVO PERÍODO
DE SESIONES DEL COMITÉ DE EVALUACIÓN



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MEMBRES DU COMITÉ

MIEMBROS DEL COMITÉ

CHAIRMAN

Indonesia

I. Nyoman ARDHA
Agricultural Attaché
Embassy of the Republic
of Indonesia
Rome

LIST A

Germany

Karl-Gerhard DILG
Counsellor
Alternate Permanent Representative
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to IFAD
Rome

Switzerland

Lothar CAVIEZEL
Conseiller scientifique
Direction du développement
et de la coopération
Département fédéral des
affaires étrangères
Berne

United States

William B. BAUCOM
Attaché for Development Affairs
United States Mission to the
United Nations Agencies
for Food and Agriculture
Rome



LIST B

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mansour Mabrouk SEGHAYER
Counsellor
Alternate Permanent Representative
of the Socialist People's Libyan
Arab Jamahiriya to IFAD
Rome

Venezuela

Eduardo Pastor SPADARO ALVAREZ
Primer Secretario
Embajada de la República
de Venezuela
Roma

LIST C

Sub-List C1

Egypt

Adel Mahmoud ABOUL-NAGA
Agricultural Counsellor
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Arab Republic of Egypt
to IFAD
Rome

LIST C

Sub-List C2

India

Kalarickal Pranchu FABIAN
Ambassador of the Republic
of India to Italy
Rome



LIST C

Sub-List C3

Panama

Ismael BERNAL MAURE
Embajador de la República
de Panamá ante el FIDA
Roma



Distribution: Restricted EC 97/18/W.P.1 9 September 1997
Original: English **Agenda Item 2** English

ANNEX II



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Evaluation Committee - Eighteenth Session

Rome, 9 September 1997

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. General Discussion:
 - (a) Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) and Follow-up Round-table Conferences (RTCs)
 - (b) Field Visits by Members of the Evaluation Committee
 - (c) Lessons Learned from Evaluation
 - (d) Role and Responsibilities of the Evaluation Committee
4. Other Business