
**Corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's management
of human resources**

Approach paper

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Executive summary

1. An independent, comprehensive assessment of IFAD's management of its human resources (HR) has not yet been undertaken. Between 2017 and 2025, major organizational initiatives such as decentralization, reassignment and recalibration significantly affected the IFAD's HR landscape and workforce engagement. Past evaluations, including those on decentralization and replenishment commitments, highlighted gaps in HR-related services. In light of this, IFAD's Executive Board, at its 143rd session, approved the present corporate-level evaluation (CLE) of IFAD's management of human resources as part of the 2025–2026 workplan of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE).
2. This CLE aims to enhance IFAD's ability to deliver on its strategy and mandate by providing a credible, independent and evidence-based perspective on its management of human resources. Covering the period from 2017 to 2025, it adopts a "whole-of-organization" approach, assessing the applicability and effectiveness of IFAD's HR policy framework at the headquarters, regional and country levels.
3. The CLE aims to answer the overarching evaluation question: to what extent does IFAD's management of human resources enable the organization to deliver on its mandate, strategy and objectives while ensuring workforce well-being, diversity and inclusivity? To answer this question, the CLE will cover key HR functional areas: strategic workforce planning; recruitment; onboarding and induction; talent management including performance management; mobility; retention; career development and succession planning; and learning and skills development. It will also examine cross-cutting issues such as staff well-being and a diverse and inclusive working environment, and HR functional support systems such as administration and employment relations. Organizational culture and how it interfaces with the HR functions will also be considered.
4. The evaluation is anchored in four internationally recognized evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. It will be based on a theory of change and employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect evidence to answer the evaluation question. Evidence will be collected through a desk review, self assessment by Management, key informant interviews, an e-survey, thematic deep dives, country case studies and comparative analysis. Evidence from different methods and sources will be triangulated for validation.
5. The evaluation will be completed in 2026 and the final evaluation report will be submitted to the Executive Board in early 2027. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation will inform a future HR strategy and policy framework.

Corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's management of human resources

Approach paper

I. Background and rationale for the evaluation

1. **The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) is conducting its first corporate-level evaluation (CLE) of IFAD's management of human resources (HR).**¹ This evaluation is part of the IOE workplan for 2025–2026,² as approved by the IFAD Executive Board during its 143rd session in December 2024. While this is the first dedicated evaluation of IFAD's management of HR, it will build on insights from previous IOE evaluations including the CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience and the CLE of institutional and operational performance under the Eleventh and Twelfth Replenishments of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11 and IFAD12). It will also consider other system-wide HR frameworks such as the United Nations Staff Rules and Charter, and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) mandate, which covers all facets of United Nations employment.
2. **IFAD's ability to deliver on its strategy and development mandate depends heavily on its people.** IFAD has operations in 92 countries across five regions with a total workforce of 1,511 to deliver on its mandate.³ A well-designed and effectively implemented HR policy framework is essential to ensure that staff are supported, engaged and equipped to contribute meaningfully while simultaneously enabling workforce well-being, diversity and inclusivity. Key HR functions such as workforce planning, recruitment, retention, performance management and skills and career development are central to enabling organizational effectiveness and positioning IFAD as an employer of choice in a competitive global talent market.
3. **The IFAD Strategic Framework 2016–2025 underscores the importance of institutional systems and workplace culture for achieving development results.** It focuses on creating an enabling environment and refining human resource policies and practices to promote workforce engagement and performance. The 2024 renaming of IFAD's Human Resource Division to the People and Culture Division (PCD) highlights the organization's growing emphasis on valuing and supporting its people.
4. **Between 2017 and 2025, major organizational initiatives such as decentralization, reassignment and recalibration significantly affected the HR environment and workforce engagement.** IFAD's move from a predominantly centralized organization to a decentralized organization changed its HR service delivery requirements. These developments underscore the need to evaluate the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the HR policy framework in supporting IFAD's evolving operating model.
5. **Past evaluations, including those on decentralization and replenishment commitments, highlighted gaps in HR-related services.** These evaluations specifically cited the allocation of staff resources, vacancy management and recruitment processes, reassignment and embedding the values, policies, practices and ways of working necessary to support delivery in line with IFAD's mandate.⁴

¹ In this approach paper, the management of HR refers to the organization-wide people practices of managers, enabled by the People and Culture Division, which designs and maintains IFAD's HR policy framework.

² [EB 2024/143/R.17](#).

³ IFAD's work spans across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East, North Africa and Europe. Workforce numbers are based on 2024 data and include consultants. See appendix VII for IFAD HR at a glance.

⁴ CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience, pp. 75-76.

Other challenges included the need for training in identified thematic areas and clear criteria for allocating staff resources to IFAD country offices.⁵ These were identified through surveys including ratings of HR services across IFAD.⁶

6. **Despite the inclusion of HR-related issues in previous evaluations, the overall management of human resources in IFAD has not been assessed comprehensively.** A comprehensive evaluation of IFAD's management of human resources will support an understanding of how people-related matters can be positioned within IFAD and how HR can optimize IFAD's achievement of its strategy, mandate and objectives. This evaluation is also driven by the need for an independent perspective on how to enhance the strategic contribution of HR in response to evolving internal dynamics such as decentralization and organizational restructuring, and external shifts in the global landscape such as agricultural transformations and technological innovation. These developments are reshaping the nature of IFAD's work and the competencies required to deliver on its mission. In light of these developments and in consultation with IFAD Management, IOE has prioritized this evaluation in order to promote accountability and facilitate ongoing learning and organizational improvement.
7. **The HR role encompasses a wide range of integrated functions that fall within its ambit.** These include: human resource planning, recruitment and selection, performance management, learning and development, career planning, function evaluation, rewards, industrial relations, employee participation and communication, health and safety, well-being and administrative responsibilities.⁷
8. In addition to these key functions, HR is rooted in cross-cutting themes of organizational culture, change management, diversity, equity and inclusion, HR information systems and analytics, and safeguarding and ethics-related practices. The scoping section will provide more details on how each function will be considered in the evaluation.

II. Key human resources milestones

9. **IFAD's current Human Resources Policy, issued in 2019, provides guiding principles for its HR management processes.**⁸ It recognizes people as IFAD's most important knowledge resource and acknowledges the link between good human resources management and results. It also recognizes that IFAD exists in a rapidly changing political, economic, social and technological environment, and therefore needs to "adapt to diverse and changing requirements by continuously developing organizational capability, improving performance by empowering staff, stimulating their creativity, rewarding risks and innovation and investing in continuous improvement through knowledge sharing and training". The Human Resources Policy is complemented by the Staff Rules and the Human Resources Implementing Procedures.
10. **Major institutional reforms between 2017 and 2025 reshaped IFAD's HR landscape.** Decentralization and recalibration have impacted – and required changes in – IFAD's HR environment and policy framework. This has resulted in many HR reforms being undertaken during this period. The timeline of IFAD's HR reforms from 2017 to 2025 can be found in appendix III.

⁵ CLE of knowledge management practices in IFAD, p. xii para. 10; CLE on decentralization, para. 217.

⁶ These evaluations include the decentralization effectiveness surveys from 2022 to 2025, the Global Staff Survey administered in 2018, 2022, 2024 and 2025, and a staff engagement and workplace culture action plan survey administered in 2019 and 2021.

⁷ <https://www.aihr.com/blog/human-resources-functions/>. The functions listed are directly referenced in *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practices: A guide to the Theory and Practice of People Management*.

⁸ The 2019 Human Resources Policy was a revision of the Human Resources Policy that was developed and approved in 2004. This policy provided the guiding principles for IFAD's HR management processes and will be examined closely to assess how the HR policy framework has evolved over time.

11. **Decentralization has significantly increased the number of outposted staff and required new HR practices.** In 2017, IFAD made a commitment to strengthen decentralization and launched the Operational Excellence for Results (OpEx) exercise (June 2017 to December 2018) focused on reengineering the country-based model. Staff outposting rose from 18 per cent in 2016 to 46.7 per cent at the end of 2024.⁹ This fundamental change in IFAD's structure required the introduction of new procedures such as the mobility procedure to guide reassignment and changes in delegation of authority. It also resulted in the establishment of four regional offices, multi-country offices and IFAD country offices. The change in structure impacted the distribution and grade levels of international Professional, National Officer and General Service staff positions. It also precipitated the introduction of the IFAD mobility framework. This framework has been reviewed annually since April 2020; the 2024 review was undertaken by external consultants.¹⁰ Given these changes, this CLE will consider the **relevance** and adaptability of the HR policy framework, and practices to support a fundamentally different organization. HR at IFAD will also be considered in the context of industry standards, including other international financial institutions (IFIs) and United Nations agencies, and ICSC standards.
12. **The McKinsey & Company study provided a foundation for workforce capacity and capability planning.** Completed in 2019, this study specifically addressed issues related to staff capacity (number of staff), staff capability (competencies and skills required), and the employee value proposition. IFAD adopted recommendations on the capacity and capability components of the report, and opted not to implement recommendations related to the employee value proposition. A key outcome of the McKinsey report was the development of skills taxonomies used to define, identify and drive skills development for current and future skills needs. The report also identified two key enablers: performance management and technological enablement of the HR function. Previous evaluations have not covered the contribution of performance management and how this supports IFAD in meeting its development objectives. This important issue will be included in the current evaluation.
13. **The People, Process and Technology Plan (PPTP) (2020–2023) aimed to align HR with development goals.** The intention of this plan was to "ensure that IFAD has sufficient human resources with appropriate capabilities, efficient corporate processes and the technological solutions required to expand and deepen its development results".¹¹ Under the PPTP banner, IFAD implemented a job audit initiative from 2021 to 2023 aimed at reviewing and classifying positions across the organization. It commenced with the preparation of job profiles, which were then classified using the ICSC methodology.
14. The PPTP was broken into four workstreams. The people workstream focused on strategic workforce planning, training for upskilling and reskilling, performance management and the employee value proposition. These issues will be included in the current CLE when considering both the efficiency of IFAD's HR policy framework across the employee lifecycle, and how effectively it creates an appropriately resourced, diverse, inclusive and productive work environment.
15. **Dynamic workforce planning (2021) introduced an organization-wide, integrated workforce planning approach that included budget, functional structuring, staff attrition and talent management.**¹² This approach was aimed at ensuring IFAD had the right people available when needed to support the achievement of corporate priorities. The ability to achieve workload and work-life

⁹ Increasing decentralization was identified as a key strategy to bring IFAD closer to the communities it serves. Targets were set as part of the IFAD11 and IFAD12 cycles.

¹⁰ Review of the reassignment exercise at IFAD. 2024. Global People Culture Consulting GmbH.

¹¹ The PPTP was approved in April 2020 and implemented between 2020 and 2023. (EB 2021/132/R.34).

¹² Memo from the IFAD President: Dynamic workforce planning. 12 May 2021.

balance was a consistent concern raised in several CLEs, the [Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network](#) (MOPAN) report and the Global Staff Survey between 2018 and 2025.¹³ The decentralization CLE found that the “resourcing levels identified by the metric system were inadequate for country presence to deliver its mandate and commitments”.¹⁴ The relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the dynamic workforce planning approach has not been reviewed from a workload and work-life balance perspective. This will be included in the current evaluation.

16. **The implementation of a significantly more decentralized organizational structure required a revised delegation of authority.** This topic was covered in the CLE of IFAD’s decentralization and was revisited in the CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12. Given that delegation of authority is a governance function, it is outside the scope of this evaluation.
17. **IFAD has invested in developing systems and rolling out training across the organization to facilitate effective onboarding, induction and staff development, specifically in operational matters.** The Department for Country Operations (formerly Programme Management Department) implemented the Operations Academy, an online training platform, to build this capacity. This was supported by implementation of the learning management system across IFAD that facilitated access to broader training content. Feedback received from the global people culture report on the reassignment exercise, supported by feedback from Global Staff Survey between 2018 and 2025, highlighted gaps in career and skills development approaches adopted within IFAD. This is a key factor in the retention of critical skills. This evaluation will assess issues related to learning, career paths and retention to support a diverse, inclusive and productive work environment.
18. **IFAD implemented a targeted approach to address the high number of vacancies** that were reported to be contributing to workload issues identified in the 2022 Global Staff Survey.¹⁵ Recruitment and selection approaches were adapted several times between 2022 and 2024 to address these challenges. This evaluation will cover the recruitment and selection process, and its role in addressing the high rate of vacancies at IFAD.
19. **IFAD’s vision for a workplace that embeds diversity, equity and inclusion is echoed in the 2021 IFAD Strategy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.** The evaluation will assess the extent to which this strategy has been a coherent part of the overall IFAD HR policy framework – and how effectively it has been implemented.
20. **In 2024, a reorganization of headquarters commenced under the banner of recalibration.** This resulted in the reorganization of headquarters functions to focus on operational delivery. The final amendments were effective from early 2025. The evaluation will include factors related to recruitment, performance management, induction, onboarding and development, workforce planning and staff well-being relevant to the recalibration.

III. Evaluation purpose and scope

21. **The primary purpose of this evaluation is to enhance IFAD’s ability to deliver on its strategy and mandate by providing a credible, independent and evidence-based perspective on IFAD’s management of human resources.** In the absence of an overall HR strategy, this evaluation will assess the

¹³ CLE of IFAD’s decentralization experience; CLE of knowledge management practices in IFAD; CLE of institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12.

¹⁴ CLE of IFAD’s decentralization experience para. 217(a) p. 76.

¹⁵ Corporate Services Department communications: Action plan to reduce IFAD’s vacancy rate.

combination of HR initiatives, processes and practices formulated within the HR policy framework.¹⁶ The objectives of the evaluation will be to:

- **Assess the performance of IFAD’s management of human resources during the review period, as well as the factors that influenced this performance;**
 - **Provide insights into areas where IFAD can enhance its HR policy framework and practices to better support staff and advance the organization’s mission and mandate.** This will also promote accountability and transparency in HR processes, which will contribute to building trust across the organization; and
 - **Provide lessons learned and recommendations for integration into a future HR strategy and policy framework.**
22. This evaluation will cover the period from 2017 to 2025. Although the current IFAD Human Resources Policy was formally introduced in 2019, the starting point of 2017 marks a major shift in IFAD’s decentralization strategy. This was an inflection point that fundamentally reshaped the organization’s structure and operations. IFAD’s accelerated decentralization has had profound implications for the management of human resources, making it essential to examine developments from 2017 to fully understand the evolution and current fit of the HR policy framework. The “whole-of-organization” approach will include an assessment of the IFAD HR policy framework’s applicability and effectiveness at the headquarters, regional and country levels.
23. Key HR functional areas that will be considered in this evaluation are: (i) strategic workforce planning; (ii) recruitment, onboarding and induction; (iii) talent management, including performance management; (iv) mobility, retention, career development and succession planning; and (v) learning and skills development. In addition, cross-cutting components span all HR functions, including staff well-being and a diverse and inclusive work environment. These functions will be considered in the context of how organizational culture at IFAD influences HR management. The evaluation will also look at the HR functional support system, which includes the administration of different HR functions, and employment relations (inputs from the IFAD Staff Association (ISA), its contributions to policy considerations and amendments, and its role in communication to staff and employee participation). Building on elements covered in previous evaluations, this evaluation will examine issues not previously assessed. The following table indicates IFAD’s key HR functions and the extent to which they will be included in this evaluation. For more details on which elements will be considered, see appendix IV.

Table 1
HR functions and their level of inclusion in this evaluation

HR function and description	Included in this evaluation	Excluded from this evaluation
HR planning. This function identifies the organizational need to plan so that the right people and skills are available when required to support achievement of the organization’s strategic objectives.	Strategic alignment of HR to IFAD’s objectives and mandate; workforce forecasting and planning; policy development including inputs from IFAD’s Staff Association.	Organizational design, which was covered extensively in the CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12.
Recruitment and selection (also referred to as talent acquisition). This function starts with the creation of an employer brand in the talent market that attracts potential employees,	Recruitment; onboarding; induction in the context of preparing employees for assignments.	Evaluation of perceptions of IFAD’s employer brand in the market, which would require extensive market research that is beyond this CLE’s scope.

¹⁶ The HR policy framework comprises all legal sources of HR regulations, including the Human Resources Policy, the Staff Rules, the HR Implementing Procedures, and other relevant internal instruments such as HR information circulars and notes.

HR function and description	Included in this evaluation	Excluded from this evaluation
then moves to the recruitment of employees and the selection and appointment of ideal candidates for roles.		
Performance management. This function: (i) facilitates productive and engaged employees who have clear goals and opportunities to give and receive feedback; and (ii) informs skills development.	Performance management and management of non-performance, and their application within IFAD.	Employee separations related to performance management since this involves confidential information.
Learning and development. This function focuses on supporting employees to build the skills they need for their roles and for the organization's future requirements.	Alignment of learning and development with organizational goals. The extent to which learning and development are: integrated into the organizational culture; needs-based; and supported by fit-for-purpose systems to support skills transfer and retention.	Programme-by-programme reviews of individual training, including detailed content reviews, quality assurance and effectiveness reviews. The evaluation will also exclude cost efficiency assessment of learning and development.
Career planning (also known as talent management). This function focuses on aligning employee career goals with the organization's future needs. It is often a key retention strategy.	Alignment of staff career goals with future organizational needs, considering mobility, reassignment, career pathways and conversations, equity of access, enabling systems and tools, and outcomes supporting internal mobility and retention.	Reviews of individual cases
Function evaluation/job evaluation. This function compares different roles within an organization and evaluates their contributions to inform remuneration parity.		Job evaluation is not included in this evaluation since IFAD is a United Nations agency and jobs are evaluated using the standard United Nations approach.
Rewards. This area includes compensation and benefits, which are important for attracting and retaining skills and employees. Rewards also include recognition, growth opportunities, work-life balance and organizational purpose and culture.	Mobility; work-life balance. A review of non-financial rewards and recognition will be included.	Financial compensation and benefits are not included since IFAD is a United Nations agency and its compensation and benefits systems are aligned with the United Nations standards.
Employee (industrial) relations. ¹⁷ This function focuses on maintaining and cultivating relationships with employee representative organizations to address potential conflicts proactively and support staff engagement. This also includes potential legal action linked to contractual and performance-related breaches.	Contributions of IFAD's Staff Association to different HR policies and practices; and the Staff Association's role in supporting communication and change management.	Litigation and legal matters since they are confidential and guided by statutory provisions.
Employee participation and communication. This function is essential to keeping staff informed and advocating for staff.	Staff well-being: the Staff Association's role in communication and change management support; diversity; inclusion; employee relations including inputs from the Staff Association.	Ethics and conduct, which fall outside IFAD's HR policy framework, with the exception of how HR interfaces with ethics.

¹⁷ The term "industrial relations" generally relates to engagement with organized labour. In IFAD, the term "employee relations" more accurately captures the relationship between IFAD Management and the staff representative body. IFAD's Staff Association is also a member of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA).

HR function and description	Included in this evaluation	Excluded from this evaluation
	Organizational approach and efficacy in building trust, dialogue and staff support during changes (including reviewing staff engagement, internal communications and their contribution to improved morale, performance and retention).	
Personal well-being (also referred to as staff well-being). This area relates to supporting employees with mental, physical and financial well-being to enable them to perform optimally.	IFAD staff well-being initiatives and staff feedback on well-being. This includes IFAD's approach to staff well-being, considering duty of care, psychosocial support, workload and work design, culture and inclusion, systems and tools, and leadership capability to support well-being in teams.	Reviews of individual staff cases, security/incident investigations, country or office-level compliance audits.
Health and safety. This area focuses on creating a safe and healthy working environment for staff.		This falls within IFAD's safety and security functions, and is therefore outside the scope of the CLE.
Administration. This function relates to systems and procedures for implementing, tracking and recording changes related to staff during their tenure with an organization.	HR functional support and the systems that facilitate implementation of HR practices across HR functions. This includes HR analytics, technology and automation for supporting the management of human resources at IFAD.	Technical specifications of HR systems.

Source: IFAD evaluation team.

IV. Evaluation approach, questions and methodology

A. Evaluation approach

24. **The evaluation is theory-based.** Theory-based evaluations use a logical chain of activities, outputs and outcomes to examine how an intervention has contributed to its expected results. Since no theory of change was available for IFAD's management of human resources, IOE has used internal documents and literature to develop a theory of change and evaluation framework. The reconstructed theory of change can be found in appendix V.

B. Evaluation questions

25. The evaluation is anchored in four of the six internationally recognized evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.¹⁸
26. The overarching question that the evaluation is designed to answer is: to what extent does IFAD's management of human resources enable IFAD to deliver on its mandate, strategy and objectives while ensuring workforce well-being, diversity and inclusivity?
- **Relevance.** To what extent has IFAD's management of human resources been fit for purpose and relevant to the current and future needs of the organization?
 - **Coherence.** To what extent does IFAD's HR policy framework demonstrate coherence: across its different components; with organizational priorities; and

¹⁸ The evaluation will not assess impact and sustainability since there are conceptual and methodological challenges in isolating the contributions of HR policy framework to impacts and sustainability.

with United Nations standards and good practices from comparable organizations?

- **Effectiveness.** How effectively has the HR policy framework been implemented to create an appropriately resourced (skills and capacity), diverse, inclusive and productive workforce and work environment to support IFAD in achieving its strategy, mandate and mission?
- **Efficiency.** How efficiently are HR processes implemented through the employee lifecycle?

27. Sub-questions for each of the above criteria are included in the evaluation framework in appendix VI. They will be further refined during the inception phase.

C. Methodology

28. The evaluation will follow the Revised IFAD Evaluation Policy (2021) and Evaluation Manual. The evaluation methodology will draw on multiple information sources and will use qualitative and quantitative methods and analytical techniques, providing the basis for triangulation and validation of evidence. The evaluation framework, included in appendix VI, includes approaches and methods for assessment, along with sources of data for each of the evaluation questions.

29. The data-collection approach adopted for this evaluation will be based on seven key evidence building blocks. The evidence blocks include: a desk review; self-assessment by Management; key informant interviews; an electronic survey; thematic deep dives; country case studies; and comparative analysis. Triangulation using evidence from multiple sources will ensure that findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by evidence.

Figure 1
CLE evidence blocks



Source: IFAD evaluation team.

- **Desk review.** A comprehensive document review will include an analysis of HR-related documentation and data sources to assess operational effectiveness and strategic alignment with IFAD's development goals. This will include:
 - (i) Review of HR plans, policies and procedure documents, as well as findings from other CLEs and country strategy and programme evaluations.
 - (ii) Exploration of documentation related to practices across the United Nations and IFIs, along with international standards and guidelines.
 - (iii) Analysis of data from HR monitoring and reporting systems, including vacancy rates, recruitment metrics, training and development, turnover rates, performance management-related metrics, reassignment metrics, staffing profile information and surveys.
 - (iv) Review of budget and financial data to estimate the adequacy of resources allocated to HR.
 - (v) Analysis of project performance data from independent evaluations in the IOE Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD (ARIE) database combined with a qualitative exploration of how HR contributes to development outcomes. This will include an examination of how HR functions enable skills and talent to serve IFAD's strategic goals, and the links between HR indicators and IFAD's results framework.
- **Self-assessment.** Management will conduct a self-assessment of its perspectives on HR-related issues, including: progress made against plans and targets; achievements; and challenges. These inputs will help to refine the evaluation design.
- **Key informant interviews.** Interviews with PCD staff, managers, IFAD Staff Association representatives and other employees will provide insights into the implementation of the IFAD's HR policy framework. Interviews will be held with staff and managers at headquarters, regional offices, multi-country offices and IFAD country offices. This will include offices with in-house HR

resources and where HR resources are available remotely. Interviews will be held across all five IFAD regions.

- **Electronic survey.** An e-survey will be administered at various levels within IFAD to elicit feedback on the HR policy framework and its implementation. This survey will also gather data on issues including staff well-being and IFAD's approach to diversity and inclusion. Survey respondents will include all categories of IFAD employees in order to capture varying experiences across the organization.
 - **Country case studies.** Case studies will enable a clear differentiation of the experiences of decentralized employees and headquarters-based employees. Selection criteria will include: (i) geographic balance; (ii) country context (middle-income countries, low-income countries, fragile and conflict-affected countries); (iii) representation of each type of office (e.g. regional offices, IFAD country offices, multi-country offices); (iv) staffing arrangements; and (v) operational considerations. The evaluation plans to conduct case studies from all IFAD regions. Depending on budget availability, a couple of these country case studies may involve missions, while the rest will be desk-based.
 - **Benchmarking/comparative analysis.** The comparative analysis will focus on good practices in HR management across selected United Nations agencies and IFIs. Agencies will be chosen based on the availability of evidence (i.e. organizations that have undertaken HR management evaluations/reviews). Recognizing that data comparability is a common challenge in benchmarking, the report will specify the differences in business models, mandates and organization attributes. This approach will help to disseminate emerging good practices and assess IFAD's alignment with them.
 - **Thematic deep dives.** The evaluation will conduct deep dives into HR-related topics in order to generate evidence in response to evaluation questions. These deep dives will utilize data from the case studies, e-survey, stakeholder interviews and document reviews, producing a brief report that will be summarized in an annex to the final evaluation report.
30. **Data analysis approach.** The evaluation will adopt a mixed-methods approach to data analysis, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques. Triangulation will be a core principle of the analysis process. Artificial intelligence (AI) – a supervised large language model – will be used to synthesize information from available documents and interview notes. The evaluation team will ensure: ethical and responsible use of AI; transparency; validation of results; and compliance with internal regulations.
31. **Ethical guidelines.** The evaluation will be conducted in full compliance with IFAD's Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Manual, and will adhere to international norms and standards, including the United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and IFAD's Data Governance Policy. The evaluation team will uphold the core principles of independence, impartiality, credibility, confidentiality and respect for human rights throughout the evaluation process. Considerable care will be given to ethics, data privacy and handling of sensitive information. All personal data will be anonymized to uphold the "do no harm" principle. The evaluation will ensure that diverse views are represented through representative sampling and that participation is voluntary and based on informed consent. Ethical clearance and appropriate permissions will be sought whenever required.
32. **Possible limitations.** Limitations may include the unavailability of data, terms of reference, criteria and frameworks for key HR processes (e.g. dynamic workforce planning criteria, succession plans, career path approaches). The absence of an overarching HR plan or strategy may limit the ability to evaluate overall HR objectives. The CLE will use the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016–2025 and other

relevant strategies such as the IFAD Strategy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to provide strategic focus and direction. The CLE will also engage key stakeholders early in the evaluation process to fill data gaps. Document review will be combined with interviews, the e-survey and focus group discussions to triangulate findings, strengthening the evidence base even when formal documentation is limited.

V. Evaluation process and timeline

33. **Appendix VIII presents the evaluation team, key stakeholders, phases and timeline.** The Evaluation Committee will consider the approach paper in March 2026 at its 132nd session. The draft evaluation report will be shared with Management for feedback by October 2026. The final report will be presented at the 136th session of the Evaluation Committee in March 2027 and the 150th session of the Executive Board in April 2027.

Definition of key terms

HR terms	Definition
Diversity	Recognizing and valuing a broad range of identities, experiences, beliefs and other diversity dimensions, whether visible or invisible, inherent or acquired. These include gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, language, sexual orientation, abilities and disabilities, culture, religion, profession, education, marital status, workplace experience, role, staff position (national/international) and contract modality. ^a
Employee lifecycle	The period of time of employee-employer interaction, which begins from the moment of attraction of the required employee on the labour market and lasts until their employment termination. ^b
HR Management	It is the “strategic and coherent approach to management of an organisation’s most valued assets, the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives”. ^c In this evaluation, the management of human resources refers to the organization-wide people practices owned by line managers, and enabled by the division responsible for HR.
HR Policy Framework	HR policies set out the approaches that an organisation adopts to deal with the key aspects of people management. They provide generalised guidance on how HR issues should be dealt with. ^d HR framework links the practices of HRM through the employee lifecycle with the employee outcomes and organisational culture contributing to organisational outcomes. ^e In this evaluation, the HR policy framework refers to all legal sources of HR regulations, including HR policy, Staff Rules, HR Implementing Procedures, and other relevant internal instruments such as HR Information Circulars and Notes.
Inclusion	The way people show that they value and respect one another’s unique contributions. An inclusive environment is one where everyone can be themselves and have an equal chance to contribute, where differences are seen as valuable and used for the good of the organization. ^f
Induction	The process through which newly appointed staff are formally introduced, oriented and get familiar with the job, performance expectations, the company, the people and the organization’s culture and values of their new employer. ^g
Mobility	The movement and/or reassignment of employees (vertically and laterally), across duty stations, roles, functions and/or geographic locations as part of talent management, organisational capability building and career development opportunities within the same organization. ^h
Performance management	The systematic way in which the organisation clarifies expectations, sets measurable goals aligned with the strategic objectives, monitors and supports performance, provides regular feedback, recognises good performance, addresses under-performance and allows for personal development. ⁱ
Recruitment	The process of attracting, selecting, and hiring individuals with the required competencies, values and potential into positions. ^j
Retention	The capacity to retain staff over a specific period measured by reviewing the number of staff remaining at the end of the period expressed as a percentage of staff at the start of the period. ^k
Succession planning	The process of identifying and developing key (internal) talent to ensure the continuity of leadership and business-critical positions in the future. ^l
Talent management	All HR processes and strategies to attract, develop, motivate and retain high-performing employees. ^m
Training	The systematic process of developing staff knowledge, technical skills and behavioural competencies through formal courses, e-learning modules, on-the-job learning and coaching to enhance individual and organisational performance. ⁿ
Work-life balance	The commitment to creating and maintaining an enabling environment in which staff can effectively manage their professional responsibilities alongside personal, family and social commitments. ^o

^a IFAD strategy on diversity, equity and inclusion, page 2.

^b Gladka, O., Fedorova, V., & Dohadailo, Y. (2022). *Development of conceptual bases of the employee life cycle within an organization. Business: Theory and Practice*, 23(1), 39-52.

^c Anbuoli, P, Thenpandian, N and Sakthivel, M (August 2016). HR Challenges and Opportunities – 2020, International Education and Research Journal, Voume 2, Issue 8. <https://ierj.in/journal/index.php/ierj/article/view/401/402>.

^d Armstrong, M. (2014). *Armstrong’s Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice* (13th ed.). Kogan p2.

^e Nirbhik Chatterjee & Muthukarupan Swaminathan & Yuangsawad Ratanaporn, 2021. "[A Conceptual Framework for Human Resource Management: An Application to the Organizational Culture.](#)" *Journal of Management World*, Academia Publishing Group, vol. 2021(2), pages 181-190.

^f IFAD strategy on diversity, equity and inclusion, page 2.

^g Hendricks, K., & Louw-Potgieter, J. (2012). A theory evaluation of an induction programme. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 10(3), Article #421. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v10i3.421>.

^h EB2021/132/R.4 p9.

ⁱ Interpretation from Staff Rules Chapter 5 Performance Management.

^j Interpretation from Staff Rule Chapter 2 Staff Recruitment, Selection and Mobility.

^k As captured in IFAD Corporate Risk Dashboard EB 2019/128/R.9 Appendix p1.

^l Rothwell, W. J. (2010) *Effective succession planning: Ensuring leadership continuity and building talent from within*, 4th edn. New York: AMACOM.

^m Interpretation from IFAD HR Policy 2019.

ⁿ Interpretation from IFAD HR Policy 2019 and IFAD Work With Us Employment FAQs webpage https://www.ifad.org/en/work-with-us/employment-faqs?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

^o Interpretation from IFAD 2025 Global Staff Survey questions.

HR related findings and recommendations from previous evaluations

HR related themes	Key findings
Strategic workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience exposed a gap in strategic workforce planning, evidenced by a high vacancy rate that couldn't keep up with the desired pace of out posting staff to the field. • There was no allocation of adequate human resources for decentralization – HR had to rely on consultants to help with the recruitment demand generated by decentralization. • CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12 reported disjointedness between workforce planning, career progression and re-assignment that does not match staff ambitions with organisational needs. • Unclear job roles for new Country Directors (CDs), many CDs were either new to the job or new to IFAD and in some cases, both.
Recruitment, Onboarding and induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancy rates were higher than industry acceptable and hence the CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience had a recommendation for IFAD to improve the vacancy rate. • CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience reported staff being outposted without appropriate skills for their new roles and lack of mentorship in the process. Induction for outposted staff was reported as being ad hoc, inadequate, or lacking altogether. • As it took long to fill up positions, affected staff reported having to do the work for portfolios not filled. • Key skill gaps, such as written and verbal communication, strategic mindset, analytical skills, problem- solving, leadership abilities were missing in newly appointed staff and induction did not cover these critical aspects.
Performance management	This was not discussed in any previous evaluations.
Mobility and reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 2016 and 2022 there was a significant increase in the proportion of P-4-level CDs. There was a slight reduction in the number of P-5-level CDs appointed which was at 27 in 2016 and reduced to 22 in 2022. The number of P-4-level CDs appointed more than doubled from 14 in 2016 to 29 in 2022. • The lack of clarity around where staff were going as well as the short lead times for moving made the process personally disruptive for staff and their families. • Disruptive scheduling of re-assignment without consideration to family needs/school calendars. • One-way communication from management on when and where staff to move to. • Even after decentralisation the organisation still retained its HQ centric culture. • CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience reported loss of experienced CDs during the decentralization 2.0 period.
Talent management, career development, retention and succession planning	Limited career path and succession planning opportunities constrained IFAD's ability to retain or attract skilled staff who were not willing to decentralise.
Staff well-being, diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread work-life imbalance and excessive workloads were strongly influenced by high vacancy levels, delays in appointing staff and long working hours for staff in different time zones. These adversely affected staff empowerment and morale. • Time zone difference between headquarters and the ICOs, coupled with the requirements to participate in meetings and activities resulted in staff working either very early, very late or at weekends. • The gender profile of staff in finance operations, programme management and strategy and knowledge management shifted slightly in favour of women between 2016 and 2022.
HR communication relating to Decentralization	There was no effective two-way communication strategy. Senior and mid-level managers found that while their feedback influenced some decisions, core issues were not adequately addressed. When staff voices were solicited in forums such as townhalls, staff saw it as tokenism as no real changes emerged from such fora.

Evaluation sources	Recommendations related to HR
<p>CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience</p>	<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Address the limitations of human resource management to achieve better development outcomes through greater consideration of the impact on IFAD operations:</i> • Identify critical factors to improve effective functioning of decentralized office including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reducing vacancy rate b. Appoint appropriately skilled staff c. Augment induction and skills development processes d. Integrate these factors into routine HR practices • CDs need clarity and skills to fulfil roles and interlocutors of the President, lead non-lending activities and carry out additional responsibilities that result from increased DoA.
<p>CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience</p>	<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p><i>HR management, policies and practices to focus on improved well-being of staff specifically:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the reassignment approach and frequency • Consider the impact of relocation on staff and families • Implement effective communication strategies to facilitate buy-in from staff on decentralisation and reassignment processes • Communication needs to be two way • Quality and quantity of communication needs to be increased • Address work-life imbalance influenced by high vacancies and headquarters centric culture • Review assumptions of DWP tools • Expedite filling of vacancies created through reassignment and SDA • Institutionalise an organisational culture that recognises the decentralised nature of IFAD

Timeline of IFAD HR reforms 2017 to 2025

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
OpEx Exercise		Decentralization 2.0						
		HR Policy (2019)						
		McKinsey's Study						
			PPTP					
Job Audit								
			OPAC					
			Reassignment	Reassignment			Rotational mobility	
			Revised DoA	DoA amended				
Vacancy action plan								
				Strategy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (2021)				
							Recalibration	
	Global Staff Survey (GSS)	Staff engagement and workplace culture action plan survey		Staff engagement and workplace culture action plan survey	GSS		Global Staff Pulse Survey	GSS

Source: Evaluation team.

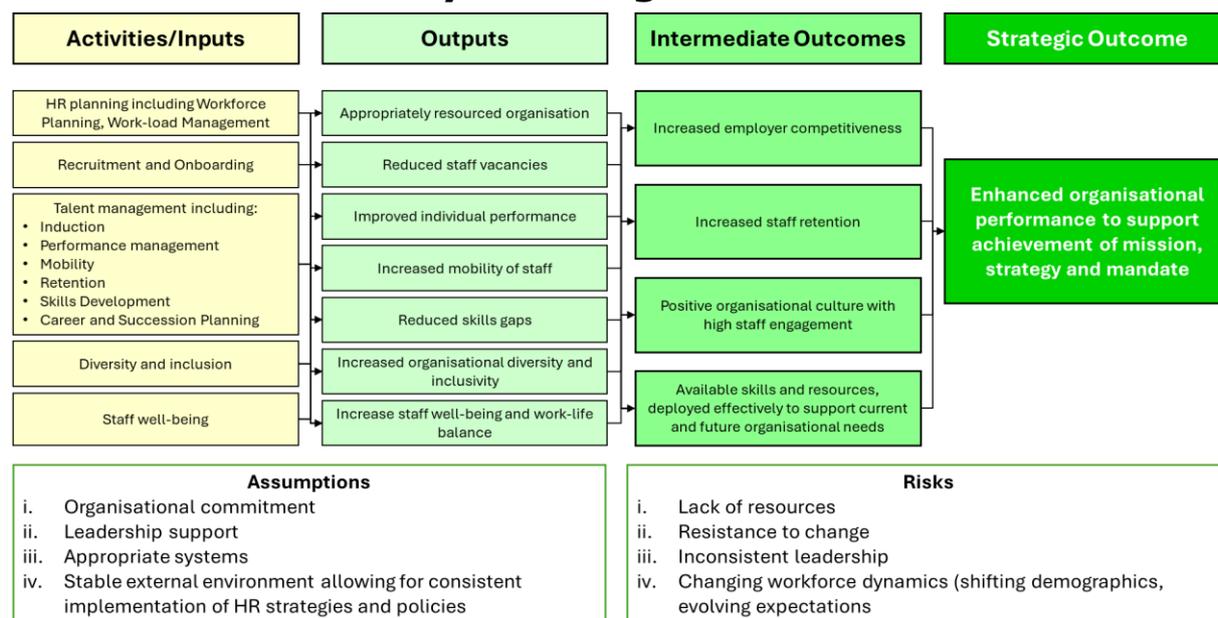
Scope of the evaluation by core HR functions

This table provides further information on the elements to be assessed in this evaluation for each of the HR core functions included (strategic workforce planning, recruitment, onboarding and induction, performance management, mobility and retention, talent management, career development and succession planning, and staff well-being, diversity and inclusion). As mentioned in the main document, HR functions such as job evaluation, remuneration, operational health and safety will not be covered.

HR functions covered in this CLE	Elements already assessed in previous evaluations/studies and will be built upon in this CLE	New elements to be assessed in this CLE
Strategic workforce planning	<p>Planning includes organisational structure and design, and these two aspects were covered in both the CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience and in the CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12.</p> <p>Specifically, regarding the Dynamic Workforce Planning initiative, the application of metrics to define the structures in the ICOs was explored in CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience. The CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12 identified the staffing levels in ICOs as a constraint in meeting replenishment commitments, particularly in light of the high vacancy rates. An internal audit of the efficiency of workforce planning in the context of vacancy management was completed in 2024</p>	<p>Planning will be assessed as part of the review of the overall alignment between the organisational strategy and HR policy framework. Planning will also be considered in the context of staffing levels and the dynamic workforce planning approach and implementation.</p> <p>Regarding the Dynamic Workforce Planning initiative, the criteria, principles and metrics that inform the DWP will be considered in the light of resourcing needs and the specific context and nature of the different ICOs. The approach to workload analysis and how this informs the metrics will also be analysed.</p>
Recruitment, onboarding and induction	<p>Vacancy Rate: The CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12 considered the vacancy rate over time and analysed the time to fill positions from the time the vacancy was advertised until the appointed incumbent started in the position.</p> <p>Induction: The induction of staff into positions was raised as a recommendation in the CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience. An analysis of training done for the CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12 identified specific investment in induction training. This was included in the broader training analysis.</p>	<p>This evaluation will assess how the recruitment, onboarding and induction function supports IFAD to achieve its strategy and mandate and how it integrates considerations linked to diversity and inclusion. It will assess the overall policy and approach on attraction, selection and appointment, including the different roles that are played, and the different decision makers involved. The policy position regarding internal versus external positions as well as the role of diversity and inclusion in recruitment will be considered. It will also assess the induction approach, its effectiveness and appropriateness for the range of different contexts. The approach to handover when staff move because of reassignment and the policies and procedures followed will also be assessed as part of the induction component.</p>
Performance management		<p>The evaluation will assess the policy related to performance management, management of non-performance and how this supports decision making.</p>
Mobility and reassignment	<p>The CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience identified key challenges with reassignment. Management appointed GPC to conduct an independent review of the reassignment exercise in 2024. The alignment of reassignment with other good practices was included in the GPC review. The CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12 considered reassignment and its impact on staffing levels and the availability of skills to support IFAD to meet its replenishment requirements</p>	<p>This evaluation will assess the reassignment policy amendments over time and how they have responded to the feedback from staff and the ISA and the operational and skills requirements. The integration of recommendations from the GPC review into the reassignment policy will be analysed. The evaluation will also analyse the factors considered in the identification and classification of posts included in the reassignment processes as well as the integration of reassignment as part of a career development process.</p>

<p>Talent management, career development, retention and succession planning</p>	<p>A broad analysis of skills development activity was undertaken in the CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12. This identified areas of training in line with mainstreaming activity and priority skill areas.</p>	<p>This evaluation will assess career planning from both the perspective of staff growth and aspirations and in the context of the mobility policy of IFAD and how this supports career growth that benefits staff and IFAD.</p> <p>This evaluation will look at learning and development specifically related to the development of current and future skills in line with the current and anticipated needs of IFAD. It will analyse how skills development is integrated into career planning, how it identifies and drives development of current and future skills required and how staff development is implemented.</p>
<p>Staff well-being, diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>Aspects of well-being were highlighted by staff in the CLE of IFAD's decentralisation experience.</p> <p>The overall work-life imbalance is constantly monitored through the Global Staff Surveys. The 2025 GSS indicated an improvement in work-life balance. The CLE of the institutional and operational performance under IFAD11 and IFAD12 identified dissonances between the findings of the GSS and feedback received in its Country Case Studies.</p>	<p>Staff wellbeing will be covered in this evaluation. This will be specifically considered in terms of aspects such as work-life balance, onboarding, induction, career development, skills development, mobility and communication. The evaluation will consider the role of dynamic workforce planning, vacancy rates and the policy related to adaptation to being a decentralised organisation in its analysis on work-life balance issues. While wellbeing, diversity and inclusion are inputs into HR processes, they can also be measured as results from well executed HR inputs.</p>

Reconstructed theory of change



Source: Evaluation team.

- The theory of change is predicated on the assumption that an appropriate HR policy framework, when consistently implemented, will enable enhanced organizational performance.** The core premise is that by investing in strategic workforce planning, recruitment, onboarding and induction, performance management, mobility and retention, talent management, career development, succession planning, and policies promoting staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, IFAD can build and sustain a workforce capable of delivering development results.
- The key inputs into the theory of change focus on the primary functions relating to staff resourcing and the employee lifecycle which fall within the ambit of human resources.** These relate to recruitment, onboarding and induction, performance management, mobility and retention. The employee lifecycle value chain is augmented by inputs that are more transversal in nature that span the entire employment journey. These relate to strategic workforce planning, talent management, career development, succession planning and staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusion.
- Appropriately delivered, these inputs should ensure IFAD is appropriately resourced with a diverse and inclusive profile of staff and that it has improved staff wellbeing and work-life balance.** These key outputs will include staffing having the required mix and level of skill to perform at the required level. It will also allow staff the opportunity for mobility within the organization to facilitate career development and growth. These components all support positioning IFAD as an employer of choice that will increase its competitiveness in the employment environment. An inclusive and diverse environment that considers staff wellbeing and drives a healthy work life balance will facilitate staff retention. Staff well-being, opportunities for growth through staff mobility and an appropriately resourced organization will also contribute to a positive organizational culture and access to the correct skills to meet the current and future organizational needs. These are the intermediate outcomes which should be viewed as steps towards the strategic outcome of enhanced organizational performance to support the achievement of mission, strategy, and mandate.
- Organizational commitment and a stable external environment are critical enablers.** A stable external environment and support and commitment, at organizational, leadership and systems levels are key in supporting achievement of

the outcomes of increased employer competitiveness, high levels of staff engagement and retention and availability of skills necessary to meet the IFAD mission, mandate and strategy. These factors are assumptions required for the theory of change to hold true.

5. **However, several risks could undermine progress if not managed proactively.** Risks that can undermine the achievement of the outcome include inconsistent leadership, resource scarcity, resistance to change and shifting dynamics in the broader labour market. Unmanaged, these risks can adversely affect IFAD's ability to attract, develop, manage and retain the skills that are required, now and in the future, to enable IFAD to meet its mission, mandate and strategy.

Evaluation framework

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
<p>Overall Evaluation question: To what extent does IFAD’s management of human resources enable IFAD to deliver on its mandate, strategy and objectives while ensuring the workforce’s well-being, diversity and inclusivity?</p>		
<p>EQ1. To what extent has IFAD’s management of human resources been fit for purpose and relevant to the current and future needs of the organization?</p>		
<p>1.1 To what extent does IFAD’s management of human resources align with IFAD’s mandate, strategy and objectives to support delivery of its mission?</p>	<p>Analysis of the HR policy framework and organisational strategy for alignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policies, procedures/guidelines • IFAD strategic frameworks • Interviews • Survey data
<p>1.2 To what extent is IFAD’s management of human resources appropriate and responsive to its current operational environment, including its size, structure and workforce composition?</p>	<p>Analysis of contextual alignment and strategic suitability</p> <p>Review of the changes of the HR policy framework in line with organisational and strategic changes between 2019 and 2025</p> <p>Analysis of HR policy framework to identify prioritisation of inclusion and diversity.</p> <p>Review of amended staffing matrices and integration of amendments</p> <p>Analysis of DWP decisions and overall adjustments and adaptability in line with changing operational requirements and organisational changes such as decentralisation and reassignment</p> <p>Analysis of DWP approaches with good practices from comparable organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policies, procedures/guidelines • IFAD strategic frameworks • IFAD performance reports • Interviews • Survey data
<p>1.3 How does IFAD’s management of human resources anticipate, and adapt to evolving workforce needs, ensuring the right skills and staff capacities in a changing global context?</p>	<p>Analysis of the strategic workforce planning and the extent to which it anticipates resourcing and skills requirements necessary to enable IFAD to meet its current and future staffing needs</p> <p>Review of amended staffing matrices and integration of amendments</p> <p>Analysis of DWP decisions and overall adjustments and adaptability in line with changing operational requirements and organisational changes such as decentralisation and reassignment</p> <p>Review of talent management policies, tracking amendment over time in line with changed approaches, skills requirements and different learning approaches.</p> <p>Analysis of the succession planning and career development approaches and policy framework and how they enable planning to mitigate key skills loss</p> <p>Analysis of career pathing and succession planning initiatives in line with anticipated skills requirements for IFAD in line with the strategy and mandate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWP documentation and audit • McKinsey’s Report • IFAD strategy • HR policies, procedures and guidelines • Succession plans • Career path policies/methods/reports • Interviews • Survey data • Engagement with the members of the DWP Committee

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
1.4 In what ways has the HR policy framework demonstrated flexibility or rigidity in adapting to structural and strategic shifts within IFAD?	<p>Review of the changes in the HR policy framework between 2019 and 2025 in response to the structural and strategic changes in IFAD</p> <p>Analysis of DWP decisions and overall adjustments and adaptability in line with changing operational requirements and organisational changes such as decentralisation and reassignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy changes • Organisational structure changes • Key informant Interviews
1.5 How did HR management in IFAD respond to shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and what does this reveal about its adaptability in times of crisis?	<p>Review the impact that the COVID-19 had on the HR policy framework and its response to the pandemic driven changes.</p> <p>Analysis of induction and onboarding over time, including how this was addressed prior to, during and post COVID.</p> <p>Analysis of skills development undertaken during COVID, including different modes and approaches implemented, skills development areas and alignment with taxonomies and skills requirements for IFAD</p> <p>Review of staff wellbeing policy initiatives initiated during COVID 19 and their amendments post COVID 19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy changes • President's bulletins • Key informant Interviews • Survey
1.6 What are the key strengths and limitations of HR management in IFAD from a design perspective and how have these evolved over time in response to internal and external pressures?	<p>Explore areas of strength and weaknesses in the design of the HR policy framework and how they have been addressed in due course (or considerations being made for future policy)</p> <p>Review of HR policies in line with comparator organisations and relevant UN standards and good practices.</p> <p>Review feedback from informant interviews, GSS, pulse and other surveys and the policy responses to feedback provided</p> <p>Review feedback from the ISA and consequent policy amendments and positions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informant interviews • Literature review of HR related reviews, surveys and previous evaluations • HR policy framework
1.7 To what extent does IFAD policy framework integrate principles of diversity and inclusion, as well as staff wellbeing ?	<p>Review the Strategy on Diversity and Inclusion and its incorporation into the broader IFAD HR policy framework</p> <p>Analysis of HR policy framework to identify prioritisation of inclusion and diversity.</p> <p>Analysis of GSS concerns related to diversity, inclusions and staff wellbeing over time through review of GSS reports and pulse surveys from 2018 to 2025 and the relevant policy responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion • UN frameworks on diversity, equity and inclusion • Interviews • HR policy framework
<p>EQ2: To what extent does IFAD's HR policy framework demonstrate coherence across its different components, with organizational priorities and with relevant UN standards and good practices from comparable organizations?</p>		

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
2.1 To what extent are the various components of the HR policy framework (i.e. recruitment, performance management, learning, mobility) logically integrated and mutually reinforcing ?	Review the coherence among different components of the HR policy framework Review of the linkages between recruitment, onboarding, induction, learning, mobility, performance management and career pathing and succession planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Surveys • Interviews
2.2 To what extent is the IFAD HR policy framework coherent with other internal policy frameworks and organizational priorities such as gender equality, social inclusion, decentralization, and engagement in fragile contexts? Does the HR framework reinforce or conflict with these thematic priorities?	Review the coherence between the HR policy framework and the broader organizational policies frameworks related to key themes and focal points such as gender, social inclusion, decentralization, fragility etc. Analysis of IFAD HR policies supporting staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusion and the extent to which the support focuses on gender equality, social inclusion, decentralization and fragility. Analysis of onboarding, induction and skills development with a specific focus on gender quality, social inclusion, skills required because of decentralization and fragility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan • Mainstreaming themes and development priorities • HR policy framework • Surveys • Interviews
2.3 To what extent is the IFAD HR policy framework aligned with UN system's HR-related norms and standards ? To what extent does it reflect good practices from comparable international organizations, including international financial institutions?	Review relevant UN norms and standards including the ICSC and ILO and compare the IFAD HR policy framework with these standards Review the findings from comparative organization's HR evaluations in the context of IFAD's HR policy framework Review the alignment between IFAD HR policy framework and different UN norms and standards (e.g. gender, diversity etc.) Review consistency with other UN Agency actions in terms of recruitment, indication, training, performance management, diversity, inclusion and staff well-being Analysis of IFAD HR policy framework's alignment on staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusion with relevant UN standards and good practices from comparable organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICSC standards • ILO standards • Evaluations from comparator organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the African Development Bank • Evaluations of the HR components in IFIs and UN organizations • System-wide UN guidance • HR policies and procedures of selected peer organizations
EQ3. How effectively has the HR policy framework been implemented to create an appropriately resourced (skills and capacity), diverse, inclusive and productive work force and work environment to support IFAD in achieving its strategy, mandate and mission?		
3.1 How effective is IFAD in attracting and retaining the skills and talent needed to meet current and future organizational demands?	Review how effectively IFAD attracts, selects and appoints staff with the skills and values to support meeting its mission, objectives and mandate Review of amended talent acquisition approach in line with organisational structure changes made during recalibration Review of recruitment SOPs Analysis of recruitment activity and data linked to diversity, inclusion and appointments in line with different skills taxonomies and categories of staff (P, G, D etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD recruitment and appointment data • IFAD staff data • IFAD turnover data • HR policy framework • Interviews • Surveys • Recruitment SOPs

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
	<p>Analysis of training data in line with skills taxonomies and identified skills for current and future requirements in line with IFAD strategy and objectives</p> <p>Review how effectively HR indicators are tracked to inform areas of focus and improvement through analysing information from HR dashboard</p> <p>Review how effectively IFAD retains staff, specifically in key skill areas identified as necessary for IFAD now and in the future</p> <p>Analysis of staff retention data, including retention considering diversity and inclusion aspects and specific skills requirements</p>	
<p>3.2 How effectively does IFAD align individual performance with organisational goals to support the delivery of its strategy and commitments?</p>	<p>Review the approach to individual performance management in the context of organisational commitments, strategy and mission.</p> <p>Review performance management processes, feedback on performance management, data on management of non or under performance and the integration of performance information into HR decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Performance management SOPs • Interviews • Surveys • HR data on performance and performance improvement management
<p>3.3 To what extent are staff provided with opportunities for professional development and continuous learning that support both individual career aspirations and IFAD's evolving skill needs?</p>	<p>Review the training, career development and succession planning approaches in line with the current and future skills requirements of IFAD and the needs and aspirations of staff.</p> <p>Review of talent management policies, tracking amendment over time in line with changed approaches, skills requirements and different learning approaches. .</p> <p>Review of succession planning for IFAD including a review of the policy and its implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Strategic workforce plans and future skills requirements • Training data • Career development plans • Succession plans • Interviews • Surveys
<p>3.4 How effectively does IFAD manage internal mobility, including reassignment and career progression across divisions and duty stations to facilitate development effectiveness of IFAD?</p>	<p>Review the mobility approaches, reassignment exercises and the alignment with IFADs resourcing requirements</p> <p>Analysis of the available information from the previous CLE of IFAD's decentralization experience, ISA reports to the Executive Board, Decentralization Effectiveness Surveys and Global Staff Survey relating to reassignment</p> <p>Analysis of the follow up to the recommendations of the GPC Review of the Reassignment Exercise at IFAD</p> <p>Analysis of mobility data in terms of diversity, inclusion, promotions, functional reassignment, classification of posts subject to reassignment and other policy provisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • External reviews • Comparator organisation approaches • Reassignment data • Interviews • Surveys

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
3.5 How well does IFAD's management of human resources support and enable work-life balance and overall staff wellbeing?	<p>Review how effectively IFAD creates an employment environment that is supportive of work-life balance and overall staff wellbeing. This will include considering wellbeing initiatives and structures that are in place and responsiveness to feedback related to staff wellbeing and engagement</p> <p>Analysis of DWP decisions and overall adjustments and adaptability in line with changing operational requirements and organisational changes such as decentralisation and reassignment</p> <p>Analysis of DWP approaches with good practices from comparable organisations</p> <p>Analysis of GSS concerns over time through review of GSS reports and pulse surveys from 2018 to 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSS reports • ISA input • IFAD staff wellness initiatives, policies and procedures • Interviews • Surveys
3.6 How effectively has IFAD's HR policy framework contributed to building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce across all levels of the organization ?	<p>Review the extent to which diversity and inclusion is integrated into the IFAD HR policy framework and represented in the employment profile and environment of IFAD.</p> <p>Analysis of staff data with specific gender, international representivity (from member countries) and inclusion (in terms of disability) lenses</p> <p>Review the staff data on diversity and inclusion, including survey feedback.</p> <p>Analysis of recruitment activity and data linked to diversity, inclusion and appointments in line with different skills taxonomies and categories of staff (P, G, D etc)</p> <p>Analysis of mobility data in terms of diversity, inclusion, promotions, functional reassignment etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff profile data • HR policy framework • IFAD strategy and commitments • Interviews • Surveys • Staff data • Strategy on Diversity and Inclusion
3.7 How effectively has IFAD recognized and rewarded staff using non-monetary means?	<p>Analysis of non-monetary recognition and reward mechanisms</p> <p>Review of feedback provided on recognition and reward mechanisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Staff Interviews • Staff Survey • Global Staff Survey reports
3.8 To what extent has the HR policy framework and the adjustments along the way been effectively communicated to staff ? To what extent has staff feedback influenced its evolution?	<p>Review how communication relating to HR has been carried out to staff (timing, content, provision for feedback)</p> <p>Review data to analyze in what ways feedback from staff (e.g. staff surveys and townhalls/ISA etc.) has been used to inform policy changes or decision making</p> <p>Analyse HR policy communications specifically how input was received in the development and review of the policy and how the approved policy was shared and implemented with staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication in the form of blogs, emails, memos etc. • Feedback from the ISA • Minutes and recordings from staff communication sessions • Interviews • Surveys

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
3.9 How effectively has IFAD's management of human resources supported organizational changes?	Analysis how HR policies and practices have evolved in response to organizational changes over the period 2017-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD strategy documents • HR policy framework • Interviews • Surveys
3.10 How effectively are human resource related disputes addressed and resolved in IFAD?	<p>Analysis of dispute resolution procedures</p> <p>Analysis of data on disputes referred and resolved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Interviews • Surveys
3.11 How well has the HR policy been able to stand up to legal challenges ?	<p>Analysis of data on legal challenges and their outcomes</p> <p>Analysis of HR policy, procedure and practice changes linked to legal challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Data on legal challenges and their outcomes • Interviews
3.12 To what extent has IFAD demonstrated innovation and proactivity in its approach to talent and organizational development, including risk-taking initiatives such as tapping new talent pools or entering unfamiliar markets?	Analysis of the extent and nature of innovative HR initiatives launched (e.g new recruitment strategies, pilot programmes, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Key informant interviews • Surveys
3.13 How effectively does IFAD leverage technology, data, and innovative practices to manage talent, improve HR processes, and anticipate organizational change?	<p>Review of HR technologies and platforms in use</p> <p>Analysis of the frequency and quality of HR dashboards or reporting tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System audit • Interviews • Surveys
3.14 What evidence demonstrates how effective management of human resources contributes to IFAD's strategic deliverables and mission achievement?	<p>Analysis of how HR practices support programme delivery, staff productivity and organizational effectiveness</p> <p>Identification of measurable contributions of HR management to IFAD's strategic deliverables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review corporate performance reports for HR-related metrics • Interviews • Surveys
EQ4. How efficiently are HR processes implemented through the employee lifecycle?		
4.1 To what extent has HR Management been adequately resourced to enable achievement of results , particularly during periods of organisational changes?	<p>Review resourcing allocated to the implementation of the HR policy framework against breadth and depth of work</p> <p>Analyse budget allocation to HR initiatives and communication particularly linked to organisational changes such as decentralisation and recalibration and during periods of significant environmental change such as during COVID 19.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD approved annual budget that includes HR budget • Human resourcing gaps analysis

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
	<p>Analyse alternative delivery approaches (virtual, technology enabled, insourcing and outsourcing etc.) adopted to resource and deliver HR policies during internal and external changes.</p>	
<p>4.2 How timely and efficient are HR processes for attracting, assessing and appointing the right talent that aligns with IFAD's mission, values and strategic needs?</p>	<p>Review the recruitment, selection and appointment policies and process in the context of the vacancy pool, skills requirements and staffing requirements. This will include reviewing recruiting and its contribution to diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Consider lead times to appoint resources and alternative resourcing strategies implemented to provide the right talent to facilitate delivery.</p> <p>Updating with information from HR dashboard including definition used to determine vacancy rate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment data • HR policy framework • Staff profile data • HR dashboard information • HR reports • Interviews • Survey data
<p>4.3 How efficiently are new staff onboarded and inducted into their new roles, the IFAD operational environment and organisational culture?</p>	<p>Review the onboarding and induction process and their appropriateness to achieving staff performance optimally. This will include reviewing the induction training, probation period management, leadership and contextual support provided</p> <p>Review of induction and onboarding programmes, including those linked to transfers due to reassignment, in terms of specific country/role context, IFAD specific training and generic skills training</p> <p>Analysis of induction and onboarding over time, including how this was addressed prior to, during and post COVID.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction plans • Onboarding plans • Reassignment data • HR policy framework • Probation data • Interviews • Surveys
<p>4.4 How efficiently is individual staff performance managed, including the handling of underperformance and the use of performance data to inform HR decisions?</p>	<p>Review the performance management processes and its implementation as well as the influence on performance since its implementation. This will include understanding the performance contracting, monitoring and reviewing processes</p> <p>Review feedback on performance management, data on management of non or under performance and the integration of performance information into HR decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy framework • Performance data • Interviews • Surveys
<p>4.5 To what extent has IFAD efficiently invested in staff development to build the skills required to fulfil its mandate and adapt to evolving needs?</p>	<p>Review of the skills development plans in line with the key skills taxonomies and the progress in developing skills in line with these taxonomies</p> <p>Analysis of budget and spend on staff skills development, career pathing and succession planning and the alignment of the spend with the skills taxonomies and priority skill areas identified by IFAD.</p> <p>Analysis of the skills development evaluation approach utilised to determine whether the investment is producing the skills required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development data • Skills taxonomies • Surveys • Interviews
<p>4.6 How efficiently has the reassignment process been in identifying and placing staff in positions</p>	<p>Review the reassignment process and analyse the alignment of staff skills with assigned roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassignment data

Evaluation sub question	Main line of investigation /How to assess (approach, methods and factors to consider)	Data collection/data sources
that support their skills, career aspirations and IFAD's delivery?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys• Interviews

Background data and key HR characteristics

Headcount and grade distribution

IFAD's staff headcount has grown from a total of 728 staff in 2019 to 953 staff in 2024. The breakdown per division is reflected below:

Table 1
Headcount per division 2019 to 2024

Year	CRU	CSD	CSSG	ERG	FOD	IOE	OPV	PMD	SKD	Total
2019	2	108	46	74	70	19	16	279	114	728
2020	2	110	54	88	73	20	16	302	124	789
2021	2	103	63	80	67	20	15	249	112	711
2022	2	112	57	84	70	20	16	262	112	735
2023	1	110	70	88	76	23	16	317	129	830
2024	3	129	69	90	82	23	21	372	164	953

Source: IFAD headcount data provided by PCD.¹⁹

The headcount, including consultants, between 2019 and 2024 it was as follows:

Table 2
IFAD staff and consultant full-time equivalents between 2019 and 2024

Year	Headcount	Consultant FTEs	Total Capacity
2019	728	406	1 134
2020	789	435	1 224
2021	711	497	1 208
2022	735	522	1 257
2023	830	552	1 382
2024	953	558	1 511

Source: IFAD HR headcount data.

¹⁹ Following name changes implemented in 2025: PMD to DCO, ERG to ERD, SKD to OTD.

Table 3
Key HRM characteristics at IFAD

IFAD workforce at a glance	HR Roles and Functions
<p>Demographics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD operates in 92 countries 1 511 employees, with 953 being full time staff IFAD's work and staff are spread across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East, North Africa and Europe. IFAD has provided US\$ 24 billion in loans and grants since inception and is reaching 78.6 million people with currently on-going projects. <p>Qualitative attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working to eliminate rural poverty, with a focus on mainstreaming themes such as climate and environment, rural women, youth, indigenous people and nutrition Commitment to improving rural agriculture and enterprise driven by core IFAD values of integrity, professionalism, respect and a focus on results Skilled workers with expertise in finance, lending and sovereign operations, programme delivery and technical support functions International and multicultural organisational setting, working with and through governments to reach the rural poor <p>Staff associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD staff association represents all categories of staff at HQ, regional and country levels Provides a platform for staff engagement with management for issues affecting employees throughout the life cycle 	<p>HR roles & functions</p> <p>HR management is not the exclusive responsibility of the People & Culture Division. While PCD is typically the custodian of HR policies, other key organizational actors play a key role to enable IFAD to achieve the objectives outlined in its HR policy framework. HR management represents a shared responsibility between the below different entities and functions within the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People & Culture Division: Sets strategic direction, aligning initiatives with organizational objectives, and promoting a diverse, ethical work environment. Also responsible for developing and implementing HR practices and policies, ensuring alignment with strategic goals Headquarter, regional and country-level leaders: Tailor and implement HR policies locally, ensuring compliance to organizational rules. Line Management: Manages daily HR responsibilities, supports staff, aligns with HR policies, and promotes employee well-being and development. Oversight and independent functions (offices of the Ombudsman, Ethics and Investigations): Ensure compliance with ethical standards and HR policies, promoting organizational integrity, accountability, and a fair workplace culture

Applicable HR regulatory framework

The HR regulatory framework applicable to IFAD is set at UN-wide level.

As part of the UN Common System, IFAD is guided by policies and guidelines set by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and other governing bodies. The UN regulatory system notably includes:

- The Charter of the United Nations:** Establishes fundamental principles, staff regulations, and the international civil service system, while General Assembly Resolutions direct HR policies, ethics, and staff welfare, shaping overall HR management.
- UN Staff Regulations:** Define conditions of service, rights, and obligations, while UN Staff Rules detail provisions for recruitment, promotion, entitlements, and disciplinary measures, ensuring consistent and fair HR policies
- Standards of Conduct for International Civil Service:** Outlines the ethical principles and behavioural expectations for international civil servants, promoting integrity, impartiality, and professionalism in the performance of their duties
- Administrative Instructions:** Guide implementation of HR policies, including recruitment, performance management, and staff development.
- UN Chief Executive Board (CEB), High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and UN HR Network:** Coordinate HR policies across UN agencies, promoting coherence, mutual recognition and collaboration.

In addition, IFAD's internal Human Resource Policy Framework includes:

- Human resources policy, staff rules, HR Implementing procedures, handbook on consultants and other persons hired by IFAD under a non-staff contract, information circulars, and HR information notes.
- Other framework documents include the IFAD's President memos, IFAD's Core Values of integrity, professionalism, respect and a focus on results
- IFAD's 2016-2025 and 2025-2031 strategic frameworks recognise the important role of HR in helping the organisation achieve its mission

Evaluation team, key stakeholders, phases and timeline

1. **Evaluation team:** Under the overall strategic direction of Indran Naidoo, IOE Director, and Mona Fetouh, IOE Deputy Director, the CLE will be led by Oanh Nguyen, Lead Evaluation Officer, IOE and supported by Enala Mumba, Evaluation Officer, IOE. Three senior consultants – HR and evaluation experts will be recruited to provide specific inputs on different HR topics and to strengthen the analysis rigour of the CLE.
2. **Quality assurance mechanisms.** The approach paper will be reviewed by external senior evaluation experts, who will provide technical guidance during the evaluation process and review the final evaluation report for ensuring its technical quality. The approach paper will also be submitted to a peer review process internal to IOE; this will also apply to the draft evaluation report.
3. The **key stakeholders** of this evaluation are the People and Culture Division, which is the custodian of human resource policy framework in IFAD, and IFAD employees, who are users of the HR systems, represented by the IFAD staff association. In addition, there are other stakeholders who may be involved in different parts of HR management, such as the Planning, Organizational Development and Budget Division, which has a key role in workforce planning, and the Vice President office, which has the chairmanship of the Dynamic Workforce Planning Committee that defines the resourcing levels across IFAD. In addition, HR policies and practices are implemented by line management in IFAD so the line managers, including senior management are responsible for interpretation and application of the practices with staff. Furthermore, the President of IFAD holds overarching responsibility for managing employees in accordance with the guiding principles of the HR Policy.
4. **Core learning partnership group.** A core learning partnership (CLP) group will be established comprising representatives from IFAD management, People and Culture Division and ISA. The evaluation team will meet with this group at key moments in the evaluation to gather their views and feedback, in particular during the self-assessment and design workshop and the emerging findings workshop. The group will review and comment on the draft evaluation report, and contribute to the promotion, dissemination and use of the evaluation results at IFAD and beyond.
5. **Phases and timeline.** As described in the IFAD Evaluation Manual, the CLE will have four main phases: (i) design including further refinement of the approach paper with data-collection tools; (ii) implementation including secondary and primary data collection and initial synthesis; (iii) reporting; and iv) completion and dissemination. The table below reports an indicative timeline for the evaluation.

Evaluation timeline

Activities	Dates
Scoping desk review and initial scoping interviews	Completed
Draft approach paper shared for IOE internal peer review and external expert review	Completed
Draft approach paper shared with Management for comments	Completed
Management comments on the draft approach paper and finalisation of the document	Completed
Establishment of the CLP	December 2025
Self assessment workshop	January 2026
Further desk review and online key informants' interviews	January - March 2026
Presentation of the approach paper to the Evaluation Committee	March 2026

Activities	Dates
Data collection (e-survey and field missions if feasible)	March - April 2026
Data analysis and synthesis	May - June 2026
Emerging findings workshop	July 2026
Report drafting	July - August 2026
IOE internal and external quality assurance	September 2026
Report shared with Management	October 2026
Management comments	October 2026
Report finalised and disseminated	November 2026

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