

a

IFAD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Executive Board – Eighty-Second Session
Rome, 8-9 September 2004

**FOURTH STATUS REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE
INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF IFAD**

**SUBMITTED BY THE
DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF EVALUATION**

I. BACKGROUND

1. In April 2003, at its Seventy-Eighth Session, the Executive Board adopted the Report of the Chairman of the Evaluation Committee on the Independent External Evaluation of IFAD (document EB 2003/78/R.45). The Board endorsed the organizational arrangements, governance structure and other provisions contained in the report. It also decided that the Director of the Office of Evaluation (OE) would provide a status report on the progress of the independent external evaluation (IEE) at each Executive Board meeting while the IEE is underway. This is the fourth such status report. The first report was tabled at the Board's September 2003 session, the second at its December 2003 session, and the third at its April 2004 session.

II. RECAPITULATION OF EARLIER STATUS REPORTS

2. The first three status reports submitted by OE covered the following aspects of the IEE:
- (a) constitution of the IEE Steering Committee and the identification of two senior independent advisers to advise the OE Director in supervising the IEE;
 - (b) preparation of the IEE terms of reference (TOR) and their endorsement by the IEE Steering Committee on 15 July 2003;
 - (c) a report on IEE resource requirements submitted by the OE Director to the Executive Board at its September 2003 session, and the Board's approval of the detailed budget amounting to USD 1 702 030, including USD 1 517 750 for the evaluation team's contract;

- (d) the international competitive bidding process used for selecting a service provider, namely Information Training and Development Ltd. (ITAD) from the United Kingdom; the endorsement by the IEE Steering Committee of this selection; and OE's negotiation and signing of a contract on behalf of IFAD on 1 December 2003 in the amount of USD 1 333 333;
- (e) an overview of the IEE workplan and the five main deliverables required from the evaluation team during the course of the IEE. This included a recapitulation of the roles of the Executive Board, the IEE Steering Committee, IFAD management and OE in reviewing and commenting on the deliverables;
- (f) an introduction to the IEE communication plan that spans the IFAD Website/Internet, newsletters and the dissemination of IEE reports;
- (g) a description of how the ITAD team randomly selected a sample of 21 countries and 42 projects for evaluation through a desk study and subsequent fieldwork (in one half of these countries and projects) for independent validation; and
- (h) short reports on: (i) the submission by ITAD of the desk study, on which more is said later in this report; and (ii) the addition of a specialist in human resource management (HRM) to the original ITAD team.

III. A REPORT ON THE DESK STUDY

3. The desk study submitted by ITAD on 8 April 2004 presented a wealth of information gleaned from secondary sources on the key questions contained in the TOR for the IEE. It also presented preliminary findings, which should be understood for what they are, that is, mainly findings at a point in time rather than in conclusion of any particular line of enquiry. A key role of the desk study is to highlight the issues that appear to be important and that will be developed in the subsequent stages of the IEE.

4. The desk study addressed Task 2 of the IEE TOR. It was completed on the basis of documentation available from IFAD and staff meetings held at IFAD while the evaluation team was based in Rome. It outlined the methodologies to be used in the IEE, and initiated evaluative analysis on the following aspects of IFAD's performance: IFAD's portfolio; corporate strategy; and the performance of loans and grant-funded projects. It also initiated an analysis of corporate processes such as policy development, knowledge management and learning, organizational partnerships and human resources management. The main focus of work during the desk study phase was to analyse a sample of 42 projects in 21 countries. Main findings concerned the corporate learning process and the performance of policy and operations.

5. As stipulated in paragraph 25 of the TOR, the OE Director distributed the desk study to IFAD management and the IEE Steering Committee. Subsequently, the OE Director forwarded the comments from IFAD management to the ITAD team, and also provided consolidated comments to ITAD, including comments provided by the two senior independent advisers of the OE Director and the Steering Committee.

IV. IEE DELIVERABLES

6. As described in the TOR, the evaluation team will complete five main substantive tasks, each resulting in a deliverable being submitted to IFAD. The deliverables are as follows:

Deliverable Number	Type of Report	Schedule
1	Inception report	Approved 30.03.2004
2	Desk study	Submitted 8.04.2004
3	Field studies	To be submitted by 17.09.2004
4	Draft final report	To be discussed at the Executive Board's April 2005 session
5	Final report	To be presented after Executive Board discussion

V. PROGRESS OF FIELD STUDIES

7. ITAD has submitted the inception report and desk study and is working on the field studies, which are now nearing completion. The field studies are taking place in ten of the 21 countries and focusing on 20 of the 42 projects that were selected through random sampling during the inception phase of the IEE and reviewed during the desk study phase. The Third Status Report provided by the OE Director to the Executive Board in April 2004 contains the list of all projects and countries included for evaluation in the IEE. The ITAD team will prepare ten country working papers (one per country) at the conclusion of its fieldwork. Each paper will provide an in-depth assessment of two selected projects as well as an overall assessment of IFAD's country programme, including the IFAD strategy, projects and policy dialogue/advocacy in the country. OE has visited three of the countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia and the United Republic of Tanzania) in which ITAD conducted fieldwork in order to familiarize itself with this important aspect of the IEE and assure itself that the IEE fieldwork in these countries is proceeding in accordance with the methodology and processes agreed in the TOR and the inception report.

VI. CONTRACT AMENDMENT

8. As noted in the third status report on IEE progress tabled at the April 2004 Executive Board session, OE and ITAD:

- (a) had agreed to introduce a personnel change in the evaluation team during the preparation of the desk study that entailed the replacement of a consultant that ITAD had proposed for fieldwork in Asia by another consultant from the same region who is considered more appropriate in view of the final selection of countries; and
- (b) were considering adding an HRM specialist for a period of about three weeks, as this position was not identified in the proposal that ITAD submitted during the bidding process, and all concerned, including the IEE Steering Committee, subsequently agreed that it needed to be added since human resource issues required more in-depth analysis than anticipated earlier.

9. OE and ITAD have now reached a formal agreement on these and other issues, and this has been duly reflected in an amendment of the IEE contract. This agreement formalizes the following changes to the contract:

- (a) The ITAD team composition stands modified as noted in paragraph 8(a) above.
- (b) The ITAD team now includes the HRM specialist, and additional efforts on this topic will also be provided by other existing team members. As a result of this, the evaluation team's budget has increased by a modest amount of USD 41 000. This increase is, however, well within the overall IEE budget approved by the Executive Board in September 2003, and will not cause any cost overrun.
- (c) In addition to ten country working papers, ITAD will, by September 2004, submit a report entitled "Preliminary Findings, Major Themes and Issues". This report will be in lieu of the thematic papers agreed in the original contract and will include, as an annex, a stand-alone report on HRM, in accordance with the TOR for the HRM specialist, and a report on policy and governance.

VII. THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

10. To date, OE has made commitments amounting to USD 945 000 against the approved IEE budget. The following contributions have been received to date: Belgium USD 87 690, Canada USD 228 000, Denmark USD 300 000, Norway USD 50 000, Sweden USD 100 000, Switzerland USD 50 000 and the United Kingdom GBP 50 000 (covering the costs of the consultancy for drafting the initial/preliminary TOR of the IEE in 2003).

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

11. Thus far, the IEE is proceeding in line with the provisions stipulated by the Executive Board and in conformity with the TOR and the inception report. Although the IEE entails complex implementation and governance processes, it is still on schedule and within the budget approved by the Executive Board, and is expected to remain so until completion. The service provider is performing well so far and intends to comply fully with the TOR, the approved inception report, the contract signed in December 2003 and the important deadlines. The Steering Committee and the senior independent advisers have been fully supportive and consistent in providing advice to the OE Director in order to set clear methodological and procedural directions for the IEE.

