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IFAD EVALUATION POLICY



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	Agreement at Completion Point
CLP	Core Learning Partnership
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OE	Office of Evaluation and Studies (to become Office of Evaluation)
TOR	Terms of Reference



INTRODUCTION

1. The Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources discussed a paper presented by the Fund on strengthening the effectiveness of the evaluation function at IFAD in the light of international experience. The paper was in response to a proposal made by the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources that the Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE) report directly to the Executive Board, independently of IFAD management and, as has been the case since 1994, of the President of IFAD. The paper covered international principles for evaluation of development assistance, and analysed how selected multilateral development organizations handle the issue of independence of their evaluation functions. The paper also explained IFAD's current approach to evaluation and proposed ways both to enhance independence and to improve the effectiveness of the evaluation learning loop.

2. The Consultation supported many concepts developed in the paper, and endorsed the value of independent evaluation and its contribution to learning. It also confirmed the need to formulate an evaluation policy for IFAD and provided guidance on elements to be considered in such a policy (see Annex I). The evaluation policy proposed in this document takes into account these guidelines and provisions, which are contained in document GC 26/L.4 of the Governing Council.¹

3. The focus of this document is on independent evaluation, which in IFAD is the role of OE.^{2,3} The document is organized in four parts. Part One outlines the policy framework, which consists of the purpose of independent evaluation and its stakeholders, the evaluation principles and the operational policies to be used by IFAD in its independent evaluation work. Part Two details operational procedures, organizational measures and other arrangements that ensure OE's independence from IFAD management and enhance its effectiveness. Part Three presents the role of the Executive Board and its Evaluation Committee in relation to the independent evaluation function, and the terms of reference (TOR) of the OE Director. Part Four describes how the policy will become effective, including the staggered introduction of particular provisions. The annexes summarize the guidelines and provisions for policy formulation laid down by the Consultation, outline important milestones in the organization of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at IFAD, introduce the types of evaluation that OE undertakes, and recapitulate the current TOR of the Executive Board's Evaluation Committee.

¹ The document is entitled *Enabling the Rural Poor to Overcome their Poverty: Report of the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (2004-2006)*.

² In addition to and distinct from independent evaluation, IFAD-funded projects and the operational units of IFAD undertake self-assessment of IFAD-supported operations. In this document, however, evaluation refers specifically and exclusively to the independent evaluation function of OE.

³ Taking into account the difference in size, the proposed policy draws, in particular, on the experience of the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, two of the international financial institutions that put most emphasis on the independence of their evaluation function from management.



PART ONE:
POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR IFAD'S INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

The policy framework describes the purpose of independent evaluation and its stakeholders, the evaluation principles and the operational policies to be used by IFAD for its independent evaluation work.

I. PURPOSE OF INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND ITS STAKEHOLDERS

A. Purpose and Role of Independent Evaluation in IFAD

4. IFAD sees evaluation as an important contributor to its strategy for rural poverty reduction. The *Strategic Framework for IFAD 2002-2006* identifies IFAD's mission as enabling the rural poor to overcome their poverty. It elaborates on this, stating, "Poverty reduction is not something that governments, development institutions or non-governmental organizations can do for the poor. They can forge partnerships and help promote the conditions in which the poor can use their own skills and talents to work their way out of poverty." IFAD's catalytic role in poverty reduction is also of great importance, as reflected in the emphasis the framework gives to advocacy, policy dialogue, learning and the dissemination of knowledge. Independent evaluation contributes to IFAD's strategy by bringing an independent perspective to the assessment of progress in relation to IFAD's mission and catalytic role, and contributing feedback for learning.

5. The main purpose of the independent evaluation function at IFAD is to promote accountability and learning in order to improve the performance of the Fund's operations and policies. Evaluations provide a basis for accountability by assessing the impact of IFAD-supported operations and policies. They are expected to give an accurate analysis of successes and shortcomings, i.e. "to tell it the way it is". This feedback helps the Fund improve its performance. Accountability is thus a key step in a learning process that, if followed through in partnership with those who are being evaluated, deepens IFAD's and its partners' understanding of the causes of and solutions to rural poverty. IFAD uses this knowledge to develop better pro-poor instruments and policies to enable the rural poor to empower themselves and overcome their poverty.

6. IFAD's evaluation approach reflects and is harmonized with internationally accepted evaluation norms and principles.⁴ It also takes into account the specific features that make IFAD different from most other development agencies, in particular, the evolving but not yet fully effective system of self-assessment of IFAD operations and IFAD-supported projects, the absence of a field presence and the limited resources available for project supervision and learning from operations. This defining logic has various implications for the independent evaluation function at IFAD. In particular, and perhaps more so than central evaluation offices elsewhere, OE must ground its evaluation in extensive fieldwork and generate much of the evaluation-based knowledge that IFAD requires to learn from past operational experiences.

7. Furthermore, OE provides guidelines and technical inputs for enhancing the capacity of IFAD operational units and IFAD-assisted projects to undertake self-assessment. These inputs are rendered through evaluation of the self-assessment system and through technical advice aimed at improving the system. In relation to the latter, OE, together with other partners in and outside IFAD, has developed *A Guide for Project Monitoring and Evaluation: Managing for Impact in Rural Development* and provides assistance in customizing this for different regions and countries.

⁴ As set down in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD, Paris, 1998.



B. Evolution of the Evaluation Function at IFAD

8. IFAD established an evaluation function shortly after it began operations in 1978. At that time, however, evaluation was combined with monitoring as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Division, which reported to the Assistant President, Economic Policy Department. In 1994, as a result of recommendations made by the rapid external assessment of IFAD during the negotiation of the Fourth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, the evaluation function was separated from monitoring and a unit independent of operations, called the Office of Evaluation and Studies, was established. The Director of OE started reporting directly to the President, and OE was then incorporated into the Office of the President.⁵

9. In accordance with the evaluation policy proposed in this document, OE will now operate as an IFAD organizational unit that is independent of IFAD management in the conduct of the evaluations that it undertakes.⁶ The OE Director will be directly responsible to the Executive Board, who will oversee OE's work. The Executive Board has established its own Evaluation Committee to assist it in considering evaluation issues. Furthermore, OE will be renamed the Office of Evaluation.⁷

C. Evaluation Stakeholders

10. IFAD recognizes that evaluation has a number of important stakeholders with a range of perspectives and expectations. Stakeholders include:

- (i) IFAD's Executive Board, which represents Member States, approves the allocation of IFAD resources with the expectation of achieving a tangible and measurable impact in terms of rural poverty reduction, and will now oversee OE's independent evaluation work.
- (ii) The rural poor, for whom the success or failure of IFAD-supported projects and programmes has the most direct and long-lasting implications.
- (iii) Stakeholders whose performance in managing IFAD-assisted operations and carrying out IFAD policies is evaluated by OE, namely:
 - IFAD operational divisions, grouped under the Programme Management Department, and IFAD management concerned with corporate-level policies and strategies;
 - Member States and their project authorities that borrow funds from IFAD for rural poverty reduction;
 - cooperating institutions that perform supervision on behalf of IFAD; and
 - non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil-society organizations, and organizations of the rural poor that are engaged in IFAD-assisted projects.
- (iv) Cofinanciers that supplement IFAD's resources in particular projects.

⁵ Annex II summarizes the significant milestones associated with the evaluation function at IFAD.

⁶ Operational arrangements required for ensuring the independence of OE from IFAD management will be given effect through a bulletin issued by the President of IFAD after the Executive Board decision on a new policy and as required by such a policy.

⁷ It is proposed that the words "and Studies" be dropped from the name of the Office in order to describe more accurately OE's core business and bring its name in line with the evaluation offices of other international financial institutions.



II. EVALUATION PRINCIPLES AND OPERATIONAL POLICIES

A. Independence

11. In accordance with the proposed evaluation policy, the evaluation function at IFAD will operate in line with internationally accepted principles for the evaluation of development assistance. Foremost among these is the principle that the evaluation process should be impartial and independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of development assistance.

12. Independence is best achieved where evaluation activities are independent from managers who have an interest in showing accomplishment and good performance, or any other decision-makers for whom evaluation raises a conflict of interest. This means that the evaluation function should be separate from and not report to IFAD's management, which is responsible for planning and managing development assistance.

13. A separate budget for evaluation is another important dimension of independence. In this connection, a review of development agencies' procedures by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)⁸ notes, "Access to, and control over, financial resources and evaluation programming is an important sign of independence." The evaluation budget is closely related to the work programme; and authority to select projects, programmes and policies for evaluation and formulate the work programme is also a key measure of independence.

14. Authority to select evaluators and consultants, formulate and approve their TORs and manage the human resources employed in evaluation is also important as these factors affect the independence of the process and the results of evaluation. So too is the authority to revise and finalize reports after discussion with the relevant partners.

15. The operational policies and procedures set down in this document incorporate all of these aspects of independence:

- (i) The OE Director will be directly responsible to the Executive Board; he or she will be appointed and removed only with the endorsement of the Board, and will not be eligible for re-employment within IFAD after the completion of his or her fixed term(s).
- (ii) The OE Director will be responsible for devising the OE strategy and for determining ways and means to achieve it.
- (iii) The OE Director, acting independently of IFAD management with the approval of the Executive Board and the Governing Council of IFAD, will be responsible for formulating OE's annual work programme and budget.
- (iv) The OE Director will have the authority to issue final evaluation reports directly and simultaneously to the Executive Board, the President and other stakeholders, and disclose them to the general public without prior clearance from anyone outside OE.
- (v) The President will delegate to the OE Director authority to make all personnel and operational decisions concerning OE staff and consultants in accordance with IFAD rules and procedures.

⁸ OECD/DAC, *Review by DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD, Paris, 1998, page 24.



B. Accountability

16. IFAD recognizes that a main purpose of evaluation is to provide a basis for accountability, including the disclosure and dissemination of information to the public. Accountability in this context refers to the assessment of developmental results, the impact of development assistance and the performance of the parties involved. This is different from accountability for the use of public funds in financial and legal terms, usually the responsibility of auditors and legal specialists.

17. IFAD considers accountability as a necessary first step in the learning process. Systematic independent evaluation of completed projects and past and ongoing policies and strategies is indispensable if IFAD is to learn from its experience, both positive and negative, and improve its future effectiveness.

18. Accountability through evaluation analysis requires a rigorous methodology for the assessment of developmental results and impacts and the performance of the partners concerned. It also requires that successes, unexpected results, shortcomings and failures highlighted during the evaluation be disclosed to relevant stakeholders and the general public without interference from any vested interest.

19. Moreover, the accountability of an international development organization as a whole is facilitated if the results of individual evaluations can be aggregated and consolidated at the organizational level. This allows a better analysis of the effectiveness of a given development organization and of the cross-cutting issues that impinge on its overall performance.

20. These aspects of accountability will be reflected in the following operational policies:

- (i) As in the past, every year OE will evaluate on the basis of clear criteria a sample of completed IFAD projects, a number of IFAD cooperation strategies in countries with large IFAD portfolios, as well as key IFAD policies, strategies, programmes and processes.
- (ii) Interim evaluations will remain mandatory before a further phase of a project is embarked on or a similar project is launched in the same region.⁹
- (iii) IFAD management will ensure that IFAD officials and IFAD-assisted projects promptly provide all documents and other information required by OE, and participate and cooperate actively in the evaluation process.
- (iv) The OE Director will issue evaluation reports to the President and the Board without prior clearance from anyone outside OE.
- (v) As in the past, OE will ensure that all evaluation reports and other evaluation products are disclosed to the public at the completion of the evaluation process and disseminated widely through the print and electronic media in accordance with IFAD's disclosure policy.
- (vi) OE will work with a methodological framework for evaluation that helps assess and evaluate impact at project completion; produce a consolidated picture of the results,

⁹ In the event that IFAD operations do not meet the requirements to include an interim evaluation in OE's work programme, then it is the responsibility of IFAD's management to provide the necessary justification to the Board.



impact and performance of a cohort of projects in a given year; and synthesize learning from evaluation.

- (vii) This methodological framework will be the basis for an annual report on the results and impact of IFAD operations, which OE will present to the Board and IFAD management starting in 2003.

C. Partnership

21. Establishing a constructive partnership between OE and other relevant stakeholders is essential both for generating evaluation recommendations and for ensuring their uptake and ownership. Fostering such partnership takes time and effort, and depends crucially on the attitude and behaviour of those conducting the evaluation. Meaningful partnership also requires, inter alia, that evaluations are perceived by stakeholders as being useful, well informed, relevant and timely, and are clearly and concisely presented. Given the value of partnership, OE intends to make respect for the partners whose performance it is called upon to evaluate a main starting point of its evaluation work.

22. IFAD evaluation policies and instruments aim at the appropriate engagement of stakeholders in the evaluation process, while safeguarding the independent role of OE. OE remains, however, solely responsible for producing the evaluation report and its findings. In particular, the following existing policies and practices will retain their validity:

- (i) As in the past, at both the beginning of the evaluation process and during fieldwork, OE will invite all relevant stakeholders, including the operational staff of IFAD and the borrower country, cooperating institutions and beneficiaries, to contribute information and insights.
- (ii) At the beginning of every evaluation, OE will continue to ensure that the evaluation process is understood, is transparent to all stakeholders and includes a timetable agreed with them.
- (iii) In line with international good practices in evaluation, OE will, as in the past, share draft evaluation reports with all concerned for purposes of obtaining comments, in particular on possible factual errors and inaccuracies.
- (iv) To firm up the partnership aspects of evaluation mentioned above, OE will, as before, form a core learning partnership (CLP) among the main users of the evaluation.¹⁰

D. Learning

23. Establishing effective feedback loops from evaluation to policy-makers, operational staff and the general public is essential if evaluation lessons are to be learned. The recognition that feedback that stakeholders understand and find useful is a key output of evaluation has led OE to nurture partnerships with stakeholders to ensure that evaluation recommendations are adopted and lead to the required changes and performance improvements. OE recognizes, in particular, that often evaluation reports, by their very nature, cannot propose the kind of clear-cut operational recommendations that implementers need. Similarly, OE recognizes that evaluation results need to be communicated through user-friendly products. It will pursue this objective through the following existing policies:

- (i) As is current practice, after completion of the independent evaluation report, OE will facilitate a process through which the main users of the evaluation can deepen their

¹⁰ The CLP is defined in paragraph 33 in more detail.



understanding of the evaluation findings and recommendations and make them more operational.

- (ii) As and when required, the OE Director will assign evaluation officers to participate in selected project development teams and programme and policy working groups in order to facilitate the understanding of evaluation recommendations.
- (iii) In addition to the evaluation report, OE will continue to prepare short, easy-to-read communication products on evaluation findings and recommendations and disseminate them widely among IFAD staff, their development partners and the general public.

24. While OE has a key role to play in generating and communicating evaluation lessons, responsibility for uptake and learning extends beyond OE and requires the commitment of IFAD management, the Executive Board and country stakeholders to follow up and act on lessons learned. In response to this need, IFAD will institute the following policies for establishing effective feedback loops:

- (i) The President will ensure that evaluation recommendations found to be feasible by users are adopted at the operational, strategic and policy levels (as appropriate).
- (ii) As in the past, the Evaluation Committee will provide feedback to OE and report to the Executive Board on specific evaluation issues, and the latter will provide feedback to IFAD management.

**PART TWO:
IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS**

These procedures and arrangements span the entire evaluation cycle from the formulation of the OE work programme and budget to the finalization and disclosure of evaluation reports. They are the means by which the policy framework described in Part One of this document is implemented in practice.

I. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETING

A. Work Programme and Budget Formulation Process

25. Each year, OE, while retaining its final authority to decide on the content of its annual work programme, will register the interest of its partners and prepare a two-year rolling work programme for independent evaluation. This work programme will be based on the selection of a critical mass of evaluations that, according to OE, is required for promoting accountability and learning in IFAD as well as for the preparation of the annual report on the results and impact of IFAD operations. Every work programme will include a mix of different types of evaluation.

26. The OE budget builds on the annual work programme and will be divided into two basic categories: (i) staff; and (ii) evaluation work. The staff budget covers regular and fixed-term staff costs. The evaluation work budget category contains items reflecting the major priority areas of OE's evaluation work, namely project evaluations, country programme evaluations, thematic and corporate-level evaluations, etc.¹¹

B. Work Programme and Budget Approval Process

27. The OE Director will formulate the annual OE work programme and budget independently of the management and transmit it to the President, who will submit it unchanged to the Executive Board and Governing Council for approval.

28. The OE annual work programme and budget will be presented together, but as a separate submission, with IFAD's annual work programme and budget to the Executive Board for approval, and to the following Governing Council meeting.

29. The President will convey to the Director of OE without change any changes requested by the Board to the OE work programme and budget. The Director of OE will then resubmit the work programme and budget to the Board *via* the President, as described above.

30. The Governing Council will be requested to delegate to the Board the authority to amend or supplement OE's work programme and budget by separate decision during the year. The levels of the OE component and the remainder of IFAD's budget will be determined independently of each other.

¹¹ These different types of evaluation are described in Annex III.



II. DEVISING THE EVALUATION APPROACH

31. For every evaluation, OE currently prepares an approach paper, which is the first step in the evaluation process. This document has a standard format covering the following aspects of the proposed evaluation:

- (i) background and rationale;
- (ii) objectives;
- (iii) expected focus and outcome, key questions and methodology;
- (iv) CLP and the other partners involved¹²;
- (v) process and workplan;
- (vi) human resource requirements for the evaluation; and
- (vii) communication and dissemination of results.

32. As in the past, the approach paper will be shared for comments with all the parties involved in the evaluation. This makes the evaluation process transparent to stakeholders and helps coordinate their inputs and participation according to a realistic timetable.

33. While preparing the approach paper, OE will identify, as it does now, members of the CLP, which consists of the main users of evaluation. At the beginning of the process, the CLP helps flag issues and information sources for the evaluation. After the completion of the independent evaluation report, the CLP discusses the evaluation findings, deepens the understanding of the findings and recommendations, and eventually works out the operational implications of evaluation recommendations and the division of labour and responsibilities for their implementation among the various stakeholders involved. The CLP is assigned this role because evaluation reports by their very nature often cannot make clear-cut recommendations that can immediately be adopted and implemented. The CLP's output is recorded in an understanding or agreement at completion point (ACP) among the stakeholders involved.¹³

III. THE EVALUATION ANALYSIS AND REPORT

A. Conducting the Evaluation Analysis

34. The overall responsibility for the conduct of the evaluation analysis rests exclusively with OE. As in the past, however, OE will engage relevant IFAD officials and stakeholders at appropriate stages of the evaluation process, taking into account the role of the partners concerned.

35. IFAD management will ensure that IFAD officials and IFAD-assisted projects promptly provide all documents and other information required by OE and participate and cooperate actively in the evaluation process.

36. Again as in the past, before initiating an independent analysis, OE will invite the implementers¹⁴ and the beneficiaries concerned to provide a self-assessment. This is followed by OE's independent analysis based on internationally accepted evaluation criteria, and a methodology aimed at promoting accountability through impact and performance assessment. This analysis will continue to be grounded in extensive fieldwork and a review of all information made available by relevant stakeholders.

¹² While the composition of the CLP depends on the nature of the evaluation and the stakeholders involved, the CLP typically consists of representatives of the Programme Management Department, the borrower, the implementing agency, the cooperating institution, NGOs involved in the project's implementation and, where feasible, organizations representing the rural poor, in addition to OE as a facilitator.

¹³ The role of ACP is described in Part Two, section IV.

¹⁴ Project authorities and other agencies involved in the implementation of the project.



37. Normally consultants recruited by OE to undertake evaluation work will carry out the field evaluation mission. This fieldwork guarantees the quality and impartiality of the information on which the evaluation analysis and report are based. It is OE's main instrument for fact-finding, data and perceptions gathering, triangulation and validation. As a rule, OE evaluation missions are carried out with the participation of in-country stakeholders, in particular the rural people involved in IFAD-assisted projects, the project management units and NGOs involved in project or programme implementation. The evaluation mission contributes to strengthening the position of the rural poor in their interaction with implementing agencies, governments and IFAD itself, through intensive works at community level and evaluation workshops with all stakeholders. It is the main instrument to enable the rural poor and their partners to participate in the evaluation learning process with IFAD, and to enable IFAD to learn from them.

38. In continuation of the prevailing practice, the evaluation mission will present and discuss its preliminary findings and conclusions at meetings with all evaluation partners. This interaction allows the mission to provide feedback to all partners, while in turn giving them an opportunity to provide additional information and insights that can be used in the draft evaluation report, for which OE remains solely responsible.

B. The Evaluation Report

39. The evaluation team comprising consultants recruited by OE to conduct the evaluation will prepare the report, which will consist of the executive summary, main text and working documents as annexes, if necessary. The evaluation team will work under the supervision of a lead evaluator, assigned by the OE Director to manage the evaluation process. The lead evaluator will be responsible, as now, for managing the evaluation process and ensuring the quality and content of the evaluation report, which should be short and user-friendly.

40. OE will use peer review from within the Division to ensure quality standards. When undertaking a complex evaluation, it may also engage an ad hoc advisory committee to provide expert advice and feedback.

41. Before the report is issued, OE will share it with IFAD management and, whenever applicable, with the concerned borrowing country's authorities, the implementing agencies and the cooperating institution in order to check facts and accuracy and obtain comments.

42. OE will decide which comments should be incorporated in the revised (final) report. As a general rule:

- (i) The draft report is revised to incorporate comments that correct factual errors or inaccuracies.
- (ii) It may also incorporate, by means of a note in the report, judgements that differ from those of the evaluation team.
- (iii) Comments not incorporated in the final evaluation report can be provided separately and included as an appendix to the report.

43. The OE Director will have the authority to issue final evaluation reports, including the ACP¹⁵ directly and simultaneously to the Executive Board and the President without prior clearance from anyone outside OE.

¹⁵ See paragraph 45.



44. IFAD management may receive, comment on and respond to the draft and final evaluation reports, but the President and other members of IFAD management will not have the right to approve, hold back, request changes to or otherwise modify such draft or final evaluation reports.

IV. LEARNING WITH PARTNERS TO OPERATIONALIZE THE RECOMMENDATIONS

45. As per current practice, upon completion of each independent evaluation report by OE, OE and relevant IFAD officials and other stakeholders will develop a separate action-oriented document, called the understanding or agreement at completion point. The ACP is the end point of a process that aims to determine how well evaluation users understand the recommendations proposed in the independent evaluation, and how they propose to make them operational. Interaction among the stakeholders working through the CLP helps deepen the understanding of evaluation findings and recommendations contained in the independent evaluation report, and elicits ownership for implementing the recommendations. The ACP illustrates the stakeholders' understanding of the evaluation, findings and recommendations, their proposal to implement them and their commitment to act upon them. OE will participate in this process to ensure a full understanding of its findings and recommendations.

46. The ACP will continue to be the outcome of the work of the CLP.¹⁶ The two objectives of the ACP are to: (i) clarify and deepen the understanding of evaluation recommendations, document those that are found acceptable and feasible and those that are not, make the former more operational, and eventually generate a response by the stakeholders on how they intend to act upon them within the framework of an action plan that assigns responsibilities and deadlines; and (ii) flag evaluation insights and learning hypotheses for further future discussions and debate.

47. The ACP will make explicit reference to the partners with whom it was concluded. These include all major users of evaluation results such as the relevant IFAD operational unit(s), project and borrower country authorities and other relevant stakeholders. OE's participation in the ACP process will be as explained in paragraph 45 above.

V. REPORTING, FOLLOW-UP, DISCLOSURE AND DISSEMINATION

A. Reporting and Follow-Up at Management Level

48. The OE Director will convey completed evaluation reports including the ACP and other evaluation documents, such as the annual report on the results and impact of IFAD operations¹⁷ and the annual OE work programme, simultaneously to the Executive Board of IFAD, the President and, whenever applicable, the concerned borrowing country's authorities, the implementing agencies and cooperating institutions.

49. The President will be responsible for ensuring that evaluation recommendations found feasible by the users are adopted at the operational, strategic and policy levels (as appropriate) and their implementation adequately tracked. The President will provide the Board an annual report on the status of adoption and implementation of evaluation recommendations and OE will provide to the Board its independent comments on this report, including an inventory of recommendations not found feasible by the users, hence not implemented.

¹⁶ See Part Two, section II, paragraph 33.

¹⁷ The contents of the annual report are outlined in Part Two, section V.B.



B. Reporting to the Executive Board and the Evaluation Committee

50. All evaluation reports will be submitted to the Executive Board at the same time as they are forwarded to the President of IFAD. The reports will be issued in the original language with English translation of the executive summary and the ACP. A translation of all evaluation reports into all official languages could be considered upon verification of the cost involved relative to the benefits associated with such practice.

51. Every year OE will also submit to the Executive Board an annual report on the results and impact of IFAD operations in its September session. This report will present a consolidated picture of results and impact achievement, and a summary of cross-cutting issues and learning insights on the basis of the project evaluations undertaken during the reporting year.

52. As is currently the case, the Evaluation Committee will select from OE's work programme a number of evaluation reports to review and discuss at its three regular sessions during the year or at additional informal sessions.

53. The Evaluation Committee will also continue to provide feedback to OE and report to the Executive Board on specific evaluation issues. The outcomes of each Evaluation Committee meeting will be summarized in official minutes. The Committee will report to the Board on its deliberations following each and every Evaluation Committee session.

C. Disclosure and Dissemination to the Public

54. OE will continue to produce evaluation summaries, called "Profiles", that provide an overview of the main evaluation conclusions and recommendations, and "Insights" that contain one learning theme from the evaluation and serve to stimulate discussion among practitioners and other development specialists on some important issues.

55. As in the past, OE will ensure that all evaluation reports including the ACP and Profiles and Insights are disclosed to the public at the completion of the evaluation process and disseminated widely through the print and electronic media in accordance with IFAD's disclosure policy.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A. Director of OE

56. The President will nominate a candidate for the position of Director of OE to the Board for endorsement, as recorded in the Executive Board minutes, whereupon the President will appoint the Director for a fixed term of five years, which may be renewed only once.

57. Similarly, the President will remove the OE Director upon and only upon the endorsement of the Board, as recorded in the Executive Board minutes.

58. The OE Director will not be re-employed by IFAD upon completion of his or her term(s).

59. The OE Director will be directly responsible to the Executive Board¹⁸.

¹⁸ The President's non-voting participation in the Board as its chairperson will not imply in any way the exercise of supervisory or other authority or responsibility by the President, in his or her capacity as chairperson or any other, over the OE Director.



B. OE Staff and Evaluation Consultants

60. The President will delegate authority to make all personnel and operational decisions concerning OE staff and consultants to the OE Director, in accordance with IFAD rules and procedures covering human resources. Within these rules and procedures, the Director will have authority for managing OE personnel, their workplans and the demands on their time.
61. The OE Director will ensure that OE is staffed by independent-minded, experienced and sufficiently senior evaluators.
62. As per current practice, OE will make certain that the engagement of any individual in an evaluation exercise will not generate a conflict of interest. In particular, an evaluation will not be entrusted to an OE staff member who has been responsible in the past for the design, implementation and supervision of the project, programme or policy to be evaluated.
63. A consultant who has worked previously on the design or implementation of a project, programme or policy may be engaged as a resource person for providing information to the evaluation team but not as a consultant entrusted with the conduct of the evaluation analysis and the preparation of the evaluation report.
64. OE staff other than the OE Director, will be entitled to seek employment in other units of IFAD. IFAD management will treat OE staff who apply for positions outside OE as other IFAD staff, and in accordance with IFAD personnel policies and procedures.

**PART THREE:
SUMMARY OF HIGH-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES**

This part of the document summarizes the role of the Executive Board in evaluation; the current composition, role and responsibility of the Board's Evaluation Committee; and the terms of reference of the OE Director.

I. ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN EVALUATION

65. IFAD's Executive Board is the Fund's oversight body for all purposes. In accordance with the role that it has specified for itself in relation to evaluation, the Board will:

- (i) oversee IFAD's independent evaluation and assess the overall quality and impact of IFAD programmes and projects as documented in evaluation reports;
- (ii) approve policies aimed at enhancing the independence and effectiveness of the evaluation function;
- (iii) receive directly from OE all evaluation reports, including the annual report on the results and impact of IFAD operations;
- (iv) approve the TOR and rules of procedure of the Evaluation Committee, which it has established to enhance and fortify its role in evaluation;
- (v) endorse the appointment, removal and renewal of service of the OE Director; and
- (vi) approve the OE's annual work programme and recommend to the Governing Council the approval of OE's budget.

II. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

66. The following is a summary of the current status and role and responsibility of the Evaluation Committee as approved by the Board in 1999 (document EB 99/68/R.12 of the Sixty-Eighth Session of the Executive Board, December 1999).

A. Composition and Chairpersonship

67. Established in 1987, the Evaluation Committee is made up of nine members drawn from the 36 Executive Board members and alternate members: four countries from List A, two from List B and three from List C. Committee members are elected by the Executive Board for a three-year term of office, coinciding with that of the Executive Board. The Sixty-First Session of the Executive Board (September 1997) decided that the chairpersonship of the Evaluation Committee would remain permanently with List B and C countries. During the Sixtieth Session (April 1997), the Board endorsed a proposal to allow other Executive Directors to sit in during Committee sessions as observers.

B. Terms of Reference

68. The Evaluation Committee was established to assist the Executive Board by undertaking in-depth reviews of a selected number of evaluations and studies, relieving the Board of those duties.



Until 1999, its work was governed by organizational principles, adopted at its First Session, that stated that the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board should be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the work of the Evaluation Committee. In 1999, the Committee proposed replacing those principles with a TOR and Rules of Procedure (reproduced in Annex IV of this document together with a summary of the most significant changes introduced through the TOR). The Board approved the TOR of the Evaluation Committee as follows:

- (i) to enhance the ability of the Executive Board to assess the overall quality and impact of IFAD programmes and projects through a discussion of selected evaluations and reviews conducted by the Office of Evaluation and Studies, as well as to fortify the Board's knowledge of lessons learned in IFAD's programmes and projects and to enable Member States to better assess the Fund's role in the pursuit of a global development strategy;
- (ii) to discuss with the Office of Evaluation and Studies the scope and contents of its annual work programme and strategic directions;
- (iii) to satisfy itself that the Fund has an effective and efficient evaluation function;
- (iv) to report to the Executive Board on the Committee's work and, as appropriate, make recommendations and seek guidance on evaluation issues of policy and strategic importance; and
- (v) to undertake field visits, as and when required, and participate in evaluation missions, workshops, round-table meetings and related activities in order to assist the Evaluation Committee in conducting its duties.

C. Considerations for the Future

69. The Board will review, or entrust the Evaluation Committee to review, the role of the Committee in light of the evaluation policy contained in this document. As indicated by the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, any proposals to change the Committee's role and responsibilities shall take into account, among other considerations, the potential workload and cost implications for the Evaluation Committee and IFAD. They will also have to pay special attention to the fact that IFAD's Executive Board and its Evaluation Committee are non-resident governing bodies, and that currently the Committee meets three times every year and reviews about six of the 20-25 reports issued each year by OE.

III. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE DIRECTOR OF OE

70. The OE Director will be responsible directly to the Executive Board for the implementation of IFAD's evaluation policy as described in this document. His or her TOR will incorporate all the responsibilities for managing OE as the independent evaluation function of the Fund in accordance with its rules and procedures. These responsibilities will include, *inter alia*:

- (i) managing OE as an effective, efficient and independent evaluation function of the Fund;
- (ii) developing operational policies, strategies and related instruments to enhance the independence and effectiveness of the evaluation function;
- (iii) ensuring high-quality professional work by instituting the necessary enabling environment for and coaching of OE staff and setting quality standards for OE outputs;



- (iv) formulating and implementing the annual work programme agreed upon by IFAD's Executive Board and reporting directly to the Executive Board on evaluation issues;
- (v) communicating evaluation results to stakeholders (as referred to in paragraph 23 of this document) and the general public;
- (vi) assisting IFAD's operations and IFAD-assisted projects in the development of their self-assessment capacity; and
- (vii) cooperating with the heads of evaluation of other international financial institutions and development agencies.



**PART FOUR:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION POLICY**

71. With the exception of the OE work programme and budget for 2003 and the related question of the promotion of OE staff, the new evaluation policy will become effective as of its approval by the Board. Policy provisions that are already current at IFAD will enter into force upon the Board's approval of the policy. However, there will be a staggered introduction, between the date the Executive Board approves the policy and the date the policy becomes effective, of those provisions that are new, have budgetary implications and/or require a lead time for implementation. The following policy provisions will be implemented in this way:

- (i) The formulation of the OE work programme and budget¹⁹ for 2004 will commence in April 2003 under the new policy. However, the expenditures and the implementation of the OE work programme for 2003 will be managed under the current system and within the OE work programme and budget for 2003 already approved by the Board and the Governing Council.
- (ii) The provisions concerning "Devising the Evaluation Approach"²⁰ and "The Evaluation Analysis and Report"²¹ – including OE's authority to issue evaluation reports directly and without prior clearance from anyone outside OE²², and the provisions relating to learning with partners²³ and reporting, follow-up, disclosure and dissemination²⁴ – will enter into force upon the Board's approval of the policy as they have no budgetary implications and consist of practices that are mostly already in place. However, the annual President's report on the status of adoption of evaluation recommendations²⁵ will be submitted to the Board for the first time in 2004.
- (iii) Provisions relating to the management of OE staff and consultants²⁶ will enter into force upon the Board's approval of this policy. However, the recruitment of staff under the new policy will commence with the first vacancy that occurs after approval, while provisions relating to the promotion of OE staff will apply with effect from 1 January 2004 as these have budgetary implications.

¹⁹ See Part Two, section I.

²⁰ See Part Two, section II.

²¹ See Part Two, section III.

²² See paragraph 43.

²³ See Part Two, section IV.

²⁴ See Part Two, section V.

²⁵ See paragraph 49.

²⁶ See Part Two, section VI.



- (iv) The provisions relating to the OE Director will be implemented after a decision from the Executive Board concerning the transition period for the implementation of paragraphs 97(a) and 97(b) of document GC 26/L.4, Enabling the Rural Poor to Overcome their Poverty: Report on the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (2004 – 2006).

ANNEX I

**PROVISIONS AND GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY THE CONSULTATION FOR
THE FORMULATION OF THE EVALUATION POLICY¹**

“96. ...The Consultation confirmed the need to formulate an evaluation policy for IFAD and provided guidance on elements to be considered in such policy formulation. These include:

- (a) the need to nurture and protect the independence of mind of OE evaluators;
- (b) the role of OE in the evaluation learning loop and that of IFAD management in ensuring that evaluation recommendations are followed up and that evaluation findings contribute to learning within IFAD;
- (c) the implication of the potentially increased burden and cost for the Evaluation Committee and IFAD; and
- (d) the definition of OE’s role in promoting evaluation capacity-building in developing countries.

97. In addition, the Consultation specified that the policy will include the following provisions related to the independence of the OE function:

- (a) The President will nominate a candidate to the Board for endorsement, as recorded in the Executive Board minutes, whereupon the President will appoint the OE Director for a fixed term, which may be renewed. Similarly, the President will remove the OE Director upon and only upon the endorsement of the Board, as recorded in the Executive Board minutes.
- (b) The OE Director will not be re-employed by IFAD upon completion of his or her term(s).
- (c) The OE Director will have the authority to issue final evaluation reports directly and simultaneously to the Executive Board and the President without prior clearance from anyone outside OE. IFAD management may receive, comment on and respond to the draft and final evaluation reports, but the President and other members of IFAD management will not have the right to approve, hold back, request changes to or otherwise modify such draft or final evaluation reports.
- (d) The OE Director will formulate independently from management the annual OE programme of work and budget and transmit it to the President, who will submit it unchanged to the Board and Governing Council for approval. Any change requested by the Board to the programme of work and budget will be conveyed by the President to the OE Director without further changes by the President, and resubmitted by the OE Director to the Board via the President, as described above. The Board will also have the authority to amend or supplement OE’s programme of work by separate decision during the year. The levels of the OE component and the remainder of the budget of IFAD will be determined independently of each other.
- (e) The President will delegate his authority to make all personnel and operational decisions concerning OE staff to the OE Director, in accordance with IFAD policies and procedures.”

¹ See document GC 26/L.4 entitled Enabling the Rural Poor to Overcome their Poverty: Report of the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources (2004-2006), paragraphs 96-97, pages 20-21.



ANNEX II

**SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION
AT IFAD**

- The evaluation function was established at IFAD as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Division shortly after the organization came into being in 1978. At that time, evaluation was combined with monitoring because the IFAD portfolio, consisting typically of projects lasting for seven years, plus extension, was not ready for evaluation. The M&E Division reported at that time to the Assistant President, Economic Policy Department. As noted below, significant changes have been taking place since then in the way monitoring and evaluation are organized at IFAD.
- On the basis of a proposal made in 1987 by the United States, the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board was established to assist the Executive Board by undertaking in-depth reviews of a selected number of evaluations and studies, relieving the Board of those duties. Until 1999, the work of the Evaluation Committee was governed by organizational principles adopted by the First Session of the Evaluation Committee. Although the TOR of the Evaluation Committee were not spelled out, these principles stated that the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board should be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the work of the Evaluation Committee.
- In 1994, the evaluation function was separated from monitoring and an independent Office of Evaluation and Studies was established as a result of recommendations made by the rapid external assessment of IFAD during the negotiation of the Fourth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. The assessment also recommended "direct reporting to the President of the Fund and to the Board". The OE Director started reporting directly to the President, and OE was then incorporated into the Office of the President.
- The self-assessment process that IFAD's operations has been pursuing to measure and monitor results of project implementation has evolved over time to respond to new priorities and to become increasingly efficient and comprehensive. This process, however, has not been fully effective in serving as a basis for the aggregation and coherent tracking of results. This is due mainly to diversity in defining baseline situations and indicators, lack of a unified methodology and shortcomings in the M&E capacity of ongoing projects. IFAD has taken several steps in recent years to address these constraints, but it will take several years to institutionalize self-assessment for purposes of accountability, contributing to learning from ongoing operations and devising remedies.
- In 1999, IFAD conducted a review of OE, including a survey of evaluation users, which led to a balanced approach to evaluation, one that sought to nurture the independence of mind of OE evaluators but also to fashion evaluation as a participatory and more effective learning process. These considerations led to: (i) new vision and mission statements for OE and an articulation of OE's strategic objectives; and (ii) the development of new instruments of evaluation, including new processes and products.



ANNEX II

- The Evaluation Committee did not have specific terms of reference until 1999, when the Committee proposed and the Executive Board approved TOR and Rules of Procedure in response to the desire expressed by several members to revitalize the Committee and make it more proactive. The Evaluation Committee and the Board reiterated that the Committee had been established with the specific purpose of assisting the Board in considering evaluation issues. They decided that the Committee would enhance its participation in several stages of the evaluation process; review OE's strategy, work programme and selected reports; and fortify the Board's understanding of OE's work and the lessons learned in IFAD projects and programmes in pursuit of a global development strategy.
- The Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources in 2002 endorsed the value of independent evaluation and its contribution to learning, and the role of IFAD management in ensuring that lessons from evaluation contribute to learning within IFAD. It called for a formal IFAD evaluation policy to be developed and provided guidelines and specific provisions to ensure the independence of OE and strengthen the learning loop (see page 1 of this document as well as Annex I).

TYPES OF EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED BY OE

Project Evaluations

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

- **Interim evaluations** are mandatory at the end of a project before embarking on a second phase of the same project or launching a similar project in the same region. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of such evaluations are used as the basis for assessing the justification of a second phase and improving the design and implementation of subsequent interventions. Over the years, the number of interim evaluations has increased dramatically. In 2002, they accounted for more than 90% of all project evaluations undertaken by OE.
- **Completion evaluations** are normally conducted after the finalization of the project completion report prepared by the borrower, with the assistance of 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 selected issues and subjects. In this way, thematic evaluations are expected to provide concrete building blocks for revisiting existing or formulating new and more effective 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. Country programme evaluations provide an assessment of the performance and impact of IFAD'-supported activities in countries with a large IFAD portfolio. Based on such assessments, these evaluations are expected to provide direct and concrete building blocks for revisiting existing or formulating new country strategy and opportunities papers. In particular, country programme evaluations 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 activities in individual countries. They are also expected to contribute elements to IFAD's policy dialogue on rural poverty reduction.

Corporate-Level Evaluations

4. Corporate-level evaluations are conducted to assess the effectiveness and impact of IFAD-wide policies, strategies, instruments and approaches. They are expected to generate insights and recommendations that can be used for the formulation of new and more effective policies and strategies.

CHANGES MADE IN 1999 IN THE WORKING OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

A. Changes in the Terms of Reference

The Evaluation Committee's TOR agreed in 1999 introduced the following specific changes in the way it worked:

- (a) The Committee now reviews the strategic directions and methodology of OE.
- (b) The Evaluation Committee now discusses the scope and contents of OE's annual work programme, which, so far, is formally approved by IFAD's management.¹
- (c) The Committee makes suggestions for including evaluations of particular interest to it in the OE work programme.
- (d) Previously, OE would select the evaluations to be presented to the Committee, but now the Committee, based on the OE work programme, decides in December what it would like to discuss in the coming year in each of its three sessions.
- (e) The Committee now can request the chairperson of the IFAD Board to include evaluation issues in the Board agenda.
- (f) In order to discuss special issues, provision has been made for ad hoc sessions of the Committee in addition to the three formal ones each year.
- (g) In principle, once a year, Committee members participate in field trips during evaluation missions in order to see IFAD's work on the ground and participate in round table workshops to discuss evaluation recommendations and the agreement arising from the evaluation process among relevant stakeholders.
- (h) The decisions taken at each Evaluation Committee meeting are now summarized in official minutes which are then consolidated in a separate chapter of the annual report on evaluation that is submitted to the Board.

B. Introduction of Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the proceedings of the Evaluation Committee, except as specified below:

Rule 1 Convening of Meetings

The Evaluation Committee shall hold three sessions in each calendar year. The first meeting shall be held the day before or after IFAD's annual Governing Council session, whichever is more convenient for Committee members. The remaining two sessions shall be held on the day preceding the September and December Executive Board sessions, respectively. Additional informal meetings in the same calendar year may also be called on an ad hoc basis by the chairperson.

¹ This will change in view of the new arrangements specified in Part Two, section I of this document.

ANNEX IV

Rule 2
Notification of Sessions and Agenda

The IFAD Secretariat shall inform each Committee member of the date and place of a session at least thirty days in advance. During its December session, the Evaluation Committee shall draw up a tentative agenda for all three sessions in the subsequent year. To facilitate this work, the Office of Evaluation and Studies shall provide the Committee with its proposed work programme for the year. The Committee retains the prerogative to revise by adding, deleting, defining or amending items on the agenda during the course of the year. The agenda shall be communicated by the Secretariat to all Evaluation Committee members along with the notification of sessions.

Rule 3
Membership and Terms of Office

The composition of the Evaluation Committee shall consist of nine Executive Board members or alternate members: four members from List A, two from List B and three from List C. The term of office of the Evaluation Committee shall be three years and coincide with the term of office of the Executive Board.

Rule 4
Quorum

The quorum for any meeting of the Evaluation Committee shall be constituted by five members.

Rule 5
Chairperson

The Committee shall elect its chairperson from List B and C Committee members. In the absence of the chairperson during a scheduled meeting of the Committee, the chair shall be temporarily assumed by another member from List B or C selected by the Committee.

Rule 6
Decisions

The Committee shall make every effort to arrive at decisions by consensus. Where such efforts have been exhausted, the chairperson's rulings shall stand when supported by four other members.

Rule 7
Attendance at Meetings

In addition to Evaluation Committee members and the Director of the Office of Evaluation and Studies, the said Director may designate members of his or her staff to participate in the deliberations of the Committee. The Director shall also invite other IFAD staff members to provide, pursuant to the Committee's request, such information as may be required in carrying out the Committee's responsibilities. Other Executive Board members not members of the Evaluation Committee may also attend the meetings as observers.



ANNEX IV

Rule 8²

Documentation, Records and Reports

The proceedings of the Committee, documents provided to the Committee and the records of the Committee's deliberations shall be restricted and available only to members of the Committee and members of the Executive Board. The proceedings of the Committee shall be reflected in the Minutes of the Evaluation Committee, unless the Committee decides otherwise.

Rule 9

Reporting to the Executive Board

The Evaluation Committee shall provide a written report of its deliberations to the Executive Board during the latter's April session. The report, which shall be included in the Office of Evaluation and Studies' Annual Progress Report on Evaluation, shall be dispatched to Board members according to established Board procedures. The chairperson of the Committee may, in addition, provide an oral report during the April Executive Board session. The Evaluation Committee may also provide ad hoc written or oral reports to the Board during its September and/or December sessions.

² However, Rule 8 has been superseded by the IFAD disclosure policy approved by the Executive Board in May 2000. The disclosure policy requires that all evaluation reports together with the documentation submitted to the Evaluation Committee be disclosed to the public.