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IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Executive Board – Eightieth Session
Rome, 17-18 December 2003

**REPORT OF THE THIRD SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee held during its Third Special Session on 27 October 2003. The agenda items of the session included: (a) the Work Programme and Budget for 2004 of the Office of Evaluation (OE); (b) report(s) of the Evaluation Committee Chairperson to the Executive Board in December 2003; and (c) other business.
2. **OE Work Programme and Budget for 2004.** The Committee discussed the first comprehensive document¹ on the OE work programme and budget for 2004 produced independently by OE following the approval of the IFAD evaluation policy by the Executive Board during its April 2003 session. The overall objective of the session on this item was to: (a) provide the Committee with an overview of the OE 2004 work programme and budget; and (b) discuss with Committee members key issues related to the 2004 work programme and budget, so as to benefit from its guidance before preparing OE's final submission for the December 2003 Executive Board for approval, in conformity with the provisions of the evaluation policy.
3. The Committee agreed with the proposed priority areas and objectives, which are: (a) evaluation work requested by the Executive Board and Evaluation Committee and/or included in the Report of the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources; (b) conduct of selected corporate-level evaluations, country programme evaluations, thematic evaluations and project evaluations; and (c) further development of the evaluation methodology. The Committee also agreed with the proposed work programme and human and financial resource requirements of OE for 2004. In general terms, it recommended that in 2004 and in future years OE should continue to strengthen its work and devise a work programme of a realistic scope and size.

¹ This document (EC 2003/S3/W.P.2) is available on the IFAD internet site under the section on the Evaluation Committee.

4. The Committee concurred with the list of evaluations proposed for 2004 as contained in Annex 1 of the document under consideration. It noted that evaluations were selected based on a coherent set of criteria developed by OE included in Annex 5 of the document. More specifically, based on a proposal made by OE, the Committee was invited to provide its recommendation on the topic for the corporate-level evaluation (CLE) to be undertaken by OE in 2004. Following discussions during the session, the Committee recommended that OE conduct the CLE on IFAD's direct supervision pilot programme next year, as this would eventually provide the members with an overall analysis and picture of IFAD supervision modalities.² It also asked OE to plan for undertaking a CLE of IFAD's approach to gender equity and empowerment in 2005.

5. On the development of the evaluation methodology, the Committee highlighted the need for OE to devote resources to train staff and consultants, as well as sensitize concerned project staff in the use of the methodological framework for project evaluations. The Committee also requested clarification, which was provided by OE, on how OE intends to conduct self-assessments in IFAD-supported projects in the framework of the independent evaluation work. The Committee expressed its interest in discussing in 2004 the country programme evaluation (CPE) methodology currently being prepared by OE.

6. As requested by the Executive Board in April 2003, the Committee discussed the need to revise its rules of procedure and terms of reference in 2004. While discussing this topic under the agenda item on Other Business (see paragraph 11), the Committee outlined a process for this task. It was agreed that a special session of the Evaluation Committee would be organized early in 2004 to brainstorm on the main issues related to the rules of procedure and terms of reference of the Evaluation Committee. On the basis of the outcome of this special session, OE will assist by preparing a written proposal for the Committee's consideration during the next planned session in April 2004. Consequently, OE will revise the document and prepare a further proposal for the Committee's review during its September 2004 session. The final proposal would then be submitted to the Executive Board for approval during its December 2004 session.

7. The Committee noted that OE will contribute to and monitor the implementation of a number of internal implementation and organizational arrangements that are required to ensure the smooth implementation of the evaluation policy. It also welcomed that these arrangements have been summarized in an IFAD President's Bulletin to be issued shortly to all staff as per normal practice. The Committee highlighted the importance of this bulletin, as it would serve to clarify to staff arrangements governing the relationships between OE and other IFAD organizational units following the approval of the evaluation policy. The Committee requested IFAD to provide the said bulletin to Executive Board members as an information paper.

8. Overall, the Committee endorsed the proposed budget level and the various components of the same. On the budget presentation, the Committee requested OE to provide a more comprehensive illustration of the budget for approval in December 2003. That is, the final proposal should include in the same table a comparison between the original OE budget approved by the Governing Council in February 2003 and the restated budget in October 2003 that takes into account the fluctuations of the United States dollar versus the euro. This would allow for a better understanding of the level of the proposed 2004 budget. In addition, it requested OE to provide information in the aforementioned budget table on the amount of technical assistance grant funds mobilized in 2003, as well as an indication of the Independent External Evaluation budget (which is administered by OE and has already been approved by the Executive Board in September 2003). Finally, the Committee agreed with the contingency allocation that OE has included, in consultation with IFAD's Office of the Controller, in its 2004 budget submission.

² The Committee will discuss the CLE on supervision through cooperating institutions in its December 2003 session.

9. The Committee discussed OE's human resource requirements in 2004. It agreed with the suggested realignment in OE of its human resources to meet the requirements of the evaluation policy. In particular, it supported the recommendation made by OE in consultation with the Office of Human Resources of IFAD to fix the minimum grade (P-3) to be offered to evaluation officers and the maximum grade (P-5) that they can reach in their career with OE. Moreover, the Committee agreed with the proposal to upgrade the position of a Senior Evaluation Officer in OE to the level of Deputy Director, for which the Committee felt there was a clear need. In fact, some members were of the impression that such a position already existed in OE. The Committee agreed that this upgrading was required to reflect the considerable changes that have already occurred in the concerned staff's job description due to the increasing demands on OE in general and its Director in particular to meet the requirements of IFAD's independent evaluation function. The Committee noted that all the proposed human resource realignments would not have any consequences on the total number of staff in OE.

10. **Report(s) of the Evaluation Committee Chairperson to the Executive Board in December 2003.** Under this item, the chairperson recalled that some Executive Board Directors had expressed in September 2003 that they did not have adequate time to review the Evaluation Committee chairperson's report on its Thirty-Fourth Session held on 5 September. While endorsing the said report, the Board's chairman invited Board members to provide any comments they had after the September Board session. The Board also requested the Evaluation Committee to consider any potential comments at its next session. On this item, the Committee chairperson conveyed that no written comments had been received on the chairperson's report of the Thirty-Fourth Session. Barring the receipt of comments by the December session of the Committee, the text of this report presented to the September 2003 Board can be considered final.

11. **Other Business.** Three topics were covered under this agenda item, including (a) a proposal by OE to inform the Executive Board of the availability of relevant evaluation reports before Board sessions; (b) the field visit of the Evaluation Committee to Indonesia in 2004; and (c) the revision of the rules of procedure and terms of reference of the Committee. The decisions taken by the Committee on item (c) have already been covered in paragraph 6. On item (a), the Committee agreed to an OE proposal that OE inform all Board Directors, in writing ahead of a given Board session, of the availability of relevant evaluation reports on topics included in the Executive Board's agenda. This proposal is an expansion of the decision taken by the Executive Board in December 2002 to receive, whenever available, the Agreement at Completion Point of CPEs for Board discussions on the corresponding country strategic opportunities paper. In addition, OE would dispatch in advance any such evaluation reports to the Board as background documentation. On item (b), the Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for its invitation to participate in the CPE national round-table workshop and to visit selected IFAD-supported projects in the country. Members conveyed their interest to participate in this event and requested OE to initiate the preparation of the field visit, which, based on the various engagements of Committee members with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, should most appropriately take place in March 2004.