

Document: EB 2009/98/R.57  
Agenda: 22  
Date: 4 November 2009  
Distribution: Public  
Original: English

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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **Annual Report on Quality Assurance in IFAD's Projects and Programmes**

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

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For: **Information**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

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## **Abbreviations and acronyms**

CPM	country programme manager
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OE	Office of Evaluation
PMD	Programme Management Department
PT	Technical Advisory Division
QA	quality assurance
QE	quality enhancement
RMF	Results Measurement Framework

# Annual Report on Quality Assurance in IFAD's Projects and Programmes

## I. Overview

1. This second Annual Report on Quality Assurance in IFAD's Projects and Programmes is divided into three sections. This section provides an overview of the quality assurance (QA) process. Overall results from the QA review of 32 operations in 2009 and ratings based on the use of Results Measurement Framework (RMF) indicators are presented in section II. Section III identifies a range of design issues emerging from the two-year experience of QA reviews that deserve further attention in 2010.
2. The QA function and process took effect as of 2 January 2008. Six QA review sessions have taken place to date, during which 61 projects have been reviewed. The established QA process entails the review of project design by the Office of the Vice-President as a final step before loan negotiations and submission to the Executive Board.<sup>1</sup> The QA review process has three main objectives, which will be reported on in section II:
  - (a) Clearing designed projects for loan negotiations and submission to the Executive Board, with special emphasis on the appropriateness of project design vis-à-vis IFAD's policies and guidelines;
  - (b) Determining the rating for results indicators under IFAD's corporate RMF at entry; and
  - (c) Assessing the quality enhancement (QE) process.

In addition, the QA review recommends measures that could help enhance the likelihood of achieving the projects' development objectives.

3. QA reviews take place three times a year (January, June and September), with each review spanning approximately two weeks (see annex I). Due to the presidential elections in which the Vice-President participated, and the resulting vacancy of the position, the three QA sessions had interim chairpersons. The first session in January was chaired by Gunilla Olsson, Executive Director of Change and Reform. The Vice-President/President-elect served as chair for the stand-alone QA reviews between February and April, whereas from April to August, the President chaired all the QA reviews, which included the second session in June and the stand-alone reviews during the intervening months. Finally, Kevin Cleaver, Assistant President, Programme Management Department (PMD), served as the interim chair for the QA session in September. Prior to that session, the QA secretariat agreed with the President that, should an external QA reviewer recommend a delay in the submission of a project to the Executive Board, the President would make the final decision regarding the project's clearance. This was the case for the North-east Rural Livelihoods Project in India. It is understood, however, that to ensure an arms-length QA process, QA reviews will be chaired by the Office of the President and Vice-President, with the Vice-President chairing the major part of the reviews.
4. To date, a total of 15 external reviewers have participated in the process (for 2009's list see annex II, table 2). These reviewers were formerly in senior management positions and have between 20 and 40 years of experience working on project development and implementation in developing countries for United Nations agencies, the World Bank and bilateral aid agencies. They have been recruited on the basis of their extensive experience working in the project countries

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<sup>1</sup> IFAD's Quality Assurance – Guidelines for QA function and process, December 2007.

and their language abilities, as many project documents are in French and Spanish as well as English. In response to an Executive Board's comment on last year's report, this year's cohort of reviewers represented an increase in the number of women reviewers from one to three and in the number of reviewers from developing countries from two to seven. To achieve still greater diversity, IFAD plans to continue to raise the number of women and developing-country reviewers over time.

## **II. Overall quality assurance results in 2009**

### **Overview**

5. A total of 32 projects (see annex II for details) were submitted to three separate QA sessions this year. Nine projects were reviewed in the February session, four in the June session and eleven during the September session. Eight projects underwent a stand-alone QA review in the intervening months. Of the 32 projects, six (about 19 per cent of the total) were cofinanced with another international financial institute as the lead financier. Overall, this year's QA reviews show an upward trend and contain several encouraging signs pointing to substantive improvement in quality-at-entry since the introduction of the QE and QA reviews in late 2007 and early 2008 respectively. Developments highlighting the efficacy of these two processes include:
  - Unlike in 2008 when the QA review recommended redesign of three projects (10 per cent of the total), this year all but one project was cleared for Board presentation without delay.
  - In several instances this year, the QE reviews' recommendations have led to substantive changes in project design.
  - This year's cohort contained six cofinanced projects with other financial institutions as the lead financier (i.e. the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank). In the case of three projects, earlier IFAD-funded components provided the underpinning for the scaled-up projects. Furthermore, all these projects underwent both QE and QA reviews, with the partner institutions participating in the QA review and expressing agreement with and appreciation for the recommendations made during the review.
  - For the first time this year, two projects (Nepal and Sri Lanka) contained, respectively, state-of-the-art approaches to value chain development and collaboration with the private sector. A third project (Georgia) adopts a leasing operation approach that is innovative for IFAD. Another project (Kyrgyzstan), cofinanced with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility, which brings IFAD in contact with the BioCarbon Fund for the first time, contained an analysis of poverty and targeting that the QA review (and the World Bank) consider best practice.
6. As can be seen from the points above, there are tangible improvements in the quality of projects overall. In addition, the QA reviews noted an increase in the number of projects considered to be part of a process of "scaling-up", though questions still remain on how best to define and promote this concept; these questions are currently undergoing a review by the Brookings Institute's Wolfensohn Center for Development.
7. A summary of the outcomes of the QA reviews in 2009 compared with those of the previous year is provided in table 1. The fact that only one project this year was dropped from the 2009 lending programme and may be taken up in 2010 suggests that tangible improvements have been made in the design quality of projects presented for QA review. The impact of QA recommendations is exemplified in the action taken under the three projects judged last year to contain design flaws

requiring additional investigation and design simplification before they were ready to proceed for Executive Board consideration. All three projects underwent major design modification (in one instance, the project adopted existing design standards from a World Bank operation that it joined as a cofinancing partner) and were subsequently presented to the Board. The project in north-eastern India that was dropped from the lending programme this year is a World Bank project that IFAD was requested to cofinance. It was the scaling up of a previously successful IFAD project NERCORMP. Unfortunately, the design of the World Bank components was not complete, resulting in the inability of the QA review to clear it for IFAD Board presentation. Though dropped from the 2009 lending programme, IFAD may rejoin the World Bank project in 2010 during the next performance-based allocation system cycle.

8. Overall results during the past two years point to substantive improvements in the quality of project design and indicate that, by and large, the QE/QA processes are having the desired effect on project quality. And yet, despite these improvements, two thirds of the projects still require additional assurances during loan negotiations and/or modification during implementation: IFAD plans to work with the QE reviewers next year in an effort to reduce those numbers.

Table 1  
**QA review results – 2008 and 2009**

<i>Final project categories</i>	<i>2008 Percentage of cohort</i>	<i>2009 Percentage of cohort</i>
Project judged ready to proceed with minor changes	30	31
Projects judged ready to proceed subject to additional assurances during loan negotiations and/or further modifications/reviews during implementation	60	66
Projects requiring substantive changes entailing delay in presentation to Executive Board	10	0
Projects dropped from the lending programme because of inappropriate design	0	3

9. As was the case last year, QA reviewers identified some design weaknesses in about two thirds of the projects, but were able to address and mitigate these shortcomings through a series of recommendations. These recommendations were aimed at:
- Obtaining additional assurances during loan negotiations;
  - Identifying specific actions to be undertaken during the first year of implementation; and
  - Outlining the conduct of additional reviews/studies to address various design aspects during the first two years of implementation or as part of the mid-term review.
10. Three other aspects related to the QA process – development outcomes, quality-at-entry ratings, and effectiveness of the QE process – will be addressed in detail below.

### **Development Outcomes**

11. Ex ante assessments of whether projects are likely to achieve their stated development objectives make it possible to channel additional attention and resources to projects found to be especially risky. To this end, in addition to the QA

reviews' focus on the quality of design, reviewers also provided their best assessment of the likelihood of each project meeting its development objectives.<sup>2</sup>

12. Based on the reviewers' expectations, 49 of the 61 projects reviewed since 2008 are likely to achieve their development objectives, resulting in an overall 82 per cent satisfactory outcome. Interestingly, these ex ante ratings are identical to the Office of Evaluation's (OE) 2002-2008<sup>3</sup> ex post findings of 82 per cent effectiveness (defined by OE as having achieved the specific objectives of the project).<sup>4</sup>

### Quality-at-entry ratings

13. As part of the QA process, reviewers assess each project with the aid of four RMF indicators. The findings for 2008-2009, which are presented in table 2, indicate a modest improvement in each indicator between 2008 and 2009, with the exception of the indicator related to innovation, learning and scaling up. While these are encouraging results, as pointed out in last year's report, there are some concerns about the constancy of these indicators as predictors of quality at entry and project outcomes. Although these RMF indicators give good insight into project compliance with IFAD's strategic objectives, they are not providing a robust indication of expected development outcomes and sustainability. When these quality-at-entry ratings based on RMF indicators were introduced in the QA guidelines, it was agreed that their effectiveness would be assessed. This review has not yet been undertaken.

Table 2  
Quality-at-entry ratings

<i>RMF indicators</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Average Rating 2008</i>	<i>Average Rating 2009</i>	<i>Satisfactory or better ratings<sup>a</sup> (percentage) 2008</i>	<i>Satisfactory or better ratings<sup>a</sup> (percentage) 2009</i>
RMF 1	Effectiveness of thematic areas	4.5	4.7	87	94
RMF 2	Projected impact on poverty measures	4.6	4.7	87	88
RMF 3	Innovation, learning and scaling up	4.4	4.4	83	81
RMF 4	Sustainability of benefits	4.4	4.5	80	84
<b>Overall rating</b>		<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>

<sup>a</sup> The quality-at-entry ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is highly unsatisfactory and 6 is highly satisfactory. The percentage indicates the number of projects receiving a rating of 4 or better out of the total number of projects.

### Effectiveness of the quality enhancement process

14. Findings emerging from this year's review reinforce those from last year identifying the positive impacts from the QE process. Technical aspects, compliance with IFAD's policies, targeting, gender and environmental aspects in particular appear to be receiving adequate attention during these reviews. At the same time, QA reviewers continue to point to the following areas in which the QE process could improve:
- (a) Reviewers should make the QE recommendations more specific so that country programme managers (CPMs) will have a better understanding of the options they should consider;

<sup>2</sup> Using a similar approach for predicting outcomes during quality-at-entry assessments, the World Bank's Quality Assurance Group compared predictions with the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group's exit assessments and found the panelists to be correct in about 90 per cent of the cases.

<sup>3</sup> Effectiveness evaluation by OE is the closest indicator available to compare with development outcome ratings used here and by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group. It is worth noting, however, that while the QA ratings are based strictly on development outcomes, the ratings of the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI) take other factors into account, and this may explain the convergence of the ex ante and ex post ratings.

<sup>4</sup> Table 2 is derived from EC 2009/59/W.P.2, Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations Evaluated in 2008.



- (b) There should be less of a focus on compliance with IFAD's policies and more on strategic aspects (e.g. appropriateness of the proposed overall approach, implementation arrangements, project complexity, synergy among the different components, mobilization of the private sector, and the likelihood of achieving development objectives);
  - (c) QE recommendations frequently entail major additional field investigations but, since the review takes place when some two thirds of the preparation budget has been spent, insufficient resources remain to carry out the additional investigations, and they are consequently being postponed to the implementation phase. Introducing a project preparation facility (i.e. earmarking a small amount of the country allocation for project preparation) should help address this issue; and
  - (d) There is still excessive emphasis on compliance with IFAD's key success factors.
15. It is becoming increasingly clear that quality enhancement reviews should be a continuous process (from inception to QA) rather than a review at one point in time. Furthermore, the PT-appointed adviser should be part of the team rather than an external enforcer of IFAD's policies. It would be desirable for QE reviews to focus on the type of strategic development outcomes and impact issues being considered by the QA (in fact, the QE should be a pre-QA review).
  16. Whenever feasible, QE advisers should join design teams in the field. During the QE/QA workshop held in September 2009, it emerged that the time invested by QE reviewers for each project amounts to some 20 person days. The 20 person days could be used differently by earmarking 10 days of a PT adviser's time per project, while the remaining resources could be used by the CPM to engage external expert reviewers to complement the input from PT. There is also scope to place greater emphasis on ensuring that QE advisers have the necessary professional background and expertise to provide appropriate advice to the design teams (perhaps by engaging outside consultants for the purpose and using the less-experienced PT advisers to undertake the compliance review). The QA also observed a tangible improvement in the quality of the QE reviews whenever they were chaired by one of the division directors, and this practice should be further expanded. Finally, there is room to de-emphasize the use of the maturity assessment template (this has become a compliance process), and to shorten and streamline the QE reports.
  17. As noted above, a short QE/QA workshop was organized as part of the preparation of this report. Following the workshop, an agreement was reached to hold another more extensive seminar in January 2010 to probe deeper into issues considered by the workshop and those highlighted above. It was also agreed to hold two QE reviews next year in which QA reviewers will participate with a view to reaching a consensus on the type of strategic issues that are of concern to the QA reviews and on which issues future QE reviews should focus.

### **III. Design aspects with scope for improvement**

18. Notwithstanding the favourable findings emerging from this year's review, there are a number of design aspects with scope for further improvement. Special attention will be paid to these issues by the QE and QA reviews in 2010, and a further update on the progress made in tackling them will be provided in next year's report. A brief summary of these issues is presented in the following paragraphs.
  - A. Strategic aspects of project design**
19. QA reviewers have pointed this year to the growing attention being paid during project design to several strategic issues encountered during last year's review (e.g. institutional arrangements, project complexity, strategies for mobilizing the private sector, appropriateness of project components, and targeting strategies).

This progress is also reflected in the table below listing the frequency of recommendations by theme. However, the reviewers also highlighted the scope for further improvements. The aspects in need of further attention, which will feature in next year's QE/QA workshop, are summarized below.

Table 3  
**Frequency of Recommendations by Theme**

Themes	2008	2009	2008/2009
Implementation arrangements	22	17	39
Monitoring and evaluation (including logframes)	22	16	38
Institutional arrangements/analysis	20	6	26
Technical issues	11	12	23
Targeting (including gender)	10	8	18
Supervision	11	6	17
Governance and corruption	5	11	16
Complexity	9	4	13
Project document	6	5	11
Operations and maintenance	4	6	10
Scaling up	2	1	3
Risk mitigation	3	2	5
Sustainability	1	1	2
Cofinancing	1	0	1
Knowledge management	0	1	1
Other	19	15	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>250</b>

20. **Project complexity.** Fewer instances of a "Christmas tree approach" were encountered this year, but the interviews with CPMs pointed to the possibility of this re-emerging as a major issue next year when the increase in IFAD's funding clashes with Management's efforts to limit the number of projects being processed. Complexity issues transcend the number of components and also involve overly ambitious objectives in relation to implementation capacity and country conditions. As these shortcomings are related to long-term project sustainability, close attention will be paid to them during the QE and QA processes.
21. **Logical frameworks and development outcomes.** Each project reviewed by the QA includes a logical framework, but many of them have imprecise development objectives and lack quantified final and intermediate outcome indicators to track progress towards achieving the objectives. Even central aspects such as pro-poor and gender targeting often lack precise outcome (as opposed to output) indicators that are linked to project activities (the Results and Impact Management System provides a good measure of changes in poverty profile but these indicators frequently cannot be directly attributed to project activities). The QE and QA processes, the allocation of additional resources and Management attention to risky projects, and the final evaluation of projects by QA would all be more effective with stronger logical frameworks. PMD undertook last year to provide further guidance and training on this aspect, but progress to date has been slow and more needs to be done.
22. **Monitoring and evaluation.** There are still issues with arrangements for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), both in terms of the use of far too many indicators and also the failure to ensure country commitment. In the absence of efficient M&E systems and practical indicators, the systems are not being used effectively as a management tool during project implementation. Delays in the preparation of baseline data are also still prevalent. The need for a functional M&E system will increase in the near future as IFAD places greater emphasis on knowledge management and the scaling up of projects.

23. **Private-sector engagement.** Last year's report recommended that PMD should examine in some detail a few examples (specific projects were identified by the QA) of successful private-sector interventions by other donors. The identified projects exemplify the level of effort involved in taking a strategic approach to mobilizing the private sector. Based on this review, a more robust approach was to have been defined for use by future operations. This review has not taken place though the QA noted that two projects this year (Nepal and Sri Lanka) had state-of-the-art approaches to value chains and private-sector engagement.
24. **Institutional arrangements.** Last year's report noted the flexible approach being used by IFAD in selecting implementing agencies so as to enhance prospects for quick and smooth implementation. But the report also highlighted the scope for greater consideration of long-term sustainability once the project is completed and the implementing agency is no longer involved in the activities. The report also expressed concerns about the depth and breadth of the institutional capacity assessments and the strengthening of government institutions. Not much progress was noted this year in addressing these issues. With the growing emphasis on scaling up projects, which is closely associated with the capacity of local institutions to replicate project activities without donor support, there is scope for more intensive and extensive assessments of institutional capacity. This is yet another area where staff would benefit from further training.
25. **Readiness for implementation.** Despite widespread recognition that timely and proper formulation of procurement and financial management aspects would help accelerate implementation, the QA review has noted only moderate progress in this year's cohort in advancing the readiness of projects for implementation. Greater effort is required to ensure prompt and speedy implementation.
26. **Good governance.** A total of 11 projects this year agreed to introduce specific good governance frameworks that emphasize transparency, participation by beneficiaries and third-party monitoring. These measures are well aligned with IFAD's empowerment agenda, and more effort in formulating such frameworks is desirable. Progress has also been made in introducing anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures. Working with Transparency International, the Financial Services Division, PMD and the Office of Audit and Oversight coordinated a concerted effort across the house.
27. **Risk assessment.** Under current practice, risks are regarded as the robustness of the economic rate of return in relation to shortfalls in benefits or increases in costs, with a focus on estimating and reflecting the potential impact of delays, cost overruns and returns below those projected. The focus is thus on improving the reliability of rates of return estimates rather than a much broader risk assessment and mitigation strategy. A broadening of the risk analysis is required to include risks associated with such events as policy failures, political uncertainties, limited implementation capacity, market failures and policy constraints. These sorts of risks require different approaches and a focus on appropriate ex ante and ex post mitigation measures, which should be identified, respectively, during project preparation and implementation.
28. **Project supervision.** While project supervision is not strictly an issue for quality-at-entry reviews, the QA reviews have noted the tendency to postpone important design activities to the implementation phase (largely due to inadequate project preparation budgets). This, in turn, makes it critical for IFAD's supervision missions, especially in the early stages of implementation, to have the required financial resources and technical expertise to address outstanding design issues. QA reviews have expressed concern about the adequacy of IFAD's supervision budgets to fund the technical expertise required to complete design aspects. Funding of project supervision in IFAD is currently about half the level at the World Bank (which has, in addition, the ability to supplement the allocated resources with

the recruitment of experts through various consultant trust funds). With the growing emphasis on knowledge management during project implementation, this could represent yet another claim on supervision resources.

29. **Project design reports.** Last year's report recommended further efforts to streamline the design reports. While considerable progress has been noted this year, there are still far too many crucial details in the working papers that are not properly reflected in the main report. There is also scope for including in the design report an executive summary and an annex outlining the project components and how they will be implemented. It is therefore once again urged that the project design document undergo formal restructuring.

#### **B. 2009 strategic issues**

30. Projects reviewed in 2009 contained a number of systemic issues that deserve further management attention. These issues are outlined below.
31. **Projects containing non-agricultural components.** On two occasions this year (Brazil and The Sudan), the projects reviewed had components that addressed issues that are outside of the agricultural sector and in which IFAD has limited technical expertise. The point is not whether these components were suitable for IFAD financing, but rather the extent to which IFAD had access to expert advice in designing these components and whether it could subsequently provide the requisite technical input to project supervision. It is suggested that, in the future, Senior Management should provide guidance for the inclusion of such components, while QE should provide technical input.
32. **Value chains.** There is a growing use of the value chain approach in IFAD-funded projects. Such an approach calls for a well-designed strategy to ensure that components and activities are appropriately linked, and a thorough analysis of constraints along the value chain. A good example where a strategy to this effect has been included and clearly spelled out in project design is the Nepal High-Value Agriculture Project in Hill and Mountain Areas. At present, however, far too many projects fail to outline a coherent strategy. Furthermore, where a value chain approach is included, little or no hard evidence or relevant experience is presented to justify the concepts advocated.
33. **Targeting.** Project design documents frequently contain statements about activities specifically designed to assist the target group (very poor households, women, young people, minorities, etc.), but the relevant components are not particularly robust and frequently lack concrete targets.
34. **Innovation.** A number of projects reviewed this year contained innovative components with which IFAD has had limited experience. Because there is a degree of risk involved, these components are frequently unsuitable for immediate adaptation by poor farmers (e.g. the leasing project in Georgia). It would be helpful to clarify that these types of projects (and probably also operations addressing emergencies) can be exempted from adhering closely to IFAD's targeting policy.
35. **Cofinancing.** Several projects reviewed during this session involved cofinancing with regional banks and the World Bank. An agreement was reached that, irrespective of IFAD's share in total project financing, these projects would benefit from a QE and QA review. Aside from assessing the overall soundness of such operations, these reviews will place special emphasis on the extent to which they are adhering to IFAD's strategic objectives of poverty and targeting.
36. **Documentation for cofinanced projects.** In cases of projects cofinanced with the regional banks and the World Bank, the QA finds the preparation of a full IFAD design document to be an unnecessary expense. Consideration should be given to replacing the full report with a brief annex (to be included in the partner's

document or even as a stand-alone report) outlining activities and approaches that are of concern to IFAD.

37. **Scaling up.** At least three projects in the current review (Cambodia, the Gambia and India) provide excellent examples of other donors adding IFAD as a financing partner in order to make use of pro-poor approaches previously developed under its projects. However, most projects do not include a clear objective and strategy for scaling up. In part this is due to confusion over what is meant by this term. While the Wolfensohn Center's team will provide a more definite statement on this topic, the QA addresses this issue from two perspectives: (i) the extent to which project design provides scope for continuing the activities with local institutions once donor support is withdrawn; and (ii) the extent to which the project is suitable to be taken over (in part or entirely) by another donor. There is clearly scope for better articulation of the objectives and strategies being adopted in this regard by each operation.

## Quality assurance process

### Quality enhancement system

- Under the new QE system the results-based country strategic opportunities programmes are reviewed and approved by the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee (OSC), at inception chaired by the President. The OSC ensures that the country strategy is in line with the policies and strategic objectives of IFAD and the country. The Technical Review Committee's review has been replaced by the QE review conducted by the Quality Enhancement Panel, which is composed of two internal and two external technical experts. The panel assesses the formulation report by performing a desk review of project documents and produces the reviewer recommendation note. During the QE review meeting, the CPM and panellists discuss matters that require clarification or issues on which the CPM had sought advice. Based on discussions during this meeting, a QE panel report is prepared providing feedback and recommendations. The CPM and relevant division director subsequently comment on the report, stating their agreement or disagreement. The CPM is expected to address the recommendations presented in the QE panel report during appraisal. The division director is responsible for ensuring that the CPM follows up on the recommendations before the project is sent for the final QA review to the Vice-President's Office.

### Quality assurance review

- Providing the final quality checks on the appraisal report, the QA review is the last stage in the overall quality enhancement system before a project proceeds to loan negotiations and then the Executive Board for approval. The table below outlines the different steps involved in the two-week QA review.

#### Procedures in the quality assurance process

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Actors</i>	<i>Timing</i>
<b>Step 1</b>	Submission of project documents	CPM	4 weeks before QA review (12 weeks before the Executive Board)
<b>Step 2</b>	Questions from reviewer and CPM's written response	Reviewer	1 week before QA review
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>First QA meeting</b> – Discuss questions and answers and potential recommendations	Reviewer, CPM	During first week of QA review
<b>Step 4</b>	Draft recommendations submitted	Reviewer	1 day after first meeting
<b>Step 5</b>	CPM comments on draft recommendations (agree/disagree)	CPM	2 days after first meeting
<b>Step 6</b>	<b>Meeting between VP and lead reviewer</b> – Discuss recommendations and CPM response – Discuss whether to proceed to the Executive Board	Lead reviewer and VP	Beginning of the second week of QA review
<b>Step 7</b>	<b>Second QA meeting</b> – Discuss recommendations CPM disagreed with – Suggest changes to recommendations	CPM, VP, director, reviewer, AP/PMD	During second week of QA review
<b>Step 8</b>	Finalize QA recommendations and ratings	Reviewer	Day after second meeting
<b>Step 9</b>	VP endorses recommendations	VP	Friday of second week of QA review
<b>Step 10</b>	Wrap-up session – Discuss project design, IFAD policy issues that arise during the QA process – CPMs provide feedback on the process	VP, AP/PMD, directors, CPMs	Friday of second week of QA review

Note: AP: Assistant President; VP: Vice-President

3. Typically, there is a three-month interval between the QE and QA reviews, during which time the CPM undertakes a field mission and carries out additional studies. Four weeks prior to the QA review, CPMs submit the project documents, which include: the appraisal report; all working papers; the compliance note; the QE panel report; the reviewer recommendation note; the maturity assessment template; the country strategic opportunities programme; and any evaluation reports or supervision reports on related projects.
4. The external QA reviewer performs a desk review of these project documents and assesses whether the issues raised by the QE panel have been adequately addressed. He or she also identifies any additional issues requiring attention, and gives an opinion on whether the project is likely to achieve its development objectives taking account of the institutional and supervision arrangements provided. Based on this desk review, the QA reviewer prepares a list of discussion questions for the CPM. The CPM provides a brief written response to these questions prior to the first QA meeting between the QA reviewer and CPM.
5. During the first QA meeting, any questions that require further clarification are discussed together with any other issues that may arise during the meeting. Based on the discussions, the QA reviewer prepares a set of recommendations, which are shared with the CPM who is asked to agree or disagree with them. These recommendations are also shared with the lawyer and loan officer assigned to the country to ensure the feasibility of the recommendations. The recommendations with the comments of the CPM, lawyer and loan officer serve as the basis of the second QA meeting.
6. Prior to this meeting, the Vice-President reviews the initial questions with their responses and the recommendations with the CPM's comments, and meets with the reviewer to raise additional issues and give an opinion on the recommendations. The final QA meeting involves principally the Vice-President, the Assistant President/PMD and the CPM and director concerned, but it may also include the lead adviser from the QE review and the relevant lawyer or loan officer. During this meeting, the recommendations on which the CPM disagreed are discussed together with any other issues that may have arisen after the initial meeting. Agreement on the recommendations is sought and ways to achieve them are discussed. Based on the discussions in this meeting, the final QA minutes are prepared specifying the recommendations that the CPM has agreed to address and indicating whether the project is cleared to proceed to loan negotiations and the Executive Board. These minutes are signed by the Vice-President and guide the loan negotiations.
7. At the conclusion of the QA session, a wrap-up meeting is held. It is chaired by the Vice-President and involves the Assistant President/PMD and the CPMs and directors who participated in the QA review. Its purpose is to discuss the policy and strategic issues that have emerged during the QA reviews and any recommendations on how to improve the QE and QA processes. These issues are documented and shared with the participants prior to the meeting, which results in productive discussions on feasible next steps. Thus, these wrap-up meetings serve as an effective feedback loop to PMD on how to improve project design.
8. One year after project effectiveness, the CPMs are expected to report on progress made in implementing the QA recommendations. The QA secretariat is responsible for reviewing the progress report and ensuring that the QA recommendations have been adequately addressed. This step is essential to ensure compliance and assess the efficacy and relevance of the QA review.

## List of QA projects and reviewers

Table 1  
Projects by QA session

	Country	Project title	CPM	Chair
<b>January session</b>				
1	<b>India</b>	Convergence of Agricultural Interventions in Maharashtra's Distressed Districts Programme	Mattia Prayer-Galletti	GO
2	<b>Afghanistan</b>	Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Programme	Maria Donnat	GO
3	<b>Guinea</b>	National Programme to Support Agriculture Value Chain Actors	Ulac Demirag	GO
4	<b>Benin</b>	Rural Economic Growth Support Project	Mohamed Tounessi	GO
5	<b>Mali</b>	Rural Microfinance Programme	Leopold Sarr	GO
6	<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Rural Business Development Services Programme	Norman Messer	GO
7	<b>Ethiopia</b>	Community-based Integrated Natural Resources Management Project	John Gicharu	GO
8	<b>Dominican Republic</b>	Rural Development Project in the South-East and North-East Regions	Marco Camagni	GO
9	<b>Burundi</b>	Agricultural Intensification and Value-enhancing Support Project	Hamed Haidara	GO
<b>June session</b>				
1	<b>Zambia</b>	Smallholder Agribusiness Promotion Programme	Carla Ferreira	KFN
2	<b>Ethiopia</b>	Pastoral Community Development Project II	John Gicharu	KFN
3	<b>Pakistan</b>	Crop Maximization Support Project	Ya Tian	KFN
4	<b>Brazil</b>	Semi-arid Sustainable Development Project in the State of Piauí (Viva o Semi-Árido)	Ivan Cossio	KFN
<b>September session</b>				
1	<b>Georgia</b>	Agricultural Support Project	Henning Pedersen	KC
2	<b>Egypt</b>	On-farm Irrigation Development Project in the Oldlands	Abdelhamid Abdouli	KC
3	<b>Bolivia (Plurinational State of)</b>	Campesino Communities Development Project in Cochabamba and Potosí	Haudry de Soucy	KC
4	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Forestry and Carbon Trading Project	Ya Tian	KC
5	<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Poverty Reduction Project	Mohamed Tounessi	KC
6	<b>Brazil</b>	Carirí and Seridó Sustainable Development Project (PROCASE)	Ivan Cossio	KC
7	<b>Liberia</b>	Agriculture Sector Rehabilitation Project	Hubert Boirard	KC
8	<b>Nepal</b>	High-Value Agriculture Project in Hill and Mountain Areas	Ronald Hartman	KC
9	<b>Sri Lanka</b>	National Agribusiness Development Programme	Sana Jatta	KC
10	<b>Gambia (The)</b>	Livestock and Horticulture Development Project	Leopold Sarr	KC
11	<b>Cambodia</b>	Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project	Youqiong Wang	KC
<b>Interim reviews</b>				
1	<b>China</b>	Sichuan Post-Earthquake Agricultural Rehabilitation Project	Thomas Rath	KFN
2	<b>Bangladesh</b>	Participatory Small-scale Water Resources Sector Project	Nigel Brett	KFN
3	<b>Sudan</b>	Revitalizing The Sudan Gum Arabic Production and Marketing Project	Rasha Omar	KFN
4	<b>Lebanon</b>	Hilly Areas Sustainable Agriculture Development Project	Abdelaziz Merzouk	KFN
5	<b>Chad</b>	Pastoral Water and Resource Management Project in Sahelian Areas	Carlo Bravi	KFN
6	<b>Sudan</b>	Rural Access Project	Rasha Omar	KFN
7	<b>India</b>	North-east Rural Livelihoods Project	Mattia Prayer Galletti	KFN
8	<b>Turkey</b>	Ardahan-Kars- Artvin Development Project	Henning Pedersen	KC
<b>Total number of projects</b>			<b>32</b>	

Note: GO=Gunilla Olsson; KC=Kevin Cleaver; KFN=Kanayo F. Nwanze



Table 2  
**List of QA reviewers in 2009**

<i>QA reviewers</i>	<i>Project reviewed</i>
Amnon Golan	Afghanistan, Zambia, Cambodia, Nepal, China (Sichuan), Georgia, Sudan (two projects)
Arna Hartmann	Chad, India (north-east project), Benin, Burkina Faso
Paolo Lucani	Brazil (two projects), Guinea, Mali,
Carlos Elbirt	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Liberia, Dominican Republic
Uma Lele	Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan
Cornelis de Haan	Gambia (The), Ethiopia
Prem Garg	India, Bangladesh
Rory O'Sullivan	Ethiopia, Burundi
Carolyn Sachs	Sri Lanka
Shawki Barghouti	Egypt
Yahia Younnes Bouarfa	Côte d'Ivoire
Abdelmajid Slama	Lebanon
Ahmed Sidahmed	Turkey