
2024 President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA)

Comments by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

Document: EC 2024/126/W.P.5/Add.1

Agenda: 6

Date: 23 August 2024

Distribution: Public

Original: English

FOR: REVIEW

Action: The Evaluation Committee is invited to review the comments of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD on the 2024 President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA).

Technical questions:

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2024 President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA)

Comments by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

1. In accordance with the Revised IFAD Evaluation Policy,¹ the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) provides comments on the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) for consideration by the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board.
2. Evaluation recommendations aim to strengthen IFAD's ability to achieve development results in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. Implementing evaluation recommendations is an important milestone in IFAD's use of evaluations to fulfil its accountability for achieving development results. IOE welcomes the PRISMA as an important instrument within IFAD's evaluation architecture for promoting accountability. It analyses the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations and organizational learning by identifying recurring findings emerging from these evaluations.
3. **Follow-up to earlier IOE comments on PRISMA: Online PRISMA.** In response to the 2020 Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE), IOE recommended transforming PRISMA into a real-time online database accessible to all. Management launched a web-based Management response tracking system at the beginning of 2024. This is a worthy effort to promote the use of evaluations. As this web-based tracking system has been expanded to track Management response to all evaluations in real time, it will render IFAD's performance in responding to evaluations more transparent, promote learning, and align IFAD with the practices of other international financial institutions (IFIs) and most United Nations agencies with a portfolio size similar to IFAD.
4. **Coverage of the 2024 PRISMA.**² The 2024 PRISMA presents the implementation status of 70 recommendations from 17 evaluations (see table 1). These include: (i) the recommendations from 5 IOE project performance evaluations (PPEs) completed during the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023; (ii) the recommendations from 9 country strategy and programme evaluations (CSPEs); (iii) 1 subregional evaluation (SRE) on countries with fragile situations in the West and Central Africa (WCA) region; and (iv) the thematic evaluation (TE) on IFAD support to smallholder farmers' adaptation to climate change (2022); and (v) 1 corporate-level evaluation (CLE) on IFAD's support to innovation – both global in scope. The 17 evaluations reviewed include 11 new evaluations as well as follow-up on 1 CLE and 5 CSPEs.³

¹ Document EB 2021/132/R.5/Rev.1.

² Each year, the PRISMA covers selected evaluations completed recently: for instance, the 2024 PRISMA covers evaluations from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and selected earlier evaluations to track follow-up.

³ The implementation status of project-level evaluation recommendations is reviewed only once, the CSPEs twice (there is one follow-up after the initial coverage), while the implementation status of CLEs/TEs is reviewed until all recommendations are fully implemented (or become non-applicable).

Table 1
Evaluation coverage of the 2024 PRISMA

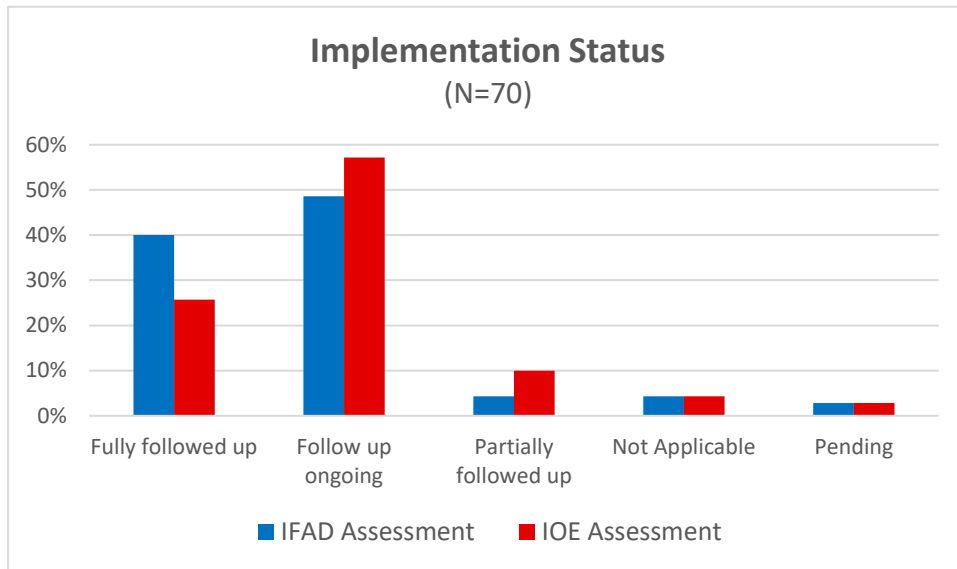
| <i>Evaluation</i> | | <i>Month and year of completion</i> | <i>Number of recommendations for which follow-up was reported in PRISMA 2024</i> |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | CLE IFAD support to innovation* | July 2020 | 5 |
| 2 | TE on IFAD support to smallholder farmers' adaptation to climate change | Sept 2021 | 6 |
| 3 | SRE on countries with fragile situations in WCA | June 2022 | 5 |
| 4 | CSPE Burundi* | April 2022 | 4 |
| 5 | CSPE Eswatini | Feb 2022 | 4 |
| 6 | CSPE Indonesia | March 2022 | 5 |
| 7 | CSPE Malawi | Jan 2023 | 3 |
| 8 | CSPE Morocco* | Jan 2022 | 4 |
| 9 | CSPE Niger* | Dec 2021 | 3 |
| 10 | CSPE Pakistan* | Mar 2022 | 3 |
| 11 | CSPE Uganda* | Dec 2020 | 3 |
| 12 | CSPE Uzbekistan | March 2022 | 4 |
| 13 | PPE Cuba | May 2023 | 4 |
| 14 | PPE The Gambia | Oct 2022 | 4 |
| 15 | PPE India | Nov 2022 | 4 |
| 16 | PPE United Republic of Tanzania | Sept 2022 | 5 |
| 17 | PPE Zambia | May 2023 | 4 |
| Total recommendations | | | 70 |

* Historical follow-up – CSPE (recommendations included in the analysis). Not all recommendations in the CSPE are followed up in this PRISMA.

Source: 2024 PRISMA dashboard.

5. **High level of Management uptake.** IFAD Management agreed with 67 of the 70 evaluation recommendations considered by PRISMA (96 per cent). This high rate of uptake of IOE recommendations reflects Management's commitment to learn and correct course based on evaluative evidence. The increased uptake may also reflect IOE's strengthened evaluation processes for engaging with Management.
6. **Follow-up to recommendations: Self-assessment and IOE verification.** As required by the evaluation policy, IOE validates IFAD's self-assessment of the status of the follow-up to the recommendations presented in the PRISMA. This is a critical part of IOE's comments as it relates to IFAD's action on recommendations. Figure 1 summarizes the validation of 2024 PRISMA.

Figure 1
IOE validation of the status of implementation of recommendations (2024 PRISMA)



Source: IOE analysis and the 2024 PRISMA.

- IFAD deemed 28 of the 70 recommendations as fully followed up (40 per cent), while IOE’s review found 18 recommendations to be fully followed up. Nearly a third of the fully followed up status issued by IFAD were found to be unwarranted by IOE based on the evidence provided in PRISMA.
 - This resulted in a higher number of recommendations deemed by IOE as ongoing or partially followed up – 40 as ongoing (57 per cent versus 49 per cent by IFAD), 7 as partially followed up (10 per cent versus 4 per cent by IFAD).
 - In assessing IFAD’s actions, IOE found that 5 of the 70 responses (7 per cent) did not fully address the issues flagged by the evaluation recommendations and downgraded their status to partially implemented.
7. Table 2 presents a comparison of key indicators in recent PRISMAs (2020–2024).

Table 2
Comparison of recent PRISMAs 2020–2024

| | | 2020 PRISMA | 2021 PRISMA | 2022 PRISMA | 2023 PRISMA | 2024 PRISMA |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Number of evaluations considered | 16 | 12 | 13 | 12 | 17 |
| 2 | Number of recommendations considered | 67 | 48 | 69 | 59 | 70 |
| 3 | Percentage of recommendations accepted | 97 | 100 | 94 | 100 | 96 |
| 4 | IFAD estimate of share of recommendations fully implemented (percentage) | 60 | 65 | 67 | 53 | 40 |
| 5 | IOE determination of share of recommendations fully implemented (percentage) | 50 | 58 | 64 | 47 | 26 |
| 6 | Percentage of recommendations not fully addressing the issues raised by the evaluation (IOE determination) | 21 | 14.5 | 3 | 7 | 7 |

Source: Executive Board documents related to PRISMA reports and IOE comments on those reports.

8. **In summary**, table 2 shows the following:
 - (i) The percentage of recommendations that are deemed fully implemented by IOE increased during 2020–2022 (from 50 per cent to 64 per cent) and dropped sharply starting from 2023 to 26 per cent in 2024. As such, closer attention and follow-up are required from Management.
 - (ii) The web-based system has resulted in a slight increase in the number of evaluations (17) and recommendations analysed (70) compared to 2023. However, these numbers are similar to those observed in 2020 (16 and 67, respectively).
 - (iii) The share of Management actions that were not fully aligned with the underlying messages of the recommendations in 2024 is 7 per cent. This figure is the same as for 2023 and lower than in 2020 and 2021.
 - (iv) The gap between IFAD’s determination of fully implemented status and IOE’s has recently increased (2023, 2024).
9. **In the 2024 PRISMA, 26 per cent of the recommendations analysed were deemed by IOE as fully followed up, the lowest reported in the past five years.** IFAD would benefit from prioritizing timelier follow-up of recommendations. In its multi-year strategy, IOE envisages conducting systematic reviews of the online PRISMA to assess the quality and timeliness of Management response updates.
10. To realize its full potential, the web-based PRISMA has to move away from the earlier system of centralized collection, uploading and quality assurance of Management actions. Under this centralized model, the capacity and resources at headquarters limit the scope of the Management responses that IFAD tracks annually. A decentralized approach that delegates the responsibility of periodically uploading the Management actions in the system, with headquarters providing necessary oversight and quality assurance, would help track the status of implementation in real time and allow for comprehensive monitoring of the status of Management responses to all recommendations issued in the past until they are fully implemented. This requires resources and dedicated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity at headquarters and in the field, as practised in other major IFIs and many United Nations development agencies.

I. Ongoing follow-up action that may require further review

11. IOE recognizes that the share of Management responses that do not address the issues raised by the recommendations (7 per cent) is lower than in 2020 and 2021 (table 2); nonetheless, the situation persists. In this context, IOE offers the following comments to strengthen the alignment between Management actions and the changes that are sought by evaluation recommendations.
 - A. Responses that do not fully address the issues raised by recommendations**
12. In the case of five recommendations, IOE found that IFAD responses did not address the changes sought by the evaluation. These are described below.
13. Recommendation 1 of PPE The Gambia called for IFAD to take steps to support the development of a national rice strategy or master plan. The follow-up actions do not indicate whether steps have been taken to support the development of such a strategy or master plan.

14. Recommendation 1 of CSPE Burundi called for developing a theory of change for IFAD's strategy and country programme for loans and non-lending activities. Nothing is mentioned of this in the PRISMA narrative. Recommendation 5(i) of the same CSPE called for the development of regional environmental and social assessments to identify cumulative environmental and social impacts. PRISMA 2024 mentions that further studies will be conducted without providing any details to clarify whether this will entail a broader approach that goes beyond specific projects and covers the cumulative effects of environmental and social impacts.
15. Recommendation 1 of CSPE Indonesia called for cohesive programming in the new country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP). While the PRISMA addressed the need to align the COSOP with a national medium-term development plan, there is no mention of purposeful sequencing of investment initiatives nor explanation of how IFAD's new COSOP complements the work of other development partners.
16. Recommendation 2 of CSPE Uzbekistan called for public-private partnerships, private sector engagement and a clear and realistic theory of change. PRISMA does not provide an explanation on how these will be addressed.

B. Conclusion

17. This PRISMA continues to make an important effort to learn from evaluation recommendations. Far more robust and enriching lessons could be learned when the online PRISMA allows IFAD to analyse the full universe of available evaluations and their recommendations until they are fully implemented. Such an effort would involve IFAD dedicating adequate resources to strengthening its decentralized M&E capacity and moving away from the headquarters-centred approach to tracking Management responses. IFAD's determination of fully implemented status seems to deviate from IOE's and needs close attention by Management.