
Results Revised results-based work programme and budget for 2025, and indicative plan for 2026–2027 of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD

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Action: The Evaluation Committee is invited to review the revised results-based work programme and budget for 2025, and indicative plan for 2026–2027 of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD.

Technical questions:

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Note to the Evaluation Committee members

The Evaluation Committee is hereby requested to review the revised version of the results-based work programme and budget for 2025, and indicative plan for 2026–2027 of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD. For ease of reference, additions are underlined, while deleted text is shown in strikethrough.

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I. Introduction

1. This document reviews the status of activities conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) in 2024 and outlines IOE priorities in 2025 and beyond. The document was informed by extensive consultations with IFAD's governing bodies and Management, including the ~~Programme Management Department (PMD)~~ for Country Operations (DCO)¹ and the ~~Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD)~~ Office of Technical Delivery (OTD).² This document is aligned with the multi-year evaluation strategy presented to the Evaluation Committee at its 114th session and approved by the Executive Board at its 134th session in December 2021.³ The multi-year strategy helps operationalize the 2021 Revised IFAD Evaluation Policy.⁴ Based on the feedback received from the Audit Committee, Evaluation Committee and Executive Board at their respective sessions in September 2024, IOE will prepare a revised proposal for its work programme and budget for 2025 and indicative options for 2026 and 2027.

II. Activities in 2024

2. This section provides an update on the progress made in 2024, budget utilization through mid-September 2024 and projected 2024 year-end budget utilization. In line with the 2021 evaluation policy, the IOE budget is prepared independently of IFAD's administrative budget.

A. Key evaluations and related initiatives

3. The progress made in selected evaluation activities is outlined below:
 - The corporate-level evaluation (CLE) on knowledge management and the thematic evaluation on gender equality were finalized in the first quarter of 2024 and presented to the Evaluation Committee at its 125th session in June 2024 and to the Executive Board at its 142nd session in September 2024.
 - The CLE on the ~~Eleventh Replenishment~~ and Twelfth Replenishments of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11) and IFAD12) started in 2024 and the approach paper is set for discussion with the Evaluation Committee at its 126th session in September 2024. Its completion is planned for 2025.
 - The thematic evaluation on food and nutrition security started in 2023 and the approach paper was discussed with the Evaluation Committee at its 124th session in March 2024. Country case studies are being conducted with data collection to conclude in October 2024 and the report finalization is planned for early 2025.
 - The subregional evaluation on the Dry Corridor of Central America was completed in January 2024 and presented to the Evaluation Committee at its 124th session in March 2024.
 - The evaluation on IFAD's experience in small island developing states started in mid-2024, with country missions fielded between May and October 2024. It is planned for completion in 2025.
 - **Country strategy and programme evaluations (CSPEs).** The CSPEs in India, Mauritania, Rwanda and Türkiye were completed in the first part of 2024. The main missions for the CSPEs in Argentina, the Dominican Republic and Ghana were conducted in March and May 2024, and they are planned for completion in 2024. The CSPEs in Egypt and Lao People's Democratic Republic have started and the country missions were completed in August 2024. The CSPE for the Plurinational State of Bolivia will start in late 2024,

¹ Formerly the Programme Management Department.

² Formerly the Strategy and Knowledge Department.

³ <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/134/docs/EB-2021-134-R-36.pdf>.

⁴ <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/132/docs/EB-2021-132-R-5-Rev-1.pdf>.

with data collection and report writing planned for 2025. The CSPE for Zimbabwe, originally scheduled to start in 2024, will start in 2025, given that the country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) for this country has been extended through 2026. IOE will instead start preparatory activities in the fourth quarter of 2024 for a new CSPE in Viet Nam.

- **Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD (ARIE).** IOE prepared its twenty-second ARIE for presentation to the Evaluation Committee at its 126th session and the Executive Board at its 142nd session. In addition to the traditional time series analysis of ratings from project-level evaluations, the 2024 ARIE contains an analysis of the relation between cofinancing and project performance, a summary of findings on rural finance from recent evaluations and a summary of findings on the implications of COVID-19 for projects and country programmes recently evaluated.
- **Project performance evaluations (PPEs)** are project-level evaluations that include country missions with field visits and are key to understanding IFAD's performance at a granular level. They are building blocks for country-level evaluations, evaluation syntheses, CLEs and the ARIE. PPEs are progressing as planned. Approach papers have been prepared for PPEs in Cabo Verde, Lesotho, Montenegro and Sri Lanka and the related field missions were completed by July 2024.
- **Evaluation Advisory Panel.** The Director of IOE has formed a new Evaluation Advisory Panel to further IOE's independence, credibility and utility. This panel will comprise Mr Juha Uitto, former Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (Chair), Ms Doha Abdelhamid, Independent Consultant, Egypt, and Ms Mita Marra, Associate Professor at the University of Naples, Italy. IOE will hold the annual workshop for the advisory panel in October 2024. Panel members will meet with representatives of the Evaluation Committee, Senior Management and IOE staff.
- **Knowledge management and communication.** Between 1 June 2023 and 31 May 2024, IOE published and disseminated 11 evaluation reports, 4 infographics, 38 news items, 28 event pages, 9 Coffee Talk fact sheets and 2 evaluation reviews. It also published 3 issues of Independent Magazine and 3 newsletters. In addition, it created 4 blog posts, 4 episodes of the "60 Seconds with the Director" video series, 5 feature promotional videos, 2 video podcast interviews, 2 episodes of the IOE video interview series, 8 instalments of the remote participatory video evaluation pilots and the IOE knowledge management toolbox.
- **Learning events in collaboration with IFAD Management.** Pursuant to the commitment to ensuring learning as part of the evaluation process, IOE has worked in partnership with Management to organize a series of learning workshops. These have maximized engagement by bringing in diverse country stakeholders to reflect more deeply on its work. Between 1 June 2023 and 31 May 2024, IOE held learning workshops for the CLE on knowledge management practices in IFAD, Türkiye CSPE, Rwanda CSPE, CLE on IFAD's decentralization experience 2023, project cluster evaluation on rural finance in East and Southern Africa, China CSPE and Ethiopia CSPE.
- **Cooperation with evaluation networks, academic institutions and think tanks.** IOE participated in and contributed to: Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) meetings (fall 2023 and spring 2024); European Evaluation Society (EES) 2024 ~~Conference~~conference; African evaluation week 2024; the 2024 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Evaluation Week; the 4th Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development; the 10th Middle East and North Africa Evaluation Network Annual Meeting and First

National Egyptian Association for Evaluation; United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Evaluation Week 2024; Food and Sustainability Certificate Programme; COP28; Global Evaluation Initiative Partnership Council Meeting 2023; Evaluation Symposium of the Islamic Development Bank titled "The Future of Development Evaluation: Adapting to a Changing Landscape"; Asian Evaluation Week 2023; 2023 Canadian Evaluation Society Conference; and Peer-to-Peer Career Advisory Sessions for Young and Emerging Evaluators.

- In addition, IOE made substantive contributions to the academic debate through presentations at renowned institutions, including the University of Arizona, the Wits University School of Governance and the University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Education.

B. 2023 and 2024 budget utilization

4. Table 1 shows IOE budget utilization in 2023 and up to mid-September 2024, and the projected rate at year-end. In 2023, IOE utilized 99.1 per cent of its non-staff budget to implement its work programme. Total budget utilization has been adversely affected by vacant staff positions.⁵

Table 1

IOE budget utilization in 2023 and projected utilization in 2024 (as of end-September 2024)
(United States dollars)

<i>Evaluation work</i>	<i>Approved budget 2023</i>	<i>Budget utilization 2023</i>	<i>Approved budget 2024</i>	<i>Commitment as of mid-September 2024</i>	<i>Expected utilization as of year-end 2024</i>
Non-staff costs					
Travel costs		403 933		457 309	480 000
Consultant fees		1 803 293		1 463 732	1 850 000
Evaluation outreach, staff training and other costs		260 881		153 474	160 000
Subtotal	2 490 000	2 468 107	2 540 000	2 074 514	2 490 000
Non-staff budget utilization		99.1%		81.67%	98.03%
Staff costs	3 481 000	3 116 811	3 604 000	3 209 775	3 243 600
Total	5 971 000	5 584 918	6 144 000	5 284 289	5 733 600
Total budget utilization		93.53%		86.01%	93.32%

III. IOE 2025 work programme

A. Proposed work programme for 2025

5. The IOE multi-year evaluation strategy helps guide the choice of evaluative work to be undertaken in 2025 and the detailed consultation with all division heads in PMDDCO and SKDOTD, as well as the department heads. The objectives established in the multi-year strategy 2022-2027 are to:

- Contribute to forging IFAD's corporate culture as a transparent, learning-oriented and accountable organization by providing IFAD governing bodies, Management, governments and national development partners with assessments and knowledge that are critical to fulfilling the commitments made under IFAD11, IFAD12 and IFAD13;
- Improve evaluation coverage and promote transformative evaluations reflecting the scale and scope of IFAD operations, ensuring methodological rigour, attention to inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness, flexibility and cost-effectiveness;
- Engage with Management, Member States and external partners to support evaluation capacity and use within and outside IFAD; and

⁵ Specifically, recruitment processes are under way for a new P-4 position, two P-5 positions vacant due to staff retirement; (one of which has been filled as of the date of this report), and a vacant D-1 position following the departure of the incumbent.

- (d) Retain and deepen IOE's position as an internationally recognized leader in the evaluation of rural development programmes, policies and strategies by further strengthening the relevance of its work, promoting innovative approaches and the adoption of technology for evaluation and enhancing collaboration with evaluation functions in other organizations and with think tanks and universities.
6. In terms of contributing to IFAD's position as a transparent, learning-oriented and accountable organization, in 2025 IOE will complete the CLE on IFAD11 and IFAD12. This is a comprehensive institutional evaluation and will assess: (i) the evolution of IFAD's corporate strategy under IFAD11 and IFAD12, including the changes and innovations made over the path marked by the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025; (ii) the available evidence on operational results achieved during ~~the~~these replenishment ~~period~~periods, including under the thematic focus areas of natural resource management and climate change adaptation, gender, nutrition, youth and the targeting of vulnerable groups; (iii) the organizational structure, including the decentralization process and the recalibration initiative; and (iv) the support of IFAD's financial architecture to furthering ~~the~~its new strategic directions. The findings and recommendations of this CLE will help orient the IFAD14 Consultation.
 7. IOE will start an independent corporate-level rapid review of IFAD's Human Resources Policy and its application. The rapid review is a new type of evaluation product introduced by IOE in 2023 that allows assessing corporate-level items, with more focused scope and reduced resource requirements compared to a CLE, while maintaining solid methodological rigour. The review will address both the relevance of IFAD's Human Resources Policy and its actual application and the implications for IFAD's capacity to fulfil its developmental mandate.
 8. In 2025, IOE will also complete the evaluation on IFAD's experience in the small island ~~development~~developing states, covering the period 2014–2024, during which IFAD prepared a paper on its approach in small island developing states (2014)⁶ and a Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States (2022–2027).⁷
 9. The report of the thematic evaluation on IFAD-funded interventions on nutrition will be finalized in early 2025 and a learning event will be held. The evaluation will include, inter alia, case studies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
 10. IOE will continue to issue the ARIE, which will retain the ratings analysis while providing more information on the full range of IOE activities. As in the past, the ARIE will present an annual topic that reflects findings from recent evaluations. IOE will select the ARIE topics, ~~taking into consideration the~~following discussions with ~~the governing bodies and~~ IFAD Management
 11. In terms of improving evaluation coverage to reflect the scale and scope of IFAD operations, IOE will complete the CSPEs in Egypt, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Viet Nam, ~~and~~.⁸ IOE will start new ~~ones~~CSPEs in Chad, Djibouti, Honduras, Zambia and Zimbabwe (originally planned to start in 2024), as well as launch the CSPEs of Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique and Zambia-Paraguay (initially planned for 2026). The CSPEs in Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Honduras, Paraguay and Zimbabwe will be the first ~~for IOE~~conducted by IOE in these countries.
 12. In 2024, IOE will conduct PPEs for the following projects: in Asia and the Pacific (APR), the Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders Project in Cambodia; in

⁶ <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39135645/IFAD%27s+approach+in+Small+Island+Developing+States+-+A+global+response+to+island+voices+for+food+security.pdf/9b62896e-10e3-420a-804a-5fffaa8821d2?t=1510322602000>.

⁷ <https://www.ifad.org/en/-/ifad-strategy-for-engagement-in-small-island-developing-states-2022-2027>.

⁸ The CSPEs of Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Dominican Republic, also implemented in 2024, will be fully completed after their presentation to the Evaluation Committee in 2025.

⁹ As noted, the COSOP for Zimbabwe has been extended through 2026.

East and Southern Africa (ESA), the Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme in Malawi; in West and Central Africa (WCA), the Value Chain Development Programme in Nigeria; and in the Near East, North Africa and Europe (NEN), the Community-Based Agricultural Support Project in Tajikistan.

13. Following standard practices, IOE will conduct project completion report validations (PCRVs) of the available completion reports. Ratings from the PCRVs are reported in the ARIE time series. PCRVs are also a source of evidence for country-level, subregional and thematic evaluations, to be triangulated with other sources (e.g. stakeholder interviews, field visits).
14. In terms of evaluation capacity development, IOE will continue to support the capacity of IFAD staff for self-evaluation, based on the 2022 Evaluation Manual, in collaboration with Management. The Evaluation Manual is a living document, and IOE will add new modules (such as the recent work on neurosciences) as needed. Based on requests from Member States, IOE is available to organize ad hoc seminars on evaluation practices and evaluation methodology, offering practical examples on how to design, report, present and use evaluations. IOE will continue to support the Global Evaluation Initiative, led by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, in collaboration with the Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme. IOE will also contribute to the National Evaluation Capacities Conference, which will be organized in Beijing, China in October 2024 and, in collaboration with PMDDCO, is exploring the option of supporting the participation of key government representatives in borrowing countries that have management and monitoring and evaluation responsibilities for IFAD-funded programmes.
15. In terms of furthering IOE's leadership role in evaluation, IOE plans to continue engaging with international evaluation networks and related international initiatives, including international evaluation associations and the International Research Group for Policy and Programme Evaluation (IntEVAL). Some of these activities will result in co-authorship of published articles and books. IOE will continue to contribute actively to evaluation events and discussions at the country, regional and global level. In 2025, IOE will chair the ECG and host two meetings of the group in Rome.
16. IOE will engage with its Evaluation Advisory Panel to help refine its methodological approaches, fine-tune the design of its evaluation ~~product~~products and enhance the utility of its work for IFAD's strategy and operations. To this end, the annual workshop with the Evaluation Advisory Panel will be held in 2025 at IFAD headquarters.
17. **Preparation for the third external peer review of IFAD's evaluation function.** According to the 2021 evaluation policy, an external review of the implementation of the evaluation policy is to be conducted every seven years. The latest review (second external peer review of IFAD's evaluation function)¹⁰ was completed in 2019. Subject to the approval of the Executive Board, the third external peer review of IFAD's evaluation function will be conducted in 2026 (terms of reference, data collection, analysis and reporting) but preparatory activities (identification of the review panel members, agreement on the key areas of analysis, consultation with IFAD's governing bodies) will be initiated in the second part of 2025. It is proposed that, as in the past, the external peer reviews of the evaluation function be led by ECG, of which IFAD is a member. ECG elaborated a framework for this type of peer review. Members of other prominent international evaluation networks, such as UNEG and the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development may also integrate the review panel. Also, as in the past, the scope of the review will include both the independent and self-evaluation functions

¹⁰ The first peer review of the evaluation function by IFAD was conducted in 2019, led by ECG.

of IFAD. This is particularly important because the 2021 evaluation policy covers both independent and self-evaluation and encourages collaboration between the two functions. IOE and Management will interact regarding their respective responsibility (independent and self-evaluation part of the peer review).

18. The proposed list of IOE evaluation activities for 2025 is presented in annex II and the indicative plan for 2026–2027 appears in annex III.

IV. 2025 resource envelope

A. Staff resources

19. In 2025, IOE proposes to ~~maintain the same~~ increase its staff complement as in the year 2024, ~~per Executive Board approval in December 2023, in line with (table 2) to respond to the expected workload (table 2);~~ linked to the expansion of countries covered by CSPEs, and upgrade one existing staff position. This is needed as IOE evaluations are led by IOE staff, who design the evaluation approach, and conduct the data collection in collaboration with a team of specialists, and, with contributions from external experts (consultants) as deemed necessary. They are in charge of also responsible for report writing, presentation, finalization and dissemination of findings and recommendations to IFAD’s governing bodies, Management, counterpart ~~government~~ governments and other stakeholders. This ensures consistently high quality of evaluation processes and documents and helps preserve knowledge and historical memory. Staff leadership of evaluation is a common model adopted by independent evaluation departments of international financial institutions.
20. In line with trends in recent years, ~~Management’s~~ the demand for evaluations is high ~~CSPEs and CLEs have~~ increased. Regarding the CSPEs, IOE has so far been ~~particularly in demand, able to respond to less than 50 per cent of the needs of having CSPEs completed before the approval of new COSOPs.~~ ¹¹ IOE is committed to ~~ensure~~ ensuring discipline in the use of its human and financial resources and ~~does not envisage~~ is therefore proposing a significant increase in its budget. For this reason, it is ~~selective in formulating the work programme proposed in this document and has consulted systematically~~ moderate expansion of CSPE coverage, by adding three additional countries for 2025 (as mentioned above), considering prior consultations with the relevant divisions of PMD/IFAD and SKD, ~~as well as with Senior Management.~~
21. The requested budget increase for 2025 (from 0.55 to 0.60 per cent of IFAD’s programme of loans and grants [PoLG], against a ceiling of 0.9 per cent) corresponds to a 5.5 per cent increase, generating a 13 per cent increase in coverage of planned COSOPs through prior CSPEs (from 44 to 57 per cent) in the next two years. A higher number of CSPEs would also yield more evidence-based knowledge feeding into CLEs, and more of IFAD funding being evaluated, besides and beyond an increase in IOE coverage, as per IOE’s multi-year evaluation strategy.
- ~~21-22.~~ In collaboration with the Planning, Organizational Development and Budget Division (POB) of IFAD, IOE elaborates specific estimates of its standard staffing costs, which are different (lower in 2024) than standard across the board IFAD staffing costs because IOE staff are all located at headquarters and do not receive the allowances and entitlements that apply to international staff posted in country offices.

¹¹ Data collected for 2024/2025 show that the CSPEs conducted (or to be conducted) cover 44 per cent of countries that will be developing new COSOPs in 2025/2026. This rate varies from year to year and may be lower if the demand for increased coverage is significantly higher.

Table 2
Staffing in 2024 and proposed staffing in 2025

Category	2024	2025 (proposed)
Professional staff		
Director	1	1
Deputy Director	1	1
Lead evaluation officers	3	3
Senior evaluation officers	5	5
Senior evaluation knowledge and communication officer	1	1
Evaluation officers	4	4
Evaluation research analyst	1	1
Subtotal - Professional staff	16	16
General Service staff		
Administrative associate	1	1
Associate to Director	1	1
Assistant to Deputy Director	1	1
Evaluation assistants	4	4
Subtotal - General Service staff	7	7
Grand total	23	23

B. Budget requirements

~~22-23.~~ Table 3 presents the proposed budget by type of activity, and table 4 by strategic objective. Table 5 contains the IOE gender-sensitive budget, which indicates the budget distribution for gender-related activities.

~~23-24.~~ **Assumptions.** The parameters used to develop the current proposed 2025 budget will be as follows: (i) IOE staff costs are ~~provisionally estimated at~~ considering the same level as for 2024 ~~additional positions~~, and using the revised estimates have been prepared in collaboration with ~~provided by~~ POB in September 2024; (ii) inflation will be absorbed insofar as possible; and (iii) the US\$:EUR exchange rate follows IFAD assumptions.

Table 3
Proposed budget for 2025 by type of activity and comparison with previous budgets

Type of activity	Approved 2022 budget (US\$)	Approved 2023 budget (US\$)	Approved 2024 budget (US\$)	Proposed 2025 budget (US\$)	Absolute number 2024	Absolute number 2025
Non-staff costs						
ARIE, CLE, thematic evaluation, evaluation synthesis and corporate-level reviews	570 000	625 000	630 000	678 574 000	4	4
SREs and CSPES	950 000	975 000	1 080 000	1 020 605 000	10	9
Project-level evaluations (PCEs, PPEs, PCRVs and impact evaluations)	420 000	360 000	320 000	330 350 000	40	40*
Evaluation Manual	30 000	-	-	-		
Knowledge-sharing, publication, communication, evaluation outreach and partnership activities	270 000	290 000	280 000	278 000 280 250		
Evaluation capacity development, training and other costs	200 000	220 000	210 000	214 000 220 750		
Buffer for unforeseen evaluation work	20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000		
Total non-staff costs	2 460 000	2 490 000	2 540 000	3 050 000		
Staffing costs	3 388 338	3 481 000	3 604 000	4 207 000		
Total budget	5 848 338	5 971 000	6 144 000	7 257 000		

* This number is indicative, as the number of PCRVs depends on the number of project completion reports that IOE receives each year. The actual number of PCRVs conducted may differ.

24-25. Budget by divisional goals. Table 4 shows the allocation of IOE’s total proposed budget for 2025, including both staffing and non-staffing costs, against IOE’s strategic objectives.

Table 4
Proposed 2025 budget allocation by strategic objective

<i>Strategic objective</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>% of total budget</i>
Contribute to forging IFAD’s corporate culture as a transparent, learning-oriented and accountable organization by providing IFAD governing bodies, Management, governments and national development partners with assessments and knowledge that are critical to fulfilling the commitments made under IFAD11, IFAD12 and IFAD13	1 679 670 <u>596 540</u>	27 <u>22</u>
Improve evaluation coverage and promote transformative evaluations reflecting the scale and scope of IFAD operations and ensuring methodological rigour, attention to inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness, flexibility and cost-effectiveness	3 297 130 <u>4 281 630</u>	53 <u>59</u>
Engage with Management, Member States and external partners to support evaluation capacity and use within and outside IFAD	684 340 <u>798 270</u>	11
Retain and deepen IOE’s position as an internationally recognized leader in the evaluation of rural development programmes, policies and strategies, by further strengthening the relevance of its work, promoting innovative approaches and the adoption of technology for evaluation, and enhancing collaboration with evaluation functions in other organizations and with think tanks and universities	559 890 <u>580 560</u>	9 <u>8</u>
Total	6 221 <u>7 257 000</u>	100

Note: percentages are rounded up.

25-26. Gender-sensitive budget. IOE evaluations placed a strong emphasis on examining gender-related issues in IFAD operations. The central transformative principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “Leave No One Behind,” is reflected in the 2022 Evaluation Manual and IOE’s multi-year strategy. IOE thus conducts a thorough review of gender equality in its evaluations (including the issue of transformational change and intersectionality). The estimates presented in table 5 are based on historical figures on the time dedicated by IOE staff to assessing operational outcomes on gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as budget used for data collection analysis, presentation and sharing of findings with the stakeholders.¹² The estimates also include IOE’s contribution to IFAD’s working groups on gender equality and to United Nations-supported initiatives such as the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), a system-wide accountability framework that reviews progress towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.¹³

¹² In 2025, IOE will undertake an assessment of the method used to estimate the “gender share-of” in its total overall budget dedicated to gender-related activities.

¹³ <https://gendercoordinationandmainstreaming.unwomen.org/un-swap>.

Table 5
IOE 2025 gender-sensitive budget

Type of activity	Proposed 2025 budget	Gender component (percentage)	Gender component (US\$)
Non-staffing costs			
ARIE, CLE, thematic evaluation, evaluation synthesis and corporate-level reviews, including UN-SWAP	678 574 000	15	401 700 86 100
SREs and CSPEs	1 020 605 000	14	142 800 224 700
Project-level evaluations (PCEs, PPEs, PCRVs and impact evaluations)	330 350 000	12	39 600 42 000
Knowledge-sharing, publication, communication, evaluation outreach and partnership activities	278 000 280 250	10	27 800 28 025
Evaluation capacity development, training and other costs	214 000 220 750	10	21 400 22 075
Buffer for unforeseen evaluation work	20 000	10	2 000
Subtotal non-staffing costs	2 540 3 050 000	13.2	335 300 404 900
Staffing costs			
Gender focal point and alternate gender focal point*	322 000	15.0	48 300
Other evaluation staff members	3 359 885 000	11.0	369 490 427 350
Subtotal staffing costs	3 681 4 207 000	11.4	417 790 475 650
Total	6 221 7 257 000	12.1	753 090 880 550

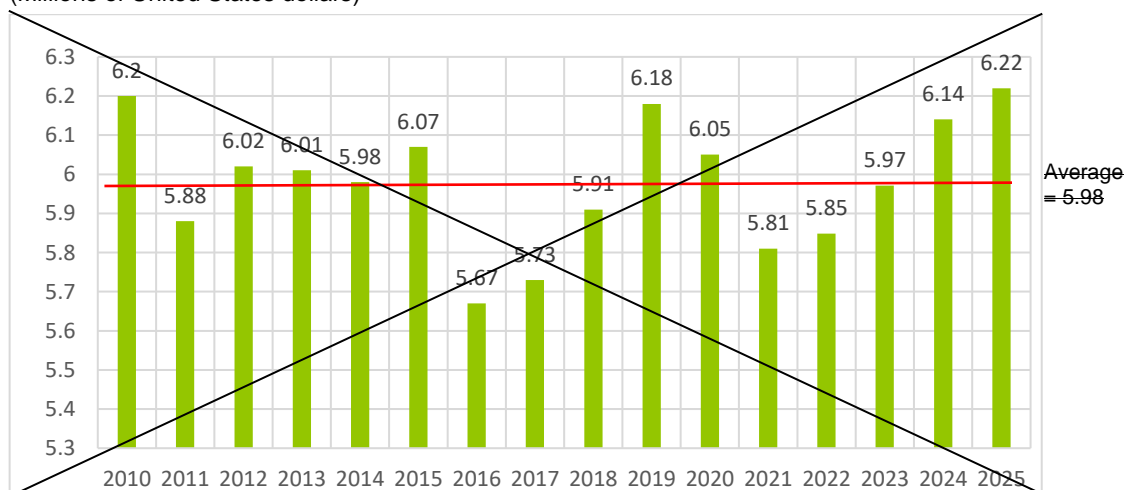
* Assuming the collaboration of one P-4 and one P-3 staff member.

V. IOE budget proposal and considerations for the future

~~26-27.~~ **Current proposal.** The total proposed 2025 budget is US\$~~6.2217.257~~ million, which is slightly higher than the approved budget for 2024 (US\$6.144 million). In nominal and real terms, IOE’s total budget has declined since 2010 (figure 1).

~~27-28.~~ IOE’s budget as a percentage of IFAD’s administrative budget has declined over the past decade (figure 2), thanks to efficiency gains (e.g. rationalizing the conduct of missions, optimizing the use of remote interviews, conducting virtual workshops at the conclusion of CSPEs, prioritizing attendance of international events). The main data collection missions are conducted in person.

Figure 1
IOE budget (2010-2025)
(Millions of United States dollars)



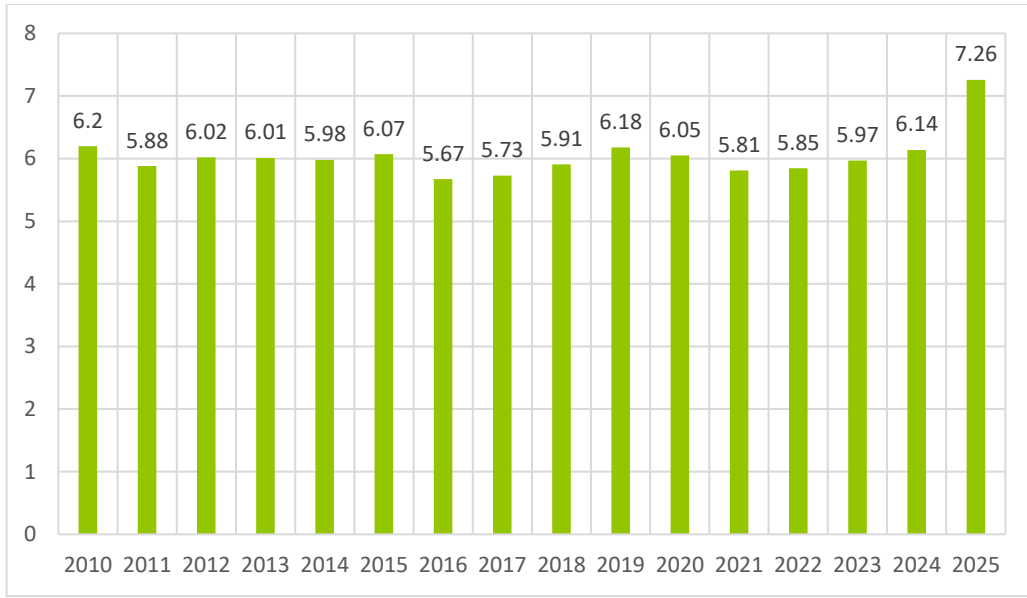
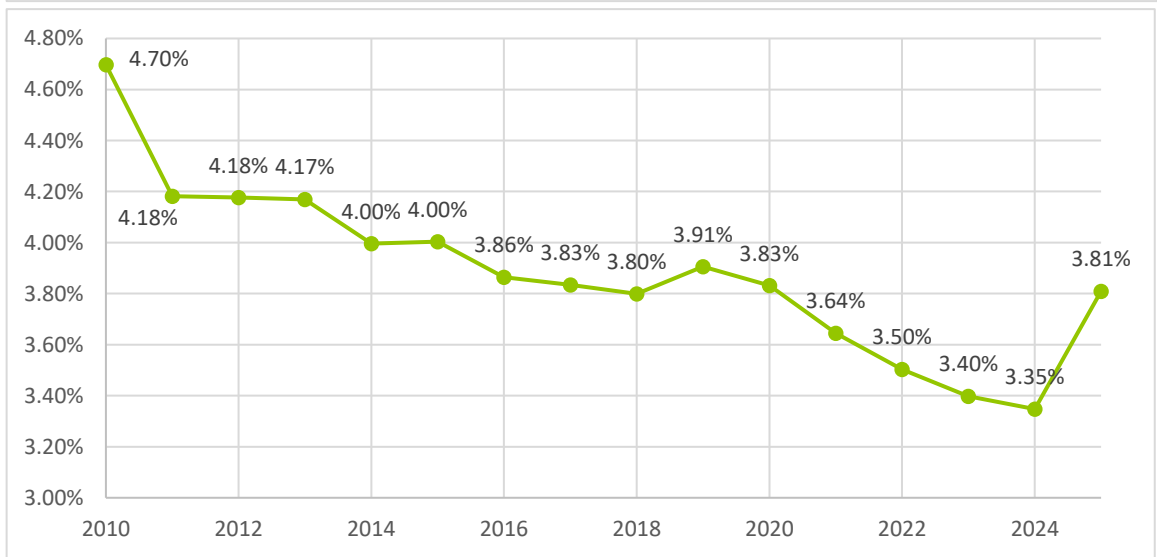
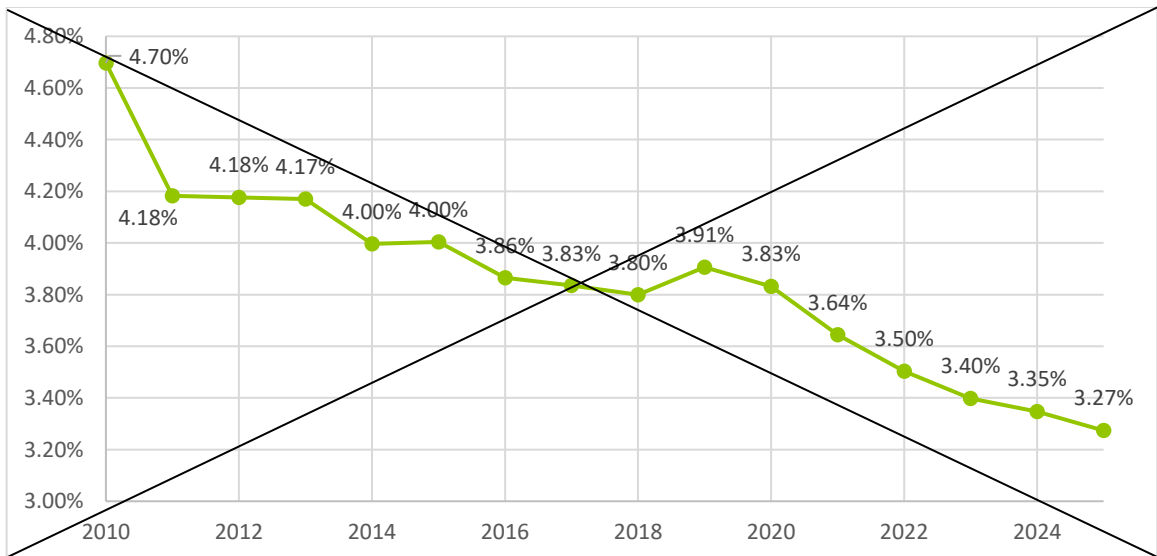


Figure 2
IOE budget as a percentage of IFAD's regular administrative budget (2010-2025)



~~28-29.~~ IOE's budget cap is fixed at 0.90 per cent of IFAD's ~~programme of loans and grants (PoLG).~~ As decided by the Executive Board at its 131st session, the ratio of the budget to the average PoLG, as a percentage, is calculated over the three years of a given replenishment period. At the time of preparation of this document, the expected total size of the PoLG for the IFAD13 period (2025–2027) was assumed to be US\$3.3546 billion, ~~the same as for IFAD12.~~¹⁴ When spread over three years, this comes to US\$1.1182 billion annually. Thus, IOE's proposed budget of US\$6.2217.257 million represents approximately 0.5560 per cent of IFAD's PoLG, well below the cap.

~~29-30.~~ IFAD's budget rules allow for a limited carry-over of the IFAD administrative budget and IOE budget from one year to next. IOE's level of carry-over will reflect the agreement made for IFAD's administrative budget, and its utilization will be in line with the relevant organizational guidelines.

¹⁴ IFAD13 target figure provided by DCO.

IOE Results Management Framework for 2024¹⁵

Table 1
IOE key performance indicators for 2024

Key performance indicator	Baseline	Target	Achievement	Notes
Adoption of evaluation findings and recommendations				
1. Percentage of recommendations partially or fully agreed to	99% (2020 President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (IPRISMA))	95%	According to Management PRISMA (2023) self-reporting: 100% agreement (97% of recommendations were fully agreed to and the remaining 3% partially agreed to)	Available via PRISMA
2. Percentage of agreed recommendations on higher-plane evaluations implemented satisfactorily and in a timely manner	n.a.	90%	According to the IOE comments on the PRISMA 2023: 53% of the recommendations were fully implemented, 41% were under implementation, 3% were not fully addressed and 3% were not yet due	Based on biannual verification by IOE on higher-plane evaluations ¹⁶
Coverage of IFAD programmes				
3. Number of higher-level evaluation reports (corporate-level evaluations [CLEs], thematic evaluations, evaluation syntheses, country strategy and programme evaluations [CSPEs] and subregional evaluations [SREs]) published during the year	6	7-8	7	Computed on an annual basis
4. Proportion of active countries covered through subregional and country-level evaluations, project performance evaluations (PPE), impact evaluations and project cluster evaluations (PCEs) on a two-year basis	25% (2019-2020) ¹⁷	28%-33%	37% (2023-2024) ¹⁸	Computed on a biannual basis
Engagement, outreach and feedback received				
5. Feedback received from the Executive Board and subsidiary bodies	n.a.	Tracked	Feedback is recorded in Evaluation Committee and Executive Board minutes and includes supportive remarks (examples in annex V)	To be reported on in qualitative terms
6. Feedback received from the Evaluation Advisory Panel on evaluation quality	n.a.	Tracked	To be presented in the Evaluation Advisory Panel's annual report	To be reported on in qualitative terms
7. Engagement events with Management and governments and feedback received	n.a.	Tracked	Per statements made at learning events (examples in annex V)	To be reported on in quantitative and qualitative terms
8. Number of visits to the IOE website	77 380 (2019)	80 000	109 000	Quantitative data tracked by IOE

¹⁵ Drawn from IOE's multi-year strategy.

¹⁶ In fact, the verification has been done annually since 2022 and is based on IOE comments on the PRISMA report.

¹⁷ Countries covered by CSPEs: 10; Countries covered by PPEs: 13; Average active countries in 2019-2020: 92.

¹⁸ Countries covered by SREs: 10; Countries covered by CSPEs: 12; Countries covered by PPEs: 8; Countries covered by PCEs: 7, removing 5 duplications; Number of countries with an active portfolio in 2021-2022: 93.

9. Number of learning events (co-)organized by IOE	8 (2019)	10	12	Includes event at IFAD and those open to the public
10. Score assigned IOE by the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women annual review ¹⁹		Score equal to or above 9.0/12 (the threshold for exceeding requirements)	Score obtained in 2023: 11.6 (exceeds requirements)	Score from UN-SWAP, based on 10 IOE evaluations assessed in 2023
Utilization of resources and cost-effectiveness				
11. Percentage of non-staffing budget utilized	98.7% (2020)	95%-100%	99.1% (2023)	
12. Ratio of IOE budget to the programme of loans and grants	0.62% (2020)	≤0.90%	0.55% (2024)	The 0.90% cap was set by the Executive Board in 2008
13. Ratio of IOE budget to IFAD administrative budget	3.64%	Tracked	3.35% (2024)	

¹⁹ The UN-SWAP on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is a United Nations system-wide accountability framework designed to measure, monitor and drive progress toward a common set of standards to aspire and adhere to for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It applies to all United Nations entities, departments and offices.

IOE proposed evaluation activities for 2025

Table 1

Proposed IOE work programme for 2025 by type of activity

<i>Type of work</i>	<i>Proposed activities for 2025</i>	<i>Start date</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>
1. CLEs and reviews	Corporate-level evaluation on institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12	Jan-24	Dec-25
	Corporate-level rapid review of IFAD's Human Resources Policy	Oct-25	Sep-26
2. Thematic evaluations	IFAD-funded interventions in human nutrition	Sep-23	Feb-25
3. SREs	IFAD's strategy and operations in small island developing states	June-24	Sep-25
4. CSPEs	Egypt	June-24	Jun-25
	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Nov-24	Nov-25
	Viet Nam	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Zambia	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Honduras	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Chad	Feb-25	Feb-26
	Djibouti	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Zimbabwe	Sep-25	Sep-26
5. Project completion report validations (PCRVs)	Validation of all project completion reports (PCRs) available in the year	Jan-25	Dec-25
6. PPEs	Asia and the Pacific (APR): Cambodia, Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders Project	Feb-25	Oct-25
	East and Southern Africa (ESA): Malawi, Sustainable Agricultural Production Programme	Feb-25	Oct-25
	Near East, North Africa and Europe (NEN): Tajikistan, Community-Based Agricultural Support Project	Feb-25	Oct-25
	West and Central Africa (WCA): Nigeria, Value Chain Development Programme	Feb-25	Oct-25
7. Engagement with governing bodies	Review of implementation of IOE's results-based work programme and budget for 2025 and preparation of results-based work programme and budget for 2026 and indicative plan for 2027-2028	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Third external peer review of IFAD's evaluation function	Oct-25	Oct-26
	Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD (ARIE)	Jan-25	Sept-25
	IOE comments on the PRISMA	Jun-25	Sept-25
	IOE comments on the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE)	Jun-25	Sept-25
	IOE comments on Management policies and strategies	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Participation in Evaluation Committee, Executive Board and Governing Council sessions, selected Audit Committee meetings and the 2025 Board country visit	Jan-25	Dec-25

<i>Type of work</i>	<i>Proposed activities for 2025</i>	<i>Start date</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>
	IOE comments on country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs), when related CSPEs are available	Jan-25	Dec-25
8. Communication and knowledge management activities	Evaluation reports, IOE website and communication activities	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Communicate the evaluation findings, disseminate the lessons and promote the utilization of evaluations	Jan-25	Dec-25
	EvalForward and other knowledge management platforms	Jan-25	Dec-25
9. Partnerships	Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG), United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG); Rome-based agency (RBA) collaboration	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI)	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Collaboration with universities, think tanks and IntEVAL	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Contribution as external peer reviewer to evaluations by other multilateral and bilateral organizations, as requested	Jan-25	Dec-25
10. Methodology	Updating of new Evaluation Manual and electronic annexes	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Annual workshop of the Evaluation Advisory Panel	May-25	Oct-25
11. Evaluation capacity development (ECD)	Engagement in ECD in the context of the Global Evaluation Initiative	Jan-25	Dec-25
	Organization of workshops in partner countries on evaluation methodologies and processes, as requested	Jan-25	Dec-25

IOE's indicative plan for 2026–2027

Table 1
IOE indicative plan for 2026–2027, by type of activity*

Type of work	Indicative plan for 2026–2027	Year	Remarks
1. CLEs	IFAD's engagements supported by supplementary funding	2026–2027	To review the partnerships and initiatives in which IFAD is involved, as well as related funding sources, their management arrangements and their contribution to further IFAD's mandate.
	Use of information and communications technology for corporate processes and programmatic support	2028	To review the effectiveness and efficiency of IFAD's investment in information and communication technology for its business processes, as well as the progress made in harnessing the capabilities of digital technologies to better serve the needs of smallholder farmers and to provide Member States and IFAD with sharper tools for monitoring and evaluation and periodic in-depth assessments.
2. Thematic evaluations (TEs)	IFAD's engagement with the private sector	2027	IFAD's private sector engagement strategy was approved in 2019. This thematic evaluation will provide an assessment of IFAD's private sector operations.
3. Independent rapid review	IFAD ex ante quality-at-entry processes for country strategies and operations	2026–2027	To review processes for internal quality assessment of COSOPs, loans, grants and other operations before submission to IFAD's governing bodies.
4. Subregional evaluations	Conflict-affected states in the Near East and North Africa region	2026	
5. CSPEs	Mozambique	2026	<u>Anticipated to start in 2025</u>
	Uganda	2027	
	Côte d'Ivoire	2026	<u>Anticipated to start in 2025</u>
	Togo	2027	
	Tunisia	2026	
	Jordan	2027	
	Paraguay	2026	<u>Anticipated to start in 2025</u>
	Peru	2027	
	Brazil	2027	
6. PCRVs	Validate all PCRs available in the year	2026–2027	
7. PCEs	Water management in the NEN region	2026–2027	
	Agroecology practices in LAC	2026–2027	
8. PPEs	ESA: Burundi, Project to Support Agricultural and Rural Financial Inclusion in Burundi	2026	
	ESA: Comoros, Family Farming Productivity and Resilience Support Project	2027	
	WCA: Central African Republic, Project to Revitalize Crop and Livestock Production in the Savannah; or Sierra Leone, Agricultural Value Chain Development Project	2026	

<i>Type of work</i>	<i>Indicative plan for 2026–2027</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
	WCA: Niger, Family Farming Development Programme in Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder Regions, or Project to Strengthen Resilience of Rural Communities to Food and Nutrition Insecurity; or The Gambia, Resilient Organizations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture Project	2027	
	LAC: Nicaragua, Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable Development Project	2026	
	LAC: Belize, Resilient Rural Belize Programme	2027	
	APR: China, Sustaining Poverty Reduction through Agribusiness Development in South Shaanxi	2026	
9. Engagement with governing bodies	Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD	2026–2027	
	Ex post review of implementation of the recommendations of selected strategic evaluations	2026–2027	
	Preparation of the results-based work programme and budget for 2026 and indicative plan for 2027–2028	2026–2027	
	IOE comments on the PRISMA	2026–2027	
	IOE comments on the RIDE	2026–2027	
	IOE comments on selected IFAD operational policies and strategies prepared by Management for consideration by the Evaluation Committee	2026–2027	
	Participation in all sessions of the Evaluation Committee, Executive Board and Governing Council, and the annual country visit of the Board	2026–2027	
	Annual workshop with the Evaluation Advisory Panel	2026–2027	
	IOE comments on COSOPs when related country programme evaluations/CSPEs are available	2026–2027	
10. Communication and knowledge management activities	Evaluation reports, IOE website and communication activities	2026–2027	
	Communicate the evaluation findings and disseminate the lessons	2026–2027	
	Promote utilization of evaluations	2026–2027	
	EvalForward and other knowledge management platforms	2026–2027	
11. Partnership	ECG, UNEG	2026–2027	
	Global Evaluation Initiative	2026–2027	
	RBA collaboration on evaluation	2026–2027	
	Contribute as external peer reviewer to key evaluations by other multilateral and bilateral organizations, as requested	2026–2027	
	Collaborate with universities and think tanks, contribute to IntEVAL	2026–2027	
12. ECD	Capacity-building for Member States	2026–2027	

* The topics and number of TEs, CLEs, CSPEs, PCEs, SREs and evaluation synthesis reports are tentative; actual priorities and number of activities to be undertaken in 2026 and 2027 will be confirmed or determined in 2025 and 2026, respectively.

IOE products

1. This annex presents the spectrum of IOE products between 1 January and 31 December 2023 and documents progress in the areas of leadership and strategy, the advancement of established outputs, the generation of new products and the improvement of staff capability and communications. The work has focused both internally and externally, noting that IOE operates within a global oversight architecture with the independent evaluation and oversight functions of other international financial institutions and UNEG.

A. Improve evaluation coverage

2. As per the multi-year evaluation strategy of IOE, one of the strategic objectives of the Office during the period 2022–2027 is to improve evaluation coverage and promote transformative evaluations that reflect the scale and scope of IFAD operations, ensuring methodological rigour, attention to inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness, flexibility and cost-effectiveness.
3. In this context, between 1 January and 31 December 2023, IOE finalized 47 reports. Of these, 35 are publicly available on the IOE website, and 12 were pending final publication as of 31 December 2023.

Reports published

- **Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD.** The ARIE for 2023 is the twenty-first version of the report to be published. It analyses performance ratings from 288 project-level evaluations and 45 country strategy and programme evaluations, as well as findings from corporate-level, thematic and project cluster evaluations. The report confirms many observations made in previous years. For example, performance varies across the evaluation criteria, with the strongest being registered in environment and natural resources management and climate change adaptation, and the worst in efficiency. The report found that performance in terms of effectiveness and rural poverty impact have declined considerably since 2018, especially in projects under conditions of fragility.
- **Corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's decentralization experience.** This 2023 report follows the evaluation conducted by IOE covering IFAD's decentralization efforts and experience during the period 2003–2015. The evaluation concludes that decentralization is necessary to improve the development results achieved on the ground. However, decentralization needs to be done right and realize this potential. Decentralization efforts since 2016 have enjoyed strong support and commitment from IFAD's Senior Management. However, there is a clear need for more strategic planning, careful resource allocation and fit-for-purpose country presence of IFAD.
- **Subregional evaluation of countries with fragile situations in West and Central Africa: Learning from experiences of IFAD's engagement in the G5 Sahel countries and northern Nigeria.** IOE conducted its first subregional evaluation (SRE) to assess how IFAD's engagement and support have addressed common rural development challenges in six countries in WCA: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and the northern area of Nigeria. As fragility was the central theme, the SRE identified five categories of fragility drivers: socioeconomic issues, social disruption, environmental/climate change issues, institutional weaknesses/weak social contracts, and insecurity and conflict issues.
- **Project cluster evaluation on rural enterprise development.** This is the first PCE to be conducted by IOE. The choice of rural enterprise development as the topic reflects the focus areas laid out in the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016–2025, which include diversified rural enterprise and employment opportunities. The PCE reviewed four ongoing projects focusing on rural

entrepreneurship, enterprise and business development, and employment creation in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana and Nepal.

- **Project cluster evaluation on rural finance in East and Southern Africa.** The PCE on rural finance in ESA covers three projects: the Programme for Rural Outreach of Financial Innovations and Technologies in Kenya; the Rural Finance Expansion Programme in Zambia; and the Rural Financial Intermediation Programme II in Ethiopia. All three projects aimed to reduce poverty rates among smallholder farmers and improve food security and nutrition of rural households by increasing the provision of financial services, although with different strategies.
- **Evaluation synthesis note: Targeting in IFAD-supported projects.** IOE prepared its first evaluation synthesis note (ESN) on targeting in IFAD-supported projects. The ESN consolidated evidence from IOE evaluations on IFAD's achievements and challenges in targeting poor rural people, in order to provide timely inputs to the updating of the IFAD Poverty Targeting Policy. The ESN confirms that targeting poor rural people is central to IFAD's mandate and to realizing its comparative advantage. IFAD's updated 2019 Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting are more in line with the 2030 Agenda and its mandate to "leave no one behind".
- **Country strategy and programme evaluations.** The primary objective of a CSPE is to assess the performance and results of a country strategy and operations and provide lessons and recommendations to guide the preparation of the next country strategy. Its main users are divisional and country directors, country teams and governments. During the reporting period, IOE published four CSPE reports:
 - Uzbekistan CSPE
 - Eswatini CSPE
 - Malawi CSPE
 - Indonesia CSPE
- **Project performance evaluations.** The primary objective of a PPE is to assess the performance and results of project-level operations funded by IFAD. Its main users are regional and country directors, technical advisors, operational staff and government counterparts. During the reporting period, IOE published four PPE reports:
 - Promotion of Rural Incomes through Market Enhancement Project (Egypt)
 - National Rural Entrepreneurship Project (Togo)
 - Smallholder Productivity Promotion Programme (Zambia)
 - Cooperative Rural Development Project in the Oriental Region (Cuba)
- **Project completion report validations.** The primary objective of a PCRV is to validate the project completion reports prepared by IFAD Management. Its main users are IOE and IFAD Management for reporting and feedback. During the reporting period, IOE published 21 PCRV reports:
 - National Programme for Food Security and Rural Development in Imbo and Moso (Burundi)
 - Participatory Natural Resource Management and Rural Development Project in the North, Centre-North and East Regions (Burkina Faso)
 - Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Project (Congo)
 - Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project (Mali)
 - Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture Project (Angola)

- Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (Cambodia)
- Agricultural Recovery Project (Angola)
- Project for Financial Inclusion in Rural Areas (Uganda)
- Fisheries, Coastal Resources and Livelihood Project (Philippines)
- Rural Markets Promotion Programme (Mozambique)
- Livestock Marketing and Resilience Programme (Sudan)
- Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project (Papua New Guinea)
- Support Programme for Rural Microenterprise Poles and Regional Economies (Madagascar)
- Project to Strengthen Rural Actors in the Popular and Solidary Economy (Ecuador)
- Value Chain Development Programme – Phase II (Burundi)
- Rural Development Programme in the Mountain Zones – Phase I (Morocco)
- Semi-arid Sustainable Development Project in the State of Piauí (Brazil)
- Adapted Rural Financial Services Development Project (Benin)
- Jharkhand Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (India)
- Agropastoral Development and Local Initiatives Promotion Programme in the South-East – Phase II (Tunisia)
- National Agriculture Project (Eritrea)

Reports completed

- Country strategy and programme evaluations:
 - Guinea-Bissau
 - Ethiopia
 - Kyrgyzstan
 - China
 - Colombia
- Project performance evaluations:
 - Southern Laos Food and Nutrition Security and Market Linkages Programme (Lao People’s Democratic Republic)
- Project completion report validations:
 - Kinshasa Food Supply Centre Support Programme (Congo)
 - Public Services Improvement for Sustainable Territorial Development in the Apurimac, Ene and Mantaro River Basins Project (Peru)
 - Rural Community Finance Project (Liberia)
 - Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition Project (Lao People’s Democratic Republic)
 - Infrastructure and Rural Finance Support Programme (Armenia)
 - Upper Tana Catchment Natural Resource Management Project (Kenya)

B. Engage strategically with IFAD governance and Management

4. As per the multi-year evaluation strategy of IOE, one of the strategic objectives of the Office during the period 2022–2027 is to engage with Management, Member States and external partners to support evaluation capacity and use within and outside IFAD.
5. In this context, during the reporting period, IOE has placed increasing emphasis on engagement with Member States and IFAD Management, with a view to further

promoting learning, accountability and reflection through independent evaluation. These efforts have taken shape through a series of corporate learning workshops, country learning workshops and an Executive Board field mission, in addition to engagement across IFAD's governance structure, including in the Governing Council, Executive Board, Evaluation Committee and Audit Committee.

Corporate learning workshops

- Learning event on the subregional evaluation of IFAD's engagement in the G5 Sahel countries and northern Nigeria
- Learning event on the project cluster evaluation on rural enterprise development
- Learning event on the project cluster evaluation on rural finance in East and Southern Africa
- Learning event on the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's decentralization experience 2023

Country learning workshops

- Kyrgyzstan, 1 March 2023
- Colombia, 21 March 2023
- Ethiopia, 6 June 2023
- China, 23 June 2023

Executive Board field mission

6. The IOE Director joined a high-level delegation of IFAD's Executive Board members and IFAD senior staff for a working visit to Uganda, from 27 November to 2 December 2023. During the mission, the delegation met with high-level government officials, and travelled to IFAD-supported projects in the country to see progress and meet with community members and rural farmers.

IFAD governance

- Governing Council:
 - On 15 February, the IFAD Governing Council approved the IOE results-based work programme and budget for 2023 and indicative plan for 2024–2025, during its forty-sixth session.
- Executive Board:
 - On 10 and 11 May the 138th session of the Executive Board took place. Items discussed included the CLE on IFAD's decentralization experience. Board members also discussed the new IFAD policy on targeting, which benefited from the IOE synthesis note on targeting.
 - On 12 and 13 September, the 139th session of the Executive Board took place. Items discussed included the preview of IOE's results-based work programme and budget for 2024 and indicative plan for 2025–2026, and the 2023 ARIE.
 - On 11 and 12 December, the 140th session of the Executive Board took place. During the event, IOE's results-based work programme and budget for 2024 and indicative plan for 2025–2026 was approved.
- Evaluation Committee:
 - On 4 April, the 120th session of the Evaluation Committee took place. Items discussed included: approach paper for the thematic evaluation of IFAD support for gender equality and women's empowerment; CLE on IFAD's decentralization experience 2022; and approach paper for the CLE on knowledge management practices in IFAD.

- On 21 June, the 121st session of the Evaluation Committee took place. During the meeting, the following reports were presented and well received: Kyrgyz Republic CSPE; Guinea-Bissau CSPE; and Colombia CSPE.
- On 5 September, during the 122nd session of the Evaluation Committee, the following documents were presented and well received: China CSPE; IOE comments on the PRISMA; the ARIE 2023; and preview of the results-based work programme and budget for 2024, and indicative plan for 2025–2026 of IOE; and IOE comments on the RIDE.
- On 6 October, the 123rd session of the Evaluation Committee took place. Items positively received included: Ethiopia CSPE; review of IFAD12 Results Management Framework; provisional agenda of the Evaluation Committee for 2024; review of the implementation of Management response to the 2018 CLE on IFAD’s financial architecture; and the results-based work programme and budget for 2024 and indicative plan for 2025–2026 of IOE.
- Audit Committee:
 - On 20 November, the 171st session of the Audit Committee took place. During the meeting, the results-based work programme and budget for 2024 and indicative plan for 2025–2026 of IOE was presented and received positive feedback.

C. Expand and deepen IOE’s leadership role in building global evaluations

7. As per the multi-year evaluation strategy of IOE, one of the strategic objectives of the Office during the period 2022–2027 is to retain and deepen IOE’s position as an internationally recognized leader in the evaluation of rural development programmes, policies and strategies by further strengthening the relevance of its work, promoting innovative approaches and enhancing collaboration with other organizations, and with think tanks and universities.
8. In this context, during the reporting period, a set of initiatives seeking to overall advance the quality of evaluations in IFAD were completed, each of which introduces an element to support effective planning and a common terminological and methodological understanding, and advance the capacity of staff.
 - **Improvement of IOE evaluation quality - IFAD Evaluation Manual. Annex for communicating evaluation findings.** IOE has published an annex to the third edition of the IFAD Evaluation Manual. In just over 10 pages, the publication successfully articulates the rationale for applying brain science to the field of evaluation in order to increase the effectiveness of communication. The main insights and perspectives of this complex subject matter are woven together through the use of simple language and intuitive arguments. With an eye on the practicality and applicability of the concepts discussed, the document offers concrete actions and implementation steps at the end of each short chapter.
 - **Brain science online training course.** IOE has launched a fully interactive online training course, to accompany the aforementioned ‘annex for communicating evaluation findings. Through an audio-visual immersive experience, users will learn about how to leverage neuroscience-based principles to enhance the effectiveness of communication efforts. The course may benefit IFAD and IOE staff and consultants, external evaluation and rural development practitioners, and national authorities and implementing agencies.

- **IOE Evaluation Advisory Panel.** The IOE Evaluation Advisory Panel held its second annual workshop on 14 and 15 November 2023. The panel affirmed that they believe the IOE evaluation processes to be among the best in international development organizations. The event featured presentations on the formulation of IOE recommendations and follow-up, on “leaving no knowledge behind”, and on climate change adaptation funding. Distinguished country representatives of the IFAD Evaluation Committee attended the event, alongside representatives of IFAD Management.
- **Research publications.** IOE improves the quality of evaluative products through the production of a suite of new substantive research publications. Each of these publications aims to improve the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of independent evaluation at IFAD. Pieces produced during 2023 include the following:
 - **Research paper series.** Geospatial tools and applications to support IOE;
 - **Learning notes series.** Technical note on the use of geographical information systems from the Ethiopia CSPE.
- **IOE staff.** The professional development of IOE staff has been enhanced through the hiring of new staff and a process of continuous training and skills building.

Professionalization

- **ECG.** On 27 and 28 March 2023, IOE participated in the ECG spring meeting in Washington, D.C. IOE contributed to the event in several ways by engaging in different sessions at multiple levels. Dr Naidoo, IOE Director, delivered a presentation on the first theme of the session, “opportunities and challenges to improve evaluation influence”. Mr Felloni, IOE Deputy Director, delivered a presentation on the fourth theme of the session, “innovative methods in evaluation”. In addition, on 29 March 2023, Dr Naidoo acted as session chair and Mr Felloni as a panellist during the ECG spring webinar series. The session was titled “Food security and broader resilience using an evaluation lens”. On 18 and 20 October 2023, IOE participated in the ECG fall meeting in Abidjan. Dr Naidoo attended in person and was joined remotely by Mr Felloni and Dr Nanthikesan, IOE Lead Evaluation Officer, who delivered presentations online.
- **GEI.** On 24 May 2023, IOE participated in the GEI Partnership Council that took place in Paris. Mr Felloni briefed the Council members on a new initiative to build monitoring and evaluation capacity in Uzbekistan. On 16 November, Dr Naidoo attended the second yearly GEI Partnership Council that took place in Paris.
- **UNEG.** On 24–26 January 2023, Dr Naidoo and Mr Felloni attended the UNEG Annual General Meeting. Items discussed during the meeting included, among others: evaluating during times of crisis; use of artificial intelligence in evaluation; review of the UNEG Strategy 2020–2024 and preparation for the Strategy 2025–2029; and drafting the UNEG workplan 2023. On 23 March 2023, Dr Lomeña-Gelis, IOE Senior Evaluation Officer, delivered a presentation during a UNEG evaluation practice exchange seminar, titled “Evaluation of transformational change for agricultural development”. On 29 March 2023, Dr Nanthikesan delivered a presentation during a UNEG evaluation practice exchange seminar, titled “Evaluating sustainable pathways to climate resilience: Recent experiences from UNEG evaluations”.

Participation

- **Global invitations.** IOE staff have been invited to deliver presentations and participate in 16 international events, including: European Investment Bank

high-level conference: "Picking up the pace: Evaluation in a rapidly changing world"; two UNEG evaluation practice exchange sessions; the ECG spring webinar series; a lecture at the Yale University School of Management; a talk at the European Institute of Innovation for Sustainability; the 2023 Annual Meeting of the International Research Group for Policy and Program Evaluation (INTEVAL); the event titled "Project cluster evaluations – sharing lessons from AfDB, FAO, IFAD and UNODC";²⁰ a peer-to-peer career advisory session for young and emerging evaluators; the 2023 Canadian Evaluation Society Conference; a lecture at the Wits University School of Governance; a lecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; the Asian Evaluation Week 2023; the Evaluation Symposium of the Islamic Development Bank titled "The Future of Development Evaluation: Adapting to a Changing Landscape"; COP28; and the event titled "What did we learn? Policy evaluation in the era of COVID-19".

- **IOE-led seminars and events.** IOE organized and co-hosted two international seminars and events: the 13th issue of the IFAD Innovation Talk series, titled "Evaluation through the lens of brain science - Building a humanized approach for better results"; and the "Targeting of the Poor" conference, held at the University of Arizona.
- **INTEVAL.** IOE hosted and funded the 38th annual meeting of INTEVAL. The event took place at IFAD headquarters, in Rome. INTEVAL is a multidisciplinary constellation of world-renowned expert evaluation leaders and distinguished authors. INTEVAL's members addressed the key strategic issues that define the evolution of the evaluation function, shaping the international debate and advancing the discipline within the context of the ever-changing global landscape.
- **Coffee Talk series.** IOE hosted 11 sessions of its Coffee Talk series, aimed at providing an informal forum in which to address a variety of evaluation-related topics. Sessions featured a mix of internal and external speakers, including Tomasz Bartos, Associate Director, Evaluation Department, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Publication

- The book "Policy Evaluation in the Era of COVID-19" has been published and is now available online, including through open access. Published by Routledge and financially supported by IFAD, the book was co-edited by the IOE Director with Pearl Eliadis, Associate Professor at McGill University, and Ray Rist, former Director of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training. The book is the first to offer a broad canvas that explores government responses and ideas to tackle the challenges that evaluation practice faces in preparing for the next global crisis.

D. Enhance IOE strategic communication, outreach and knowledge management

9. A range of communication resources defines IOE's visual persona and brand identity, embodying its independent status. Through this assortment of products, IOE continues to build safe spaces for user interaction that invite its stakeholders to continuously reach out and engage with the Office's outputs in a more accessible manner.

Public resources

- **IOE website.** The website, for which IOE maintains full intellectual ownership, is structured to best meet the specific needs of IOE, with the adoption of dynamic functionalities that maximize opportunities for user

²⁰ AfDB = African Development Bank; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; UNODC = United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

engagement. It also ensures an intuitive, easy navigation experience as the Office moves forward in building evaluation capacity across IFAD, advancing the IOE conduct model, and building bridges through evaluation dialogues to enhance understanding and improve performance. Following the launch of the website in March 2022, an independent Google Analytics tracking dashboard was finalized in April 2022. Since the launch of the dashboard, the website has totalled 206,000 views from 83,000 users across 217 countries and territories, as of 31 December 2023.

- **Independent Magazine.** As IOE’s flagship communication product, Independent Magazine brings to the forefront of the global development dialogue the major efforts undertaken by IOE, while seeking to advance IFAD’s vision of vibrant, inclusive and sustainable rural economies where people live free from poverty and hunger. In 2023, IOE published three editions of the magazine and the cumulative total number of readers reached 27,800 across 116 countries as of 31 December 2023.
- **Social media.** IOE has a strong, active and vibrant social media presence, which allows the Office to keep its stakeholders updated in real time on its latest endeavours, while ensuring that its stakeholders are able to interact with the Office in an ongoing and fluid fashion. In 2023, IOE has continued to grow its following on Twitter, reaching 3,436 followers [@IFADeval]; LinkedIn, reaching 5,967 followers; and YouTube, reaching 570 subscribers, as of 31 December 2023.
- **IOE newsletter.** The IOE newsletter promotes transparency and shares knowledge with partners and stakeholders about key developments related to IOE’s work. The newsletter is aligned with IOE’s visual identity and strategic approach to communications. The broad readership of the newsletter ensures that IOE stakeholders have quick access to the latest outputs of the Office. In 2023, IOE published three issues of the newsletter.
- **News items.** The IOE news items capture the undertakings of the Office, highlighting key take-home messages. The breadth of issues addressed by the items ranges from the publishing of reports, to meetings, events, new products and opportunities for engagement with the Office. In 2023, IOE published a record-breaking 48 news items – an average of almost one every week of the year.
- **Video series.** In 2023, IOE published 23 videos. This reflects a broadened list of video products, which now include five separate formats:
 - **60 seconds with the Director.** The video series offer easy-to-digest insights into the IOE Director’s perspectives on a number of salient, evaluation-related issues. In 2023, IOE published two instalments in the series.
 - **Promotional videos.** Through its promotional videos, IOE provides enhanced visibility to key substantive issues at the heart of the international evaluation debate, while bringing to the forefront important new outputs produced by the Office. In 2023, IOE produced four promotional videos.
 - **Video interview series.** Through one-on-one interviews, each episode offers the opportunity to delve into specific evaluation issues. Discussions focus on key areas of interest, which are addressed through open and candid conversations, during which interviewer and interviewee exchange thoughts, opinions and perspectives. The use of accessible language, complemented by an informal setting, create a welcoming atmosphere where seemingly complex topics are presented in a user-friendly fashion. In 2023, IOE published two video interviews.

- **Events.** Event videos present corporate learning workshops, with the involvement and participation of IFAD Senior Management, regional and country directors, and other staff members. The series also features country learning workshops on a select basis. In 2023, IOE published three event videos.
- **Evaluation pills.** The evaluation pills offer succinct, one-minute takeaways on select topics related to the practice of evaluation and how it can be enhanced through the tailored application of neuroscience principles. The pills feature the IOE Director and Dr Srini Pillay. In 2023, IOE published 12 instalments.
- **Evaluation briefs.** Evaluation briefs are ad hoc publications that document and provide insights on specific events, topics, themes and issues pertaining to IOE's work. In 2023, IOE published four briefs.
- **IOE Coffee Talk series.** Each instalment of the previously presented talk series is captured through new fact sheets. In 2023, IOE published 11 Coffee Talk sheets.
- **IOE blogs.** Blogs advance IOE's critical thinking vis-à-vis issues at the heart of the international evaluation debate, stimulating thought-provoking dialogue and debate. In 2023, IOE staff published two blogs.
- **Infographics.** IOE's re-envisaged infographics offer an invaluable compendium to its evaluation reports. Each infographic presents soundbite report extracts, packaged in visually appealing solutions.

Internal resources

- **Media coverage reports.** IOE issued two media coverage reports, in June 2023 and January 2024, covering the first and second semester of the year, respectively. The reports present the latest data, statistics and trends relative to the Office's website, social media platforms and select IOE products. Findings include IOE's continued leadership role in methodological and strategic debates at the international level, and IOE's strong presence in the spotlight at critical decision-making times for IFAD.
- **Director's bulletin.** The bulletin responds to the IOE Director's personal commitment to transparent and proactive internal communication. The Bulletin serves as a valuable resource to record IOE outputs, engagements and activities. In 2023, IOE issued nine editions of the Bulletin.

Examples of feedback from governing bodies and from Management received by IOE

Table 1

Examples of feedback from governing bodies

141st session of the Executive Board [24 April 2024]

“Canada also welcomes the new COSOP for Colombia and we commend IFAD for implementing the lessons learned and the recommendations from the previous evaluation into this new programme.”

- **Representative of Canada**

“We note very much the way that IFAD has responded to the evaluation findings and recommendations.”

- **Representative of United Kingdom**

“I also want to highlight IOE’s contributions to the document. [...] Additionally, as highlighted by IOE’s evaluation, it is also necessary to improve communication with the community about the fruits of IFAD’s joint work with the Colombian Government.”

- **Representative of Brazil**

CSPE Rwanda [5 March 2024]

“So we are happy to be part of this workshop and hear about the findings from the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD [‘s colleagues] who are presenting us the evaluation that was carried out on IFAD’s programme and projects here in Rwanda. We are looking forward to the discussion of findings and methodology [...]. I think the purpose [of this discussion] is to ensure better implementation in the future and, most importantly, sustainability of our projects; and then I think this informs both the design, the implementation and the long-term planning looking ahead.”

- **Honourable Dr Ildephonse Musafiri, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Rwanda**

122nd session of the Evaluation Committee [5 September 2023]

The Evaluation Committee welcomed the country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) for the People’s Republic of China [...], which provides important inputs that will facilitate the consultations between IFAD and the People’s Republic of China. [...] Members noted that the CSPE was the first such report on one of the eight IFAD Member States in the process to approach graduation, and together with other such reports would generate important lessons learned.

- **Evaluation Committee Chair**

“First, I would like to express our gratitude to IOE and the evaluation team. We appreciate the professionalism and expertise they have demonstrated in this excellent evaluation work, which generates fruitful and insightful findings as well as recommendations. [...] China welcomes the fruitful evaluation outcomes. [...] We welcome the five recommendations proposed in this report to inform the upcoming COSOP. [...] These five recommendations are based on China’s national conditions and IFAD’s comparative advantages and will be conducive to deepen China-IFAD cooperation. China expects to work jointly with IFAD to translate them into pragmatic actions through the proposed follow-up agreed in the ACP.”

- **Mr Mei Hongyong, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome**

“The reason for which I think this is an important document is because, as has been said, since 1981, China has been the main country where IFAD actions have taken place. [...] This is also a remarkable document because it covers a 10-year lifespan which spreads over two COSOPs. [...] This is also an important document because it is the first country assessment which has to do with one of the eight Member States of IFAD which looked at a process of graduation mechanism. These are all the reasons for which I believe that this is an important document and should very much inform our discussions within the Committee, within the Executive Board and in IFAD13 as well.”

- **Representative of France**

“I think this is really exemplary of what a CSPE should look like. [...] We should all learn from this CSPE.”

- **Representative of Indonesia**

“I personally believe this is one of the key reports for the 139th session. It contains, in my opinion, very relevant information that can be used to support IFAD and also to guide IFAD into the future.”

- **Evaluation Committee Chair**

“Many thanks to IOE for this ARIE report, which, of course, as usual, has exceptionally high-quality standards.”

- **Representative of Ireland**

Table 2
Examples of feedback from Management

CSPE Rwanda [5 March 2024]

“I always look forward to reading the country strategy and programme evaluation reports, as they provide rich and constructive insights, that not only provide lessons, but also hold us collectively to account for the performance of the portfolio and improve our effectiveness. [...] I would also like to thank IFAD’s Independent Office of Evaluation for, as ever, their high-quality evaluation report, and the learning from which we will inform the future direction of our collaboration with the Government of Rwanda. And I appreciate the effort to deliver this evaluation in time to make sure it can properly inform the new country strategy we are going to develop with the Government. [...] IFAD Management is very committed to ensure that the recommendations from this evaluation are incorporated in the new COSOP, working with the Government”.

- **Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD**

“First of all, I would like to appreciate the contribution and the richness of the discussion on the CSPE. I think evaluations in general are [needed] to give a fresh look and eyes at what we are doing, what is working well or what areas we can improve. We might not always agree with all the assessments, but I think it really helps us to see through and understand how we can improve our impacts and do better. I want to thank the team leading this CSPE, I think the overall feedback was positive. Over the past years I have been in the country, and I have seen the extent of the positive work and the impact our colleagues have done through IFAD’s programme, so thank you for that.”

- **Mr Dagmawi Habte-Selassie, Country Director for Rwanda, East and Southern Africa Division, IFAD**

CSPE Türkiye [16 April 2024]

“I would also like to thank IFAD’s Independent Office of Evaluation for the rigorous evaluation, and for ensuring that its timing is aligned with the design of the new country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) which will be developed later this year for 2025–2030.”

- **Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD**

“So, with this [vision going forward], and with a diversified portfolio, I think we will be definitely in a position to respond to the evaluation’s recommendations on the one hand, but also increase the impact of our operations in the country, working hand in hand with the Government at all levels, and with our development partners.”

- **Mr Liam Chicca, Head of IFAD Multi-country Office/Country Director, Near East, North Africa and Europe Division, IFAD**

“We will use this evaluation to build a more effective and efficient IFAD country programme, ultimately delivering the best possible development impact for the rural people of Türkiye.”

- **Ms Dina Saleh, Regional Director, Near East, North Africa and Europe Division, IFAD**

122nd session of the Evaluation Committee [5 September 2023]

“Management welcomes the second country strategy programme evaluation for China. It provides many useful insights and lessons for the new COSOP. [...] Going forward, we will continue to work closely with the Government to ensure that lessons emerging from this evaluation and the agreed recommendations will feed into the current and future programmes in the next COSOP.”

- **Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD**

“As the Management response said, there are a number of really important issues in the CSPE which we will be taking to the new COSOP. [...] As we move forward, and where this CSPE will be very helpful is the challenge for us under the new COSOP.”

- **Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD**

“Thank you to Indran and to Joanna for this evaluation, which I found really useful, and on behalf of Management, we found it very useful. [...] I really want to credit the evaluation on noting the extent to which innovation has been taken on board.”

- **Ms Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD**

“Management very much appreciates the improved format and learning perspective in the 2023 ARIE, like the 2022 one. [...] This obviously helps inform the design and implementation of our projects and country strategies. [...] Management looks forward to strengthening the ongoing collaboration with IOE on the ARIE, as on other evaluation products under its multi-year strategy.”

- **Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD**

Summary infographic

2023








Investing in rural people

Independent Office of Evaluation

Engage strategically with IFAD governance & management

Expand IOE learnership in building global evaluations

Improve evaluation coverage

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Evaluation Reports



9 Country Strategy & Programme

5 Project Performance

27 Project Completion Report Validation



Annual Report on Independent Evaluation 2023

2 Project Cluster Evaluations



4 Country learning workshops



2 Corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's decentralization experience 2023








2 Sub-regional evaluation of fragile states in West and Central Africa







1 Evaluation synthesis note - Targeting in IFAD-supported projects



EVALUATION QUALITY

-  On-line training course
-  Research publications
-  Communication of evaluation findings based on brain science
-  IOE staff development
-  Evaluation Advisory Panel

EVALUATION PROFESSIONALIZATION

-  Membership of global networks
-  2 International seminars hosted by IOE
-  IOE staff invited to deliver presentations in 16 international events
-  3 Corporate learning events

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION



IOE Website

n. countries* **> 217**

n. views **> 206,000**



Independent Magazine

n. countries **> 116**

n. readers **> 27,800**



x3




x4



x48



x11



1.9k views



5,967 followers
570 subscribers
3,436 followers

*Including dependent territories and Areas of Special Sovereignty