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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents and IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management**

Executive Board — Ninety-eighth Session  
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For: **Information**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for the information of the Executive Board.

To make the best use of time available at Executive Board sessions, Directors are invited to contact the following focal point with any technical questions about this document before the session:

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# IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents and IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management

## I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the commitment undertaken during the ninety-seventh session of the Executive Board (14-15 September 2009), a list of actions taken with respect to the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents is hereby provided.

## II. IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents

2. At its sixty-first session, in September 1997, the Executive Board considered document EB 97/61/R.11 on the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents. The document referred to the disclosure, *inter alia*, of: formulation and project appraisal reports; the reports and recommendations of the President; country strategic opportunities papers; agreements with Member States, international organizations, NGOs and other institutions; evaluation reports and studies; policy papers; governing body documents; information on project-related procurement activities; information on the use of supplementary funds; environmental documents. The Board accepted the proposed policy with the view of recommending a retroactive application thereof to the Governing Council. In making this recommendation, the Executive Board voiced concerns regarding the cost implications of a fully retroactive policy and requested that Management look into options for minimizing costs, including a gradual implementation approach.<sup>1</sup>
3. At its sixty-second session, in December 1997, the Executive Board reconsidered its previous recommendation owing to the cost implications of the proposal, and recommended that the Governing Council endorse the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents – Interim Phase, as outlined in document EB 97/62/R.38. The policy envisaged an 18-month interim phase (from July 1998 to December 1999) in which governing body documents were to be disclosed, with a prospective application in all four official languages, through the IFAD website on the Internet. It also contained a proposal to review the policy at the end of the interim phase, with a view to achieving a more comprehensive disclosure policy.
4. At its twenty-first session, in February 1998, the Governing Council considered the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents as set out in document EB 97/61/R.11, the Executive Board's review of the cost implications of a disclosure policy, and its recommendations on the implementation of an interim phase, as outlined in document EB 97/62/R.38.<sup>2</sup>
5. In agreeing to the principle of having a disclosure policy, the Governing Council:
  - (a) Approved the 18-month IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents – Interim Phase,<sup>3</sup> from July 1998 to December 1999, during which only governing body documents were to be made available on IFAD's website in the four official languages of the Fund. In this connection, only the main report and not the appendices to the President's reports were to be made available, as the latter were not completely available in electronic form;
  - (b) Requested the Executive Board to review the disclosure policy and procedures in 2000 at its sixty-ninth session (subsequent to the end of the interim phase) and authorized it to adopt a final disclosure policy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Document EB/61 minutes.

<sup>2</sup> Document GC 21/L.8.

<sup>3</sup> Document EB 97/62/R.38 (as attached to document GC 21/L.8).

<sup>4</sup> Document GC/21 report.

6. From 1998, documents were disclosed on the Internet website only after IFAD's Governing Council and Executive Board, at the conclusion of each session, had reviewed requests for the disclosure of documents submitted to the session.<sup>5</sup>
7. In May 2000, the Executive Board examined the results obtained during the interim phase<sup>6</sup> and approved the expansion of the disclosure policy to include all evaluation reports as well as documentation submitted to the Evaluation Committee. At the same time, the Executive Board endorsed the possibility of disclosing other types of documents in the future.<sup>7</sup>
8. At its seventy-ninth session, in September 2003, the Executive Board approved the posting on IFAD's public website, in the four official languages, of detailed descriptions of projects in the form of two-page information notes.<sup>8</sup>
9. In the Report of the Consultation on the Seventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources it was proposed, *inter alia*, that a revised disclosure policy be presented to the Executive Board in 2006, taking into consideration the views expressed in the report, in particular the recommendation to disclose policy, strategy and loan documents when being presented to the Executive Board, and a comparison with the disclosure policies and procedures of selected international financial institutions and United Nations agencies.<sup>9</sup> The report was approved by the Governing Council at its twenty-ninth session.<sup>10</sup>
10. In December 2006, at its eighty-ninth session, the Executive Board reviewed the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Consultation on the Seventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. The Board approved that, from its eighty-ninth session onward:
  - (a) All documents submitted to the Governing Council (including its replenishment consultations) and the Executive Board (including the Evaluation Committee) be disclosed to the public on the Internet at the time they are made available to Governors and Representatives of the Executive Board on the restricted IFAD website;
  - (b) Information/status notes on projects being developed for Board presentation continue to be disclosed on IFAD's public website;
  - (c) Agreements for newly approved loans and grants be disclosed once they are signed and effective, and amendments thereto be disclosed once signed and countersigned; and
  - (d) Previously undisclosed documents that are eligible for disclosure under the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents be made available upon request or as necessary, in accordance with paragraph 14 of the policy.<sup>11</sup>
11. In September 2009 the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents (EB 2006/89/R.5/Rev.1) was further amended by the Executive Board to allow for public disclosure of project/programme design documents, in their original language, prior to the Executive Board session in which the project/programme is to be considered (EB 2009/97/R.33). Such expansion in the policy was in response to the commitment made in the context of the Consultation on the Eighth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. The Consultation also directed the Board to

<sup>5</sup> GC/21 to GC 29 reports and EB/63 to EB/89 minutes.

<sup>6</sup> Document EB 2000/69/R.13/Rev.1.

<sup>7</sup> Document EB/69 minutes.

<sup>8</sup> Document EB/79 minutes.

<sup>9</sup> Document GC 29/L.4.

<sup>10</sup> Document GC 29/REV.141/XXIX/Rev.1.

<sup>11</sup> Document EB 2006/89/R.5/Rev.1, paragraph 14:

"When the disclosure policy was approved in 1998, there was no decision on retroactive application. It is therefore proposed that previously undisclosed documents that are eligible for disclosure under the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents be made available upon request or as necessary."

review the policy provisions with regard to the disclosure of previously undisclosed documents.<sup>12</sup>

### III. IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management

12. The importance of knowledge management first came to prominence in the Rapid External Assessment of IFAD in 1994,<sup>13</sup> which identified IFAD's potential role as a knowledge centre on the issues of rural poverty.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, it was only in 2007, with the Executive Board's adoption of the IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management (EB 2007/90/R.4), that knowledge management activities were set out and planned with a clear strategic focus and within a planning and results framework. As explained in the strategy, IFAD's previous knowledge management initiatives tended to involve isolated activities having no clear unity of purpose.
13. A draft strategy (EB 2006/89/R.3) had been discussed in the course of the Executive Board's eighty-ninth session. On such occasion it was determined that an *ad hoc* working group of the Board was to be established to provide guidance and to ensure that the concerns expressed by the Board members were adequately dealt with in the revised knowledge management strategy, which was eventually approved at the ninetieth session of the Board in April 2007.<sup>15</sup>
14. The implementation of the strategy is guided by four strategic objectives:
  - (a) Strengthen knowledge-sharing and learning processes;
  - (b) Equip IFAD with a more supportive knowledge-sharing and learning infrastructure;
  - (c) Foster partnership for broader knowledge-sharing and learning; and
  - (d) Promote a supportive knowledge-sharing and learning culture.<sup>16</sup>
15. The strategy is structured according to a results framework, comprised of 12 expected results, among which is "improved information management standards, rules, procedures and tools" (expected result No. 9).

### IV. Revision of the disclosure policy

16. With the aim of submitting a proposal to the Executive Board for its consideration during its ninety-ninth session (April 2010), staff have undertaken the task of developing a new Policy on the Disclosure of Documents for the purpose of enhancing information management and knowledge-sharing with IFAD Member States, development partners and the public. It is envisaged that the proposal will clearly identify, *inter alia*, the categories of documents eligible for disclosure, the roles and responsibilities deriving from broadening the policy, and the security measures required to safeguard, *inter alia*, the Fund, any intellectual property right(s), and the accuracy of the information disclosed. The proposal will also consider the release of previously undisclosed documents, as requested in the course of the last Board session. At present, the policy foresees that "... previously undisclosed documents that are eligible for disclosure under the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents be made available upon request or as necessary".<sup>17</sup> This provision seems to limit the sharing of information with IFAD's stakeholders and thus will be duly addressed in the course of the proposal to be submitted for consideration by the Executive Board.

<sup>12</sup> Document GC 32/L.5.

<sup>13</sup> At its seventeenth session in January 1994, the Governing Council adopted Resolution 81/XVII to set up a Rapid External Assessment Team to assess the extent to and the ways in which the Fund was fulfilling its mandate, its strengths and weaknesses, etc. The team began its work in March 1994 in Rome and completed its report in the same year.

<sup>14</sup> Document GC 18/L.6.

<sup>15</sup> Document EB/89 minutes.

<sup>16</sup> Document EB 2007/90/R.4.

<sup>17</sup> Document EB 2006/89/R.5/Rev.1, paragraph 14.