

Reconvened 133rd Session of the Evaluation Committee

Procedures to select and appoint the next IOE Director following the recommendation by the External Peer Review (EPR) – note for consideration of the Evaluation Committee, prepared by IOE

EPR Recommendation 6: *The Executive Board should reaffirm its commitment to the 2021 Evaluation Policy and safeguard the independence of IOE and the role of ODE by clarifying the annexes in the policy.*

The EPR finds that the policy itself is in line with best practice of comparable organizations and sufficiently flexible as a framework for further improvements of the evaluation function. The annexes should explain the roles and responsibilities of ODE, clarify that the Board is in full charge of the selection and dismissal of the evaluation director without interference, and that sufficient time is allocated in the Evaluation Committee for each evaluation presented¹⁶.

¹⁶ *The annexes should clarify: (i) The role and responsibilities of ODE, (ii) That sufficient time be allocated to each evaluation product presented to the Evaluation Committee, (iii) That the Board is exclusively responsible for selecting and dismissing the IOE Director, and (iv) That the recruitment process should be merit-based, fully transparent, and free from external interference, including from IFAD Management, the President and the outgoing IOE Director*

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a short **position paper to the Evaluation Committee for its deliberation on the amendment of the annexure to the Evaluation Policy** and its effect on the process to recruit the next IOE Director, following the departure of the current IOE Director at the end of his term on 28 February 2027, as announced at the Executive Board informal meeting on 21 April and in subsequent documents.

The session is reconvened following the 133rd EC session on 18 June 2025, to allow full discussion and consultations among the EC members before decisions and options are finalized.

As IOE reports directly to the Board, this work is undertaken on behalf of the Board. The Board remains at liberty to consider management's views on the matter and to make its final decisions and determinations. As per the Revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board, the Executive Board is tasked with enhancing the independence and effectiveness of the independent evaluation function.

The position presented by IOE draws on the recommendation of the 2026 External Peer Review, presented earlier in the session. The review confirmed IOE's reputation as a leading independent evaluation office globally. It recognized that the high level of

independence of the office contributes significantly to its credibility, and that this reputation and independence must be maintained and safeguarded.

2. External Peer Review recommendations

An External Peer Review is the precursor to an evaluation policy revision, as per standard practice in international organizations and for IFAD takes place every seven years as per the policy. This 3rd External Peer Review was timed to meet the target to commence recruitment six months before the expiry of the current IOE Director's term. After approval at the 143rd Executive Board, the EPR approach paper was presented to the 131st Evaluation Committee and the 146th and Executive Board sessions for approval by the EB. The EPR report was presented to the 133rd Evaluation Committee session. The process has enjoyed the fullest cooperation from IFAD, Member States, donors and management, all of which is reflected in the evidence base of the report.

The high-level EPR panel of global experts, comprised a Chair and head of an MDB evaluation function (EBRD), a UNEG head who is also the Director of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office, and the Chair of the OECD/DAC EvalNet who is the head of the German Institute for Development Evaluation, supported by the former Director of the Norwegian independent evaluation office. Their presentation to the Evaluation Committee on 18 June was complimentary of both IOE and IFAD, and both received strong acknowledgement from EC members. The report followed a rigorous process with a strong evidence base, ensuring high credibility for its findings.

The EPR did not call for a policy change, but rather for a revision of the annex relating to recruitment of the IOE Director in order to affirm the exclusive role of the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board in this process. It notes that the current provisions compromise the independence of the office, and specifically asked for the exclusion of the IFAD President and IFAD Management from the selection process, as they are the evaluands of IOE, which is necessary to remove conflicts of interest, align IFAD with MDB practices, strengthen the credibility of IFAD's evaluation function, and ensure the full independence of IOE. It also recommended the exclusion of the outgoing IOE Director from the selection process, which IOE fully agrees with and intends to abide by to prevent conflict of interest and ensure the Board authority over the process.

By not calling for a policy change, the EPR recognizes that an annex revision can be undertaken within the current policy. Following a review of the annex, IOE has confirmed that to meet the requirement set by the EPR recommendation, only minor edits are required – presented in section 4. Thus, IOE presents this revised annex to the Evaluation Committee today for its consideration.

3. Why is independence important?

In a context of increasing global complexities and crises, the role of independent evaluation in ensuring learning and accountability for development results is more

critical than ever and must remain robust. A fully independent office also directly benefits credibility of IFAD as an organization, as it promotes transparency and evidence-based decision making and strategic direction. It ensures that evaluations are selected, conducted and finalized without bias or influence and based solely on the evidence collected. Independence comes with the responsibility to ensure that evidence is rigorous and evaluations are high quality – a responsibility that IOE takes seriously and that was affirmed by the EPR results.

Independence is not only what happens once the Director is in office; it begins before appointment. The Director of independent evaluation sets the tone and acts as a firewall to ensure that reports and processes are not compromised, and that IOE only present work to the EC and the Board that is based on rigorous norms, standards and methods, with credible results. The question before the committee today is whether they would entrust the future of the independent evaluation function to a Director chosen through a process that is not aligned to other MDBs and to the principles of independence. Attempts to trigger the process under the old policy, while it was under review, are preemptive and compromise the authority of the Board.

Directors of evaluation functions can “make or break” an office, and in the current constrained funding environment there have been numerous examples of less independent evaluation functions being undermined or restructured. IFAD stands out from this trend, in its dual identity as a UN entity and an MDB, in protecting the independence, credibility and utility of its independent evaluation. The EC decision today is to uphold independence principles to ensure that your investments are fairly and robustly assessed without interference, by ensuring full integrity of the selection process to mitigate against this risk. IFAD has an opportunity to demonstrate global best practice and reinforce the positive results from the 2026 EPR. As the position is a fixed-term appointment of six years, the decision has implications for the short- and medium-term functioning of IOE.

4. Next steps for today’s session

The Evaluation Committee is presented with the revised annex reflecting the EPR recommendations, as well as rationale for abiding by this revision for the upcoming recruitment of the IOE Director. IOE’s strong position is that the recruitment process must be governed by this revision, to maintain the credibility and independence of IOE, as well as the authority of the Executive Board. If the committee agrees that independence is integral to the work of IOE and if it also validate the results of the EPR, it would be logical to follow a process that adheres to the EPR recommendation.

The proposed process meets the target and allows sufficient time for recruitment. The evaluation policy establishes a timeline to begin recruitment six months before the expiry of the IOE Director term and his announced departure and handover on 28 February

2027, corresponding in this case to 28 August 2026. Some aspects of the recruitment that are not affected by the annex revision may proceed, under full authority of the Board only. IOE will present the revised annex to the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board in September for formal decision. As the EPR did not recommend a full policy revision, the changes can be made broadly within the recruitment timeline and are presented below. The apply specifically to Section A, *Selection and appointment of the Director, IOE*

- **Paragraph 6 – remove** in its entirety: “After the search panel completes its work, the chairperson of the panel consults with the IFAD President to obtain her/his views with respect to the recommendations of the search panel.
- **Paragraph 7 – revise** the first sentence to read: “The search panel then prepares a report on its work including the order in which the candidates are ranked, which the chairperson of the search panel presents to a special/dedicated session of the Evaluation Committee.”
- **Paragraph 7 – remove** the second sentence: “This report clearly mentions the views of the President with respect to the suitability of the recommended candidates, the order in which they are ranked, and any other concern the President may have about the candidates.”
- **Paragraph 8 – remove** the following from the first sentence: “taking into due account the President’s views”

Annex I: Proposed revisions to the Part A of the Annex of the 2021 Evaluation Policy (tracked changes)

Detailed procedures to select, appoint and dismiss the Director, IOE

A. Selection and appointment of the Director, IOE

1. The selection process is led by a search panel consisting of three Executive Board members who, for the duration of the search panel process are neither members of the Evaluation Committee nor serving as Convenors of their respective Lists and/or sub-Lists (one each from Lists A, B and C and nominated by the Convenors of the respective Lists), and two independent experts identified by the Evaluation Committee with recognized evaluation experience (at least one of whom would have experience managing an independent evaluation department). A representative of IFAD's Senior Management participates in the panel as a non-voting member. The Executive Board search panel members choose a chairperson who is not one of the independent experts nor the Management representative.
2. IFAD Management provides administrative and legal support and advice to the search panel. Such support and the recruitment process and procedures are consistent with established IFAD policies, rules and procedures to the extent that they are not superseded by the provisions of the evaluation policy.
3. The search panel develops the position description and ensures that the position is advertised. A professional headhunting firm may be engaged to help ensure that a number of well-qualified candidates are provided to the panel. The search panel decides whether to engage a professional headhunting firm and approves the selection of the firm.
4. From the applicants obtained either through advertising or a professional headhunting firm or both, the search panel draws up a shortlist of candidates, interviews and assesses them, and ranks them in order of merit.
5. The search panel requests the Human Resources Division to verify that the academic and professional credentials of those candidates shortlisted for further consideration are valid before proceeding with its assessment of the shortlisted candidates. Subject to their agreement, personal and professional references of shortlisted candidates are checked at this stage by the Human Resources Division or the professional headhunting firm at the search panel's direction. Otherwise, the search panel requests the Human Resources Division or the professional headhunting firm to carry out reference checks after the search panel has identified its preferred candidate, with the results made available to the search panel before it completes its work.

~~6. After the search panel completes its work, the chairperson of the panel consults with the IFAD President to obtain her/his views with respect to the recommendations of the search panel.~~

7. The search panel then prepares a report on its work including the order in which the candidates are ranked, which the chairperson of the search panel presents to a special/dedicated session of the Evaluation Committee. ~~This report clearly mentions the views of the President with respect to the suitability of the recommended candidates, the order in which they are ranked, and any other concern the President may have about the candidates.~~ Thereafter, the Evaluation Committee endeavours to arrive at a consensus

on the ranking of candidates in order to present in the Committee's report to the Executive Board, as far as possible, the consensus views of Committee members. In the event the Evaluation Committee cannot reach a consensus, it provides, along with the list of candidates, a report setting out the different views expressed in the Committee and an explanation of why it has been unable to reach agreement or, if it deems none of the candidates qualified, why the search process should be restarted. This report, approved by all participating Committee members, constitutes the official record of the Committee's meeting. Reporting to the Board on this matter shall be governed by rule 2.3 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee. For the purposes of the Evaluation Committee meeting(s) dedicated to consideration of the search panel's report, rule 2.5 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee is suspended.

8. The Executive Board deliberates on the suitability of the candidates submitted by the Evaluation Committee ~~taking into due account the President's views~~. The Executive Board may decide to endorse the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee, select a different candidate from among those proposed by the Evaluation Committee, or request the Evaluation Committee to restart the search process in case it concludes that none of the candidates are suitably qualified.

9. After the Executive Board has taken a decision on the candidate to select as Director, IOE, the President or his/her representative makes an employment offer to the candidate and the President will make the formal appointment.

10. In the process of recruiting and selecting the Director, IOE, search panel members must avoid any situation that poses an actual conflict or the potential for or the appearance of a conflict between their individual interests and the performance of their official duties. Considerations for identifying and handling conflicts of interest are set out in section C below.

Annex II: Roles and responsibilities under the revised Evaluation Policy

Evaluation Committee

- The overall role of the Evaluation Committee is to set the direction and authorize the process.
- The Evaluation Committee should receive and approve the job description from IOE, ensuring that it is compliant with the policy and meets standards for evaluation heads of MDBs.
- It should note the names of committee members drawn from the Board, representing constituencies, and approve the names of the external experts, both of whom are voting members.
- It should nominate the name of the management representative, who is non-voting.
- It should approve the shortlist.
- It should agree to the terms of reference of the head-hunting company, noting its reputation in conducting searches in similar cases.
- It should receive the draft report of the search panel.
- It should discuss the report and prepare recommendations for the Executive Board.
- It should receive the names of referees and examine their reports, seeking additional information from relevant parties as needed.
- It should endeavour to arrive at a consensus on the ranking of candidates in order to present in the Committee's report to the Executive Board, as far as possible, the consensus views of Committee members. In the event the Evaluation Committee cannot reach a consensus, it provides, along with the list of candidates, a report setting out the different views expressed in the Committee and an explanation of why it has been unable to reach agreement or, if it deems none of the candidates qualified, why the search process should be restarted.

Executive Board

- The Executive Board deliberates on the suitability of the candidates submitted by the Evaluation Committee. The Executive Board may decide to endorse the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee, select a different candidate from among those proposed by the Evaluation Committee, or request the Evaluation Committee to restart the search process in case it concludes that none of the candidates are suitably qualified.

Management

- Management participates in the search panel as a non-voting member only. The representative is to be chosen by the Evaluation Committee.

- IFAD HR should provide secretarial support and conduct full reference checks across the system on shortlisted candidates, including management competencies, previous staff assessments, ethics clearances and related checks.

President

- The President should not participate in the process, as he/she is represented by management.
- The President should not have any role in, or influence over, candidate selection.
- The President or his/her representative makes an employment offer to the candidate and the President will make the formal appointment.

IOE

- IOE should review and draft the job description for the consideration of the Evaluation Committee.
- IOE should provide an opinion and suggestions to the Evaluation Committee on the external experts. One expert should be an existing head of an independent evaluation office, and another should be an internationally renowned person who may also be a former or current head of office.
- IOE may share the job advertisement through its professional networks once it has been issued.
- IOE should not participate in the candidate selection process. The views of the IOE Director should not be sought in the selection process and he/she should have no influence on the selection.

Head-hunting company

- The head hunting company shall conduct the candidate search and review according to the instructions of the Executive Board and per the job description. The company makes recommendations to the Board.

Annex 3: Base documents to be understood in the context of this note:

1. External Peer Review Report [EC 2026/133/W.P.5](#) and comments by IOE [Add.1](#) and management [Add.2](#)
2. IOE Director statement to the Evaluation Committee (18 June 2026):

Statement of the IOE Director on the Handover Process

Indran A. Naidoo, Ph.D.

[\[Profile\]](#)

Thank you, Chair.

I am pleased that the 3rd External Peer Review has confirmed that IOE has met the highest standards of independence, credibility and utility. I am sure this is a reassuring outcome for the Board. The Board's steadfast commitment to the independence of the office, protecting its structural and operational independence has ensured accountability.

This achievement merits international recognition. However, it also reminds us of the criticality of safeguarding the Executive Board's governance role. In consultation with the Chair of the Evaluation Committee, I ensured that the integrity of the EPR process was maintained by preventing any interference in the process, such as seeking to initiate recruitment when a policy was being assessed. IFAD must uphold the highest standards of integrity in its stewardship of public funds and needs its reputation to be respected. For that accountability is critical.

The EPR has also reaffirmed the authority of the Chair of the Evaluation Committee in making key evaluation decisions, as delegated by the Executive Board. It is important that all parties follow the enshrined evaluation principles, including respect for equality and transparency.

The EPR further proposes, and I quote, that "the recruitment process should be merit-based, fully transparent, and free from external

interference, including from IFAD Management, the President and the outgoing IOE Director.” I welcome this proposal. It is fully consistent with multilateral development bank practices. The Evaluation Cooperation Group, our professional network, also operates within these governance parameters.

I would encourage the Executive Board and its Evaluation Committee to remain attentive to any developments or interpretations that might interfere with the Board’s established oversight role.

In March 2026, I issued an advisory to reemphasize decisions taken by the Board when it authorized the EPR. I am satisfied this has ensured that the EPR process remains on track.

The EPR report will now proceed to the Executive Board for tabling and decision. The session will include a revised annex, to the evaluation policy, drafted by IOE, with EPR comments, that reflects international best practices, sets out clearly all roles and responsibilities while addressing the shortcomings of the current version. This will ensure full transparency for the process.

I wish to once again thank all Executive Board members for their solid support throughout my tenure. I appreciate the leadership and support of the Chair of the Evaluation Committee, Dr. Yaya Olaniran [[here](#)], who has steered this period in an exemplary manner. This positive EPR outcome has also been made possible by the expertise and vision of Dr Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President: Country Operations [[here](#)], who has supported independence, the increased coverage and ensuring evaluations are used.

Throughout my tenure, a key focus has been on strengthening evaluation methodology. Over the last five years we have benefitted from the expertise of the internationally renowned members of the Evaluation Advisory Panels [[here](#)] [[here](#)], whom you have engaged with. They have

helped us set global standards for IOE. The first-ever global neuroscience approach to evaluation which IOE has piloted has helped build bridges in and across the organization for learning and trust [[here](#)] [[here](#)] [[here](#)]. Our commitment to transparency, through candid and reflective evaluation products, has been further reinforced by communication through IOE's own fully independent evaluation website [[here](#)].

I thank every member of my diverse and experienced team built on merit, for their hard work and professionalism [[here](#)] [[here](#)].

In the remaining months of my mandate, I will consolidate this work and preparing an end-of-term report for the Executive Board, as requested. We continue to complete evaluations and prepare the work plan for 2027, and presentation to the Executive Board and Governing Council.

My message to the EC and Board is that protecting accountability remains key in the context of the many challenges we are faced with, including budget constraints.

3. IOE Director advisory statement to the Evaluation Committee (18 March 2026)

Statement of the IOE Director

Indran A. Naidoo, Ph.D.

Thank you, Chair.

1. I hereby submit this statement into record based on IOE Director's direct reporting and accountability to the Board. It relates to the work conducted and processes set out for the review of the Evaluation Policy by the External Peer Review (EPR) team.

2. The IOE Director has a clear responsibility to alert the Executive Board of Directors on any matters relating to independence, since IOE governance falls under the exclusive purview of the Board. This submission's timing seeks to be pre-emptive, to ensure that the EPR of IFAD's Evaluation Policy is completed smoothly.

3. As was the case in 2021, IOE Director is responsible for revising the policy through an EPR and presenting it to the Board for approval. Hence, in consultation with the Evaluation Committee, I began the process of setting up the EPR panel in 2024, with the ToR approved in 2025 and the panel addressing the Board in same year. IFAD has a high-level panel conducting this delicate endeavour, drawn from all the key global evaluation networks – ECG, OECD DAC, and UNEG.

4. The Board is central in providing IOE with directions for follow-up. Its Evaluation Committee makes recommendations on key matters related to Governance (including recruitment). It consults with the entire Board on key governing matters.

5. The Panel has completed much of its evaluation work by now. In the remaining period, it will synthesize results and get feedback from the Board and management on governance issues. The process also implies

that a report will be shared with the Evaluation Committee at the June session and with the Board at the September session.

6. It would be important that the agreed process and timelines set out are used as decision making opportunities to revise the current Evaluation Policy. IOE stands ready as a qualified resource to advise any parties along this highly strategic process, drawing from its 21 years' track record in performing independent evaluation at IFAD.

4. Evaluation Policy 2021 <https://ioe.ifad.org/en/evaluation-policy>
5. Evaluation Policy annex – proposed revision