

Document: EB 2010/99/R.4  
Agenda: 6(a)(i)  
Date: 10 March 2010  
Distribution: Public  
Original: English

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## **Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-first session of the Evaluation Committee**

Executive Board — Ninety-ninth Session  
Rome, 21-22 April 2010

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For: **Review**

## **Note to Executive Board members**

This document is submitted for review by the Executive Board.

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## Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-first session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its sixty-first session on 29 January 2010. The four agenda items for discussion were: (i) the draft final report of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation (OE) and Evaluation Function; (ii) review of the provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2010; (iii) OE support to evaluation capacity development in partner countries; and (iv) other business.
2. All Committee members (Brazil, Canada, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Netherlands, Nigeria, Sweden) attended the session. Observers were present from Belgium, Guatemala, France, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The Committee was joined by IFAD's Associate Vice-President, Programmes, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Director of OE; the Secretary of IFAD; and others. The chairperson of the Peer Review Panel and one panel member also joined the session for discussions on the agenda item related to the peer review.<sup>1</sup>

### A. Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function

3. The Evaluation Committee analysed the draft report of the Peer Review Panel and its seven recommendations. The Committee also took note of the clarifications proposed by the reviewers to the draft report circulated to members.
4. All members acknowledged the quality and thoroughness of the work done in producing the report, which was very useful. The Committee also took note of the comments provided by the Office of Evaluation and by Management. An extensive discussion of the findings of the report then followed.
5. There was unanimous agreement on the commitment of both the Evaluation Committee and Management to support the independence of the Office of Evaluation and the evaluation function. Several Committee members referred to the Report on the Sixth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (EB 2003/78/R.2) as the legal basis for the independence of OE. In this regard, other guidelines and regulations should be amended as required by IFAD policies, rules and regulations.
6. Broad agreement was expressed on the seven recommendations and, in particular, regarding the following issues:
  - (a) The proposed single six-year term of office of the Director, OE;
  - (b) The proposed code of conduct for Executive Board members, as it is believed that the Audit Committee is currently addressing this issue;
  - (c) The grade-rank of the Director, OE, to be maintained;
  - (d) The importance of pursuing cost-efficiencies both for OE and IFAD.
7. The General Counsel will need to review and propose appropriate legal solutions to address incompatibilities that may exist with the present legal framework. This should be completed prior to the Board's review of the final report.
8. Divergent views were expressed with reference to, inter alia:
  - (a) The need for a vice-chairperson of the Evaluation Committee;
  - (b) The shift of certain responsibilities from OE to PMD (stakeholder workshops) and to the Office of the Secretary (ES) (country visits);

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Murray, Chairperson, Peer Review Panel, and Pieter Stek, Peer Review Panel member.

- (c) Issues related to human resource management and the roles of the Executive Board, the Evaluation Committee, the President of IFAD and the Director of the Office of Evaluation.
9. There was unanimous agreement on the need to draw up a road-map-style action plan, which would specify accountability, timelines and resource implications for implementation of the recommendations set out in the draft final report. This should be prepared by the peer reviewers and submitted to the Evaluation Committee at its April session, so that the Committee may report to the Board accordingly.
  10. The Committee supported the idea of forming a working group with Management and OE to follow up on the recommendations of the Peer Review Panel.

### **B. Office of Evaluation support to evaluation capacity development in partner countries**

11. Members welcomed the document. Taking into account the comments on the same topic contained in the draft peer review report, members were broadly supportive of the approach proposed by OE.
12. The Committee discussed the document outlining OE's proposed approach to support evaluation capacity development in partner countries. This document represents a cautious approach, which takes into account OE's overall priorities and resource availability.
13. The Committee invited OE to mainstream the recommendations made by the Peer Review Panel with regard to continuing evaluation capacity development activities. In particular, Members invited OE to take a structural, although cautious, approach to evaluation capacity development. This would also include the development of strong partnerships with interested local and other institutions for this purpose.
14. On a related issue, the Committee welcomed the undertakings of OE and PMD to develop a joint plan for strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities within the context of IFAD-funded programmes and projects.
15. Finally, the Committee also discussed the possibility of selectively using grants to support evaluation capacity-building activities.

### **C. Review of the provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2010**

16. The Committee discussed its agenda for 2010, taking into account the additional information provided by OE. Members agreed with the agenda as contained in annex I of document EC 2010/61/W.P.3, with the understanding that two further items be added to their planned session in July 2010. These include: (i) discussion of the Mozambique country visit; and (ii) review of an action plan for implementing the peer review recommendations.

### **D. Other business**

17. The Committee considered four items under other business: (i) the minutes of the fifty-ninth session of the Committee; (ii) reflections on the 2009 country visit to India; (iii) the draft concept note for the Evaluation Committee country visit to Mozambique in 2010; and (iv) an oral update by OE on the ongoing corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's efforts to promote gender equity and women's empowerment.
18. **Minutes of the fifty-ninth session of the Committee.** The Committee considered the amendments to the draft minutes of their fifty-ninth session as contained in document EC/61/W.P.5, and adopted the minutes accordingly.
19. **Reflections on the Committee's 2009 country visit to India.** The Committee expressed appreciation to the Government of India, OE and the Asia and the Pacific Division for the organization of the event.

20. The Chairperson shared three main issues from the country programme evaluation (CPE) that deserve due consideration in the next country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) for India: (i) it is clear that country presence needs to be strengthened in a country as large as India, including the outposting of the country programme manager, requested by the Government at the CPE workshop in Delhi in December 2009; (ii) IFAD should continue its engagement in the development of tribal populations living in conflict areas. Over the years, IFAD has developed a comparative advantage and specialization in supporting tribal peoples in India, and the Fund should build on its experience in the future; and (iii) as India is a middle-income country and the resources that IFAD is able to mobilize for the country programme are relatively limited, IFAD needs to enhance its focus on knowledge management. For instance this could include sharing relevant IFAD experiences and lessons from other countries. Experiences from the India country programme could also be documented and disseminated to benefit IFAD-supported activities in other countries.
21. Members provided a series of comments on issues related to the organization of the India CPE national round-table workshop and field visit that should be considered in planning for the future. Regarding the workshop, the need to pre-identify chairs for working group discussions and rapporteurs was underlined. The Committee also recommended that careful consideration be devoted to the number and background of participants invited to the CPE workshop.
22. It was felt that the Committee's own terms of reference for country visits should be shared beforehand with key stakeholders.
23. The Committee requested that the country visit's overall budget be shared with them beforehand. This would allow members to gain a better understanding of the costs involved in organizing the visit, and to make decisions about the event accordingly.
24. Members felt that more efforts need to be made to visit different areas and activities supported by IFAD in the country, and that the programme be constructed so as to avoid travel at night. Also, the duration of the field visit to project sites needs careful reflection.
25. Members recommended that efforts be made to keep the group for the field visit to IFAD-financed projects as small as possible, limiting IFAD participants. Moreover, the number and roles of participants in the field visit should be clarified beforehand, including those of Management, OE, consultants and IFAD country presence staff. The Committee indicated that it would be more beneficial to schedule the field visit to IFAD-funded project(s) ahead of the CPE national round-table workshop. Members also questioned whether CPE consultant participation is necessary in the fieldwork part of the event.
26. The Committee suggested that an Evaluation Committee country visit manual, with "dos and don'ts", be prepared to facilitate future visits.
27. Members highlighted the importance of organizing a bilateral meeting between the Committee and the United Nations Country Team during the country visits. This is especially important for the forthcoming visit in 2010 to Mozambique, given that it is a pilot country of the One United Nations Initiative.
28. Some members noted that, should the peer review recommendations be approved as contained in the draft report, future country visits of the Evaluation Committee would be organized by ES.
29. In preparation for the 2010 country visit to Mozambique, the Evaluation Committee requested that an informal session be organized by the end of February or in early March. This would allow discussion of the overall approach and related details with Committee members early in the process.

30. The Committee recommended that: (i) the second day of the CPE workshop include a discussion on the formulation of the new COSOP; and (ii) the workshop issues paper should be developed and shared with participants well in advance of the event.
31. **Mozambique country visit.** The Committee discussed the draft concept note for the forthcoming Mozambique country visit. It was observed that formal agreement by the Government of Mozambique with regard to the proposed dates (24-28 May 2010) was still pending.
32. Members underlined again that it would be useful to hold a discussion of the new Mozambique COSOP following completion of the planned CPE national round-table workshop in Mozambique.
33. With regard to the field visit to IFAD-funded project(s) in Mozambique, the Eastern and Southern Africa Division proposed a visit to the Nampula region. This would offer the Committee a good opportunity to see a cross section of IFAD-funded programme activities on the ground, as well as being more appropriate from a logistical point of view. As suggested by PMD, the Committee requested that two options for the field visit to Nampula be developed for their consideration.
34. The Committee noted that the Mozambique country visit would be a transitional one. As already stated in paragraph 28 above, ES is expected to take the lead in organizing the Committee's country visits in the future, should the relevant recommendation of the draft OE peer review report be adopted by the Board in April 2010. Thus ES should also be involved in organizing the event.
35. Members requested that OE enhance the draft concept note based on their feedback, which should include the estimated budget for the country visit and the proposed list of participants from IFAD Management and OE. They also requested that a further briefing meeting be organized by OE on the 2010 Mozambique country visit by the end of February or in early March, as was specified in paragraph 29 above.
36. Finally, members repeated the request that a manual be developed as soon as possible for the undertaking of the Committee's future country visits.
37. **Update on the gender evaluation.** As requested by the Committee, OE provided an oral briefing on implementation of the corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's efforts to promote gender equity and women's empowerment in IFAD operations. OE highlighted the origins and objectives of the evaluation and next steps. In this regard, OE informed the Committee that the draft approach paper was discussed with members of the evaluation's core learning partnership on 22 January 2010.
38. OE also informed the Committee that Ms. Rieky Stuart has been recruited by OE as the consultants' team leader. Ms. Stuart has undertaken evaluations on the same topic at the Canadian International Development Agency and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in recent years, and is presently a key adviser to the United Nations Evaluation Group task force on gender and human rights. The gender corporate-level evaluation will be completed and ready for discussion by the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board by the end of 2010.

