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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function

Review Approach Paper

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

For: **Approval**

Note to Executive Board Directors

This document is submitted for approval by the Executive Board.

To make the best use of time available at Executive Board sessions, Directors are invited to contact the below focal points with any technical questions about this document before the session. In this regard, kindly address your queries to the chairperson of the Evaluation Cooperation Group with a copy to the vice-chairperson and chairperson of the Peer Review Panel:

Vinod Thomas

Director-General and Senior Vice-President, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank, and Chairperson of the Evaluation Cooperation Group
e-mail: vthomas@worldbank.org

Fredrik Korfker

Chief Evaluator, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Vice-Chairperson of the Evaluation Cooperation Group
e-mail: korfkerf@ebrd.com

Bruce Murray

Chairperson of the Peer Review Panel and former Director General, Operations Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank
e-mail: bmurray.xadb@gmail.com

Queries regarding the dispatch of documentation for this session should be addressed to:

Deirdre McGrenra

Governing Bodies Officer
telephone: +39 06 5459 2374
e-mail: d.mcgrenra@ifad.org

Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the main provisions contained in this approach paper, taking into account guidance by the Evaluation Committee reflected in the report of the chairperson on the fifty-eighth session of the Committee.

Introduction

1. In line with the decision of the IFAD Executive Board during its ninety-fifth session in December 2008, the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the multilateral development banks has been entrusted with undertaking a peer review of IFAD's independent Office of Evaluation (OE) and IFAD's evaluation function.
2. This Review Approach Paper, prepared by the ECG, defines the main objectives, scope, process, methodology and timeline for this independent peer review and provides other related information.
3. A first version of the Review Approach Paper was discussed by the Evaluation Committee at its fifty-seventh session on 20-21 July 2009 (see document EC 2009/57/W.P.2). The present document reflects the discussions of the Committee on that occasion. As per the Committee's request, the revised approach paper will be considered by the Committee at its fifty-eighth session, prior to being discussed by the Board at its ninety-seventh session on 14-15 September 2009. Should any changes be required after the presentation of the document during the fifty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee to be held on 4 September 2009, these will be incorporated in an addendum or corrigendum, which will be tabled at the Executive Board session in September.

**EVALUATION COOPERATION GROUP OF THE MULTILATERAL
DEVELOPMENT BANKS**

**Peer Review of
IFAD's
Office of Evaluation
and Evaluation Function**

Review Approach Paper

31 July 2009

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACP	agreement at completion point
ARRI	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
OE	Office of Evaluation (IFAD)
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PMD	Programme Management Department (IFAD)
PRISMA	President’s Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions
RIDE	Report on IFAD’s Development Effectiveness
RAP	Review Approach Paper
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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Review Approach Paper

I. BACKGROUND TO THE PEER REVIEW

1. In December 2008, the Executive Board of IFAD instructed the Office of Evaluation (OE) to plan for an external peer review of its effectiveness and usefulness. The Board decided that the peer review would – in addition to assessing OE's performance – examine the current IFAD Evaluation Policy, the self-evaluation conducted by IFAD Management and the oversight function of the Evaluation Committee with respect to evaluation. While recognizing the hybrid nature of IFAD, as both an international financial institution and a United Nations specialized agency, the Board decided that the review would be undertaken by the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG)¹ of the multilateral development banks, with the understanding that the review would adequately address the United Nations dimension of IFAD.
2. The review process will follow the approach adopted by the ECG for conducting peer reviews of the evaluation function of its member organizations, described in ECG's Review Framework for the Evaluation Function in Multilateral Development Banks.² This framework is sufficiently flexible to be adapted to reflect any special characteristics of the entity being reviewed.³ The goal of such reviews is to help the concerned institution to improve its evaluation policymaking, adopt best practices, and comply with established evaluation standards and principles. While ECG peer reviews cover all evaluation activities, the content and application of the existing evaluation policy of the concerned institution is at the core of the review. The board, through the concerned committee, is the main client for the review and the recipient of the final report.
3. The current IFAD Evaluation Policy was approved by the Executive Board in April 2003, when OE became independent and began reporting to the Executive Board rather than to the President of IFAD.⁴ Other aspects of OE's independence are described in the IFAD Evaluation Policy. The policy was brought into effect gradually. It took OE some time to standardize an evaluation methodology in line with the requirements set forth in the policy. The evaluation reports and associated products produced in 2003/2004 did not adequately reflect the changes called for by the policy. In December 2004, the Executive Board approved new Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for IFAD's Evaluation Committee to bring them into line with the Evaluation Policy. IFAD's self-evaluation function evolved following approval of the IFAD Evaluation Policy, especially after conclusion of the harmonization agreement with OE.⁵ Thus, the peer review will focus mostly on the period from 1 January 2005 to the present.

¹ The ECG was established in 1996 by the evaluation departments of the multilateral development banks in response to a call for the harmonization of evaluation methodologies, performance indicators and criteria. Representatives of the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) attend as observers. IFAD, through OE, was admitted to the ECG with observer status in April 2008, pending its consideration as a full member in the future.

² See document on ECGnet.org at www.ecgnet.org/documents/review-framework-Mar09

³ The peer review of IFAD's evaluation system will be the first application of the recently finalized ECG framework and, as such, represents a valuable learning opportunity for ECG. The experience gained from the IFAD peer review will contribute to modifying and improving the ECG framework.

⁴ While all members of ECG have independent evaluation departments, IFAD is unique among United Nations agencies in having an independent evaluation office reporting to its Executive Board.

⁵ Agreement between the Programme Management Department (PMD) and OE on the harmonization of self-evaluation and independent evaluation systems of IFAD, 6 April 2006.

4. International evaluation practice is for an approach paper to be developed at the beginning of an evaluation to define the objectives, approach, methodology and associated timeline, human resource requirements and budget implications. This Review Approach Paper (RAP) constitutes the broad terms of reference and outlines the approach that will be taken for the independent peer review of IFAD's evaluation function. In addition to the ECG framework, the paper draws on the proposal to conduct a peer review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and IFAD's evaluation function⁶ and a preparatory note for the review issued in June 2009. The Evaluation Committee considered an earlier draft of this paper and provided some helpful suggestions for improvement (see annex I). This version of the RAP reflects all major issues raised by the Evaluation Committee. Feedback on the earlier draft was also received from IFAD Management and OE and was used, as appropriate, to revise the paper.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

A. Objective

5. The **objective** of the review is to assess the adequacy and performance of IFAD's evaluation policy and function, with the aim of strengthening the contribution of evaluation to IFAD's development effectiveness.

B. Scope of the Review

6. The **scope of the review** will cover:
- (a) assessing the content and application of the current IFAD Evaluation Policy and the corresponding President's Bulletin;⁷
 - (b) assessing OE's performance, including the quality of its evaluation products, methodology, processes, recommendations and resulting decisions taken based on the work of OE;
 - (c) reviewing how effectively the Evaluation Committee has discharged its responsibilities, as captured in its terms of reference;⁸
 - (d) assessing the self-evaluation system maintained by IFAD Management, including the quality of its products, methodology, processes, recommendations and resulting decisions taken based on the outputs of the self-evaluation system; and
 - (e) formulating a set of recommendations related to the IFAD Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Committee, OE and the self-evaluation system, to be considered by the Executive Board after review by the Evaluation Committee.

III. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

A. Key Questions and Assessment Criteria

7. There are two dimensions of evaluation: (i) accountability;⁹ and (ii) learning. The approach and methodology for the peer review are designed to assess how well IFAD's evaluation function, and its components, address both dimensions of evaluation and whether the balance between the two is appropriate. In the ECG approach, the assessment criteria are defined in an extensive questionnaire

⁶ Programme of work, Programme Development Financing Facility and administrative and capital budgets of IFAD and the Office of Evaluation for 2009 (EB 2008/95/R.2/Rev.1, paragraph 106 and annex XV).

⁷ The [IFAD Evaluation Policy \(EB 2003/78.R.17/Rev.1\)](#) approved by the Executive Board in April 2003, was brought into effect by means of a President's Bulletin issued in December 2003, which established the operational arrangements for implementing the policy. Thus the President's Bulletin is considered to be an integral part of the policy.

⁸ [Terms of reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board](#), December 2004 (EB 2004/83.R.7/Rev.1).

⁹ Accountability refers to the assessment of developmental results and the impact of development assistance as distinct from accountability for the use of public funds in an accounting and legal sense, responsibility for which is usually assigned to an audit office.

covering all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) principles of evaluation of development assistance.¹⁰ However, the ECG approach encompasses additional issues and criteria to assess performance more broadly.

8. Both the OECD-DAC and ECG evaluation issues and criteria are grouped under eight headings: (i) evaluation policy: role, responsibility and objectives of the evaluation department; (ii) impartiality, transparency and independence; (iii) resources and staff; (iv) evaluation partnerships and capacity-building; (v) quality of evaluation products; (vi) planning, coordination and harmonization; (vii) dissemination, feedback, knowledge management and learning; and (viii) evaluation use. These are called the "international principles of evaluation". Some additional criteria have been added to the ECG list that are specific to IFAD and/or reflect feedback from the Evaluation Committee, OE and IFAD Management during the preparation of the Review Approach Paper. The evaluation norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)¹¹ were also considered where appropriate in refining the ECG questionnaire. The list of questions and criteria that will help to guide the peer review is shown in annex II.
9. The IFAD Evaluation Policy and the President's Bulletin that brought it into effect provide the framework within which the evaluation function operates and OE relates to the Executive Board, the Evaluation Committee, IFAD Management and other IFAD departments and divisions. The policy emphasizes only four of the "international principles of evaluation": independence, accountability, learning and partnership.¹² Several other principles, however, are reflected in the more operationally oriented chapters of the policy. Moreover, OE has been evolving since the evaluation policy was approved and has incorporated important principles into its work through methodologies and related processes and guidelines that are elaborated in OE's Evaluation Manual.¹³ The questions and criteria in annex II provide a relevant guide for the peer review since most of these issues are addressed in either the IFAD Evaluation Policy and/or the Evaluation Manual (see annex III).
10. The large number of questions in annex II will be customized to reflect each of the four elements of the peer review's scope and to provide guidance for the self-assessment to be undertaken by both OE and IFAD Management. This material will be discussed at the inception workshop.
11. In addition to examining relevant documentation, the review will include a series of meetings and interviews with:
 - (a) the Chairperson and all members of the Evaluation Committee, as well as representatives of other selected Member States;
 - (b) IFAD Management, including the President and the Assistant President of the Programme Management Department (PMD);
 - (c) Key IFAD staff including the PMD front office, regional directors, country programme managers, key officials in the Office of the President, the General Counsel and key staff responsible for policy, financial and human resource management, audit and secretariat support for the Evaluation Committee; and

¹⁰ OECD-DAC, *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*; Paris: OECD, 1991; available at <http://www.oecd.org>

¹¹ UNEG norms and standards are available at <http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp> [Norms for Evaluation in the UN System](#).

¹² The Independent Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) also emphasizes four principles: impartiality and independence, credibility, usefulness and partnership. Asian Development Bank, [Review of the Independence and Effectiveness of the Operations Evaluation Department](#). Policy paper (Manila: November 2008).

¹³ IFAD. [Evaluation Manual: Methodologies and Processes](#). Office of Evaluation (Rome: 2009).

- (d) The Director of OE, key evaluators and other staff in relation to evaluation methods and products and the management roles they perform.¹⁴
12. IFAD is a hybrid organization: it has many characteristics that are consistent with an international financial institution but it is also a United Nations agency. IFAD's core function is to "... mobilize additional resources to be made available on concessional terms for agriculture development in developing Member States. In fulfilling this objective the Fund shall provide financing primarily for projects and programmes specifically designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems and to strengthen related policies and institutions within the framework of national priorities and strategies, taking into consideration: the need to increase food production in the poorest food-deficit countries; the potential for increasing food production in other developing countries; and the importance of improving the nutritional level of the poorest populations in developing countries and the conditions of their lives."¹⁵ While engaged in agriculture and rural development, multilateral development banks have a broader range of activities. More importantly for this peer review, the governance structure for the IFAD evaluation function is similar to that of the multilateral development banks. IFAD is the only United Nations agency that has an independent evaluation office reporting to the Executive Board. Also, virtually all of the key products produced by IFAD's evaluation system are similar, in principle, to products produced by the independent evaluation offices of the multilateral development banks. However, like other United Nations agencies and unlike the ECG members, IFAD's Executive Board is non-resident, a factor that the panel must consider when reaching its conclusions. Another factor identified in the paper, which the Executive Board endorsed in revising the terms of reference of the Evaluation Committee, was that the size of IFAD operations and those of OE, relative to the multilateral development banks, is modest. This has implications for economies of scale.
13. The ECG will take the following steps to ensure that the peer review considers United Nations characteristics that may impact on its assessment of IFAD's evaluation function: (i) drawing on UNEG's evaluation norms and standards¹⁶ where appropriate in refining the ECG questionnaire; (ii) including the chair of UNEG on the Peer Review Panel; (iii) reviewing the results of the OECD-DAC peer review of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) evaluation function to see what may be relevant to IFAD; and (iv) considering issues related to IFAD's non-resident Executive Board and Evaluation Committee, as well as its scale and mandate, when reaching conclusions.

B. Methodology and Work Activities

14. Within the framework of the questions and criteria in annex II, the review will assess the performance and quality of work of the four key aspects of the evaluation function at IFAD, namely, the IFAD Evaluation Policy, the oversight by the Evaluation Committee, OE's independent evaluation system and the self-evaluation system.

Evaluation Policy

15. The 2003 IFAD Evaluation Policy and the corresponding President's Bulletin provide the broad framework for the evaluation function. The independence of OE, the role of the Evaluation Committee, OE's management and the contributions of evaluation to learning to improve IFAD's development effectiveness are key messages in both documents.

¹⁴OE has an evaluation communication unit and focal points for budget management, staff training, relations with the Evaluation Committee, and liaison with UNEG and ECG.

¹⁵ IFAD. Agreement Establishing the International Fund for Agricultural Development. 1976, page 4.

¹⁶ Because IFAD is a United Nations agency and a member of UNEG, it is bound by UNEG's norms and standards.

16. The evaluation policy and President's Bulletin will be reviewed by the Peer Review Panel based on their professional experience and by comparing these documents and their statements about the governance of the evaluation system with similar documents of ECG members. The ECG is in the process of developing Good Practice Standards for independence. Although this work has not yet been completed, the work undertaken by ECG to date will provide a framework that the panel will use to make its judgements on independence and other governance issues covered by the evaluation policy.
17. Both the content of the evaluation policy and the details of its application in practice are important issues of concern for the review. Experience in other ECG members indicates that sometimes a lack of clarity leads to confusion and differences of opinion among management, heads of evaluation offices and/or evaluation committees and boards. At its ninety-fourth session, the Executive Board asked for the views of IFAD Management on institutional issues related to the implementation of the evaluation policy. In 16 March 2009, the President set up a working group to review, from an institutional perspective, the evaluation policy and President's Bulletin to identify any required revisions and/or amendments. The working group is focusing on: (i) benchmarking against contemporary practice; (ii) adherence to IFAD's basic legal texts, rules and procedures; (iii) consistency between the evaluation policy and the President's Bulletin; (iv) the success in implementation from an institutional point of view; (v) issues not being adequately covered in the guiding documents;¹⁷ and (vi) issues identified as requiring amendments or revision. The panel will examine whether ambiguities in the IFAD Evaluation Policy need to be clarified by conducting interviews with a broad range of stakeholders,¹⁸ examining the work already undertaken by IFAD Management in this area and comparing IFAD with ECG members to highlight the role of their respective boards/evaluation committees, management and standard institutional processes in these areas.
18. This part of the review will be designed to assess whether the changes associated with the evaluation policy have been successful in introducing a culture of independent evaluation in IFAD and to identify areas of the evaluation policy and the President's Bulletin that need to be amended to introduce greater clarity and/or sections that need to be modified, dropped or added. The objective will be to identify changes that will bring IFAD's Evaluation Policy into line with best international practice and to remove ambiguities.

Evaluation Committee

19. The Terms of Reference¹⁹ of the Evaluation Committee require it to: (i) ensure full compliance with and implementation of the IFAD Evaluation Policy; (ii) satisfy itself that both OE's independent evaluation work and IFAD's self-evaluation activities are relevant and carried out effectively and efficiently; and (iii) contribute to the learning loop of integrating the lessons from OE evaluations into operational activities as well as policies and strategies. The Evaluation Committee advises the Executive Board on evaluation issues and is expected to bring important findings and lessons learned to the Board for consideration and make recommendations related to evaluation activities and significant aspects of the IFAD Evaluation Policy. The Executive Board is responsible for exercising oversight of IFAD Management and OE, as well as providing Management with feedback to enhance the learning loop. Once its terms of reference were developed, it was recognized that the

¹⁷ The working group is also looking at issues related to lesson learning and feedback from evaluation findings to strengthen IFAD's development effectiveness.

¹⁸ Including members of the Evaluation Committee, members of the Executive Board who are not members of the Evaluation Committee, the President, Senior Management, concerned senior IFAD staff and the Director and staff of the Office of Evaluation.

¹⁹ Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board (EB 2004/83.R.7/Rev.1).

Evaluation Committee's reporting to the Executive Board needed to be strengthened.

20. The work of the Evaluation Committee is guided by its terms of reference and rules of procedure. The assessment of the Evaluation Committee will be based on interviews with key stakeholders and a review of the written record (e.g. minutes of meetings; the reports of the chairperson; verbatim records of the discussion of evaluation items by the Executive Board; reports on the annual Evaluation Committee field visits) and a comparison of the terms of reference, rules of procedure and work of the Evaluation Committee with the counterpart committees in ECG members. The role of the Office of the Secretary in supporting the Evaluation Committee will also be examined and compared with other institutions. While all ECG members have resident boards, the IFAD Executive Board is non-resident. This issue will be considered when comparing the Evaluation Committee with its counterparts in ECG members and considering factors such as the strength of its oversight of OE, the number of meetings and volume of work that can be undertaken and the fact that the Committee concentrates exclusively on evaluation.
21. This analysis will be designed to identify areas where changes might be considered to help the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board to fulfil their evaluation mandates more effectively and/or to identify areas where the mandates should be strengthened or changed.

Performance of the Evaluation Office

22. At the third session of the Consultation on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (in July 2002), a Member State presented a proposal for OE to report directly to the Executive Board, independently of Management, in order to strengthen its effectiveness.²⁰ Issues were also raised about the need to improve the evaluation policy, strengthen the role of the Evaluation Committee and improve the learning loop. Since then, OE has become independent and steps have been taken to strengthen OE, improve and broaden its range of products and enhance the feedback loop so that evaluation findings are used to improve IFAD's development effectiveness. These changes are consistent with the decision taken during the Sixth Replenishment to adopt a new evaluation policy, significantly strengthen the evaluation function and make OE independent. The review will assess how well the current performance of OE now meets the requirements of the evaluation policy and good practice standards.
23. The assessment of OE's performance will cover a broad range of factors. Among other things, it will examine the procedures related to preparing and executing OE's work programme and budget; human resource management issues;²¹ the quantity and quality of evaluation products; evaluation methodology and processes; interaction with the operational side of IFAD and with government officials, project beneficiaries and NGOs at the country level; transparency and disclosure; and procedures for handling potential conflicts involving OE staff. OE's results measurement framework (see annex IV) includes measurable indicators of usefulness and output, which provide a context for assessing OE's performance.²²
24. With the signing of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, the international donor community expressed its commitment to strengthen country capacities, including those related to results-based monitoring and evaluation, and to increase harmonization and the use of

²⁰ Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Evaluation Function at IFAD: a Discussions Paper on IFAD in the Light of International Experience (EB REPL. VI/4/R.4), 9-10 October 2002.

²¹ The issues to be examined would include the recruitment and promotion of OE staff, the flow of operational staff into OE and visa versa, and OE's ongoing team-building and renewal initiative that is addressing issues highlighted by IFAD-wide human resource surveys.

²² The framework was developed in 2008 in response to a request from the IFAD Executive Board in December 2007. This framework was designed to enable OE and the Board to assess OE's effectiveness.

country systems. OE's approaches to supporting evaluation partnership and capacity development are evolving and will be considered in the review, as will its efforts to undertake joint evaluations and collaborative evaluation activities with other donors.

25. Examples of issues that the analysis will examine include: (i) the appearance and reality of OE's independence in undertaking its work and reaching its conclusions; (ii) changes in the composition and quality of OE products and methodologies and the resulting impact of OE on IFAD;²³ (iii) cost-effectiveness, value-for-money issues, and the quality and influence of OE products; (iv) the formulation and uptake of evaluation recommendations; (v) effectiveness of OE's learning activities; and (vi) the views of key IFAD staff and selected beneficiary countries on OE's processes, interactions in the field, products and recommendations.
26. The assessment of the quality and credibility of OE products will examine outputs since 2005, but efforts will also be made to highlight significant changes that have occurred since OE became independent. Tasks to be undertaken will include assessing: (i) the quality and coverage of a random sample²⁴ of project evaluations and related approach papers and agreements at completion point (ACPs),²⁵ including commenting on consistency with OE's methodology, consistency with the ECG's Good Practice Standards on public investment and the quality, number and monitorability of recommendations; (ii) the quality and coverage of a sample of country evaluations produced since 2005,²⁶ including commenting on consistency with OE's methodology, consistency with the ECG's Good Practice Standards on country assistance evaluations and linkage to the corresponding country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs); (iii) the quality and impact of all corporate evaluations;²⁷ (iv) the quality and impact of selected thematic evaluations;²⁸ (v) the quality and coverage of all Annual Reports on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRIs) produced since 2005, with a brief comparison with the 2003 ARRI to identify major changes since OE became independent; (vi) an examination of OE's comments on the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE), the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) and proposed new policies; (vii) the quality and coverage of a sample of evaluations of grants; (viii) the number, quality and usefulness of the information in a random sample of information products²⁹ and other outreach activities; (ix) an assessment of OE's evaluation methodologies, including a review of OE's Evaluation Manual: Methodology and Processes, and the Guide for Project M&E; (x) an examination of the coverage and management of OE operations, including a review of internal quality control procedures, OE's internal peer review guidelines and system to avoid conflicts of interest in the evaluation teams; (xi) OE's input into policy

²³ The review will examine the impact on IFAD of major corporate evaluations undertaken, for example of the evaluations of the IFAD Rural Finance Policy and the Field Presence Pilot Programme, the corporate-level evaluation of the direct supervision pilot and the evaluation of IFAD's technical assistance grants programme for agriculture research.

²⁴ Close to 50 evaluation reports, the same number of approach papers and ACPs, and smaller numbers of Profiles and Insights were produced and disseminated between 2005 and 2009.

²⁵ ACPs reflect the extent of IFAD Management and borrower agreement with the findings and the recommendations in OE reports and how they propose to make the agreed recommendations operational. The ACP and other aspects of IFAD Management's response to evaluation have been analysed in a paper prepared in 2008 by Sara Bandstein and Erik Hedblom for the Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation – [IFAD's Management Response System: The Agreement at Completion Point Process](#). A related paper - which examines other organizations as well as IFAD – is "Institutional Practices for Management Follow-up: Review and Proposal of Good Practice Standards," by Osvaldo Feinstein. This was commissioned by the UNEG Task Force on Evaluation Quality Enhancement.

²⁶ A total of 28 country evaluations have been issued, including 12 in 2005 or later.

²⁷ A total of 8 corporate evaluations have been issued, including 5 in 2005 or later.

²⁸ A total of 23 thematic evaluations have been issued, including 3 in 2005 and none in 2006 or later.

²⁹ Including evaluation summaries, called Profiles, which provide a user-friendly overview of the main evaluation conclusions and recommendations and Insights, which are prepared only for higher order evaluations and contain one learning theme from the evaluation and are designed to stimulate discussion among practitioners and other development specialists on some important issues.

formulation; and (xii) an assessment of IFAD stakeholders' perceptions of OE through interviews with key informants.³⁰

27. Feedback from government officials from borrowing countries on evaluation matters will be sought by interviewing delegations that visit IFAD when the peer review is being conducted. In addition, some panel members will visit selected countries to seek feedback from country officials on OE's evaluation processes, products and recommendations. Selected project visits will be undertaken to provide limited independent validation of key evaluation findings and impacts on beneficiaries. The following criteria were used to select the countries to be visited: (i) the time schedule and available budget for the review—these factors limited the number of country visits; (ii) countries with recently completed country programme evaluations to facilitate meeting officials with an institutional memory of working with OE; (iii) a country in which a country programme evaluation is nearing completion so that the last stage of the evaluation focusing on the feedback loop could be observed first-hand; (v) countries that have a significant forward programme; and (vi) countries in the different regions in which IFAD operates. Based on these criteria, Brazil,³¹ India³² and Mali³³ were selected for the country visits.
28. This analysis will be designed to identify areas where changes might be considered to improve the quality of OE's work and its impact on helping to improve IFAD's development effectiveness.

Performance of IFAD's Self-Evaluation System

29. Self-evaluation and independent evaluation should be closely linked and mutually reinforcing to provide an overall assessment of IFAD's performance. Consistent methodologies should be used for both the self-evaluation and the independent evaluation systems. The low base of IFAD's self-evaluation system in 2004 is evident from the following quotations taken from comments by a senior operational staff member when reviewing the draft terms of reference of the Evaluation Committee:
- (i) "IFAD's self-evaluation ended when the Office of Evaluation became an independent entity under the new Evaluation Policy. And, therefore the self-evaluation referred to in the draft terms of reference of the Evaluation Committee refers to an activity that IFAD units (apart from the independent Office of Evaluation) do not carry out."
- (ii) "... in particular, project mid-term reviews and project completion reports are not produced by IFAD, but are produced under the responsibility of the borrower. ***They are neither evaluations in any proper sense, nor are they performed by IFAD*** (emphasis added)."
30. The review will focus on the quality and credibility of the products and processes associated with IFAD's self-evaluation system since 2005 and highlight significant changes that have occurred since OE became independent. The assessment will cover: (i) the quality and coverage of a random sample of project completion reports, including commenting on consistency with IFAD's norms and standards and the harmonization agreement with OE, the credibility of the ratings, OE efforts to enhance the quality of the self-evaluation system, the usefulness of project completion reports, the number and quality of recommendations and the related

³⁰ A decision on the need for an electronic survey of the perceptions of IFAD staff about the evaluation function will be taken at the inception workshop after the coverage of the interviews to be undertaken for the peer review has been finalized and the panel has reviewed the results of OE's assessment of the views of its clients (to be conducted in September through focus groups of key operational staff).

³¹ The only country evaluation issued in September since 2007 for a Latin American country.

³² The only Asian country for which a country evaluation has reached the penultimate stage.

³³ The African country with the earliest country evaluation in the time period covered. This will allow some broad comparisons with the more recent country evaluations for Brazil and India to identify changes in OE's approach and methodology over time.

follow-up with respect to the implementation of the recommendations; (ii) the credibility of overall portfolio performance indicators; (iii) the quality, usefulness and impact of all PRISMA reports produced since 2005; (iv) the quality, usefulness and impact of all RIDE reports produced since 2007 and the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS); and (v) an assessment of the coverage and management of IFAD's self-evaluation system, including the agreement between PMD and OE on harmonization of self-evaluation and independent systems of IFAD.

31. This analysis will be designed to identify areas where changes might be considered to improve the quality of IFAD's self-evaluation system and its impact on helping to improve IFAD's development effectiveness.

C. Review Process

32. The process matrix for the review of IFAD's evaluation function is shown in annex V. The ECG approach calls for the three phases described below:

- (a) The **preparatory phase** includes preparation of this Review Approach Paper, establishing a Peer Review Panel, identification of the consultants that will report to the panel and identification of the countries to be visited, subject to their concurrence.³⁴ During this phase, OE and IFAD Management will undertake background analysis and begin to prepare their self-assessments of the performance and quality of their evaluation work. The initial draft of the RAP has been prepared by the ECG. While inputs were received from the Evaluation Committee at its meeting on 20 July 2009, from OE and from IFAD Management, the ECG is responsible for the content of the RAP. It was finalized by the chairperson of the review panel. The Evaluation Committee will consider the final RAP and recommend the paper to the Executive Board for approval. The preparatory phase will conclude with the approval of this Review Approach Paper by the Executive Board.
- (b) The **consultation phase** includes substantial review and analysis of information, report-writing and consultation by the review panel and consultants with stakeholders in IFAD and in the countries visited. The first activities during the consultation phase will be finalizing contracts with the independent panel members and the consultants³⁵ working under the direction of the panel, an initial meeting of the panel, high-level interviews in IFAD and an inception workshop. At the inception workshop: (i) pertinent documents will be provided to the panel and consultants; (ii) the list of key informants to be interviewed will be finalized; (iii) the customized questionnaires to be used for the assessments of the evaluation policy, the Evaluation Committee, OE and the self-evaluation system will be finalized; (iv) OE and IFAD Management will present their initial report on their self-assessments; (v) deliverables will be finalized, responsibilities assigned and deadlines confirmed; (vi) Management's Working Group on the Institutional Review of the Evaluation Policy will brief the panel on its conclusions; (vii) OE will report on the concurrence of the countries proposed for the country visits; (viii) the timetable for the review and travel schedules will be finalized; and (ix) a preliminary table of contents for the panel's report will be developed. Refinements in the peer review approach and any other relevant information will be recorded in a brief inception report. During the consultation phase, the panel will prepare a first draft of their report – based in part on the more technical reports prepared by the consultants – which will be presented to the ECG Chair for review and will then be shared with the Evaluation Committee, IFAD Management and OE for comments. The panel

³⁴ The composition and role of the review panel and the tasks to be assigned to the consultants are described in a later section.

³⁵ The consultants will undertake the necessary detailed technical work and prepare working papers on various topics for the panel and report to the panel through the panel chairperson.

will have sole discretion on whether, and how, to reflect the comments received in their final report. The consultation phase will end with the submission of the panel's final report to the ECG.

- (c) In the **assessment phase**, the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board will consider the final report and recommendations and make any decisions they consider appropriate. After review of the final report by the ECG chairperson, the report will be presented by the chairperson of the review panel to the Evaluation Committee. The review panel will send the final report plus the Evaluation Committee chairperson's report to the ECG. The ECG chairperson will transmit the final report, as delivered by the review panel, with a cover letter including any comments from the ECG, to the IFAD Executive Board. The Executive Board will also receive the report of the chairperson of the Evaluation Committee giving the Committee's views on the report. This material will be discussed by the Executive Board in a session that will be attended by the ECG chairperson and the chairperson of the Peer Review Panel to answer any questions. The Executive Board will make decisions based on the final report that it deems appropriate. The final review report, the corresponding extracts of the minutes of the Executive Board session and the report of the Evaluation Committee chairperson will be disclosed to the public.

IV. GOVERNANCE

33. The ECG's peer review of IFAD's evaluation function was requested by IFAD's Executive Board. Since this is an independent review, ECG's role is to: (i) determine the contents of, and finalize, the proposed RAP through the panel chairperson; (ii) appoint the members of the review panel and, through the panel, the consultants; (iii) review the draft report, through the ECG chairperson; and (iv) transmit, through the ECG chairperson, the final report to the IFAD Executive Board, together with any comments that the ECG may wish to offer.
34. The peer review panel will undertake the tasks outlined in this RAP, select and supervise the consultants and prepare the report. While the panel will consult with a broad range of stakeholders and seek comments on its draft report, decisions on the content of the report and judgements made will be at the sole discretion of the panel.
35. The ECG's Review Framework for the Evaluation Function in Multilateral Development Banks (March 2009) states that while senior management can derive value from a review of both the self-evaluation and the independent evaluation systems, the board committee overseeing the evaluation function is the main client for such reviews. This was echoed in the preparatory note for this review, which states that "The review will be commissioned by IFAD's Executive Board, which will designate the role of main client for this exercise to its Evaluation Committee".³⁶ The Evaluation Committee will: (i) offer feedback on the draft Review Approach Paper;³⁷ (ii) discuss the final Review Approach Paper before it is considered by the Executive Board for approval, conveying its views through a report by its chairperson; (iii) offer comments on the panel's draft report; and (iv) discuss the final report before it is considered by the Executive Board and convey its comments through a report by the chairperson of the Evaluation Committee. The chairpersons of the Evaluation Committee and of the review panel will have special roles in coordinating and facilitating the review, whereby the focus of the former will be primarily on facilitation. They may need to engage from time to time to address problems and issues arising during the review.

³⁶ Preparatory note for the independent review exercise of IFAD's Evaluation Office and Evaluation Function through the application of ECG's Review Framework for the Evaluation Function. June 2009. Paragraph 3.3.1.

³⁷ This was done at the 20 July 2009 session of the Evaluation Committee.

36. The role of the Executive Board includes: (i) approving the Review Approach Paper; (ii) considering the final report; and (iii) making specific recommendations and decisions on follow-up action that it deems necessary, based on the findings of the peer review and the resulting recommendations. In addition to their formal roles, members of the Evaluation Committee and other members of the Executive Board will be interviewed by the panel.³⁸
37. OE will: (i) facilitate the work of the panel and consultants by providing pertinent documents and information, arranging necessary appointments, arranging the country visits, providing office space when the panel and consultants are in IFAD and providing logistical and administrative support; (ii) arrange for the formalization of contracts for the independent peers and the consultants; (iii) undertake a self-assessment of IFAD's independent evaluation system following the questionnaire prepared by the panel; (iv) facilitate and participate in the inception workshop; (v) review and provide written comments on the draft report; (vi) arrange for the distribution of the necessary documents to the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board; and (vii) disclose the final report, report of the chairperson of the Evaluation Committee and the related extracts of the Executive Board minutes on the evaluation page of the IFAD website³⁹ and arrange for the printing of the final report.
38. IFAD Management will: (i) facilitate the work of the panel and consultants by providing pertinent documents and arranging necessary appointments; (ii) undertake a self-assessment of IFAD's self-evaluation system following the questionnaire prepared by the panel; (iii) participate in the inception workshop; and (iv) review and provide written comments on the draft report.

V. REVIEW PANEL AND SUPPORTING CONSULTANTS

39. According to the ECG approach, the review panel includes two categories of peers, namely, evaluation peers and independent peers. The evaluation peers are drawn from the heads of evaluation departments in ECG members.⁴⁰ Independent peers are respected independent evaluators from the international evaluation community. The inclusion of independent peers in a review panel is designed to enhance the credibility of a review. As required, the review panel will be supported by consultants to undertake detailed work.
40. For the purposes of this review, there will be five individuals on the review panel, including two independent peers. It is important that the peers are from organizations that have substantial operations in rural and agricultural development. Because of IFAD's nature as both an international financial institution and a United Nations specialized agency, the Chairperson of UNEG – who is a permanent observer to the ECG and the Director of the UNDP Evaluation Office – was invited to be a member of the panel. The composition of the review panel is as follows: (i) Bruce Murray, independent peer and former Director General, Operations Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank (AsDB) (chairperson of the Peer Review Panel); (ii) Cheryl Gray, Director, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank; (iii) Saraswathi Menon, Chairperson of UNEG and Director, Office of Evaluation, UNDP; (iv) H. Satish Rao, Director General, Operations Evaluation Department, AsDB; and (v) Pieter Stek, independent peer and former Executive Director, World Bank and Chairperson of the Committee on Development Effectiveness.

³⁸ The panel will endeavour to interview each member of the Evaluation Committee individually. Members of the Executive Board who are not members of the Evaluation Committee will be invited to attend group discussions to provide their views to the panel.

³⁹ This material will also be disclosed on the ECG website.

⁴⁰ This is consistent with the request of the Executive Board that the panel consist of the heads of the evaluation offices of ECG while taking into account IFAD's nature as both an international financial institution and a United Nations specialized agency.

41. The panel will be supported by two consultants, a team leader and a senior consultant, to undertake detailed work (see annex VI for the indicative tasks to be undertaken by the consultants). This consulting team will have expertise in agriculture and rural development and knowledge of evaluation. The criteria for selecting the consultants will be determined by the review panel but the signing of their contracts will not take place until after the Executive Board approves the RAP. The detailed tasks assigned to the consultants will be finalized at the inception workshop. The team leader is expected to work closely with the chairperson of the review panel to help draft the review report.
42. The review panel will be supported by IFAD staff specifically assigned to the task, namely, a senior evaluator from OE and a senior official involved in IFAD's self-evaluation function. This support will be provided on a part-time basis.

VI. DELIVERABLES

43. The written deliverables for the independent peer review include: (i) a brief inception report prepared after the inception workshop; (ii) a 20-to-30-page draft review report, plus associated annexes, highlighting major strategic findings and issues; and (iii) a final review report for submission by the ECG to the Executive Board. In addition, various working papers will be prepared for consideration by the panel, including: (i) OE's assessment of the independent evaluation system; (ii) Management's assessment of the self-evaluation system; (iii) the consultants' assessment of the coverage and quality of OE's products and processes; (iv) the consultants' assessment of the coverage and quality of products and processes in the self-evaluation system; (v) an assessment of the evaluation policy, major governance issues and the roles of the Executive Board and the Evaluation Committee; and (vi) brief reports on the field visits.

VII. PROPOSED SCHEDULE

44. The key dates for the peer review are given in annex VII. Major milestones include:
 - (a) 4 September 2009: Evaluation Committee considers final Review Approach Paper;
 - (b) 14/15 September 2009: the Executive Board considers the Review Approach Paper;
 - (c) Week of 12 October 2010: initial panel meeting and inception workshop;
 - (d) 10 January 2010: after review by the ECG Chair, the draft Peer Review Report is forwarded to the Evaluation Committee, Office of Evaluation and IFAD Management for review and comment;
 - (e) Last week of January 2010: the Evaluation Committee discusses the draft of the Peer Review Report in a special session;
 - (f) 15 February 2010: the final Peer Review Report is submitted;
 - (g) Last week of March 2010: after review of the final report by the ECG, the Evaluation Committee considers the final Peer Review Report and the chairperson prepares a report conveying the Committee's views to the Executive Board;
 - (h) 14/15 April 2010: the Executive Board considers the Peer Review Report; and
 - (i) May/June 2010: disclosure of the Peer Review Report, the ECG's covering letter, report of the chairperson of the Evaluation Committee and relevant extracts from the minutes of the Executive Board session on the IFAD and ECG websites and publishing of the printed report.

VIII. BUDGET

45. The costs of the review exercise will be financed by IFAD through a one-time below-the-line contribution in the 2009 OE budget that the IFAD Governing Council approved in February 2009. The initial budget for the review was estimated at US\$300,000. However, that estimate did not provide for country visits. The budget estimate was carefully reviewed but it was found that not all of the costs associated with the country visits could be accommodated. Thus, it will be necessary to increase the funds available for the independent peer review by US\$50,000 to a total of US\$350,000. The revised cost estimates are shown in annex VIII. Out of the total budget of US\$350,000, in the neighbourhood of US\$240,000 will be allocated to the panel and will include fees for the independent peers and the cost of travel and accommodation, including the country visits. Approximately US\$96,000 is set aside for the consultants and their travel and accommodation. A more detailed budget breakdown will be prepared following the recruitment of the consultants and included in the inception report.

Key issues identified by the Evaluation Committee

1. Define a clearer role for the Evaluation Committee, as the Evaluation Committee is the main client for the peer review.
2. Clarify objectives and expected outputs including changes that may be needed in both the Evaluation Policy and the procedures and practices associated with IFAD's evaluation system. Emphasize that the purpose of undertaking the peer review is to learn from the experience of both IFAD and peers to improve IFAD's evaluation system.
3. For each objective, define the work activities to be undertaken.
4. Define an approach and methodology to be used in undertaking the peer review that reflects IFAD's characteristics.
5. Propose countries for field visits. Likely countries will have recently been the location of programme evaluations.
6. More detailed assessment of the timeline and implementation schedule: revisit the current proposal to complete the peer review in time for the December Board.
7. More detailed budget presentation, taking into account field visits.
8. More emphasis on "what will be done" and less descriptive background of the peer review concept.
9. Greater use of comparison between the IFAD system and those of ECG members, taking into account IFAD's unique features.
10. Explicit reference to cost-efficiency and value for money.
11. Illustrate institutional changes resulting from the work of the Office of Evaluation.
12. More specific description of the roles of the panel and consultants: clarify that the consultants should have expertise in agriculture and rural development and, preferably, knowledge of IFAD and some exposure to evaluation.
13. Consultants may be identified but contracts may not be signed until after the September Board session.
14. The result will be a clearer, shorter and more focused document (delete lengthy annexes that served the purpose of informing the Evaluation Committee of the ECG approach as these are not necessary for a Board paper).

Modified ECG questionnaire for the assessment of IFAD's evaluation function

1. IFAD Evaluation Policy: role, responsibility and objectives of the evaluation office

- (i) Does the evaluation policy clearly describe the role, governance structure and position of OE within the institutional context governed by the articles of association?
- (ii) Are there inconsistencies between the evaluation policy and the associated President's Bulletin?
- (iii) Does the evaluation function provide useful coverage of all the activities/operations/programmes of IFAD?
- (iv) According to the policy, how does evaluation contribute to institutional learning and accountability?
- (v) How is the relationship between evaluation and audit conceptualized within IFAD?
- (vi) Is the evaluation policy adequately known and implemented within IFAD?
- (vii) Are there ambiguities in the evaluation policy that lead to different interpretations by the Board/Evaluation Committee, the Office of Evaluation and/or Management?
- (viii) Are there parts of the evaluation policy that need to be clarified or deleted, or sections that should be added?
- (ix) Are there special features that need to be included in the evaluation policy to reflect the fact that IFAD is a United Nations agency?

2. Impartiality, transparency and independence

- (i) To what extent are the evaluation department and the evaluation process independent from line management?
- (ii) What are the formal and actual drivers ensuring/constraining the Office of Evaluation's independence?
- (iii) Is there a culture of independent evaluation in IFAD?
- (iv) What is the role and effectiveness of the Board or the Evaluation Committee in the evaluation function relative to its terms of reference?
- (v) How does the Office of Evaluation and its relation to institutional processes such as human resource management, code of conduct and financial management compare with the ECG Good Practice Standards for Independence?
- (vi) What is OE's experience of exposing successes and failures of operational activities/programmes/projects/strategies/policies and their implementation?
- (vii) What is OE's experience in challenging conventional wisdom?
- (viii) Is the evaluation process transparent enough to ensure its credibility and legitimacy? Are evaluation findings consistently made public?
- (ix) Is there a policy on managing conflicts of interest?

- (x) How is the balance between independence and the need for interaction with line management dealt with by the system?
- (xi) Are evaluation processes and reports perceived as impartial by non-evaluation actors within and outside the institution?

3. Resources and Staff

- (i) How efficient have the independent evaluation and self-evaluation systems been in fulfilling their evaluation functions? If feasible and appropriate, a benchmarking exercise of OE with other evaluation departments should be considered, taking into account that comparing budgets is a challenging endeavour: collecting comparable data is not easy because the nature and size of the organization and its mandate and operating model all have consequences for the budget.
- (ii) Are the independent evaluation and self-evaluation functions supported by appropriate financial and staff resources?
- (iii) Does OE have a dedicated budget? Is it annual or multi-year? Does the budget cover activities aimed at promoting feedback and the use and management of evaluation knowledge?
- (iv) Are OE's operations cost-effective? Is OE providing value for money?
- (v) Is the cost of producing various evaluation products known, in terms of the use of both OE staff time and consultant inputs? Do OE staff use a time recording system?
- (vi) Is there a policy on recruiting consultants, in terms of qualification, impartiality and deontology? Are the rates paid to evaluation consultants comparable with those paid to consultants on the operational side of IFAD and/or in ECG members?
- (vii) Are there opportunities to increase OE staff productivity?
- (viii) Do some policies need to be revisited to improve effectiveness and efficiency (e.g. the need to undertake interim evaluations in every case before a follow-on project is approved)?
- (ix) How is the Director of OE selected and/or extended? What is his/her level in the organization? Who does his/her annual performance review? Who decides his/her salary increase? Who exercises oversight of the OE Director, his management of personnel, work programmes and budgets (e.g. the Evaluation Committee; Management)? If there are concerns, are audits ordered by Management, the Evaluation Committee or the Audit Committee?
- (x) How does OE select, recruit, mentor/develop and promote staff?
- (xi) Do staff have specific expertise in evaluation and, if not, are training programmes available?
- (xii) Is there a flow of staff between OE and the operational divisions and vice versa?

4. Evaluation partnerships and capacity-building

- (i) To what extent does OE engage in joint or collaborative evaluations with other donors?
- (ii) To what extent are beneficiaries, borrowers or executing agencies involved in the evaluation process?
- (iii) To what extent does OE rely on local evaluators or, when not possible, on third party evaluators from borrowing Member States?
- (iv) Does OE engage in partner-led evaluations?

- (v) Does OE support evaluation training and capacity-building programmes in borrowing Member States?
- (vi) How do partners/beneficiaries/NGOs perceive the evaluation processes and products (in terms of quality, independence, objectivity, usefulness and partnership orientation)?

5. Quality of Evaluation Products

- (i) How does OE ensure the quality of its evaluations (including reports and process)?
- (ii) Does OE have guidelines for the conduct of evaluations and are they used?
- (iii) Has IFAD developed/adopted standards/benchmarks to assess and improve the quality of its evaluation reports?
- (iv) How well have evaluation reports dealt with answering the question “Why was the performance as it was”?
- (v) How has the evaluation office, in aggregating its findings to assess portfolio- and programme-wide performance, addressed issues related to sample size, representativeness, minimum quality standards, and comparability of ratings across evaluations?
- (vi) What is the usefulness of evaluation reports from the point of view of the Board of Directors, Management and the operational side of IFAD?
- (vii) What is the assessment of the quality of the evaluation reports in terms of coverage; presentation of evidence to support conclusions; dispassionate, objective analysis; and use of best international evaluation practice?
- (viii) How is the quality of evaluation products/processes perceived throughout IFAD?

6. Planning, coordination and harmonization

- (i) Does IFAD have a multi-year evaluation workplan, describing future evaluations according to a defined timetable?
- (ii) How is the evaluation plan developed? Who, within the organization, identifies the priorities and how?
- (iii) Does the work programme reflect an appropriate balance between corporate-level evaluations, complex evaluations (e.g. country/sector/policy/thematic) and project-level evaluations?
- (iv) How is the evaluation function organized within IFAD?
- (v) Does OE assess the quality of the self-evaluation processes in the institution?
- (vi) Does OE coordinate its evaluation activities with other multilateral agencies and bilateral donors?
- (vii) How are field-level evaluation activities coordinated? Is authority for evaluation centralized or decentralized?
- (viii) Does OE engage in joint/multi-donor evaluations?
- (ix) Does OE make use of evaluative information from ECG members, bilateral donors, academia or NGOs?

7. Dissemination, feedback, knowledge management and learning

- (i) How are evaluation findings disseminated? In addition to reports, are other communication tools used (e. g. press releases, press conferences, abstracts, annual reports providing a synthesis of findings, repackaging of evaluation findings, web-based technologies, articles in non-ECG member publications)?
- (ii) Are all evaluation reports made public? Are position papers made public? Are comments from third parties on the evaluation products made public?
- (iii) What mechanisms are in place to ensure feedback of evaluation results to policymakers, operational staff and the general public?
- (iv) What mechanisms are in place to ensure that knowledge from evaluation is accessible to staff and other relevant stakeholders?
- (v) Is evaluation viewed as an integral part of the knowledge management system?
- (vi) Is evaluation considered a "learning tool" by staff of the organization under review?

8. Evaluation Use

- (i) Does the learning from evaluation findings help to improve IFAD's development effectiveness? What parts of the feedback loop need to be strengthened?
- (ii) Who are the main users of evaluations within and outside the institution?
- (iii) Does evaluation respond to the information needs expressed by the Board of Directors, Management, operational staff, developing countries and/or civil society?
- (iv) Are there systems in place to monitor and track action taken on the implementation of evaluation findings and recommendations? Are the systems effective or do they need strengthening?
- (v) Are recommendations included in evaluation reports clear and is it possible to act upon and monitor them?

- (vi) What is the linkage between the timing of evaluations and new projects and policies? For example, are there institutional requirements for evaluations of policies, country strategies or projects to be completed before policies or country strategies are revised or follow-on projects are funded? Is OE engaged in quality-at-entry processes for new projects and policies and risk management processes?
- (vii) How does IFAD promote follow-up on findings from relevant stakeholders (through e.g. steering groups, advisory panels or sounding boards)?
- (viii) Are links with decision-making processes ensured to promote the use of evaluation in policy formulation? For example, is there a "just in time" dissemination system – i.e. ensuring that evaluation findings are packaged in a digestible form and delivered to decision-makers who can influence decisions?
- (ix) Are there recent examples of major operation and policy changes attributable to evaluation findings and recommendations, i.e. influential evaluations?
- (x) Are there examples of how evaluation serves as an accountability mechanism?
- (xi) What are the perceptions of non-evaluation actors (operation and policy departments, etc.) regarding the usefulness and influence of evaluations?

Relationship between the OECD-DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, the ECG approach, the IFAD Evaluation Policy and OE's reference documents

DAC evaluation principles and additional assessment criteria	Addressed in:			OE sources other than IFAD Evaluation Policy
	ECG Questionnaire?*	IFAD Evaluation Policy?	OE Evaluation Manual?	
DAC Principles:				
1. Purposes of evaluation		Yes	Yes	B, C
2. Evaluation policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3. Impartiality and independence	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4. Accountability	Yes	Yes	Yes	B
5. Credibility	Yes		Yes	C
6. Transparency	Yes		Yes	
7. Learning	Yes	Yes	Yes	B
8. Partnership	Yes	Yes	Yes	
9. Feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes	B
10. Dissemination	Yes	Yes	Yes	A, B
11. Usefulness	Yes		Yes	B, C
12. Overall planning	Yes ⁴¹	Yes	Yes	A, B
13. Guidelines and/or standards	Yes	Yes	Yes	B, C
Additional Assessment Criteria:				
• Resources and staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	A
• Capacity-building	Yes			⁴²
• Quality of evaluation products	Yes		Yes	B, C
Key to OE sources indicated above:				
A = Annual work programme and budget		B = OE Results measurement framework		
		C = Internal OE peer review guidelines		

* ECG questionnaire for the assessment of the evaluation function.

⁴¹ In the ECG questionnaire, planning includes coordination and harmonization.

⁴² In their sessions in September 2008, the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board requested that OE find ways and means of promoting evaluation capacity development in partner countries. In response, OE proposed to become involved more systematically in this work. This proposal was outlined for the Executive Board in paragraph 104 of the Programme of work, Programme Development Financing Facility and administrative and capital budgets of IFAD and its Office of Evaluation for 2009 (EB 2008/95/R.2/Rev.1) Executive Board – ninety-fifth session, 15-17 December 2008. A more detailed proposal will be prepared by OE for the Evaluation Committee in October 2009.

OE Results Measurement Framework

Results	Verifiable Indicators
Usefulness of evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation recommendations adopted by IFAD Management and the Government concerned, as captured in the agreement at completion point (ACP)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior independent advisers convey their full satisfaction with quality of evaluation process and content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Committee and Executive Board express broad agreement with key evaluation findings and recommendations
Outputs – clustered by priority	
(a) Corporate-level evaluations (CLEs), country programme evaluations (CPEs) and project/programme evaluations (PEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations completed against annual targets in accordance with work programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation reports, Profile and Insights issued within three months of established completion date (i.e. following signing of ACP)
(b) Evaluation work required by the IFAD Evaluation Policy and the Terms of Reference of the Evaluation Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of planned Evaluation Committee sessions and annual field visits held in accordance with work programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARRI report produced annually and discussed with Evaluation Committee and Executive Board, in accordance with established practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written comments prepared on PRISMA, RIDE and selected corporate policies and processes in a timely manner
(c) Evaluation outreach and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation reports, Profiles and Insights disseminated to internal and external audiences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hits on the evaluation section of the corporate website
(d) OE methodology and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations conducted with internal peer reviewers and higher-plane evaluations with senior independent advisers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations in full compliance with the evaluation policy

PROCESS FOR THE ECG PEER REVIEW OF THE IFAD EVALUATION FUNCTION

Preparatory Phase
1. ECG consults with IFAD on the composition of the review panel, in particular on the names of two external peers, including the chairperson of the review panel.
2. ECG appoints the review panel and its chair after consultation with the Evaluation Committee and IFAD.
3. The chairperson of the review panel finalizes the Review Approach Paper after an initial ECG draft is discussed by the Evaluation Committee and commented on by the Director of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and IFAD Management.
4. The chairperson of the review panel begins to identify suitable consultants but contracts are only signed after the Executive Board approves the final Review Approach Paper.
5. The final Review Approach Paper is endorsed by IFAD's Evaluation Committee for presentation to the Executive Board for approval.
Consultation Phase
6. Consultant contracts are finalized and an inception workshop is held to develop a detailed work programme.
7. The work of the panel and consultants takes place, including country visits. The chairperson of the review panel supervises the work of the consultants. The chairperson of IFAD's Evaluation Committee, chairperson of the review panel and OE resolve ad hoc problems and issues during the review exercise.
8. The review panel, with the support of the consultants, prepare their draft report.
9. After review of the draft report by the ECG chairperson, the review panel presents the draft report to the Evaluation Committee and seeks comments and feedback from IFAD Management and OE. The review panel will address the comments as it deems appropriate.
Assessment Phase
10. The final report is presented by the chairperson of the review panel to the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board and copies are given to IFAD Management and OE. The Evaluation Committee will consider the final report and convey its comments, through the chairperson's report, to the Executive Board. The chairperson and selected members of the review panel will attend the Evaluation Committee session in which the final review report is discussed.
11. The review panel sends the final report plus the Evaluation Committee's comments to the ECG for consideration.
12. The ECG chairperson transmits the final report, as delivered by the review panel, with a cover letter including any comments the ECG wishes to make to the Executive Board of IFAD.
13. The transmitted report is discussed by the Executive Board. The chairpersons of the ECG and the review panel are available to answer any questions. The Executive Board makes such recommendations as it deems appropriate based on the panel's report.

INDICATIVE TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE CONSULTANTS

A. Team Leader

1. Take the lead in undertaking the technical work necessary to assess the IFAD Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Committee and the role, functioning and quality of products of OE.
2. Develop a work programme to undertake the activities and deliver the outputs specified in the terms of reference for consideration by the panel chairperson. For this assignment, the consultant will report to the panel through the chairperson.
3. Undertake interviews and review of documents in IFAD to address issues raised in the Review Approach Paper and inception workshop.
4. Verify, contest or explore key issues of relevance to the review that are identified in the self-assessment prepared by the Office of Evaluation.
5. Assess the quality and credibility of the products of the Office of Evaluation, highlighting any significant changes that have occurred since the office became independent,⁴³ specifically: (i) the quality and coverage of a random sample of project evaluations, including commenting on consistency with the methodology of the Office of Evaluation, consistency with the ECG's Good Practice Standards on public investment and the quality, number and monitorability of recommendations; (ii) the quality and coverage of all country evaluations undertaken since 2005, including commenting on consistency with the methodology of the Office of Evaluation, consistency with the ECG's Good Practice Standards on country assistance evaluations and linkage to the corresponding country strategic opportunities programmes; (iii) the quality and impact on IFAD of all corporate evaluations; (iv) the quality and impact of selected thematic evaluations; (v) the quality and coverage of all Annual Reports on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRIs) produced since 2005 with a brief comparison with the 2003 ARRI to identify major changes since OE became independent; (vi) procedures for evaluating grants; (vii) the number, quality and usefulness of the information in a random sample of dissemination products and other outreach activities; (viii) the methodologies used by OE, including a review of the Evaluation Manual: Methodology and Processes, and the Guide for Project M&E; (ix) OE's input into the formulation of IFAD policies and the quality at entry of new projects, and the timing of this input; (x) OE's interaction with the Evaluation Committee through interviews and a review of the record of discussions and chairperson's report; (xi) the interaction between the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board through interviews and a review of Board minutes; (xii) assess the procedures for developing OE's work programme and budget; (xiii) OE's cost-effectiveness including evaluating the impact of OE on IFAD, OE's budget relative to other ECG members and OE's consultant recruitment processes and costs, including comparisons with ECG members; (xiv) OE's human resource management systems and procedures, recruitment, promotion, performance appraisal, staff development, and rotation of staff between OE and other departments and visa versa, including OE's ongoing human resource and renewal initiative; (xv) outputs of the Working Group on the Institutional Review of the IFAD Evaluation Policy; and (xvi) based on the foregoing, prepare comments on the IFAD Evaluation Policy, highlighting areas where ambiguities or gaps exist.

⁴³ The detailed analysis of evaluation products will focus on those prepared since 2005. However, the situation in 2003 should be briefly reviewed to highlight any major changes.

6. Prepare a technical report covering these issues and submit to the panel chairperson by 28 November 2009.
7. Attend the December 2009 panel meeting to identify the key issues to be covered in the report of the Peer Review Panel. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to summarize key findings and conclusions covering topics highlighted in the Review Approach Paper and the inception workshop, and the results of the investigations undertaken. Identify any gaps in information.
8. Draft assigned sections of the Peer Review Report for consideration by the panel chairperson. Revise contributions as necessary based on feedback from the panel chairperson.
9. As directed by the panel chairperson, revise portions of the peer review report based on comments made by the Evaluation Committee, the Office of Evaluation and IFAD Management.

B. Senior Consultant

10. Take the lead in undertaking the technical work necessary to assess IFAD's self-evaluation system, including its role, functioning and quality of products and major changes over time.
11. Develop a work programme to undertake the activities and deliver the outputs specified in the terms of reference for consideration by the panel chairperson. For this assignment, the consultant will report to the Peer Review Panel through the chairperson, although some guidance will also be provided by the team leader.
12. Undertake interviews and review of documents in IFAD to address issues raised in the Review Approach Paper and inception workshop.
13. Verify, contest or explore key issues of relevance to the review that are identified in the self-assessment prepared by IFAD Management.
14. Undertake the analysis necessary to prepare a technical report on the topics, which is to be submitted to the panel chairperson by 28 November 2009. This will include assessing the quality and credibility of the products and processes involved in IFAD's self-evaluation system highlighting any significant changes that have occurred since OE became independent,⁴⁴ specifically: (i) the quality and coverage of a random sample of project completion reports including commenting on consistency with IFAD's norms and standards and the harmonization agreement with the Office of Evaluation, the credibility of the ratings, the efforts by the Office of Evaluation to improve the quality of project completion reports, the usefulness of these reports, the number and quality of recommendations and the related follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations; (ii) the quality, usefulness and impact of all President's Reports on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMAs) produced since 2005; (iii) the quality, usefulness and impact of all Reports on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDEs) produced since 2007 and the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS); and (iv) the coverage and management of IFAD's self-evaluation system, including the agreement between PMD and OE on harmonization of self-evaluation and independent systems of IFAD.

⁴⁴ The detailed analysis of evaluation products will focus on those prepared since 2005. However, the situation in 2003 should be briefly reviewed to highlight any major changes.

15. Attend the December 2009 panel meeting to identify the key issues in his/her areas of responsibility that should be considered for coverage in the report of the Peer Review Panel. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to summarize key findings and conclusions covering topics that are highlighted in the Review Approach Paper, the inception workshop and the results of the investigations undertaken to date. Identify any gaps in information.
16. Draft assigned sections of the peer review report for consideration by the panel chairperson. Revise contributions as necessary based on feedback from the panel chairperson.
17. As directed by the panel chairperson, revise portions of the peer review report based on comments made by the Evaluation Committee, the Office of Evaluation and IFAD Management.

KEY DATES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE⁴⁵**A. Preparatory Phase**

1. 20 July 2009: Evaluation Committee considers draft RAP
2. 20-31 July 2009: Finalize RAP
3. 1-31 August 2009: Identify consultants (part time)
4. 1–23 August 2009: Develop questionnaires for self-assessments (part time)
5. 24 August to 9 October 2009: OE and Management undertake self-evaluations
6. 4 September 2009: Evaluation Committee considers RAP
7. 14 September 2009: Board considers the RAP

B. Consultation Phase

1. 14-21 September 2009: OE finalizes contract with independent peers and consultants
2. 1 to 9 October 2009: Preparation and background review by panel and consultants
3. 6-17 October 2009: Interviews/panel meeting/inception workshop
4. 18 October to 20 November 2009: Consultant prepares technical report on OE
5. 18 October to 20 November 2009: Consultant prepares technical report on self-evaluation system
6. 3-20 November 2009: An independent panel member prepares working paper on governance and the roles of the Executive Board and Evaluation Committee
7. November/December 2009: Country visits (to be scheduled)
8. 3-4 December 2009: Panel meeting to scope the report
9. 15 December 2009 to 10 January 2010: Prepare and submit draft panel report
10. 29–31 January 2010: Receive comments on draft report from the Evaluation Committee, IFAD Management, OE and ECG
11. 1-15 February 2009: Finalize and submit panel report and covering letter from ECG.

C. Assessment Phase

1. 29 March 2010: Special session of the Evaluation Committee considers final report
2. 14/15 April 2010: Board approves final report
3. 16 April to 15 June 2010: Public disclosure and publishing of the final report

⁴⁵ A more detailed schedule has been developed using Microsoft Office to help manage the peer review.

BUDGET

COST ESTIMATES FOR THE PEER REVIEW	US\$
1. Panel	
(a) Fees	117 000
(b) Travel and daily subsistence allowance	122 072
Subtotal	239 072
2. Consultants	
(a) Fees	64 800
(b) Travel and daily subsistence allowance	31 664
Subtotal	96 464
3. Unallocated and survey administrator	14 464
Grand total	350 000

NOTE: AN EXTENSIVE SPREADSHEET UNDERLIES THESE ESTIMATES.