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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Report of the Chairperson on the fifty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee**

Executive Board — Ninety-seventh Session  
Rome, 14-15 September 2009

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For: **Review**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

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## Report of the Chairperson on the fifty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its fifty-eighth session on 4 September 2009. The two agenda items for discussion were: (a) the peer review of the Office of Evaluation and IFAD's evaluation function; and (b) other business.
2. All Committee members attended the session (Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Nigeria and Sweden) with the exception of the Netherlands, who submitted written comments in advance that were shared with all participants. Observers were present from China, Mexico and the United Kingdom. The Committee was joined by the Director, Office of Evaluation (OE); the Secretary of IFAD; the Executive Director, Change and Reform; and the Senior Portfolio Manager, Programme Management Department (PMD), who represented the Assistant President, PMD; and a number of other IFAD staff members.

### **Peer review of the Office of Evaluation and IFAD's evaluation function**

3. At its fifty-seventh session in July 2009, the Evaluation Committee reviewed the draft approach paper and terms of reference for the peer review of the Office of Evaluation and IFAD's evaluation function. The peer review is being undertaken by the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the multilateral development banks. In the course of the session, the Committee provided detailed comments on the draft and requested that the revised Review Approach Paper (RAP) and terms of reference be discussed at a special session of the Evaluation Committee on 4 September 2009.
4. Following the introductory presentation on the revised RAP made by ECG representatives<sup>1</sup> outlining the key changes made to the paper, Committee members expressed their appreciation for the work done in revising the document and incorporating the comments made by the Committee at its session in July 2009.
5. The Committee then invited the ECG to consider if further revisions were required of the questionnaires in annex II of the document to reflect IFAD's hybrid nature as both a United Nations agency and an international financial institution (IFI). It was suggested that this could be discussed at the planned Inception Workshop of the Peer Review Panel in October, during which the key questions of the Peer Review are to be fine-tuned as required.
6. Committee members reiterated that it was important that the Peer Review assess the cost-effectiveness or "value-for-money" of the Fund's evaluation function, a consideration already reflected in the RAP.
7. In response to clarifications requested by the Committee on the timeline for the exercise, the ECG stressed that it would not be possible to prepare a credible and useful peer review report in time for submission to the Executive Board in December 2009, given that work could only begin in earnest following the Executive Board discussions and adoption of the RAP at the Board's September session. Moreover, the deadline for the submission of documents for translation and distribution for the December Executive Board session is 21 October, which would provide very little time to undertake the review. As such, the Committee broadly endorsed the presentation of the final Peer Review report to the Executive Board session in April 2010. This will provide adequate time for the preparation and finalization of the report.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Fredrik Korfker, Chief Evaluator, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Vice-Chairperson of the ECG; and Mr Bruce Murray, the proposed chair of the Peer Review Panel and former Director-General, Operations Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank.

8. The issue of country visits was raised and, following explanations by the ECG representatives, the Committee concurred that well-focused visits to various countries in the different regions where IFAD operates would add value to the peer review process.
9. Following the clarifications provided by the ECG representatives on the overall scope of the exercise and the proposed increase of US\$50,000 in the peer review budget, the Committee expressed broad agreement with the budget increase.
10. The Committee underlined the fact that the Executive Board places great importance on the peer review's assessment of the IFAD Evaluation Policy, OE and its products, the self-evaluation function, and the role of the Evaluation Committee. The Committee further highlighted the fact that the review will provide recommendations that will be used as building blocks for strengthening IFAD's evaluation function overall.
11. The Committee noted that Management had commented on and was supportive of the RAP and the terms of reference of the review. The Committee invited Management to select a sample of self-evaluation reports, rather than including the entire collection in the Management self-assessment report. This would both limit the level of effort by Management and ensure timely delivery of the report for the Peer Review Panel's consideration.
12. The Committee welcomed the OE Director's proposal for the ECG to review a stratified random sample of OE's evaluations since 2005. This would ensure that evaluations from each year since 2005 are represented in the sample reviewed by the panel. The Committee also concurred with the Director's suggestion to interview former Evaluation Committee members as well as current members.

#### **Other business**

13. In response to a Committee member's query, the OE Director clarified that the annual field visit of the Evaluation Committee to India will take place from 7–11 December 2009. He also informed the Committee that the field visit will include a visit to an IFAD-funded project, in addition to a one-and-a-half-day national round-table workshop, which will most likely be held in New Delhi. A series of complementary bilateral meetings will also be organized with stakeholders at the national and state levels. The Director noted that a detailed programme for the field visit will be provided in a concept note currently being drafted in consultation with the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Government of India. This concept note will be shared with the Committee. A briefing session for the annual field visit will be organized in November.

