

Distribution: Restricted

EB 2001/72/R.13

5 April 2001

Original: English

Agenda Item 6

English



IFAD

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive Board – Seventy-Second Session

Rome, 25-26 April 2001

ANNUAL REPORT ON EVALUATION

Document #: 160570

Library:DMS

Due to resource constraints and environmental concerns, IFAD documents are produced in limited quantities. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their documents to meetings and to limit requests for additional copies.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	iii
PART ONE: IFAD'S EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	1
I. Introduction	1
II. Review of 2000 Achievements	1
III. Overview of the 2001 Work Programme	7
PART TWO: LEARNING AND INSIGHTS FROM EVALUATION	11
I. Preparing Common Ground: Institutional Capacity at Local Level	11
II. Widening Horizons: Land for the Poorest	14
PART THREE: IFAD'S EVALUATION COMMITTEE	16
I. Main Activities	16
II. Election of New Members and Chairman of the Evaluation Committee	18
III. Highlights of Evaluation Committee Discussions	18
TABLE 1: How OE 2001 Priorities Relate to the Plan of Action and the Process Re-Engineering Programme	20
ANNEXES	
I. Overview of Evaluation Work Undertaken in 2000	21
II. OE Programme of Work for 2001-2002	22
III. Product Descriptions	24
IV. Evaluations Undertaken by OE from 1983 to 2000	25
V. Evaluation Criteria	30



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	Agreement at Completion Point
AP	Approach Paper
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CLP	Core Learning Partnership
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	Evaluation Committee
ECP	Extended Cooperation Programme
EKSYST	Evaluation Knowledge System
ENRAP	Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific
IFI	International Financial Institution
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAE	New Approach to Evaluation
NAFP	Nampula Artisanal Fisheries Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLASP	Newlands Agricultural Services Project
OE	Office of Evaluation and Studies
PD	Programme Management Department
PRP	Process Re-Engineering Programme
TA	Technical Assistance

PART ONE: IFAD'S EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is the second Annual Report on Evaluation since the Evaluation Committee (EC) took the decision in 1999 that the Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE) should issue such a document.
2. The year 2000 was the first year of implementation of the New Approach to Evaluation (NAE), developed in 1999. In addition to that, a number of major corporate initiatives launched during the year have significantly affected the work of OE; in particular, the IFAD V: Plan of Action (2000-2002) and the Process Re-Engineering Programme (PRP).

II. REVIEW OF 2000 ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The following sections describe how each of OE's four main priorities for 2000 has been implemented¹.

A. The New Approach to Evaluation

4. OE's staff are firmly committed to working with the new strategy, the overriding objective of which is to enhance the impact of IFAD's operations and to contribute to IFAD's becoming a knowledge centre on rural poverty alleviation. In the last year, OE's partners – i.e. the actual users of its evaluation work – have firmly supported the NAE, particularly with regard to the three main features of the 1999 restructured evaluation process: the approach paper (AP), the core learning partnership (CLP) and the agreement at completion point (ACP)². With the introduction of the NAE, OE now conducts evaluations in a very different manner compared with the past.
5. The first of the four main features of the NAE is a stronger orientation towards serving its partners. While maintaining a clear, independent perspective, OE wants its work to be of value to the users of its output, and to meet their expectations and needs. One of the outcomes of this new orientation has been the development of an instrument for formulating the OE annual work

¹ The four main priorities for 2000 were: (i) the implementation and the gathering of experience with the NAE; (ii) the completion of the NAE with the development of the New Approach to the Dissemination and Communication of Evaluation's results; (iii) the methodological work for impact and performance assessment; and (iv) the reorganization of OE.

² *Approach paper*: Prepared by the concerned evaluation officer in close cooperation with his/her partners, the AP provides concise background information on, and the rationale for, the evaluation activity to be undertaken together with its objective and the expected outcome. The evaluation process and the methodology to be used are described. The finalized paper provides the guiding framework for undertaking the evaluation.

The core learning partnership: This is composed of a few dedicated representatives of the main evaluation partners such as IFAD's Programme Management Department (PD), project staff, governments, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and OE. The involvement of other partners, including community-based organizations (CBOs), NGOs, beneficiaries and cooperating institutions, is pursued wherever feasible. The CLP collaborates in the design of the AP, discusses the draft evaluation report and, most importantly, develops recommendations, lessons learned and related follow-up for inclusion in the ACP. The CLP also plans the process leading to the ACP.

Agreement at completion point: The learning and knowledge generated by the evaluation is officially acknowledged and internalized by IFAD and its partners. The ACP is a written understanding, although not necessarily a signed agreement, that illustrates the stakeholders' consensus and commitment to adopt and implement evaluation recommendations expected to improve the performance of IFAD-supported operations and policies.



programme in a manner that is collaborative and responsive to the priorities and needs of OE's evaluation partners from both inside and outside IFAD. As such, the preparation of the 2000 work programme required a round of initial discussions not only with all Programme Management Department (PD) divisions and other units within IFAD, but also with recipient governments, to ascertain the justification for each evaluation, its expected outcome, scope, etc. The programme of work for 2000 was finally approved by the IFAD's President in November 1999, discussed in the EC in December 1999, and posted on the IFAD home page. OE reviewed the implementation of the 2000 annual work programme in June 2000 during a mid-year review. Note was taken of the unprecedented demands on OE staff time in relation to PRP, the Rural Poverty Report 2001 and the Plan of Action. For this reason, the completion of some of OE's objectives for 2000 will slip into 2001. The mid-year review also recommended that the next OE annual work programme should cover a two-year period to allow for necessary lead time and flexibility³.

6. NAE's second strategic direction aims to shift OE's past focus on project evaluations to the 'higher plane' of policy/strategy evaluations, country programme evaluations (CPEs) and thematic evaluations⁴. This is in line with the trend seen in the majority of the evaluation units of the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) agencies. That trend reflects the significant change over the past decade in the way that development assistance is delivered and assessed: the undertaking of more country-level programmes, thematic initiatives and sector-wide approaches complements the now more traditional project-based approach. This change also recognizes that lessons learned from project evaluations tend to be specific, making it difficult to see the larger picture. Furthermore, since evaluations are normally carried out at the end of the project cycle, lessons may be learned too late to be of use for the projects concerned. However, this does not mean that OE now intends to disregard project evaluations. Rather, OE will continue to perform a reduced, but critical, number of project evaluations each year. These evaluations will provide the information for the corporate impact assessment referred to under Part One, section II.C.

7. For an evaluation to be of value to its users, it is not enough to conduct a thorough and rigorous analysis and produce a good report – although both certainly remain indispensable. Experience has shown that the usefulness of good analytical work and good reports can be dramatically enhanced if IFAD and its partners 'learn how to learn together' during the evaluation process. This is the essence of the third strategic direction, which aims to transform each evaluation into a systematic learning process. This learning process takes place within the CLP before and after the independent impact assessment conducted by OE. Experience during 2000 has convinced OE that the concept of the CLP is a key to this participatory learning process. Although there are variations in the way the CLP can be implemented in different countries and situations, the concept itself is viable. Interaction among the CLP members can take place by use of videoconference, as in the case of the CPE for Viet Nam, which proved to be a very cost-effective tool for the purpose.

8. The fourth key feature of the new strategy is its results orientation. Each evaluation is now expected to make a significant contribution towards improving the performance of IFAD's policies and operations. For this purpose, the final outcome of each evaluation now entails achieving consensus among the main partners on the learning generated by the evaluation and the required follow-up action. These elements are all recorded in the final ACP, which is the outcome of the

³ A list of all evaluations conducted in 2000 is contained in Annex I.

⁴ Examples of higher-plane evaluations conducted in 2000 include: the evaluation of the IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme (ECP), which contributed concrete building blocks for the development of a strategy for IFAD's cooperation with NGOs and highlighted the need for greater emphasis on innovative approaches to selecting activities to be funded under the ECP; the evaluation of IFAD's capacity to promote replicable innovation, which is expected to contribute to the development of the Fund's capacity and strategy in this critical area; and, finally, three CPEs, in Papua New Guinea, Syria and Viet Nam, which have provided clear building blocks for formulating or revisiting Country Strategic Opportunities Papers (COSOPs) for these countries.



learning process undertaken by the CLP. So far, experience with the ACP has been good, but lessons and recommendations need to be rendered clearer and more specific. Wherever possible, the ACP will also contain an implementation plan with deadlines and assignment of responsibilities. This will facilitate the future monitoring of the implementation of the evaluation's recommendations.

B. Development of a New Dissemination and Communication Approach

9. Until recently, most development agencies, including IFAD, saw evaluation reports as the end of the line. Copies of evaluation reports were circulated, but all too often the lessons they contained were effectively buried, made inaccessible by overly technical terminology and opaque language. Most ended up on shelves, gathering dust, rarely consulted and hardly ever reaching the people who could most benefit from them. IFAD acknowledges that far more needs to be done to capitalize on the knowledge generated through the evaluation process. Therefore, having recognized that good communication lies at the heart of effective learning, OE systematically reviewed its evaluation communication practices last year with the aim of improving the effectiveness with which they helped to disseminate learning beyond the restricted circle of the CLP.

10. To start with, OE embarked upon an analysis of the communication requirements of various stakeholders, which yielded a number of important insights. For example, OE has learned that its audience has different needs and priorities. Some intended recipients already suffer from information overload, while others are starved of relevant information or excluded by language. With the help of expert advice from communication specialists⁵, OE has now begun to formulate a more client-oriented approach towards evaluation communication. The work done so far has resulted in the identification of a number of new instruments, which are presently being considered for implementation:

- First, a standard package of core products will be produced for each evaluation, so that levels of consistency and quality can be raised. These core products include the main evaluation report, the executive summary and the ACP. In the near future, they will not only have a similar look and format but, more importantly, will have harmonized tables of contents. This will facilitate the aggregation and reporting of evaluation results by theme, as well as comparisons across projects, countries and regions. Other standard products include the "Profile" and the "Insights" (see below).
- Then, a customized approach for additional communication activities and products will be tailored and built into each evaluation to reflect the specific nature of the evaluation and its context. Customized products will be developed to ensure greater dissemination of the main evaluation messages⁶.
- Another new instrument is a very brief, reader-friendly summary document of 500-700 words, which will summarize major evaluation findings. Such documents will be written by professional writers and, for the time being, have been named Profiles. Profiles

⁵ From the World Bank and the Institute of Development Studies (United Kingdom).

⁶ In the year 2000, for example, OE undertook translations into Tamil and Portuguese of the ACP of evaluations undertaken in India and Mozambique in order to ensure a wider dissemination of evaluation lessons within the NGO community and civil society at large. In another evaluation, OE is supporting the efforts of the Tamil Nadu government in India in preparing training modules for different project partners based on the key lessons learned and recommendations from the evaluation of the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project. The purpose of these training modules is to increase the operational capacity of the more than 250 NGOs currently involved in the project and improve their provision of training and technical assistance to women's self-help groups in line with the evaluation's findings. In yet another example, a video documentary is being prepared, containing the main messages of the evaluation of the Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project. This new medium of communication is being specifically designed to reach illiterate rural people and their communities.



are designed to be particularly useful to those who simply may not have time to read even the executive summary of a full report. Such readers may include senior civil servants in developing countries and senior management at IFAD, for example. The objective of a Profile is to provide a 'taste' of the evaluation and an incentive to the reader to deepen his/her understanding by referring to further information in the executive summary of the evaluation or the main report.

- In 2001, the Evaluation Knowledge System (EKSYST) (available on the newly developed OE home page, "Evaluation, Learning and Impact", through the Fund's corporate home page at www.ifad.org) will be upgraded. The creation of the new OE home page can also be regarded as an important and cost-effective step in the implementation of the Fund's disclosure policy, which was approved by the Executive Board last year.
- The new approach also includes one-to-two page Insights, a new product designed to focus on key learning conclusions and recommendations emerging from thematic evaluations or CPEs and, when feasible, also from project evaluations. Insights will form the principal knowledge element in the new EKSYST and will replace the concept of lessons learned⁷. Insights will not have the character of prescriptive lessons. Rather, they will primarily serve to direct attention to critical learning hypotheses and form the basis for further discussion among professionals and policy-makers. An insight will be prepared and validated following discussions among CLP members and other partners.
- OE is considering establishing an evaluation help desk. The help desk will respond to electronic, telephonic and written queries. It will retrieve OE material for dispatch and will prioritize the sharing of information and knowledge with project partners in the field and other development partners lacking access to Internet facilities. Above all, the help desk will give the opportunity for a real-time and personalized interactive contact.
- New standard operating procedures will be adopted for communication with key partners at critical points in the evaluation process. IFAD's evaluations are a participatory process unfolding around an independent evaluation analysis. Communication is complex and must be well organized. Standard operating procedures are expected to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of communication in the entire evaluation process.
- Finally, one instrument still under discussion is a dedicated Internet gateway on evaluation of poverty reduction and rural development. It would provide links to relevant on-line material anywhere in the world and act as a focal point for learning and innovation on these subjects. As well as being a useful tool for OE staff and partners, the gateway would reinforce IFAD's reputation as a centre of excellence on rural poverty reduction.

11. Any new endeavour, of course, has its financial consequences and these need to be assessed carefully in view of OE's limited resources. The incremental costs associated with the new approach have been estimated, both in terms of setting up the required systems and implementing the proposed approach. These preliminary estimates show that many of the incremental recurrent costs could be accommodated within OE's operational budget through a reallocation of resources and rationalization of evaluation activities and processes.

⁷ A 'lesson learned' in the context of evaluations, was defined as a generalization based on an experience (e.g. project, policy or programme) that was evaluated.



C. Methodological Work for Impact and Performance

12. Assessing the impact and performance of IFAD's operations has been a priority for some time⁸. This priority has been further boosted by the Plan of Action, which reiterates the paramount importance of increasing the effectiveness of the Fund's operations, *inter alia*, by reviewing and improving current practices of impact assessment and monitoring⁹. From IFAD's perspective, 'impact' can be defined as the change brought by the operations financed by the Fund to the lives of the rural poor and their communities, as well the change that affects the environment within which they operate. Such an impact is produced by all lending and non-lending activities undertaken by IFAD together with its partners. There is a pressing need for the Fund to develop a sound and realistic methodology for impact assessment at the project and corporate levels, as set out in the Plan of Action, and to devise and implement a strategy for sharing lessons learned during this process.

13. In order to respond to the requirements of the Plan of Action, and rise to the challenges involved in developing such a methodology, OE initiated two closely related studies in 2000, each with the specific objective of formulating a coherent approach to impact assessment. As set forth in the Plan of Action, IFAD will, while developing these new approaches to impact assessment, take care to establish due linkages to both the global development targets as well as the harmonization of evaluation criteria called for by the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the Multilateral Development Bank.

Development of an Improved Methodological Framework for Impact Assessment

14. This first study¹⁰ aims at the development of a standard methodology for impact evaluation. This reflects the growing recognition of the need to develop within IFAD the capacity and methodology to assess performance and impact at the corporate level along the lines of other international financial institutions (IFIs). As part of this study, OE concluded a stocktaking exercise in the first half of 2000 of the methodologies used by IFAD and other development agencies and proposed a tentative framework of impact and performance assessment. More recently, in the context of the PRP exercise, OE proposed, *inter alia*, the development of a set of agreed upon categories of impact indicators that reflect IFAD's mandate, corporate strategy and stakeholder expectations. These will be part of a harmonized methodology for assessing performance and impact at corporate level.

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems at Project Level

15. This second study is based on the realization that project-level impact monitoring and assessment is fundamental for learning and improvement of performance. Moreover, in many ways, the effectiveness of OE's evaluations will depend upon the quality of project-level M&E. OE's support to M&E aims to identify good practice and development of tools and guidelines for effective project M&E systems. In 2000, OE reviewed IFAD's experience in M&E over the last ten years. The outcome of this review, which was discussed at an in-house seminar in May 2000, evidenced the deficit existing in most IFAD projects: M&E systems are given insufficient priority, rarely function satisfactorily, and – in most cases – are not used in a meaningful way to manage the projects. The review further identified the importance of involving field-level partners in the development of M&E

⁸ In April 1999, for example, IFAD presented a first major study on the "Effectiveness of Selected IFAD Projects" at the Consultation to Review the Adequacy of the Resources Available to IFAD.

⁹ The Plan of Action envisaged two concrete lines of action in this respect:

(i) develop "an improved methodological framework for impact assessment and use it consistently in *evaluating* IFAD's projects and programmes;..."

(ii) "identify best practices and develop tools and guidelines for an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system at the project level."

¹⁰ Conducted with the assistance of the World Bank.



systems at the project level. The synthesizing report of the review was presented as work in progress to the EC in September 2000.

16. During 2000, OE also participated in the PRP Impact Management Working Group. Impact management aims to ensure that the impact of IFAD-supported activities in combating rural poverty is constantly monitored, assessed, improved and effectively communicated. The goal is increased effectiveness of IFAD and its partners in reducing rural poverty and, in so doing, enhancing financial and political support for the Fund's mandate. The impact assessment initiatives undertaken by OE and its involvement in the re-engineering of the impact management process have been mutually reinforcing.

D. Reorganization of the Office of Evaluation and Studies

17. As a first step in aligning OE's organizational set-up with the new evaluation strategy developed in 1999, the Division has been reorganized into five regional teams based on the concept of peer reviews. The main objective of these teams is to build up, within OE, expertise and knowledge on the work priorities and directions of each IFAD regional division; the ultimate aim is to support the development of IFAD's regional strategies through appropriate evaluation work. Before it can develop its full potential, however, the concept of OE regional teams needs time and nurturing. Peer reviews within the teams are not yet held on a regular basis, yet good results have been obtained with a number of pilot initiatives in 2000.

18. OE has also established two functional desks: one for evaluation committee relations and communication; and the second for work programme and budget issues. All General Service staff positions were reclassified in 2000.

E. Other Activities Performed by the Office of Evaluation and Studies in 2000

Partnership

19. OE organized seven partnership meetings with the heads and representatives of evaluation divisions of various bilateral and multilateral agencies¹¹. The overall objectives of these meetings were to understand the role of evaluation in other organizations, exchange experiences together with related methodologies and pave the way for future partnerships in areas of mutual interest. As a result, the World Bank is now assisting OE in the impact assessment study referred to in Sections II.C and III.A and in the field of communication of evaluation results. Discussions are currently being held with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Department for International Development (DFID) (United Kingdom) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on the content of possible future partnerships, in such areas as impact management, learning and knowledge management through evaluation, the undertaking of joint country assistance reviews and major thematic evaluations.

20. The Division acted as focal point in organizing the Fund's participation in the Second Global Knowledge Conference, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in March 2000. On that occasion, OE organized a number of events with other partners, including a successful international contest to scout for knowledge and innovation among rural people and the production of a documentary film entitled "Forests, Local Knowledge and Livelihoods", which emphasized the importance of local knowledge for development.

¹¹ These were the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID) (United Kingdom), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Government of The Netherlands, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the World Bank.



21. The Division was represented at the Workshop on Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability, organized by the Government of Japan in cooperation with the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation. OE has officially requested that IFAD be admitted to the Working Party in an observer capacity.

Plan of Action and Process Re-Engineering Programme

22. As mentioned earlier, work has started on all three of the action lines for which OE is answerable under Recommendations B(iii) and B(iv) of the Plan of Action (see Table 1 on page 20). This initial work has been financed entirely from OE's administrative budget, with the exception of the evaluation of IFAD's innovation capability, for which supplementary funds were mobilized from Finland and Switzerland.

23. Nine OE staff members have been involved in six PRP working groups¹². Given the size of the Division, this was a significant contribution. Involvement in the PRP was not, however, cost-free for the Division. Although compensation was provided by way of funds for the recruitment of some consultants, only a limited amount of the duties usually performed by the OE staff members could be delegated to them. Furthermore, OE seconded one of its General Service staff to work with the PRP team.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE 2001 WORK PROGRAMME

24. In the formulation of its priorities for 2001-2002, OE has been influenced by three major considerations: (i) priorities set in the Plan of Action and the IFAD 2001 score cards; (ii) expected OE participation in the implementation phase of the PRP; and (iii) current OE activities that need to be carried over into 2001 for completion¹³.

25. Based on these considerations, OE has identified its three priority areas for 2001, as follows: (i) impact management; (ii) knowledge management and innovation; and (iii) the further development of the NAE. Details of the OE programme of work for 2001-2002 are provided in Annex II. The following sections describe how OE intends to implement the above priorities and objectives.

A. Impact Management

26. Activity in this area corresponds to the Objective B(iii) of the Plan of Action and is divided into two areas:

Development of an Improved Methodological Framework for Impact Assessment (and its Consistent Use) in Evaluating IFAD's Projects and Programmes

27. This ongoing study (see Part One, section II.C) has the goal to improve IFAD's capacity to assess impact through evaluation work and, eventually, to contribute to the enhancement of the impact of the Fund's operations on the ground. This goal is to be achieved through two sets of simultaneous actions:

- (i) to develop an improved methodology for impact evaluations and use it consistently across all evaluations; and

¹² (i) Impact Management (sponsor and co-sponsor); (ii) Knowledge Management; (iii) Project Cycle; (iv) Partnership Management; (v) Support Services; and (vi) Information Technology.

¹³ A summary of how OE's priorities relate to the PRP and the Plan of Action is contained in Table 1 on page 20.



- (ii) to aggregate evaluation results on impact and performance, synthesize the learning and insights from evaluation, and report periodically on that to senior management and the Board.

28. The first set of actions include the development of harmonized evaluation criteria and impact assessment methodology to be used consistently across all evaluations undertaken by IFAD, thus facilitating corporate-level impact assessment. This should reflect the emerging consensus among IFIs on evaluation criteria, international development goals as well as IFAD's specific mandate and vision. OE's ongoing work in this area points to four such criteria: relevance, efficacy, efficiency and sustainability¹⁴; all are adapted to the particular features of the Fund's operations¹⁵. Such criteria should embody agreed upon categories of impact indicators that reflect the main emphasis of the Fund, e.g. poverty, food security, empowerment of grass-roots institutions, empowerment of women (see paragraph 14). The other fundamental aspect of the new impact assessment methodology is the development of a manageable system of performance rating that allows sensible aggregation and comparison of evaluation results. This requires the choice of some measuring scale to be used in ranking qualitative and quantitative findings.

29. The second set of actions relates to the aggregation of and systematic reporting on the results of evaluation using the new impact methodology. This will require first of all a cohort of project evaluations (interim evaluations, completion evaluations) as well as CPEs and thematic evaluations to be undertaken in a given year¹⁶. IFAD senior management will approve the final list of project/programme evaluations in order to ensure that they reflect the organization's priorities in the area of impact and knowledge management. These evaluations will be undertaken in accordance with the strategic guidelines of the NAE and the agreed upon evaluation criteria and methodology for impact assessment. Based on the evaluation of such a cohort of projects, the aggregation of the results of these evaluations will be performed using the established performance rating and a thorough analysis of the various factors (e.g. socio-economic, institutional, policy, environmental). The aggregation of ratings will be supplemented by a synthesis of learning and insights from the above evaluations to feed into and improve current and future design, implementation and strategy formulation processes. The evaluation, aggregation and synthesis work will form the basis of consolidated periodical reports to senior management and the Board.

30. The above-mentioned initiatives and their implementation will supplement the ongoing self-evaluation effort performed by PD on a yearly basis¹⁷ and recognize both the Fund's generalized use of the project logical framework system and its efforts to strengthen M&E systems at the project level.

Identification of Best Practices and the Development of Tools and Guidelines for an Effective M&E System at the Project Level

31. In 2001, OE will develop a practical guide for project monitoring and evaluation, which will facilitate the development, installation and use of effective project-level M&E systems as tools for impact-oriented management. OE is aware that many of the M&E guidelines and handbooks produced in the past failed to deliver the expected results. The guide to be produced by OE in close cooperation with PD will therefore endeavour to be the result of a participatory process with its potential users, and aim to address their concrete problems using, as much as possible, real-world examples of good

¹⁴ See Annex V.

¹⁵ For example, relevance is defined with respect to country's policies and priorities on rural poverty alleviation, the COSOP, IFAD's mandate, IFAD's operational policy papers and the actual needs of project beneficiaries.

¹⁶ In 2001, for example, OE will complete or initiate 13 project evaluations, ten thematic evaluations, five country programme evaluations and two major policy/strategy evaluations. The details of this evaluation work are contained in Annex II.

¹⁷ Summarized in the Progress Report on Project Portfolio.



practices from rural development projects. It will be tailored to the specific context of IFAD-supported operations and will propose options that can be adapted to the specificity of different regional and national contexts. The guide will not be a stand-alone initiative: it will supplement other efforts undertaken by IFAD such as the installation of logical framework approaches and the development of regional support networks.

32. A core learning partnership has been established to include staff from IFAD regional divisions, technical advisers and cooperating institutions in the steering and definition process of the guide. The CLP will be expanded to also include a number of project directors and beneficiaries' representatives. An in-house 'validation' workshop will then be organized in October to discuss the draft of the guide internally. A synthesis of the guide will be presented to the EC of the December Executive Board.

B. Knowledge Management and Innovation

33. Activities in this area in 2001 will entail:

Completion of the Evaluation Initiated in 2000 of IFAD's Capacity as a Promoter of Replicable Innovations in Rural Poverty Reduction

34. This evaluation, which is contained in the Plan of Action, aims at providing IFAD with a better understanding of how it may strengthen its capacity and performance in innovation and knowledge management, in line with its comparative advantages and stakeholder's expectations. The evaluation will also provide building blocks and a framework for developing an IFAD strategy for the promotion of innovations and the sharing of innovative learning and knowledge on rural poverty alleviation.

35. The evaluation consists of two phases. The ongoing phase aims at: (i) establishing a common conceptual framework and understanding of replicable innovation and the innovation process as applicable to IFAD; (ii) reviewing the efforts of IFAD's partners in promoting institutional innovations to define overlap and complementarity; (iii) assessing the strengths, weaknesses and potential of IFAD's instruments for innovations (including loans and non-loan instruments); and (iv) carrying out evaluations of selected case studies of innovations and deriving lessons learned from these experiences.

36. Building on these results, the second phase of the evaluation will assess IFAD's institutional capacity as a promoter of replicable innovations. This will include assessment of the culture of innovation in the Fund, its innovation capabilities and learning potential, its institutional commitment to innovation, and the incentive framework provided. The main constraints affecting IFAD's performance in promoting replicable innovation will be identified, together with the means for enhancing and capturing existing and potential opportunities for the Fund to maximize its effectiveness in this respect.

Evaluation of the Technical Assistance (TA) Grant Programme for Agricultural Research

37. IFAD's intention to conduct this major evaluation was outlined in the paper entitled "Grant Financing: A New Approach" (document EB 2000/69/R.11) submitted to the Executive Board in May 2000. Although the Board requested further information in the form of an additional document, the conducting of such an evaluation was not disputed. Coupled with the results of the 2000 evaluation of the IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme (ECP), the evaluation under reference is expected to have an important bearing on the formulation of IFAD's policy on the TA grant programme. As IFAD management intends to present a document on the latter policy to the Board during the course of 2002, the evaluation is both timely and – as grants for agricultural research are clearly meant to promote innovations – expected to produce insights that complement the ongoing evaluation of IFAD's capability to promote innovations.



Contribution to the Development of the Strategy on Corporate Knowledge Management

38. OE will take an active part in formulating the knowledge management strategy and defining building blocks and organizational infrastructure within the framework of the PRP implementation phase.

Thematic Evaluations¹⁸

39. These particular evaluations have been selected in cooperation with other IFAD divisions and departments, and approved by IFAD senior management. They therefore reflect some of the Fund's priorities for knowledge management in 2001.

C. New Approach to Evaluation

40. In 2001, OE will fully develop the communication component of the Fund's new evaluation strategy as well as the organizational set-up most suited to support the NAE. It will also start to evaluate and fine-tune the NAE, based on the first two years of experience.

Communication and Dissemination of Evaluation Results

41. Among the new communication instruments and products mentioned earlier, OE will in 2001: (i) develop a standardized table of contents for the evaluation core products to allow for aggregation and comparison; (ii) finalize the preparation of standard operating procedures for communication during any evaluation work; (iii) continue to pilot work with the production of Profiles and a limited number of customized products; (iv) complete the development of OE's home page, the introduction of Insights and the recasting of EKSYST; and (v) undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a help desk at OE.

Organizational Set-Up

42. In 2001, the Division intends to determine the most suitable organizational set-up to support the implementation of the NAE. This will also entail reviewing the achievements of the OE regional teams established in 2000.

Monitoring and Fine-Tuning the NAE

43. All evaluation missions undertaken by OE are required to produce brief summaries of their experience with the NAE and new evaluation processes and, when appropriate, outline the remedial and/or follow-up measures required. Based on these summaries, in 2001, OE intends to conduct a stocktaking exercise of the first two years of experience in implementing the NAE and the new evaluation processes and products. This exercise is intended to fine-tune and, where necessary, adjust the Fund's evaluation strategy so as to render it more effective in terms of supporting new processes for impact and knowledge management.

¹⁸ See Annex II.



PART TWO: LEARNING AND INSIGHTS FROM EVALUATION

44. In the past, OE's annual reports have traditionally presented individual summaries of Insights from the most recent evaluations. While this provided detailed and valuable information, it was left to readers to synthesize an overall view of the learning generated by these evaluations. In other words, it was left to readers to move from the single tree to the forest. This year, OE has made a first attempt to provide a consolidated view. It has selected two themes that have cropped up in OE's evaluations in the last years and that it believes are important for IFAD to ponder on: the way in which institutional capacity at local level influences project success, and the types of issues that arise from the Fund's long-term interest in providing the poor with productive agricultural land. What follows is an experiment in taking the learning from evaluations one step further, and raising questions that, are believed to be important for IFAD to address properly.

I. PREPARING COMMON GROUND: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AT LOCAL LEVEL

45. The impact of IFAD-funded rural development programmes depends largely on the capacity of the institutions through which it chooses to work. Where IFAD has made partners of agencies with a proven track record of delivering quality services, the results have been remarkable. Where the Fund has succeeded in building the capacity of weaker implementing agencies, outcomes have been similarly positive. Recent evaluation evidence suggests some promising approaches to tackling the problems arising at the interface between the Fund and its beneficiaries. These findings, summarized below, have important implications for the design and sustainability of IFAD-supported projects.

46. A sufficiently thorough understanding of the institutional context within which a project is likely to operate is essential to its success. The findings of evaluations carried out in the past two years by the OE suggest that time spent on *institutional analysis* in the design stage of a project could pay for itself many times over during implementation and after project completion. A good understanding of the nature of potential partners would comprise knowledge of their technical and social-development expertise and the strength of their relationships with civil society and government line agencies. Primed with this kind of information, project designers could choose to build on existing capacity or design in components to strengthen capacity where it is needed. Furthermore, *involving local institutions early on in the design process* would make projects easier to implement and would also improve their chances of sustainability. A comparison of the institutions involved in IFAD's Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project in India and the Production Credit for Rural Women Project in Nepal illustrates these points and how they might influence the success of programmes.

The Case of the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project

47. The state government of Tamil Nadu had already set up its Corporation for Women's Development prior to IFAD's involvement. In 1990, when the Corporation was charged with the responsibility for implementing the newly established Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project, it had a state-wide presence but was weak in reaching women and the community-based organizations (CBOs) that represented them. Through the actions of the Corporation, the project aimed to bring about social and economic betterment of poor women, particularly women who headed households. This was to be achieved largely by providing credit and promoting income-generating activities.

48. The Corporation coordinated the activities of NGOs and intermediary agencies working with CBOs to promote the formation of savings groups. It became the link between these organizations and participating banks, village-based animators and trainers. At the start of the project, the Corporation was weak in vision and planning capability, and staff were generally inadequately trained and not well motivated. However, by the end of the project in December 1998, the Corporation had grown and



developed into a state-wide organization of considerable reputation. Its staff were more technically competent and motivated, and the Corporation was managed more confidently and had much greater bargaining power with state authorities. Today, the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project stands out as a success story¹⁹. The factors that made it so are discussed further below.

The Case of the Production Credit for Rural Women Project in Nepal

49. The CPE for Nepal noted pervasive gender inequalities. For example, girls are generally fed less than boys, educated less and have fewer opportunities for self-development²⁰. Unequal access to resources throughout a woman's life may account for the fact that Nepal is one of the few countries in the world where women have a lower life expectancy than men. IFAD supported, *inter alia*, the Production Credit for Rural Women Project, run by the Ministry of Local Development through its Women Development Division. The project was to engage in activities broadly similar to those described for the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project (see paragraph 47). However, despite some successes in project delivery and redesign to address emerging issues, the Division was hindered by the limited technical capacity of its staff, inadequate outreach, scant funding and an organizational culture that constrained flexibility and innovation.

50. According to the evaluation report, the Division was required to operate like an NGO; yet, being part of the government, its administrative procedures were less flexible, its pay and conditions were worse, and the staff were not as well trained. The Division is directed by civil servants with little or no field experience or understanding of gender issues. In sharp contrast to the Tamil Nadu Corporation, which is to manage a new follow-up state-financed project to extend the activities of the former Women's Development Project, the Nepalese project has closed and the possibility of the Women Development Division cutting its ties with the government is being explored.

51. These two examples share certain important factors. Both projects aimed to improve conditions for poor rural women; both operated in a social context characterized by marked gender inequality; both were managed by government agencies (with field presence) mandated to furthering the cause of women's development; both relied on productive partnerships with NGOs and CBOs. Yet the results are very different. The pivotal factor determining the degree of success was the institutional context. Although the capacity of the Corporation in Tamil Nadu was weak at the outset of the project, the Corporation was assisted by able NGOs such as Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency and others, which could provide high-quality training and facilitation. Moreover, there is a long history of NGO-government partnership in India, which no doubt played its part in building the trust necessary to implement the project successfully. The context in Nepal was very different. Just one decade ago, Nepal's administration was rather centralized with limited opportunities for local-level initiatives. Despite significant progress in decentralization, self-help groups and NGOs have emerged only recently, and their capabilities are not yet comparable to those of similar organizations found in other parts of South Asia.

52. The examples given above happen to be South Asian. They were selected merely to contrast the relative capacities of the institutions involved. However, IFAD has also encountered problems of institutional capacity in other regions. The Fund has at times overestimated the strength and resilience of local government services in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, to the detriment of its programmes. In Zambia, IFAD overestimated the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) in the Southern Province Household Food Security Programme; critical appointments were delayed with resulting harm to project management as well as to the research capability of the MAFF

¹⁹ India, *Completion Evaluation of the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project* (Loan No. 240-IN), April 2000, OE, IFAD.

²⁰ Nepal, *Country Programme Evaluation*, July 1999, OE, IFAD.



Research Branch²¹. While it is easy to appreciate the advantages of informing project design with the findings from institutional analyses, building such analyses into the project design and implementation processes is more difficult and will require more resources and a longer start-up phase and greater flexibility in, for instance, lending procedures and programme design.

Sustainability of Local-Level Institutions

53. The aim of any development support is, first, to help the poor to forge better futures for themselves; and, second, in so doing, to become redundant. To a large extent this translates into strengthening the fabric of civil society and creating social capital through which poor people may gain support for their endeavours. At the grass-roots level, this has been successful in some IFAD-supported programmes but still remains an issue for many others.

54. Recent evaluations report disappointing progress once projects have been completed and IFAD has exited. A study on water users' associations in IFAD projects, completed in 2000, demonstrated that legal transfer of project assets to these associations had not been achieved in many of the projects reviewed. The Nampula Artisanal Fisheries Project (NAFP) in Mozambique successfully established linkages between committees and fishermen's associations and formal bodies such as the Fisheries Administration, but the process of empowerment is incomplete without the formalization of management organizations that legal status would confer.

55. Evidence to date points to two potentially promising areas to explore in the interests of improving sustainability. The first concerns '*post-formation*' support of newly formed grass-roots organizations. The second concerns the *regulatory and legal reforms* necessary to confer legitimacy to newly formed people's institutions. The evaluation of the Special Programme for Africa projects highlights the lack of support once grass-roots organizations mature and develop into cluster groups or federations. There has often been no legal recognition of such bodies. The projects have continued to act at the interface between community-level groupings and regional or national bodies, private enterprises, banks, and so on, even though federations or higher-level representative bodies were quite capable of taking over such functions. The provision of credit to smallholders was hampered in Nepal by the lack of legislative support for NGOs that have recently emerged as providers of financial services. The establishment of co-management organizations in NAFP has been impeded by deficient formalization, legal status and recognition by the authorities.

Food for Thought

56. The evaluation findings summarized above raise a number of questions concerning the design and sustainability of IFAD-supported projects, which are worthy of further consideration.

57. Carrying out detailed institutional analyses, identifying partners and designing flexible projects in partnership all demand more investment of time by IFAD's limited staff resources as well as greater flexibility in lending procedures and programme design. Can IFAD afford to spend more time at start-up and ensure the required flexibility? This is a necessary condition for relevant and implementable design, but it is not an easily reached condition, nor is it by any means a sufficient one.

58. Closer direct contact with the relevant institutions and continuity in the conduct of effective policy dialogue are other crucial requirements. More presence on the ground would help the Fund to better understand the often complex institutional context sufficiently to provide or facilitate the degree of support necessary for newly formed organizations to flourish, build networks and eventually

²¹ Zambia, *Southern Province Household Food Security Programme (SPHFSP)* (Loan No. 368-ZM), May 2000, Mid-Term Evaluation Report, Executive Summary, Appendix 2, OE, IFAD.



become sustainable. How can IFAD become more ‘hands-on’, given that the Fund lacks a permanent presence in the field?

59. The need for legislative and regulatory reform has been identified in many IFAD-supported projects in several regions. Yet, in most countries, the Fund focuses on work at the community level. How can IFAD increase the effectiveness of its policy dialogue at the national level so that it encourages policy changes at the institutional and regulatory level? And how can the Fund build its own capacity for policy work and enhance the effectiveness of its partnerships with other agencies more experienced in this area?

II. WIDENING HORIZONS: LAND FOR THE POOREST

60. Agriculture is the lifeline of the poorest people living in many countries of the Near East and North and Western Africa regions. As such, increasing poor people’s access to productive land is a priority of the Fund’s activities in many countries of these regions. Recent evaluations of IFAD-supported projects in Egypt, Mauritania and Syria suggest that a more holistic approach in project design and implementation, taking in all aspects of poor people’s livelihoods, could improve IFAD’s chances of achieving that aim.

Giving Precedence to the Physical and Technical Aspects

61. A mid-term evaluation of the Newlands Agricultural Services Project (NLASP) in Egypt concluded that project services successfully reached the target group, consisting of small landholders, and assisted in the establishment of new irrigation settlements in arid environments. The mobilization of an effective demand-led extension system, backed by capable technical specialists and research facilities, contributed to this achievement. However, the project tendency to favour technical aspects restricted the outreach of project benefits. Government-run social services were limited in the villages; social development in the communities therefore lagged behind farming development and restricted the pace of permanent settlement.

62. Project activities encouraged single women farmers with recognized land titles (accompanied by family members) to settle in the project area. The introduction of women contact farmers created leadership roles for women, which catalysed the development of self-help and labour-exchange groups for women farmers. But other gender aspects were not equally considered. The evaluation concluded that women without landholdings, such as the wives of settlers, and other women members of the household were not fully recognized as part of NLASP’s target groups; hence their productive potential and impact on the overall livelihood of the household – including both on- and off-farm activities – were not fully exploited. In attempting to address the needs of these women, the project adopted a “women in development” approach, which focused primarily on improving their home economics skills. The evaluation recommended that the project extend the training offered to women to include profitable income-generating and business skills, record-keeping and literacy classes.

63. In Syria, four of the five IFAD-supported projects were successful in transforming sloping and rocky lands into productive agricultural land²². The projects involved the purchase of machinery to rake rocks and remove boulders from areas of land and deposit them at the boundaries of the newly created fields. All land-owning farmers, poor and better off, undoubtedly benefited from the intervention. Positive impact was recorded on food production, on food security and, despite the difficulties of targeting land reclamation, on poverty reduction. However, the evaluation concluded that, because of the associated impact on land value and productivity, the divide between rich and poor may well increase. Attempts at targeting the poorest households for supporting women’s income-generating activities were only partly successful due, *inter alia*, to the conventional

²² Syria, *Country Programme Evaluation*, 22 February 2001, Executive Summary.



orientation of existing institutions and the lack of knowledge about the determinant of rural household income and poverty. Environmental aspects were also not specifically considered. In fact, there were also concerns that the removal of rocks may have led to increased erosion and changes in the hydrology of the area, which could affect the sustainability of benefits from the newly created land.

64. To increase the benefits to the poor, the evaluation recommended that IFAD: (i) support the Syrian Government in articulating a strategy for rural poverty reduction, with priority given to defining the causes of rural poverty and the identification of the poorest areas and households; (ii) enhance policy dialogue with the government to establish pro-poor subsidization policies, in which better-off farmers would be required to bear the full cost of reclamation, as well as better targeting strategies; and (iii) support a new strategy for gender, developed recently by the Ministry of Agriculture, which would strengthen capacity of gender analysis and refocus women's training to include those skills needed within the farming system and for profitable and marketable income-generating activities in support of the poorest households.

The Wider Spectrum: The Case of Negotiated Land Reform

65. The Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project in Mauritania illustrates the advantages of knowing more about the larger picture, going beyond the narrow emphasis on landholders as such. The Maghama region has a long tradition of flood-recession agriculture, but the construction of the Manantali dam upstream from Maghama, in Mali, reduced the flooded area in Maghama to 2 000 ha in most years. The IFAD project was designed to undertake civil works that would control water so as to assure an almost fourfold increase in the flooded area. The project was also designed to support vulnerable groups to increase household food security and to support processes that would instil self-help approaches. These included the set-up of village-level cereal banks to smooth over periods of production surpluses and consumption deficits. Village-level rural finance cooperatives were likewise designed to provide the poor with access to financial services.

66. However, at the time of project design, serious concerns were raised about who would benefit from the project. Some 60% of the potential target group were landless, with weak, if any, land-use rights. The fear was that the landowners, who traditionally control land-use rights, would reap the lion's share of project benefits; there seemed little chance of the poor benefiting from project investments.

67. Upon the recommendation of the IFAD Executive Board, which reviewed the project at two separate sessions before approving the loan to finance it, a condition was set whereby project expenditure on civil works could proceed only after negotiations for land reform had reached a stage that IFAD found acceptable. The interim evaluation of the project found that this design choice proved correct on two counts: first, it was right to have set the condition that would tip the scales in favour of the weaker players; second, it was right to leave it open as to how that condition would be achieved.

68. The envisaged project benefits were promising enough to bring to the table the representatives of those who controlled access to land. A coalition of Maghama landlords, resident in Nouakchott, spontaneously emerged to negotiate an *entente foncière*, or understanding on land tenure, to which 25 of the 28 communities in the project area voluntarily adhered. IFAD considered this sufficient to begin the engineering works. Later, land-use rights were distributed to the landless on a village-by-village basis in open meetings that were facilitated by project staff.

69. Although the process has granted the poor and landless only a small increase in access to land, they consider themselves considerably better off. They now have greater security of access, lower rents and longer time horizons. Cereal banks and credit cooperative initiatives, although implemented on a limited scale, have also widened horizons and access to other resources for poorer households



and women. It is not possible to predict whether the agreement will be honoured after IFAD has withdrawn, but, for the project period at least, there is now more land to share, and conditions are more conducive for landowners to respond to their own social and cultural norms that call upon them to assist the poor.

Food for Thought

70. One principle that IFAD strives to put into practice is that of focusing on the poor and building on their strengths. This presupposes knowledge of a number of critical issues, such as: (i) detailed poverty profiles to determine who is poor; (ii) access to physical and non-physical assets, such as land and physical infrastructure as well as personal skills, social networks, finance, etc.; (iii) the various ways, in addition to agriculture, in which rural households (men and women) make a living; (iv) existing and potential marketing opportunities for income-generating activities; and (v) the way in which access to assets and livelihood strategies are affected by national and local institutions, and government policies, services and laws.

71. Investigating such areas during design and implementation might have, for example, helped to identify more-effective means to address gender issues in NLASP and to meet the social needs of project beneficiaries. And it could be asked whether more effective targeting measures might have emerged from a more comprehensive knowledge of the above-mentioned issues in rural Syria? Similarly, focusing on the larger context of poor people's livelihoods could have simultaneously helped to envisage how they might be affected in the longer term by project activities, particularly by the opportunities newly created by de-rocking land and the potential effects on the environment.

PART THREE: IFAD'S EVALUATION COMMITTEE

I. MAIN ACTIVITIES

72. This section contains a summary of the main activities of the EC from April 2000 until April 2001, as well as the highlights of some of the main issues emerging from their discussions. During this period, three sessions of the EC were held: September and December 2000 and February 2001.

73. In the September 2000 EC session, two evaluation reports were discussed: (i) the evaluation of the IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme; and (ii) the methodological study on "Strengthening IFAD's Support to the Development of Effective and Efficient Monitoring and Evaluation Systems". The former evaluation provided the EC with an opportunity to review the role and usefulness of the ECP as an alternative financial instrument in the Fund's overall efforts towards poverty eradication and sustainable development.

74. M&E systems have long been an area of major concern in development projects and programmes. The methodological study on M&E systems is therefore an ongoing effort by IFAD to improve the functioning of project-level M&E systems, which are recognized as an essential tool both for monitoring implementation and for assessing impact. The study will also result in the updating of IFAD's existing M&E guidelines, with the proviso that they be made as 'implementable' as possible in order to be adopted and actually used by all stakeholders, including field staff and, whenever possible, beneficiaries. OE presented to the EC an interim report during the Committee's September 2000 session, and important observations were made that have helped shape OE's subsequent work in this area. The EC has requested to discuss a more advanced version of this study during its December 2001 session.



75. As per its terms of reference and rules of procedure, during its December 2000 session, the EC reviewed the OE work programme for 2001. This discussion not only included an overview of the main achievements in relation to OE's work programme for 2000, but also a discussion on the objectives and priority areas of intervention for OE in 2001. Based on the OE work programme for 2001 and as per the standing practice introduced since December 1999, the Committee also developed a tentative agenda for its three sessions in 2001. Therefore, in its February 2001 session the EC discussed the Syria CPE and the interim evaluation of NAFP in Mozambique. In September 2001, the EC will consider two thematic evaluations including: (i) agricultural extension in West and Central Africa; and (ii) rural financial services in China. In December 2001, the Committee will discuss: (i) the thematic evaluation of the Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific (ENRAP); and (ii) the methodological study on M&E systems.

76. As part of its 2001 annual programme of work, during the December 2000 session the EC took a decision to undertake a field visit to Syria in the framework of the CPE that was undertaken by OE in 2000. In the December 2000 session, the EC also discussed the Viet Nam country programme review and evaluation (CPRE). This evaluation provided the EC with an opportunity to assess the overall cooperation between IFAD and Viet Nam, and to discuss key strategic and operational issues for current and future interventions. The director of one of the four IFAD-supported projects in Viet Nam was invited to participate in the EC deliberations, and he provided first-hand impressions about the CPRE and the opportunities and challenges involved in poverty alleviation efforts in Viet Nam.

77. In the February 2001 EC session, the Committee considered the interim evaluation of the NAFP in Mozambique and the Syria CPE. With regard to the former, the EC discussed the lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluation and provided their observations for the design of a follow-up artisanal fisheries project²³ in Mozambique, which is currently being prepared by IFAD and likely to be presented for the consideration of the Executive Board during its Seventy-Third Session in September 2001. The EC also discussed with the NAFP director (who had been invited to participate in this Committee session) not only about the NAFP, but, more importantly, about the contribution of the evaluation towards the formulation of the Sofala Bank Artisanal Fisheries Project.

78. The EC also considered the Syria CPE during the February 2001 session, providing the Committee with an overview of IFAD's development cooperation in Syria. The CPE is expected to provide the building blocks for the imminent development of IFAD's Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP) for Syria. The EC discussed the summary of the CPE's conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The Committee members had an opportunity to experience the conclusion of an evaluation "agreement at completion point"²⁴ during the Syria round-table workshop which took place in April 2001.

79. The Executive Board approved the Fund's disclosure policy during its Sixty-Ninth Session that was held in May 2000. According to the disclosure policy, all IFAD evaluation-related documents are to be disclosed to the public at large. Therefore, the EC's approval was sought and given to disclose fully all the documents presented by the Secretariat to the three above-mentioned EC sessions.

²³ Sofala Bank Artisanal Fisheries Project.

²⁴ As per the NAE, each evaluation will be completed upon the formulation of an ACP, which includes the key lessons learned, recommendations and follow-up actions that core evaluation partners agree to adopt and implement.



II. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

80. The conclusion of the February 2000 EC session also marked the end of tenure for the EC members. The Sixth-Ninth Session of the Executive Board elected a new EC for a term of three years. The new EC²⁵ is composed of Angola, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Sri Lanka/Pakistan/Romania²⁶ and Switzerland. During its Twenty-Fifth Session, the Committee elected the representative from Mexico as its new Chair and thanked the outgoing Chairperson from Indonesia for his efforts in steering the Committee for the past four years.

III. HIGHLIGHTS OF EVALUATION COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

81. The following sections contain highlights of some of the main issues emerging from the discussions during the EC sessions in September and December 2000 and in February 2001.

Partnerships with NGOs

82. In the context of discussing the evaluation of the IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme, the EC recognized the considerable gains that collaboration with NGOs can bring to IFAD-supported projects. The ECP, for example, strengthened both IFAD-NGO partnerships as well as NGO-government partnerships. The former demonstrated the significant contribution that community participation can make to the design, implementation and assessment of IFAD-supported projects. In addition, IFAD has gained valuable insights into how to promote community participation. NGO-government partnerships hold promise in making the development process more pro-poor and sustainable.

83. However, members reminded the meeting that NGOs are not a homogeneous group, that the involvement of NGOs should not be seen as an objective per se, and that one needs to study on a case-by-case basis whether the participation of a particular NGO will provide a comparative advantage to the planned intervention. Members also stressed the importance of emphasizing the identification and testing of innovative approaches for rural poverty alleviation in allocating the ECP grants.

Partnerships with Government and Policy Dialogue

84. The Committee has had the opportunity to review IFAD's policy dialogue and partnership with Governments in a number of programme and project evaluations. In the case of the Syria CPE, the EC noted IFAD's efforts to introduce and replicate, jointly with the government, pilot local-level participatory initiatives in extension services and rangeland management. It also noted the Fund's advocacy role in promoting NGO involvement. In this context, the EC made incisive comments for IFAD's future strategy in Syria. It urged IFAD to build on recent changes in the policy environment in the country and to further enhance the dialogue with government in order to agree on new strategic directions for promoting viable rural financial systems for the rural poor, better targeting the poorest, and for widening opportunities for participatory planning and implementation. The EC stressed the need for more-focused targeting strategies in the context of land reclamation through de-rocking.

85. The Committee noted that in implementing NAFF, IFAD and the Government of Mozambique were able to shape a constructive relationship to help poor fishermen to help themselves. NAFF was able to engage the cooperation of local-level as well as central government partners in constructing a framework to support all stakeholders in the Mozambican fisheries sector. This holistic approach to empowering the fishing community involved not only the obvious sectoral interests but also, for

²⁵ Belgium, Germany, Indonesia and Switzerland were also part of the outgoing EC.

²⁶ Sri Lanka was a member in 2000, Pakistan will be a member in 2001, and Romania in 2002.



example, the Department of Roads, the Ministry of Finance, fisheries research organizations and other actors. In this context, the EC highlighted the need for taking this approach even further and aligning it with the development of a national programme for artisanal fisheries development in Mozambique.

Sustainability

86. The Committee underscored the need for the Fund to devote more attention during the design stage to developing an ‘exit strategy’ for its interventions. Concerned IFAD staff present at the pertinent EC session acknowledged that, in the past, projects were largely designed with limited attention to post-project upkeep. Therefore, the EC recommended that greater efforts be made in defining, right from the beginning, an exit strategy that will enhance the chances of sustainability.

Monitoring and Evaluation

87. The Committee expressed its strong support to the Fund in finding ways to improve the quality of project-level M&E systems. In this respect, the EC highlighted, *inter alia*, the importance of partnerships in developing effective and efficient M&E systems. In particular, the EC emphasized the need for a closer partnership with cooperating institutions and local stakeholders, who provide an essential service and link between the ground and IFAD.

Monitoring the Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations

88. The EC members mentioned that it would be useful to have a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the lessons learned and recommendations from each evaluation.

Evaluation Communication and Dissemination

89. The Committee showed its appreciation of OE’s current efforts to develop customized communication and dissemination instruments for enhancing the effects and overall impact of lessons learned and recommendations from evaluation. For example, the Committee was pleased to receive documents containing colour maps and photographs, which have facilitated the communication of evaluation analyses and results. The EC also supported OE’s work in translating selected evaluation reports into local languages, which contributes to a wider dissemination of lessons learned and recommendations from evaluation.



**TABLE 1
HOW OE 2001 PRIORITIES RELATE TO THE PLAN OF ACTION AND
THE PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING PROGRAMME**

OE PRIORITIES	PLAN OF ACTION	PRP
Impact Management		
1.a. Develop methodological framework for impact assessment at the corporate level	Recommendation B(iii), Action 2	Impact Management Working Group recommendations No. 1 and No. 4
1.b. Develop guidelines for M&E systems at the project level	Recommendation B(iii), Action 3	Impact Management Working Group recommendations No. 6 and No. 7 and Project Cycle Working Group recommendations
1.c. Conduct project evaluations and CPEs	Recommendation B(ii), Action 3	Impact Management Working Group recommendations No. 1 and No. 4
Knowledge Management and Innovation		
2.a. Evaluation of IFAD's capacity to promote replicable innovation in rural poverty	Recommendation B(iv), Action 1	Relevant for Knowledge Management
2.b. Evaluation of the agricultural research component of the TA grant programme	Recommendation B(vi), Action 1(b)	“ “
2.c. Contribute to the development of a corporate strategy on knowledge management and related organizational infrastructure and building blocks	Recommendation B(iv)	Knowledge Management Working Group recommendations Nos. 1, 2 and 3
2.d. Conduct thematic evaluations	Recommendation B(i) Action 1 and Recommendation B(ii) Action 2	
New Approach to Evaluation		
3.a. Review experience with NAE and make necessary adjustments		Relevant for Impact Management and Knowledge Management
3.b. Recast OE's approach to communication	Recommendation B(iv)	“ “
3.c. Complete reorganization of OE		“ “

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2000

Area of Work	Region/Topic	Number
1. Policy/strategy evaluations	- Evaluation of IFAD's capability as a promoter of replicable innovations - IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme	1 1
2. CPEs ¹	- Asia and the Pacific (PI) - Near East and North Africa (PN)	2 1
3. Thematic Evaluations ²		5
4. Project Evaluations:		
4.1 Interim evaluations ³	- Eastern and Southern Africa (PF) - Western and Central Africa (PA) - Latin America and the Caribbean (PL) - Near East and North Africa (PN)	2 1 3 1
4.2 Completion evaluations ⁴	- Western and Central Africa (PA) - Asia and the Pacific (PI) - Eastern and Southern Africa (PF)	1 1 1
4.3 Mid-term evaluations ⁵	- Near East and North Africa (PN)	1
Total evaluations		21
5. Methodological and strategic work ⁶		4
6. M&E support ⁷		6
Total evaluation work		31

¹ In Syria; Viet Nam, in conjunction with a Country Programme Review; and Papua New Guinea.

² On water users' associations (phase II); agricultural extension interventions in West and Central Africa; rural agricultural marketing in the United Republic of Tanzania; community ownership of food/nutrition security intervention tools (ongoing); and rural financial services in China.

³ Ghana, Rural Enterprises Project; Mauritania, Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project; Mozambique, Nampula Artisanal Fisheries Project; Madagascar, Upper Mandrare Basin Development Project; El Salvador, Rehabilitation and Development Project for War-Torn Areas in the Department of Chalatenango; Honduras, Agricultural Development Programme for the Western Region (PLANDERO); and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Smallholder Crop Improvement and Marketing Project.

⁴ Niger, Aguié Rural Development Project; India, Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project; Uganda, Masindi District Integrated Community Development Project.

⁵ Jordan, Agricultural Resource Management Project in the Governorates of Karak and Tafila.

⁶ The following methodological and strategic work was initiated: improved methodological framework for impact assessment; participatory evaluation study; M&E systems support work; development of a dissemination and communication approach to evaluation.

⁷ Direct M&E support missions as follows: PL/Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Poverty-Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (PREVAL) – Phase II, PI/Bangladesh, PI/Sri Lanka, PF/United Republic of Tanzania-Mauritius, PA/Guinea, PA/Mali (two missions).



OE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2001-2002

Area of work	Identification	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Responsible Persons
1. Policy/strategy evaluations	Evaluation of IFAD's capability to promote replicable innovation	2000	2 nd Quarter 2001	Bishay/CLP with PD staff
	Evaluation of the agricultural research component of the TA grant programme	2001	3 rd /4 th Quarter 2001	Bishay/Mathur
	Evaluation of natural resources management in IFAD projects	2002	2002	*/Mwanundu
	Evaluation of women's grass-roots organizations in IFAD projects	2002	2002	*/Crowley
2. CPEs	Papua New Guinea/Pacific Islands	2000	2 nd Quarter 2001	Eklund/Prayer Galletti
	Syria	2000	1 st Quarter 2001	Bishay/Abdouli
	Sri Lanka	1 st Quarter 2001	2 nd Quarter 2001	Muthoo/Ramesh
	Tanzania, United Republic of	3 rd Quarter 2001	4 th Quarter 2001	Muthoo/Faisal
	Turkey (Country Portfolio Review/CPE)	2001	2001	Palmeri/Hassani
	Tunisia	2002	2002	*/El Harizi
3. Thematic evaluations	Agricultural extension interventions in West and Central Africa	2000	1 st Quarter 2001	Audinet/Madsen/Kingsbury/Jatta
	Rural financial services in China	2000	1 st Quarter 2001	Eklund/Martens
	Marketing and prices in the United Republic of Tanzania	2000	1 st Quarter 2001	Muthoo/Faisal
	Soil and water conservation and agro-forestry: impact study in Burkina Faso	End 2000	2001	Audinet/Trupke
	TA grant Community Ownership I & II	2000	2001	Eklund
	Study on organic agriculture in Latin America	2001	2002	Silveri/Hopkins
	Evaluation of livestock and pastoral development operations in three ongoing projects in Morocco	2001	2001	Palmeri/Nourallah
	Impact of microfinance schemes in West and Central Africa	4 th Quarter 2001	2002	Audinet/Tounessi
	Country thematic evaluation on decentralization in Indonesia	2 nd Quarter 2002	2002	*/Prayer Galletti
	Evaluation of IFAD operations in land reclamation and impact on natural resources management in the Near East and North Africa region	2002	2002	*/Abdouli
	ENRAP TA grant	4 th Quarter 2001	2002	Muthoo/Keating/Thapa
	FIDAMERICA TA grant	3 rd Quarter 2001	1 st Quarter 2002	Audinet/Murguia

* Responsible person within OE not yet determined.



Area of work	Identification	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Responsible Persons
4. Project Evaluations				
4.1 Interim evaluations	Mauritania: Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project	2000	2 nd Quarter 2001	Palmeri/Ben Senia
	Niger: Aguié Rural Development Project	2000	1 st Quarter 2001	Audinet/Manssouri
	Guinea: Smallholder Development Project in the Forest Region	2001	2001	Audinet/Nsimpati
	Pakistan: Neelum and Jhelum Valleys Community Development Project	1 st Quarter 2001	3 rd Quarter 2001	Eklund/Attig
	Laos: Bokeo Food Security Project	1 st Quarter 2001	3 rd Quarter 2001	Silveri/Wang
	Panama: Rural Development Project for Ngobe Communities	1 st Quarter 2001	3 rd Quarter 2001	Silveri/Murguia
	Togo: Support to Village Groups in the Eastern Savannah Region Project	2 nd Quarter 2001	2001	Silveri/Marzin
	Tanzania, United Republic of: Mara Region Farmers' Initiative Project	2 nd Quarter 2001	4 th Quarter 2001	Palmeri/Faisal
	Yemen: Tihama Environment Protection Project	2 nd Quarter 2001	3 rd Quarter 2001	Bishay/Rahman
	Chad: Ouadis of Kanem Agricultural Development Project	3 rd Quarter 2001	2002	Audinet/Nsimpati
	Swaziland: Smallholder Agricultural Development Project	3 rd Quarter 2001	2001	Eklund/Yayoock
	Mauritania: Oasis Development Project - Phase II	2002	2002	*/Ben Senia
	Zambia: Smallholder Irrigation and Water Use Programme	2002	2002	*/David e Silva
4.2 Completion evaluations	India: Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project	2000	1 st Quarter 2001	Muthoo/Khadka
	Armenia: North-West Agricultural Services Project	3 rd Quarter 2001	4 th Quarter 2001	Palmeri/Turilli
	Ethiopia: Informal Seed Component of the Seed Systems Development Project	2002	2002	*/Gicharu
	D.P.R. Korea: Sericulture Development Project	2002	2002	*/Musharraf
	India: Maharashtra Rural Credit Project	2002	2002	*/Khadka
5. Methodological and strategic work	Impact assessment at the corporate level	2000	2001	Bishay/CLP with PD staff
	M&E systems at the project level	2000	2 nd Quarter 2001	Silveri/Audinet/Madsen CLP with PD staff
	Communication strategy for OE	2000	2 nd Quarter 2001	Palmeri/Muthoo/Keating
6. M&E support	Mali: Sahelian Areas Development Fund Programme	2000	2001	Audinet/Jatta
	Angola: Assistance in setting up M&E system in the Northern Region Foodcrops Development Project	1 st Quarter 2001	2001	Muthoo/David e Silva
	India: Bihar-Madhya Pradesh Tribal Development Programme	2 nd Quarter 2001	2001	Muthoo/Khadka
	Viet Nam: Country-level M&E support	2 nd Quarter 2001	2001	Muthoo/Prayer Galletti
	Uruguay: National Smallholder Support Programme – Phase II (PRONAPPA II)	2 nd Quarter 2001	2001	Silveri/Glikman
	Cape Verde: Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme	2001	2001	Audinet/Manssouri
	Madagascar: Evaluation of M&E system vis-à-vis impact achievement in Madagascar projects	2001	2001	Palmeri/David e Silva
	Sao Tome and Principe: Participatory Smallholders and Artisanal Fisheries Development Programme	2002	2002	*/Sparacino

* Responsible person within OE not yet determined.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

Project Evaluations

1. Project-level evaluations are undertaken throughout the implementation cycle. The different types of evaluations all share the purpose of assessing implementation achievement, impact and sustainability, and ultimately of contributing to the improvement of project impact and performance.

- **Interim evaluations** are mandatory before embarking on a second phase of a project or launching a similar project in the same region. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of such evaluations are used as the basis for improving the design and implementation of subsequent interventions. Over the years, the number of interim evaluations has dramatically increased. In 2001, this type of evaluation accounts for 85% of all project evaluations undertaken by OE.
- **Completion evaluations** are conducted after the finalization of the project completion report prepared by the borrower or the cooperating institution, generally 3–18 months after the project closing date.
- **Mid-term evaluations** are undertaken at around the mid-life of project implementation, when approximately 50% of the funds have been disbursed.

Thematic Evaluations

2. Thematic evaluations and studies are designed to assess the effectiveness of IFAD's processes and approaches and to contribute to increasing the Fund's knowledge on specific issues and subjects. Through that, thematic evaluations are expected to provide concrete *building blocks* for revisiting existing, or formulating new, operational strategies and policies. Such evaluations not only build on the findings of project evaluations but also draw on a variety of external sources including evaluation work done by other organizations and institutions on the same theme or issue.

Country Programme Evaluations

3. CPEs provide an assessment of the performance of IFAD's activities in a given country. Based on such assessments, the CPEs are expected to provide direct and concrete inputs for revisiting existing or formulating new COSOPs, which are progressively assuming greater importance at IFAD. In particular, CPEs are expected to provide information on the most essential aspects of project performance and to contribute to developing strategic and operational orientation for IFAD's future project pipelines in individual countries. Furthermore, CPEs are expected to contribute elements to IFAD's policy dialogue in rural poverty alleviation.

**EVALUATIONS UNDERTAKEN
BY OE FROM 1983 TO 2000****WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION (AFRICA I)**

Year	MTEs¹	CEs²	IEs³	CPEs⁴	Total Evaluations
1983	-	-	-	-	-
1984	1	-	-	-	1
1985	-	-	-	-	-
1986	4	1	-	-	5
1987	3	1	-	-	4
1988	3	1	-	-	4
1989	-	1	-	-	1
1990	2	-	4	-	6
1991	1	3	2	-	6
1992	3	-	3	-	6
1993	-	1	3	-	4
1994	3	-	1	-	4
1995	1	1	1	-	3
1996	2	2	-	2	6
1997	-	-	-	1	1
1998	-	-	-	-	-
1999	1	2	2	-	5
2000	-	1	3	-	4
Total	24	14	19	3	60

1. Includes MTR/Es from 1983-1998.
2. Includes Ex Post Evaluations.
3. IEs started in 1990.
4. CPEs started in 1991.

**EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION (AFRICA II)**

Year	MTEs¹	CEs²	IEs³	CPEs⁴	Total Evaluations
1983	-	-	-	-	-
1984	2	-	-	-	2
1985	1	-	-	-	1
1986	3	-	-	-	3
1987	4	1	-	-	5
1988	1	-	-	-	1
1989	3	-	-	-	3
1990	1	1	2	-	4
1991	3	1	3	-	7
1992	2	-	1	-	3
1993	3	2	-	-	5
1994	-	2	-	-	2
1995	-	-	1	-	1
1996	1	-	2	-	3
1997	-	2	2	-	4
1998	-	-	-	-	-
1999	2	1	-	-	3
2000	-	-	3	-	3
Total	26	10	14	-	50

1. Includes MTR/Es from 1983-1998.
2. Includes Ex Post Evaluations.
3. IEs started in 1990.
4. CPEs started in 1991.



ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

Year	MTEs ¹	CEs ²	IEs ³	CPEs ⁴	Total Evaluations
1983	1	-	-	-	1
1984	4	-	-	-	4
1985	1	-	-	-	1
1986	4	2	-	-	6
1987	4	-	-	-	4
1988	1	1	-	-	2
1989	1	2	-	-	3
1990	1	3	-	-	4
1991	4	1	3	-	8
1992	2	3	-	1	6
1993	4	-	2	1	7
1994	1	2	3	1	7
1995	3	-	1	-	4
1996	-	-	1	-	1
1997	4	-	1	-	5
1998	-	-	-	-	-
1999	-	3	-	-	3
2000	-	1	1	2	4
Total	35	18	12	5	70

1. Includes MTR/Es from 1983-1998.
2. Includes Ex Post Evaluations.
3. IEs started in 1990.
4. CPEs started in 1991.



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

Year	MTEs ¹	CEs ²	IEs ³	CPEs ⁴	Total Evaluations
1983	-	-	-	-	-
1984	2	-	-	-	2
1985	3	-	-	-	3
1986	1	-	-	-	1
1987	2	3	-	-	5
1988	1	1	-	-	2
1989	1	-	-	-	1
1990	3	3	-	-	6
1991	1	1	2	-	4
1992	2	2	2	-	6
1993	2	2	3	-	7
1994	1	3	1	-	5
1995	-	1	1	1	3
1996	1	2	3	1	7
1997	-	-	2	-	2
1998	-	-	-	-	-
1999	-	1	3	-	4
2000	-	-	4	-	4
Total	20	19	21	2	62

1. Includes MTR/Es from 1983-1998.
2. Includes Ex Post Evaluations.
3. IEs started in 1990.
4. CPEs started in 1991.



NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

Year	MTEs ¹	CEs ²	IEs ³	CPEs ⁴	Total Evaluations
1983	-	-	-	-	-
1984	4	-	-	-	4
1985	-	-	-	-	-
1986	2	-	-	-	2
1987	1	-	-	-	1
1988	1	1	-	-	2
1989	1	1	-	-	2
1990	-	-	1	-	1
1991	2	-	1	1	4
1992	-	-	2	1	3
1993	1	-	-	-	1
1994	-	-	-	-	-
1995	1	3	-	-	4
1996	-	3	1	-	4
1997	2	-	-	-	2
1998	-	-	-	-	-
1999	2	-	-	-	2
2000	1	-	-	1	2
Total	18	8	5	3	34

1. Includes MTR/Es from 1983-1998.
2. Includes Ex Post Evaluations.
3. IEs started in 1990.
4. CPEs started in 1991.



EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **Relevance.** Consistency of project with: (i) country's overall development strategy, and IFAD's assistance strategy for that country (reflected in the COSOP), and (ii) IFAD's mandate, comparative advantage and policy priorities. The relevance refers to current circumstances, i.e. is based on (i) and (ii) above as they stand at the time of the evaluation, and at Board approval, if different at that time. Any changes introduced in the project since Board approval should be taken into account.
2. **Efficacy.** Extent to which project achieved development objectives articulated at approval and specified in categories such as poverty reduction, food security, policy advocacy, physical, financial, institutional, social and environmental, recognizing any change introduced since Board approval.
3. **Efficiency.** Extent to which project benefits, actual or expected at the time of evaluation, are commensurate with inputs, looking at cost and implementation time. Economic and financial rates of return should be used or, if not possible, other measures of cost effectiveness.
4. **Sustainability.** Likelihood that project results, actual and expected at the time of evaluation, will be maintained over the intended useful project life. Eight factors to be considered in establishing likely sustainability (no priority ranking intended) are: (i) technical soundness; (ii) government commitment, including supportive legal/regulatory framework; (iii) socio-political support; (iv) economic viability; (v) financial viability; (vi) institutional, organizational and management effectiveness; (vii) environmental impact; and (viii) resilience to exogenous factors.

Note: The items listed under criterion 4 (Sustainability) are also relevant to criteria 1 through 3.