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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Report of the chairperson on the fifty-ninth session of the Evaluation Committee**

Executive Board — Ninety-eighth Session  
Rome, 15-17 December 2009

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For: **Approval**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for the approval 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:

**Luciano Lavizzari**

Director, Office of Evaluation

telephone: +39 06 5459 2274

e-mail: [l.lavizzari@ifad.org](mailto:l.lavizzari@ifad.org)

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](mailto:d.mcgrenra@ifad.org)

## **Recommendation for approval**

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendations contained in the report of the chairperson on the fifty-ninth session of the Evaluation Committee.



## Report of the chairperson on the fifty-ninth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its fifty-ninth session on 9 October 2009. The four agenda items for discussion were: (a) the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations evaluated in 2008; (b) the Mozambique Country Programme Evaluation; (c) the Office of Evaluation's three-year rolling working programme (2010-2012) and budget for 2010; and (d) other business.
2. All Committee members attended the session (Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, Nigeria and Sweden). Observers were present from Angola, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cameroon, France, Germany, Guatemala, Mexico and the United Kingdom. The Committee was joined by the Assistant President, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Director, Office of Evaluation (OE); the Secretary of IFAD; the Director, Strategic Budget and Planning Division; and the Director, Eastern and Southern Africa Division (PF), in addition to a number of other IFAD staff members. The Governor of the Bank of Mozambique, the Ambassador of Mozambique to Italy and other Mozambican government officials also attended the session, as did Mr Bruce Murray, chair of the Peer Review Panel and Mr Pieter Stek, member of the Peer Review Panel.

### **Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations evaluated in 2008 (ARRI)**

3. OE presented the seventh edition of the ARRI to the Evaluation Committee for its consideration. The Committee commended OE for the excellent quality of the document, and noted that IFAD is one of the few development organizations that produces a consolidated report of this nature, aimed at promoting both accountability and learning. As per usual practice, Management's response to the document was provided orally during the session by PMD, with the understanding that the written response would be considered by the Board in December 2009.
4. The Committee acknowledged the usefulness of the collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) around the two learning themes covered in this year's ARRI, namely access to markets, and natural resource management and the environment. The Committee also took note that input from Management had been captured through two dedicated in-house learning workshops organized by OE in May on these topics. On the issue of learning, the Committee agreed with OE's proposal for the 2010 ARRI to cover one learning theme – the efficiency of IFAD operations – and invites the Board to endorse the corresponding recommendation contained in the report.
5. The ARRI revealed overall improvements in the performance of IFAD-funded projects since 2002 in the majority of evaluation criteria assessed. The Committee was satisfied to note that projects that became effective more recently performed better than older-generation operations. At the same time, it was recognized that caution should be exercised in interpreting these results, given that a significant number of projects evaluated only manifest a moderately satisfactory performance. Performance in terms of the promotion of innovations has been positive, although more attention is required to replication and scaling up. Similarly, performance with respect to sustainability has steadily improved since 2002, although more progress can still be made.
6. Members recognized that there is scope for IFAD to contribute further to improving government performance, given that this is a critical factor in ensuring sustainable agricultural and rural development. This would entail support for institutional

capacity development, the formulation of pro-poor policies and gender mainstreaming.

7. The Committee agreed with the recommendations on natural resource management and the environment and on market access contained in the document. Consequently, the Committee recommends their endorsement by the Board and the incorporation by Management of the natural resource management and environment recommendations into the corresponding IFAD strategy for presentation to the Board in 2010. Moreover, the recommendations on market access should be implemented within existing institutional processes, including during the preparation of country strategies and project design.
8. The Committee underlined the importance for IFAD to consolidate its efforts in strengthening country presence. Given that IFAD may not be able to establish a presence in all the countries in which it operates, one option would be to experiment with the subregional model, entailing coverage of IFAD operations also in countries that neighbour the country with an established IFAD presence. However, the Committee found that this would require careful reflection and the allocation of adequate human and financial resources.
9. On the new feature introduced in this year's ARRI – the chapter on quality at entry – the Committee emphasized the need to ensure that this feature does not duplicate efforts by Management. At the same time, the Committee noted that OE's analysis was undertaken from an independent perspective and covered all country strategic opportunities programmes and a selection of projects approved in 2008 in a holistic manner. In addition, OE pointed out that unlike the quality assurance and quality enhancement systems maintained by IFAD Management, the ARRI quality-at-entry analysis aims to provide a holistic account of learning covering the entire range of new country strategies and projects approved, rather than focus on individual country strategies or projects.
10. The Committee underlined that IFAD's efforts in promoting natural resource management and in addressing the effects of climate change should be mutually reinforcing. This would ensure that climate change issues are dealt with in a comprehensive manner, within the overall context of IFAD's natural resource management efforts.
11. The Committee also discussed the need for Management to reflect on taking a differentiated approach in allocating administrative resources for country strategy development, project preparation, supervision and implementation support. The complexity of the country context – countries with a challenging context in terms of weak policies and institutional capabilities for example – could be a key determinant in such allocations.

### **Mozambique Country Programme Evaluation**

12. In discussing the Mozambique Country Programme Evaluation (CPE), the Committee commended OE on a well-researched evaluation and expressed their broad agreement with its main findings and recommendations.
13. The representative from the Government of Mozambique conveyed his Government's overall satisfaction with the evaluation. He also underlined the importance of strengthening IFAD's country presence in Maputo, and highlighted the fact that the Government considers IFAD to be a strategic partner in its fight against poverty and in its efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals.
14. The Committee noted the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country and the potential consequences for the labour force. It invited Management and the Government to consider approaches that could contribute to reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS on agriculture in the future.

15. Committee Members also noted that IFAD could contribute towards promoting South-South cooperation, in terms of both technical assistance and knowledge sharing, especially with Lusophone countries such as Brazil.
16. Members emphasized the importance for IFAD to pay particular attention to reducing the time lapse between loan approval and effectiveness to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of operations in the country. However, it was observed that this issue appears to be improving, as illustrated by the recently launched Rural Markets Promotion Programme, which was declared effective within seven months of Executive Board approval.
17. Discussion also centered on the sustainability of project benefits, an area in which the performance of IFAD-funded projects in Mozambique was relatively weaker than the averages for IFAD operations in all regions. In this regard, the Committee highlighted the importance of reflecting on ways and means to enhance sustainability, especially in the Mozambique country programme, which involves a growing partnership with the private sector.
18. Finally, OE and IFAD Management clarified that a CPE is a critical type of evaluation, as it assesses the performance and impact of the partnership between IFAD and the concerned government and generates lessons and building blocks for the preparation of the new country strategic opportunities programme.

#### **Office of Evaluation's three-year rolling programme (2010-2012) and budget for 2010**

19. The Evaluation Committee discussed the three-year rolling programme (2010-2012) and 2010 budget proposal. Members welcomed the fact that OE had addressed the key comments made by the Committee on the preview document at its fifty-seventh session in July 2009. The Committee was reassured that due consultation had taken place between OE and Management in the development of the work programme, and expressed its broad agreement with OE's priorities, work programme and budget for 2010.
20. In particular, the Committee stressed the need for the final report on the external peer review by the Evaluation Cooperation Group to be ready for consideration by the Board at its session in April 2010. Similarly, members saw the joint evaluation of African Development Bank (AfDB) and IFAD policies and operations as a key report and looked forward to discussing this at the both the Committee and the Board sessions in December 2009.
21. With regard to the 2010 work programme, OE explained that as requested by the Committee and the Board, it would work on two corporate-level evaluations (CLEs) in 2010: gender and the private sector. This had required delaying the start-up of the Haiti CPE and substituting the China CPE with a self-assessment by PMD. With regard to the latter, OE will provide methodological inputs to the design of the PMD self-assessment, and will review and comment on the draft final report.

#### **Other Business**

22. The Committee considered five topics under this agenda item. These included: (i) the minutes of the fifty-seventh session of the Evaluation Committee; (ii) a request by PF for a waiver of the interim evaluation of the Sofala Banks Artisanal Fisheries Project (SBAFP) in Mozambique; (iii) the forthcoming presentation on the joint AfDB/IFAD evaluation at the December 2009 session of the Executive Board; (iv) the scheduling of the CLE on IFAD's capacity to promote pro-poor replicable innovations for discussion by the Committee and Board in December 2009; and (v) the process for preparing the report of the Evaluation Committee Chairperson for the Board.
23. On the basis of comments received, the Committee adopted the revised minutes of the fifty-seventh session of the Evaluation Committee.

24. On the second topic, the Committee was satisfied that the recent Mozambique CPE assessed in detail and rated satisfactorily the SBAFP. Taking this into consideration and based on the explanations provided by PF, the Committee recommends to the Executive Board that PF be granted a waiver from the interim evaluation of the SBAFP, and be allowed to proceed with the design of the second phase of the operation without this evaluation by OE.
25. With regard to the planned presentation of the Joint Africa Evaluation in the December Board, the Committee took note of the heavy Board agenda and indicated its preference for its presentation of the evaluation in the formal Executive Board setting, provided that adequate time is allocated for this event. However, should this not be possible and due to the importance of this evaluation, a second option would be to organize a half-day informal seminar before the Executive Board session.
26. The heavy agenda of both the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board sessions in December 2009 also led the Committee to recommend that consideration of the CLE on IFAD's capacity to promote pro-poor innovations be deferred until the respective Committee and Board sessions in April 2010. This would help lighten the agendas of the Committee and the Board sessions in December and provide these governing bodies with more time to consider the CLE.
27. Finally, in order to ensure that an accurate sense of the discussion in the Committee is conveyed to the Board, it was agreed that in addition to the customary oral account of the key points and decisions taken provided by the chair at the end of each agenda item considered in the Committee, he would also circulate the written summary of the same among members for their reference. This would then form the basis for the Chair to prepare his written report for consideration by the Board.



