

Document: EB 2007/92/R.6  
Agenda: 5(a)(ii)  
Date: 11 December 2007  
Distribution: Public  
Original: English

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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Report of the Chairperson on the fiftieth session of the Evaluation Committee**

Executive Board — Ninety-second Session  
Rome, 11-13 December 2007

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For: **Approval**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for approval by the Executive Board.

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## Report of the Chairperson on the fiftieth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations held by the Evaluation Committee during its fiftieth Session on 7 December 2007. There were six agenda items for discussion: (a) Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI); (b) Country Programme Evaluation of Morocco; (c) Provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2008; (d) IFAD's Portfolio Performance Report together with the Comments of OE; (e) The Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness together with OE Comments; and (f) Other business.
2. All Committee members (Belgium, Cameroon, Germany, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden, and Switzerland) attended the meeting. Observers were present from Brazil, Canada, France, Guatemala, Mali, Morocco, Netherlands, and United Kingdom. The Committee also welcomed the presence of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture from Morocco, Mr Moha Marghi, who was here for the discussion on the Morocco Country Programme Evaluation (CPE). The Committee was joined by the Assistant President of the Programme Management Department (PMD), Director of the Office of Evaluation (OE), Senior Director of the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Division, Executive Director of the Action Plan, the Director of the Near East and North Africa Division, Secretary of IFAD and others.
3. **Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI).** The Committee discussed the final ARRI prepared by OE, expressing its appreciation for a well prepared report, which takes into account the main issues raised by the Committee in its October session. The Committee also acknowledged the increasingly good working relationship between PMD and OE, which is important for ensuring a well functioning evaluation function at IFAD.
4. Discussions took place on the importance of benchmarking. The management and the Committee expressed the importance for further strengthening benchmarking of IFAD operations, although some members highlighted their concerns related to the methodological challenges associated with it. OE concurred with the Committee about the importance of benchmarking and the need to have it based on a realistic methodology, including a reliable data for all geographic regions based on an acceptable sample size.
5. Sustainability was another topic discussed and the Committee underlined the importance of developing an overall approach to sustainability, including the contribution that enhanced country presence as well as direct supervision and implementation support can play in this regard. The need to incorporate sustainability concerns already into the design of projects was also underlined. The importance of assessing the sustainability of environmental services was highlighted, together with the importance of economic sustainability and the commitment of the partner government. It was also acknowledged that country context and M&E are critical factors influencing sustainability, which need to be addressed with priority. The Committee also emphasized the need for IFAD to develop new approach to address the specificities of the middle income countries.
6. The Committee noted that IFAD should improve the link between loans and grants, as the latter are important also for further strengthening IFAD non-project activities, such as policy dialogue, innovation promotion, knowledge management, and partnership building.
7. With regard to another issue raised by the Committee, the Director of OE highlighted that according to its evaluation methodology, OE assesses impacts on

environmental and natural resources in all its evaluations, covering also those projects that may not have specific components devoted to environmental issues.

8. The Committee supported the proposal for OE to treat country context as a key-learning theme in the ARRI to be produced in 2008. In this regard, it suggested to also assess if there is a correlation between income levels of countries and project performance and impact.
9. Moreover, it supports the idea for OE to launch an institution-wide effort - together with PMD - to find ways and means to systematically enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at the project level. These issues differ however in complexity and nature. Taking into account its observations at the fiftieth session, the Evaluation Committee invites the Executive Board to endorse the recommendations contained in this year's ARRI report.
10. **CPE of Morocco.** The Committee commended OE for the high quality of this evaluation and expressed their broad agreement with its main findings and recommendations. In general, the Committee was pleased with the overall results achieved by IFAD in Morocco. As for the ARRI, the positive spirit of collaboration between OE and PMD during the evaluation was also noted.
11. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture of Morocco expressed deep appreciation to OE for the rigour and usefulness of the evaluation exercise, which culminated with the organisation of a national roundtable workshop in Marrakech in June 2007. He also expressed his gratitude to IFAD for the financial support provided by the Fund in the past 30 years of collaboration. While expressing his general agreement with the main evaluation results, he confirmed the commitment of the Government of Morocco to follow up on the main recommendations included in the evaluation's agreement at completion point.
12. Among various issues, the Committee requested further explanation from IFAD Management as to the measures that will be taken to: (i) improve IFAD's performance in project implementation support and policy dialogue, (ii) enhance the sustainability of IFAD activities; and (iii) strengthen the monitoring and evaluation systems at the project and programme level.
13. With regard to the issues raised in paragraph 12, the Management explained that the Fund will cover IFAD operations by direct supervision and implementation support in Morocco in the future, within the overall framework of the IFAD policy on the topic. This is expected to further enhance developmental results on the ground in the country. Moreover, the Fund plan to strengthen its country presence in Morocco in the future, as appropriate, which will also serve as a means for engaging more systematically in policy dialogue processes at the country level.
14. On sustainability, the management underlined that IFAD's approach in Morocco is to focus on the capacity building for grassroots organisation and, most importantly, on the signature of agreements between the local public administration and beneficiaries' organisations. These agreements specify the division of responsibilities for the operation and maintenance of the basic infrastructure provided by the projects.
15. Following his participation in the Marrakech workshop, the former Executive Board Director from Saudi Arabia wrote a letter to the President of IFAD, expressing his overall appreciation for the event and acknowledged the good work by IFAD in the country. A copy of the letter was shared with the participants at the meeting.
16. **Provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2008.** As per past practice, based on a proposal made by OE, the Committee discussed and agreed on the dates and provisional agenda items for its four planned sessions in 2008 are as follows:

**Fifty-first Session: Friday, 18 April 2008**

- a) Brazil, Country Programme Evaluation
- b) Burkina Faso, Rural Development Project, Interim Evaluation

**Fifty-second Session: Friday, 5 September 2008**

- a) Preview of the Work Programme and Resource Issues of the Office of Evaluation (OE) for 2009
- b) President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) with comments from OE
- c) Pakistan, Country Programme Evaluation

**Fifty-third Session: Friday, 3 October 2008**

- a) Work Programme and Budget for 2009 of the OE
- b) The Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI)

**Fifty-fourth Session: Friday, 12 December 2008**

- a) Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness with OE comments
- b) Portfolio Performance Report with OE comments
- c) Ethiopia, Country Programme Evaluation

17. In addition, the Committee welcomed the proposal to travel to the Philippines as part of its annual field visit 7-11 April 2008. However, the Committee, citing the experience of the 2007 field visit to Mali, suggested that the number of participants beyond the Committee members should be limited so that the Committee could spend more time in the field and interact more closely with project beneficiaries. The field visit will provide Committee members an opportunity to visit the Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project (WMCIP). A special session of the Committee will be organized to discuss the WMCIP evaluation. Similarly, a special session of the Committee will be organized to discuss the new OE evaluation manual.
18. **IFAD's Portfolio Performance Report together with the comments of OE on the document.** The Committee discussed the portfolio performance report presented by PMD together with the comments of OE on the document. In introducing the report, the Assistant President, PMD, summarized the salient features of the performance of the portfolio and highlighted that there has been improvement in almost all indicators as compared to last year.
19. While appreciating the introduction of the reporting on net disconnect between the PPR and ARRI, the Committee underlined the importance of ensuring that the duplication across the PPR, RIDE and ARRI are avoided. However, the Committee also noted that the ARRI is a different type of document, as it provides an independent perspective on the performance and impact of IFAD operations annually.
20. The Committee appreciated the increasing attention IFAD has devoted to the participation of women in Micro Finance Institutions, and encouraged the Fund to continue along the same lines to promote wider participation of women in development activities. It also requested IFAD to further its efforts in reducing delays in projects effectiveness.

21. The Committee associates itself with the clarification in the PPR (para 42) and OE's comments on the need to put more caution in doing the trend analysis from one year to another in light of relatively small numbers of projects completed each year.
22. The Committee noted the decline in cofinancing and encouraged the fund to make more proactive efforts in this regard, as co-financing is also important for upscaling and replication of innovative approaches promoted by IFAD. Finally, the Committee underlined the importance of further strengthening country presence and direct supervision and implementation support, as key areas for improving IFAD's development effectiveness.
23. **The Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness together with OE Comments.** The Committee expressed appreciation to the management for the quality of the first edition of the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE), especially the useful information on the overall aid architecture within which IFAD operates and the section on organisational effectiveness and efficiency.
24. The Committee supported the inclusion of themes not widely treated in other reports, such as on international policy and partnerships and the implementation by IFAD of the Paris Declaration. At the same time, it noted the duplication of information on performance and impact provided in other reports, especially the PPR and ARRI. As such, the Committee made recommendations for streamlining the RIDE in relation to the PPR and ARRI. In this regard, the Committee suggested that the RIDE be made a more reflective and forward looking document.
25. The Committee felt that it could be useful to include more data in the RIDE on organisational performance. In addition, further information on the external environment, on issues such as SWAPs and remittances, could also be included. On organizational performance, the management explained that the RIDE relies on some of the systems that have only recently been introduced by the Fund - such as the Results Measurement Framework. Therefore, the next RIDE is likely to benefit from such new systems, once they been more comprehensively operational. The Committee recommended to the Board that the OE comments on the RIDE be made an integral part of the Report, in the same manner as of the comments on the PPR.
26. **Other Business.** Before closing the session, OE gave a brief presentation updating the Committee on the implementation status of the Joint Evaluation on Africa with the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Committee thanked OE for the presentation, and requested that it be given early opportunity to be involved in the process, including reviewing the evaluation interim report once available. Moreover, it was generally felt that it would be easier to organise a discussion of the draft final report in a joint session of the Evaluation Committee and the AfDB's Development Effectiveness Committee, rather than in the joint session of the Boards of the two organisations.
27. Finally, the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee was the last meeting attended by Mr Medi MOUNGUI, the Executive Board Director of Cameroon and Ms Ann UUSTALU, the Executive Board Director for Sweden. Mr MOUNGUI was the longest serving member of the current Committee and Ms UUSTALU was a member for about two years. The Committee expressed deep appreciation to them for their commitment and useful contributions, and wished them the best in their new endeavours.
28. In the invitation of the President, the Committee has now been involved in the process of appointment/reappointment of the Director of Office of Evaluation. For this purpose, the Committee held a closed session to discuss the issue.

