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IFAD

Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

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

Volume I

Main Report

For: **Review**

Note to Evaluation Committee members

This document is submitted for review by the Evaluation Committee.

To make the best use of time available at Evaluation Committee sessions, members are invited to contact the following focal point with any technical questions about this document before the session:

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACP	Agreement at Completion Point
ARRI	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations
CE	completion evaluation
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
CPE	country programme evaluation
CPM	country programme manager
DSPP	Direct Supervision Pilot Programme
FDC	Financial Development Company (Albania)
FPPP	Field Presence Pilot Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IE	interim evaluation
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MADA	Mountain Areas Development Agency (Albania)
MAFF	Mountain Areas Finance Fund (Albania)
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
MIC	middle-income countries
OE	Office of Evaluation
PA	Western and Central Africa Division
PBAS	Performance-Based Allocation System
PF	Eastern and Southern Africa Division
PI	Asia and the Pacific Division
PL	Latin America and the Caribbean Division
PMD	Programme Management Department
PN	Near East and North Africa Division
PREVAL	Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation of IFAD's Rural Poverty-Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean
PT	Technical Advisory Division
REAF	Commission on Family Farming (Brazil)
RFP	Rural Finance Programme (Belize)
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SADEV	Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive summary

1. In line with the IFAD Evaluation Policy, this President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) updates the Executive Board on the status of recommendations agreed at completion point of evaluations undertaken in 2007. The aim of the report is to support both accountability and learning. As in previous years, the report provides an analysis by implementing agency and by theme of the recommendations reviewed this year. It also examines the two learning themes highlighted in the Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations, country context and project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

2. This year's PRISMA contains a new section that provides an assessment of the status of recommendations issued in the last four years. It also discusses institutional progress and planning in the context of direct supervision and field presence, two important developments in the operating model that were the focus of key corporate evaluations. Recurring themes that have surfaced in the last four reviews are also briefly examined: project management and administration; M&E; rural finance; training and capacity-building; and targeting and beneficiary participation.

3. On the whole, IFAD's response to recommendations has been vigorous. Altogether, 57 per cent of the recommendations reviewed this year were fully followed up; implementation is ongoing for another 8 per cent; 13 per cent have been partially followed up; 16 per cent will be addressed when a new project is designed in the near future. Importantly, no recommendations are pending, reflecting an overall compliance with, and respect for, recommendations emerging from the evaluations. Over the last four years performance has also been consistent, with 65 per cent of all recommendations fully followed up and only 3 per cent pending. The follow-up conducted by IFAD at the corporate level, and at the level of both country teams and projects, has been robust. At the regional level, follow-up was good despite the fact that a number of recommendations were later deemed to be not applicable owing to changes in circumstances following the evaluation. However, follow-up by partner government authorities has been weak, with only 46 per cent of the recommendations fully followed up. This reflects the longer follow-up chain in government structures.

4. The Office of Evaluation conducted corporate-level evaluations of the field presence and direct supervision pilot programmes. The resultant recommendations have been incorporated into recent IFAD policies and processes. Both these fundamental changes to IFAD's operating model are already yielding benefits in terms of supporting project implementation, understanding country context, identifying problems in the portfolio and resolving problems through consensus with stakeholders. At the corporate level, all new IFAD procedures that are developed are receptive to these changes. Mainstreaming is also promoted through staff training in supervision and procurement, training of IFAD field staff and training in new project design processes.

5. Common themes in the recommendations issued over the last four years are reviewed in this report. Some refer to project management, which will be reinforced through new approaches entailing greater involvement of line agencies and existing institutions, and fewer special project management units. Many recommendations refer to the need to improve M&E at the project level. Recently introduced corporate-level tools will help streamline M&E processes. In addition, a new IFAD Rural Finance Policy encourages greater diversity in IFAD-supported rural finance operations, which is recommended by the Office of Evaluation in its assessment of rural finance operations. Training and capacity-building in project units is

increasingly recognized as a key focus area in the initial implementation stages of a project and can be facilitated by increased country presence, as recommended in many evaluations. Evaluations often recommend that targeting should receive more attention during project design; IFAD is in agreement and endeavours to disseminate best practices in targeting throughout the organization.

6. The evaluations covered in this report have followed the suggestion of IFAD Management that the number of recommendations be reduced and more detailed and strategic advice be provided. As was the case last year, 74 per cent of the evaluation recommendations are strategic. Over the longer term, the number of recommendations resulting from each evaluation has also declined, which is useful for IFAD Management. In addition, future evaluations should give more attention to high priority areas such as gender. There is also a need to expedite and streamline the finalizing of agreements at completion point with governments; a number of evaluations could not be included this year because the finalization of these agreements was delayed. Lastly, the Office of Evaluation needs to step up efforts to enhance country ownership of the evaluation process, which would increase the likelihood of the recommendations made and agreed upon being implemented effectively.

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

I.   Introduction and methodology

1.   The IFAD Evaluation Policy requires the President to ensure the adoption of feasible evaluation recommendations, track the implementation of the recommendations, and inform the Executive Board about the results of follow-up actions through the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA).[1] This PRISMA, the sixth in the series, summarizes the recommendations agreed at completion point of the evaluations conducted in 2007 and presents the status of implementation of the related follow-up actions.

2.   The PRISMA serves as an instrument of management accountability with regard to the evaluations conducted by the Office of Evaluation (OE) and the resultant recommendations, and as a learning tool for staff in IFAD and within project authorities. An external assessment of the management response system by the Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV)[2] found the PRISMA to be an "effective accountability mechanism" with a "high degree of transparency".

3.   For the purpose of maintaining consistency in annual reporting, this report adopts a similar structure to that of previous years. In addition to the responses to individual evaluations, systemic reforms and initiatives undertaken by Management to address some recurring deficiencies are highlighted. A thematic review looks at follow-up within broad sectoral themes. Special attention is also given to the two learning themes identified in the 2008 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI):[3] country context and project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

4.   A new section has been included this year to assess the follow-up status of all the recommendations made in the last four years. The purpose of this assessment – which focuses mainly on institutional learning – is to develop a long-term perspective on Management's response to evaluation recommendations. It also increases the sample size, making regional analyses statistically tenable. Key corporate-level evaluations of the field presence and direct supervision pilot programmes are analysed in greater depth. These two aspects – field presence and direct supervision – were chosen because they signal a fundamental change in IFAD's operations in the field.

5.   This report is accompanied by a second volume containing the detailed responses from the regional divisions to each strategic recommendation, as requested by the Executive Board.

6.   For reporting to the Board, the agreement at completion point (ACP) recommendations are reviewed by the Programme Management Department (PMD) and categorized using three classification systems,[4] the first of which identifies the entity responsible for following up on the recommendations. This year's PRISMA retains the categories used in the 2008 report:

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[1] EB 2003/78/R.17/Rev.1.
[2] SADEV 2008:4.
[3] EB 2008/95/R.7.
[4] The ACP reflects the stakeholders' understanding of the evaluation findings and recommendations, their proposals to implement them and their commitment to act upon them. The two objectives of the ACP are to: (i) clarify and deepen the understanding of recommendations, document those deemed to be acceptable and feasible, and eventually generate a response from stakeholders on follow-up action; and (ii) flag evaluation insights and learning hypotheses for future discussion and debate.

- IFAD at the project level;
- IFAD at the country level, in partnership with government;
- Partner-country government authorities;
- IFAD at the regional level; and
- IFAD at the corporate level.

7. The second classification system examines the nature of the recommendation, in keeping with IFAD Evaluation Policy. The categories are:

- Operational, if the recommendation proposes a specific action;
- Strategic, if it suggests an approach or a course of action; and
- Policy, if it relates to the IFAD guiding principles.

8. The report retains the policy-level classification to allow comparability and consistency with previous years; however, there are no recommendations this year referring to actions at the policy level. This is because there were no corporate-level evaluations or thematic evaluations, which typically generate policy-related recommendations.

9. Recommendations are also classified on the basis of 24 thematic categories, such as rural finance, gender and partnerships. These themes span the different dimensions covered by the evaluations, including: targeting and gender; technical areas; project management; cross-cutting themes.

10. In terms of the process of developing the PRISMA, once the recommendations emerging from evaluations conducted in 2007 are classified by PMD Front Office into categories, each one labelled using all three classification systems (level, nature and theme), the list and categorization of ACP recommendations is reviewed and cleared by OE. The regional divisions within PMD are then requested to comment on the status of the follow-up actions related to each recommendation and to illustrate the learning loop in the process. The PMD Front Office classifies the responses according to follow-up status:

- Full follow-up;
- Not yet due;
- Ongoing;
- Partial;
- Pending; and
- Not applicable.

11. In compliance with the Evaluation Policy, IFAD Management has discussed the present report with OE. The comments made by OE are attached as annex I.

II. Implementation status of recommendations made by 2007 evaluations

A. Evaluation coverage and contents

12. The PRISMA 2009 report covers a total of six evaluations, four of which were conducted in 2007: three completion evaluations (CE) and one interim evaluation (IE). Two evaluations which were not included last year are included in this year's report: the country programme evaluation (CPE) for Brazil and the CE for the Apuseni Development Project in Romania.

13. The number of evaluations reviewed for this year (six) is lower than in previous years: 12 in 2008, 14 in 2007 and 13 in 2006. This is because the ACPs for a number of evaluations had not been not finalized between OE and the stakeholders in time for review and inclusion in the PRISMA. This year, OE and PMD Front Office decided that enough time should be allowed for meaningful follow-up and to determine the source of responses for inclusion of an evaluation in the PRISMA.

Evaluations covered in PRISMA 2009

Seven evaluations from 2007 and three from 2006 were considered for inclusion in the present report. Of the ten considered, six are followed up in this PRISMA. The four excluded from this year's review had ACPs that either were not finalized or were finalized too close to the start of the PRISMA process to allow sufficient time for follow-up action to be implemented and reviewed. The four evaluations are: (i) and (ii) the CPEs for Ethiopia and for Pakistan (conducted in 2007). The Ethiopia CPE was finalized in December 2008 and it was decided that there was insufficient time for any significant follow-up before the drafting of the PRISMA report. The country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) for Pakistan will be prepared in 2010 and followed up subsequently; (iii) the IE of the Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project in the Philippines (2007 evaluation); and (iv) the CE for the Southern Region Cooperatives Development and Credit Project in Ethiopia (conducted in 2006). These will be included in PRISMA 2010.

Project/programme evaluations in IFAD and coverage in PRISMA 2009:

1. **Interim evaluations** (IEs) are mandatory before a further project phase or similar project is launched in the same region. IEs are used to assess the extent to which a further phase is justifiable, and to improve the design and implementation of the subsequent intervention. One IE undertaken in 2007 is included in PRISMA 2009:
    *   Burkina Faso: Community-Based Rural Development Project.

2. **Completion evaluations** (CEs) are normally conducted after finalization of the project completion report, which is prepared by the borrower in collaboration with the cooperating institution once the project has ended. The following CEs are included in PRISMA 2009:
    *   Albania: Mountain Areas Development Programme;
    *   Belize: Community-Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management;
    *   Pakistan: Dir Area Support Project; and
    *   Romania: Apuseni Development Project (carried over from 2006 evaluations).

CPEs assess the performance and impact of IFAD-supported activities in a given country, and thus provide direct and concrete building blocks for the review and formulation of COSOPs. One CPE is included in PRISMA 2009:
    *   Brazil (carried over from 2006 evaluations).

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14. The evaluation exercises reviewed in this PRISMA cover four of the five regional divisions. The Eastern and Southern Africa division has no projects or country programme evaluations reviewed in this PRISMA.

15. The one IE included is for the project under way in Burkina Faso. A number of recommendations made in the evaluation refer to strategies for the next phase of the project. IFAD plans to design a new operation under the 2010-2012 cycle of the performance-based allocation system (PBAS), when a number of the recommendations will be incorporated into the design and implementation of the upcoming project.

Table 1
Regional distribution of 2007 evaluations reviewed

Regional Distribution	IE	CE	CPE	CLE	Total
Western and Central Africa	1				1
Eastern and Southern Africa					
Asia and the Pacific		1			1
Latin America and the Caribbean		1	1		2
Near East and North Africa		2			2
IFAD corporate					
Total	**1**	**4**	**1**		**6**

16. The trend in types of evaluations covered is shown in table 2.

Table 2
Types of reviewed evaluations from 2003 to 2007

Evaluations	2003	2004	2005	2006*	2007**
Interim	8	8	5	1	1
Completion	2	1	5	6	4
Country programme	4	2	3	2	1
Thematic	2	2			
Corporate-level	1		1	3	
Total	**17**	**13**	**14**	**12**	**6**

* Includes the CE of the Arhangai Rural Poverty Alleviation Project in Mongolia from the previous year.
** Includes the Brazil CPE and the CE of the Apuseni Development Project in Romania from the previous year.

17. The overall number of recommendations agreed at the completion point and included in the PRISMA has declined steadily – from 377 in 2006 and 277 in 2007 to 178 in 2008 and 92 in this year's PRISMA. The average number of recommendations made in each evaluation has also been reduced notably – from 29 in 2006 and 20 in 2007 to 15 in 2008. Of the 92 recommendations in PRISMA 2009, two refer to Romania. Omitting this outlier, the average number of recommendations is 18 per evaluation (90 spread across five evaluations). While slightly higher than last year, this still represents progress towards a long-term reduction in the number of recommendations generated by each evaluation. It is also in keeping with the suggestion made by IFAD Management that the effectiveness of evaluation recommendations could be enhanced if recommendations were fewer in number but more focused and strategic in nature.

18. With regard to the Romania project, initially the ACP included a number of recommendations addressed to IFAD at the corporate level. These related to strategic issues, including a number of design-related considerations. However, in agreement with OE, they have not been included in the PRISMA. For future consideration, corporate processes that are design-related should be addressed mainly through specifically formulated corporate-level evaluations, since it is not feasible to draw conclusions about, or to make changes in, corporate processes affecting the entire portfolio from a single project.

19. In terms of the entities to which the recommendations are addressed, most of the recommendations reviewed in the PRISMA 2009 report apply to country institutions (42 per cent) and to the project (47 per cent). This is consistent with the types of evaluation conducted, or with the absence of an IFAD corporate-level evaluation, which generally addresses strategies or changes at the corporate level. As a result, there is only one recommendation applying to IFAD at the corporate level and two to a regional division, all of which emerged from the Brazil CPE. This is in contrast with last year, when almost a quarter of the recommendations were at the IFAD corporate level and 15 per cent at the regional level.

Table 3
Evaluation recommendations by type of evaluation and level
(number and percentage)

	IE	CE	CPE	CLE	Total	
IFAD corporate level			1		1	**1%**
IFAD regional level			2		2	**2%**
IFAD country/government	7	20	12		39	**42%**
Government authorities and institutions		7			7	**8%**
Project	13	30			43	**47%**
Total (number)	**20**	**57**	**15**		**92**	
Total (percentage)	**22**	**62**	**16**		**100**	**100**

20. Seventy-four per cent of the recommendations are strategic in nature. This is the same as last year, and represents a significant long-term increase; the share of strategic recommendations was 53 per cent in 2007 and only 31 per cent in 2006. Operational recommendations were agreed almost entirely at the project level. Strategic recommendations cover issues such as improved targeting, beneficiary participation, enhanced partnership building, increased dialogue with development partners or the introduction of private-sector partnerships.

Table 4
Evaluation recommendations by level and nature (number and percentage)

	Operational	Strategic	Policy	Total
IFAD corporate level		1		1
IFAD regional level		2		2
IFAD country/government	1	38		39
Government authorities and institutions		7		7
Project	23	20		43
Total (number)	**24**	**68**		**92**
Total (percentage)	**26**	**74**		**100**

B. The extent of compliance

21. To assess the compliance of follow-up actions with the original recommendations, the PRISMA 2009 report employs the six implementation status categories used in the 2008 report:

- **Full follow up:** recommendations fully incorporated into the new course of activities/operations;
- **Not yet due:** recommendations that will be fully incorporated in projects/country programmes/COSOPs not yet officially approved;
- **Ongoing:** actions initiated in the direction recommended during the ACP;
- **Partial:** recommendations not yet fully applied, or applied differently from what was agreed during ACP but respecting the underlying philosophy;
- **Pending:** recommendations that could not be followed up; and
- **Not applicable:** recommendations that have not been complied with owing to changing circumstances in the country development contexts or for other reasons.

22. The implementation status of the 92 recommendations reviewed is summarized in table 5. The same information, classified by theme, is provided in annex II.

Table 5
Implementation status of evaluation recommendations (number and percentage)

Level	Full follow up	Not yet due	Ongoing	Partial	Pending	Not applicable	Total
Project	19	9	3	8	0	4	43
IFAD country/government	28	6	2	1		2	39
Government	3		2	2			7
IFAD regional level	2						2
IFAD corporate level				1			1
Total (number)	**52**	**15**	**7**	**12**	**0**	**6**	**92**
Total (percentage)	**57**	**16**	**8**	**13**	**0**	**7**	**100**

23.　In all, 52 recommendations, or 57 per cent of the total, have been fully implemented. This is in step with performance in recent years — 54 per cent were fully implemented in the 2008 PRISMA and 60 per cent in the 2007 PRISMA. It should be noted that in this year's review, 16 per cent, or 15 recommendations, that are not yet due are drawn from the IE in Burkina Faso. As stated earlier, a number of recommendations for a new project in Burkina Faso will be addressed during project design in the next PBAS cycle. Omitting these 15 recommendations, a clearer picture of follow-up emerges: 52 of the 77 recommendations currently due have been fully followed up. This constitutes 68 per cent of all recommendations.[5]

24.　Implementation of actions is ongoing for seven recommendations, accounting for 8 per cent of the total. These include actions that have a longer gestation or realization period for which preparations are under way, or recommendations that have been noted in the design of subsequent projects. In Albania, it was suggested that the restructuring of the Mountain Areas Finance Fund should be accompanied by training for staff and management; training needs are currently being identified. In Belize, greater flexibility of project processes was advised to improve the response to change, especially after the mid-term review. Direct supervision under the new project in Belize, the Rural Finance Programme (RFP), should allow this recommendation to be followed.

25.　For 12 recommendations, or 13 per cent, the follow-up has been partial. This usually means that the project or country teams have respected the spirit of the original recommendation and undertaken to make changes in strategy or operations accordingly, but were unable to fully comply with the recommendation because of constraints or changes in the country or project context, or as a result of the way the scope of work is defined by understandings with governments. For example, in Brazil, the evaluation recommended increasing the allocation to Brazil under the PBAS, and expanding resources devoted to non-project activities. The PBAS allocation is a function of the PBAS formula, and is not made at the discretion of Management. All countries eligible for IFAD loans and grants will have higher PBAS allocations in the 2010-2012 period as a result of the increase in IFAD's resource availability following its successful Eighth Replenishment. Activities pertaining to knowledge management and policy dialogue in Brazil are now supported through non-reimbursable contributions from IFAD and its partners in the country.

26.　Six of the recommendations, or 7 per cent, were not applicable owing to changing development contexts in the country concerned or other reasons, such as agreements with governments. In Romania, IFAD closed its last project in 2007 and there are no further IFAD loans in the pipeline for the country, given that it is now a member of the European Union. Because IFAD activities were terminated, there were not enough opportunities to follow up on the two recommendations.

27.　In summary, there are no recommendations pending or not followed up. Every recommendation elicited some action and was either partially applied or not

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[5] The projects or programmes used as sources of responses are listed in annex III.

complied with because of changed circumstances. In both 2007 and 2008, only 2 per cent of the recommendations were pending follow-up action.

C. Thematic review

28. This section looks at the thematic classification of recommendations. A system of four thematic blocks, subdivided into 24 thematic areas,[6] has been developed to classify recommendations. Trends can thus be tracked and any areas that need to be addressed can be highlighted. The thematic blocks are:

- **Targeting and gender:** targeting; gender; beneficiaries; organizations of the poor;
- **Technical areas:** natural resource management; private sector and markets; analysis, studies and research; rural finance; infrastructure; training and capacity-building; policy dialogue; partnerships;
- **Project management:** decentralization; project design and formulation; project management and administration; field presence; results measurement and M&E; human resources; supervision; and
- **Cross-cutting themes:** knowledge management; sustainability; innovation and replication.

Table 6
Evaluation recommendations by theme and nature

Block	Theme	Nature			Total	Percentage
		Operational	Strategic	Policy		
Targeting and gender	targeting		8		8	9
	gender					
	beneficiaries	1	7		8	9
	organizations of the poor	3	3		6	7
Technical areas	natural resource management		3		3	3
	private sector, market		7		7	8
	analysis, studies, research	1			1	1
	rural finance	1	5		6	7
	infrastructure					
	training and capacity-building	2	2		4	4
	policy dialogue		2		2	2
	partnerships		6		6	7
Project management	decentralization					
	project design and formulation	3	3		6	7
	project management and administration	6	1		7	8
	field presence		1		1	1
	results measurement, M&E	3	3		6	7
	human resources	2			2	2
	supervision		2		2	2
Cross-cutting	knowledge management		3		3	3
	sustainability	1	4		5	5
	innovation and replication		1		1	1
Others	governance					
	strategy	1	7		8	9
	Total	**24**	**68**		**92**	**100**

Targeting and gender

29. **Targeting.** A total of eight recommendations applicable to targeting were agreed upon; all were strategic in nature. Two broad themes were covered in most of the recommendations: (a) the need to devote attention and resources to deprived geographical regions within countries; and (b) the need to give due consideration to socio-cultural contexts in the design and implementation of project activities.

30. In Albania, a focus on poorer geographical areas was recommended. The distribution of funds under the Programme for Sustainable Development in Rural

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[6] Where recommendations apply to more than one thematic area, PMD Front Office and OE discuss and agree on the most relevant classification.

Mountain Areas programme is closely monitored by IFAD and the borrower – through the Mountain Areas Development Agency (MADA) and the Mountain Areas Finance Fund (MAFF) – to ensure an appropriate geographical balance of investments. In addition, the forthcoming Mountain to Markets Programme focuses exclusively on the four poorest regions of Albania. In Belize, under the planned RFP, the capacity-building package offered to each participating credit union would be based on the principle of increased understanding of the cultural context. Assistance to credit unions will be tailored to their specific needs and their socio-economic context. There is also a specific focus on the poorest and the indigenous populations in the southern regions.

31. **Gender.** There are very few gender-related recommendations in this year's evaluations. In earlier PRISMA reports, the number of such recommendations was also negligible: 3 per cent in 2006, 2 per cent in 2007 and only one gender-related recommendation in 2008. A few recommendations made reference to gender – for example, in the context of training for village and women's organizations – but were classified under other relevant categories. Nonetheless, this warrants attention in future ACPs. Within IFAD gender is tracked as a separate indicator and assessed at different stages of the project cycle for the entire portfolio. Gender is also considered in the course of quality assurance reviews conducted in the project design phase, in the project status reports prepared during implementation and in the project completion reports on the completed portfolio.

32. **Participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries.** This aspect was highlighted in eight evaluation recommendations, all of which stressed the need to ensure representation of the poor in projects and in decision-making. One representative IFAD response is the RFP in Belize. It will be implemented by private local institutions such as credit unions. Membership of these bodies is comprised of the local population, including local leaders, to ensure better decision-making and build local capacity.

33. **Organizations of the poor.** The six recommendations related to this theme emphasized the creation of local organizations, support to apex bodies and analysis grounded in local realities. In Pakistan, for example, 31 cluster organizations were set up at the local level, while an apex body was also created in consultation with stakeholders. The capacity-building of the apex body was supported by an IFAD grant.

Technical Areas

34. **Natural resource management.** Three recommendations covered in the PRISMA focused on natural resource management in Burkina Faso (see box 1).

Box 1
Participatory watershed management in Burkina Faso

The Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD) promotes financing instruments and accompanying measures in five pilot watersheds as a means of developing inter-village and inter-community consensus. This is expected to encourage users and decision-makers to adopt natural resource management rules. The integrated watershed management approach, supported through a Global Environment Facility grant, should ensure that the building of a consensus among natural resource users and owner-managers involves elected commune officials, socio-professional organizations and public technical services.

The approach is based on a sound analysis of the resource dynamics concerned, and on existing operating approaches and management rules. All villages in the five watersheds will be involved in the project.

Land tenure security has been built into each local investment subproject as a cross-cutting issue, starting with the community-driven development approach of the PDRD.

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35. **Private sector and markets.** The evaluations reviewed in this PRISMA contain seven recommendations concerning market development, enterprises and the

private sector. Examples of recommendations and the responses implemented include:

- In Albania, it was recommended that small-scale and undercapitalized farmers be supported in making the transition away from small-scale farming. Under the Mountain Areas Development Programme, MADA is co-financing, together with programme beneficiaries, the introduction and development of technological innovations. MADA has also implemented a labour force and capacity-building programme to extend the pool of appropriately qualified workers available to emerging mountain businesses.

- In Brazil, it was recommended that IFAD should continue working in the provision of support services for small-scale farmers, such as financial services, technical assistance and applied research. The first strategic objective of the new results-based COSOP is to increase commercial agricultural production by small-scale farmers. The COSOP will work towards providing access to markets under rewarding and sustainable conditions through measures such as: (a) improving productive infrastructure, equipment and support services; (b) strengthening farmers' organizations; (c) promoting and supporting productive alliances; and (d) providing incentives to small-scale farmers. These strategic objectives have been incorporated into the design of new projects.

36. **Analysis, studies and research.** There was only one recommendation relating to this theme: the suggestion that a new agriculture and livestock impact study be designed in Pakistan. It was not possible to undertake the proposed study, but beneficiary workshops were conducted by the project. These revealed that the project had achieved significant growth in agricultural and livestock production in the project area.

37. **Rural finance.** Six recommendations applied to rural finance. At the corporate level, rural finance received increased attention following the presentation of the Rural Finance Policy to the Board in April 2009.[7] The new policy builds on, updates and supersedes the Rural Finance Policy of 2000, in response to recommendations made in the 2006 corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's rural finance projects.

38. **Training and capacity-building.** Four recommendations were made that apply to training and capacity-building. In Albania, a restructuring strategy for the Mountain Areas Finance Fund was developed with IFAD assistance and approved by the Government. The strategy included a business plan, a new statute and an act of establishment. In addition, identification of training needs for staff and management is ongoing. In Pakistan, the project provided training and revolving funds for small loans to members of village and women's organizations. The training will enable a more pro-active management of internal savings and lending.

39. **Policy dialogue.** Two recommendations related to policy dialogue were issued in the Brazil CPE. The ACP recommended policy dialogue through initiatives such as the Commission on Family Farming (REAF) to disseminate IFAD-promoted innovation and knowledge in the region. In response, last September, IFAD approved the third and final grant of US$1.08 million to REAF. The objectives of the grant are to consolidate the REAF, prepare an impact assessment, and disseminate lessons learned to other IFAD partners in Latin America and other regional groups. The Brazil ACP also recommended that IFAD should devote sufficient attention to maintaining close dialogue with the federal government on strategic directions, policy issues and all aspects of the Fund's relations with the country. In response, the federal government has fully endorsed the new COSOP, representing a shared vision of IFAD's contribution to rural development in Brazil.

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[7] EB 2009/96/R.2/Rev.1.

40. **Partnerships.** There were six recommendations on building and sustaining partnerships. In Brazil, it was recommended that IFAD intensify its collaboration with federal and state governments. It was also recommended that IFAD expand its outreach to states and other actors, including exploring opportunities for direct lending to state governments. In response, the projects currently under design would be implemented by state governments and would support collaboration among federal research enterprises, state research enterprises, state extension services and other service providers. Also as part of the COSOP orientation, the federal government and IFAD have agreed to lend directly to the state governments.

Project management

41. **Project design and formulation.** There were six recommendations dealing with design issues. In Belize, it was suggested that future projects clearly indicate their management arrangements and potential time frames. This recommendation will be taken into consideration during the implementation of the RFP in Belize. The ACP suggested that a clear counterpart – in terms of cash and labour equity – should be required for specific subprojects. The RFP beneficiaries interested in joining a credit union and opening a savings account will therefore now be required to put up a cash counterpart in order to benefit from the share and savings incentive (matching grant) scheme. In Pakistan, it was suggested that future projects with a community development approach should include a three-year phase-out stage. This would be incorporated into the design of future projects.

42. **Project management and administration.** Project management issues generated seven recommendations. In Belize, it was recommended that there should be intensive support at the commencement of a project to ensure that design is effectively translated into implementation and the needed capacity is built. The RFP has a large capacity-building component including specialized international technical assistance to achieve this objective. In addition, IFAD will directly supervise the project and will pay special attention to this issue. It was also suggested that projects should institute procurement processes that allow for the limited markets and have levels of bureaucracy appropriate to small contracts. Recognizing that most problems in the past have arisen from a combination of cumbersome procedures imposed by IFAD cofinanciers and the limited experience of project staff, RFP staff will receive substantial induction training in the early stages of the project, followed by close direct supervision by IFAD.

43. **Country presence.** The Brazil CPE suggested that the Latin America and Caribbean Division should explore the possibility of enhancing its country presence in Brazil. As stated and agreed in the COSOP, a country office will be set up and a country officer based in Brazil will be recruited. The Fund and the Government are currently negotiating arrangements for this office.

44. **Results measurement, M&E.** In PRISMA 2009 six recommendations focused on M&E. In addition to the specific projects, IFAD has introduced a number of processes to improve the capture and aggregation of results from the field, including a new online tool for inputing indicators from the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) and new software to facilitate baseline and follow-up surveys in the projects. At the project level, in Brazil, a strategic-level recommendation focused on providing support to strengthen Brazil's M&E capacity by, inter alia, promoting a more active involvement of PREVAL (Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Poverty-Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean) in the country. In the new COSOP, collaboration with PREVAL will be fostered under a strategic objective. PREVAL is already supporting the Gente de Valor Project in Bahia in the implementation of RIMS.

45. **Human resources.** There were two recommendations related to human resources, both addressing staffing issues at the project level. In Belize, as suggested,

experienced rural development implementers at the management and field level will be built into the credit unions, which are the implementing agencies for the RFP, to serve as mentors and to provide training for local project staff. In Pakistan, the problem of low salaries was resolved and salary scales were harmonized, as recommended.

46. **Supervision.** Two recommendations were generated by supervision issues. In Brazil, in response to the recommendations, the ongoing projects and new projects have all been brought under direct supervision. At the corporate level, over 80 per cent of the portfolio has been shifted to direct supervision. This is already yielding benefits in terms of learning, enhanced implementation support, better follow-up and increased rigour in assessing and rating projects.

Others

47. **Strategy:** There are 8 recommendations that deal with strategic issues at the project level. In Brazil, it was agreed that the Fund would not engage directly in enabling access to land. In Belize, as per the evaluation recommendations, the investments for the RFP have been envisaged as long term investments, similar to that provided to the Toledo Cacao Growers Association. The investments will develop local institutions, including both local governance structures and specific interest groups.

Cross-cutting themes

48. **Knowledge management.** Three recommendations emphasize the advantage of expanding the role of knowledge management in order to provide strategic support and advice. In Brazil, it was suggested that IFAD should become one of the central partners in the management of knowledge on rural poverty issues, and efforts should be directed towards documenting project experiences and sharing them with key actors. It was also recommended that IFAD facilitate collaboration between Brazil and Africa, in the lusophone countries (see box 2).

Box 2
Knowledge management in Brazil

One of the strategic objectives set by the new COSOP for Brazil is that of disseminating and exchanging information. The programme will launch discussions and knowledge-sharing networks so that successful experiences and technologies for development can be exchanged, in particular, in the semi-arid north-east region. It also emphasizes partnerships with relevant institutions involved in science, technology and innovation. Support will also be provided for the monitoring of climate change and dissemination of adaptation measures.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Agrarian Development and other federal entities, The COSOP will undertake national-level activities that focus on policy options to support family farmers in MERCOSUR countries.

It is also expected that the COSOP will benefit Brazil's South-South cooperation programme, particularly in Africa. Learning exchange learning visits have been organized with Cape Verde and South Africa.

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49. **Innovation and replication.** One recommendation regarding innovation and replication was made in the Brazil CPE. It was suggested that the Fund should devote more attention to scouting for innovative solutions from different sources. In response, one of the strategic objectives included in the COSOP is that of improving the capacity of the rural poor through knowledge generation and dissemination. The COSOP is also designed to foster networks and knowledge-sharing among organizations. It will scout for and systematize experiences to improve the design, implementation and articulation of policies in the region.

50. **Sustainability.** Five recommendations focused on post-project sustainability. In Albania, it was recommended that MAFF be restructured (see box 3). In Pakistan, it was suggested that IFAD should explore supporting post-project sustainability

through working with financial apex institutions or even trust funds. Through a small country grant, IFAD currently finances the Sarhad Rural Support Programme to support the apex body set up by the Dir Area Support Project. This one-year grant project is under implementation, and will be continued with provincial government funding in 2010.

Box 3
Restructuring of the Mountain Areas Finance Fund (MAFF) in Albania

MAFF is undergoing a process of privatization, which will allow it the operational and managerial freedom needed to remain competitive, while continuing to serve beneficiaries effectively. Originally a foundation, MAFF has been converted into a financial development company and is currently 100 per cent government-owned. A strategic investor is expected to be brought in during the second half of 2009.

IFAD support has been crucial in transforming MAFF into a self-sustaining, non-banking financial institution. For example, IFAD financed international technical assistance to identify and strengthen MAFF's comparative advantages. IFAD also assisted MAFF in developing a new conversion strategy, which has been approved by the Government, a business plan, and a new statute and act of establishment.

In addition, MAFF is now licensed to operate as a non-banking financial institution.

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51. The 2008 ARRI examined two themes in greater detail to contribute to the internal learning process – country context and project-level M&E. These two themes are also explored here, and several of the initiatives taken within IFAD are illustrated.

52. **Country context.** Country context is defined as the initial and evolving conditions under which a project or country programme is prepared, implemented and evaluated. The ARRI found that country presence and direct supervision increase the understanding of the context and help to achieve satisfactory achievements in difficult environments. Key findings emerging from the ARRI are: (a) there is a need to provide more differentiated products and services to match diverse contexts; (b) projects in fragile states tend to be insufficiently differentiated, overambitious, overdesigned and undersupported, and need greater political-economic analysis; (c) better performance in fragile states needs simplified COSOPs and projects, better analysis of the context, robust and better-supported implementation arrangements and an increased country presence; and (d) IFAD needs to be better equipped to provide knowledge services and differentiated financial products relevant and attractive to middle-income countries (MICs).

53. These recommendations have been addressed in recent corporate discussions and documents. Notes on both fragile states[8] and MICs[9] were presented during the Consultation on the Eighth Replenishment. A set of suggested principles was elaborated that could be incorporated into both COSOP and project design.

54. International financial institutions have identified 46 fragile states, of which 40 are members of IFAD. IFAD will adopt a differentiated country programme and project design for fragile states reflecting the weaker institutions and the need for capacity-building in these states. Country strategy and projects in these states will focus more intensively on: (a) vulnerability and economic empowerment; (b) food security; (c) gender; (d) institution-building; and (e) natural resource management and climate change. There will also be greater simplicity in project objectives and activities to allow for the limited capacity of many fragile states to manage and implement development projects. Expanded country presence and direct supervision should also enable better analysis in these countries. Where possible projects should attempt cofinancing through harmonized procedures to reduce transaction costs on these governments.

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[8] REPL.VIII/4/R.5.
[9] REPL.VIII/4/R.4.

55. Seventy-seven MICs are members of IFAD, and relevant and country-appropriate engagement with MICs is being addressed in new approaches presented during the Replenishment. IFAD has recognized the need to remain relevant in these countries through greater value-added and adapting strategies to their needs. IFAD will emphasize more collaborative approaches in programmes with MICs. This could include leveraging contributions from MIC members for knowledge-sharing and innovation in low-income countries. It could also push for a wider variety of financing packages for MICs, with a choice of combinations of lending period, grace period and interest rate. A wider range of instruments will also be offered including lending to subsovereign entities, private sector and farmers' organizations. There would also be streamlined procedures for MICs with demonstrated management success in projects.

56. **Project-level M&E:** The critique of project-level M&E highlighted in the ARRI included limited scope, particularly a lack of data on the impact of operations, excessive complexity, low data quality, weak institutional capacity, limited resources and a lack of use. In terms of lessons for improving M&E systems, the report highlights the need to stimulate real demand by creating strong incentives for accountability and learning, the limited technical capacity available in developing countries and the need for capacity development, and the need to tailor M&E activities to the specific context, capacity and requirements.

57. In IFAD, the value of M&E has been emphasized to regional divisions and, in turn, to projects, both as an instrument of upward accountability to the Board and also as an essential component of project planning and management. At the level of outputs and outcome, a broad menu of indicators has been prepared under the RIMS framework that could be tracked through project-level M&E systems. Projects are urged to select only the few indicators that are relevant to the project (and chosen by the project themselves). Therefore while maintaining cross-comparability throughout the portfolio, projects can still adapt the results to report according to their own constraints and context. Reporting on outputs has been high (over 85 per cent of required projects reporting). Reporting on outcomes is not as high but has been increasing. With regard to impact measurement, the impact manual has been circulated to projects. It requires the mandatory collection of data related only to two easily measurable and comparable aspects – the anthropometric measurements of children and household assets. In countries and project areas where alternative sources of data are available, projects are advised to simply use reliable data from other national or regional surveys.

58. A number of tools are being developed at the corporate level to facilitate M&E processes and reporting at the project level. This includes an online data inputing platform that was piloted at headquarters in 2009 and will be rolled out to the project level. This should reduce the workload, minimize human error, and allow the aggregation and analysis of data at the corporate level. In addition, PMD has developed software to enable projects conducting impact surveys (baseline surveys or later comparator surveys) to enter data and easily generate reports.

59. While limited capacity at the level of governments cannot be directly remedied, IFAD Management and regional divisions are undertaking a number of initiatives to bolster capacity. Country teams and officers are present at regional workshops and seminars where project implementation and M&E issues are discussed. The regional initiatives that are under implementation to improve M&E capacity at the project level include:

    • In the Western and Central Africa Division (PA), the West Africa Rural Foundation has been supported by a large four-year grant for the coordination and management of a programme dedicated to strengthening the M&E capabilities of projects in the region. Specific objectives include building the capacities of project staff, knowledge-sharing and developing best practices related to M&E.

- In the Eastern and Southern Africa Division (PF), a similar large grant supporting a regional programme to strengthen "Managing for Impact" has been under way with the objective of bolstering M&E capacity in projects.

- The Asia and the Pacific Division (PI) annual performance workshop (March 2009) attended by country officers from the region emphasized project-level M&E and empowering country officers to support projects better in this regard.

- Near East and North Africa Division (PN) has recruited a specialist institution, under a grant for capacity-building in managing for results and impact, to strengthen planning and M&E systems at the project level.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean Division (PL), PREVAL is collaborating with a number of projects and countries to boost capacity with regard to M&E systems and planning.

III. Summary review of recommendations made by evaluations undertaken during 2004-2007

60.   This year's PRISMA includes a section on the responses to recommendations made in the last four years, the purpose being to develop a long-term perspective of the PRISMA process, which can then be used to strengthen the learning loop.

A. Status by region

61.   The aggregation of the recommendations made in the four years generates a larger pool of data which, even disaggregated at the divisional level, can be interpreted with some level of confidence. Table 7 shows status by IFAD regional divisions for the evaluations reviewed from 2006 to 2009.

Table 7
Implementation status of recommendations by regional division, 2004-2007* evaluation periods

Division	Country/ Project eval.	Regional eval.**	Full follow up		Not yet due		Ongoing		Partial		Pending		Not applicable		Total	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PA	8		93	54	56	33	1	1	4	2	4	2	13	8	171	20
PF	5	1	80	68	13	11	16	14	4	3	2	2	3	3	118	14
PI	9	2	182	72	12	5	27	11	10	4	12	5	10	4	253	29
PL	9		115	54	47	22	32	15	9	4	4	2	5	2	212	24
PN	8		89	75	10	8	7	6	5	4	4	3	4	3	119	14
Total	**42**	**3**	**559**		**138**		**83**		**32**		**26**		**35**		**873**	**100**
Total (%)			**64**		**16**		**10**		**4**		**3**		**4**		**100**	

* The 2002 and 2003 evaluation periods are not included because follow-up provided for those years was not classified as per follow-up status. Percentages are rounded and may not add up to 100.
** Evaluations listed as regional-level include those that assessed regional strategy, in addition to thematic evaluations spanning several countries such as those assessing performance in decentralizing environments in three countries in PF and organic agriculture in China and India. Country-level includes IEs, CEs and CPEs.

62.   Table 7 shows that 64 per cent of the recommendations received by the divisions were fully followed up. All regions responded vigorously to evaluation recommendations; the response rate is relatively lower in PA and PL, with the corresponding figure being 54 per cent for both. However, it should be noted that in both regions a large number of recommendations were not yet due (33 per cent for PA and 22 per cent for PL), indicating that they could not be fully complied with because the relevant COSOP or new project design had not been introduced at the time of the PRISMA review.

63.   The percentage of pending recommendations is low across the regions at 3 per cent overall. This has been consistent over the last three years. This signifies a generally high level of adherence to recommendations and focused efforts across the

organization to incorporate valid and feasible recommendations into project and programme design.

B.   Status by implementing agency

64.   Table 8 classifies follow-up for the last four years by level of implementing agency.

Table 8
Implementation status of recommendations by level of implementing agency, 2004-2007 evaluation periods

Level*	Full follow up		Not yet due		Ongoing		Partial		Pending		Not applicable		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
IFAD	61	69	1	1	19	21	1	1	0	0	7	8	89	10
Region	19	56	3	9	6	18	0	0	1	3	5	15	34	4
Country	199	67	56	19	25	8	9	3	6	2	4	1	299	32
Government	42	46	13	14	17	18	3	3	15	16	2	2	92	10
Project	275	67	66	16	27	7	19	4	4	1	19	5	410	44
Total	**596**		**139**		**94**		**32**		**26**		**37**		**924**	**100**
Total (%)	**65**		**15**		**10**		**3**		**3**		**4**		**100**	

* The numbers of recommendations by level do not match the numbers by regions, because they include thematic and corporate-level evaluations. A few recommendations addressed to country-level cooperating institutions have been included in the Country category.

65.   Response rates at the level of IFAD, the country and the projects are robust, with 67 per cent or more of the recommendations fully followed up. At the regional level, the response rate is slightly lower, with 56 per cent of the recommendations fully followed up. This is also the result of a large number of recommendations subsequently being deemed to be not applicable, such as the recommendations relating to a regional strategy in PI (since it was decided by Senior Management not to develop new Regional Strategies). Such recommendations represent 15 per cent of all recommendations addressed to the regional divisions.

66.   The lowest performance is at the government level. Only 46 per cent of the recommendations were fully followed up, which is significantly lower than the other levels. A further 16 per cent of the recommendations are still pending. This often reflects the longer and more tenuous chain of follow-up in governments involving several organs and layers. It could also indicate varying levels of commitment among partner countries towards following up on evaluation recommendations. This was reiterated in the external assessment conducted by SADEV, which concluded that while the process has been effective and relevant for IFAD overall and for IFAD's priorities, there were few incentives for partner governments, and therefore their participation and response was limited.

C.   Status by key themes

67.   This section briefly reviews the most common themes that have emerged in recommendations from the last four evaluation years covered. These are:

- Project Management and Administration (this includes 3 per cent of the recommendations dealing with Project Management and 8 per cent that were classified under the earlier category Implementation Advice);

- M&E (8 per cent of the total recommendations);

- Rural Finance (8 per cent);

- Training and capacity-building (8 per cent); and

- Targeting (targeting itself comprises 6 per cent of the total; beneficiary participation another 2 per cent)

Project Management and Administration

68.   Recommendations related to project management include recommendations mostly from the project-level evaluations (IEs and CEs). Common themes encountered include management and information flows within projects, procurement, staffing at the local level, budgets and fund flows, disbursement-related issues, infrastructure

related to projects, technical advice related to crop and livestock production systems, and coordination of projects and programmes at the national level.

69. Most of the recommendations are met through measures such as process restructuring, increased efforts during the subsequent supervisions, strengthened and more flexible project management bodies or increased staffing in key areas of deficiency. With increased country presence and direct supervision of projects, it will be easier for IFAD to track project-related issues. These changes enable Management to identify problems, build consensus on feasible solutions, and increase the rigour and efficiency of project supervision and implementation. Increasingly the "decision-taking and action chain" extends deeper into the countries. Information exchange and discussions between headquarters and the field are improving.

Monitoring and Evaluation

70. M&E has received attention in a number of evaluations. It has also been a key focus area for IFAD Management since the adoption of the Framework for a Results Management System.[10] Recommendations on M&E have touched on issues such as establishing effective monitoring systems in projects, increasing focus on measuring results and impact in project areas, expanding material and human resources dedicated to M&E (including recommendations for contracting or consulting services specifically for the purpose), conducting baseline surveys in projects, and emphasis on M&E during the initial phases of the projects. Several recommendations also suggested providing support to national systems and harmonizing M&E efforts with national programmes.

71. At the level of the specific projects and programmes being evaluated, projects have responded by taking steps to enhance monitoring systems, recruiting consultants for the review and scaling up of systems, and paying greater attention to M&E issues in forthcoming COSOPs and projects. In addition to the individual responses, there have been attempts at the corporate level to increase awareness and adaptation of the RIMS systems. Reporting for RIMS first-level indicators (measuring outputs) is quite high (paragraph 57, above).

72. For the third level (impact), data are collected through baseline surveys or comparable data already available in national databases. About 35 projects have finalized survey reports, and a large number of projects are currently implementing surveys, including follow-up surveys. These processes will be supported by tools being developed by PMD – the online form for inputing annual RIMS data, which would reduce human error and aid aggregation and analysis of data; and the updated software application for data entry and analysis to be used during surveys by the projects.

Rural Finance

73. Recommendations related to rural finance included the corporate-level evaluation of the earlier Rural Finance Policy.[11] Recommendations have focused on themes such as improved targeting of the poor, emphasizing loan recovery in order to make financial intermediaries sustainable, establishing partnerships with other financial institutions, and strengthening financial operators. It was suggested that the policy itself should be updated and that IFAD should consult with the Board about best practices for rural finance and their implications.

74. Individual responses have included strategies such as focusing on marginal and small-scale farmers, accepting participation in training as a form of in-kind collateral for poor borrowers, targeting poorer segments through more appropriately designed loans, stricter control regarding borrower repayments, creating networks with other government initiatives, and strengthening second-tier banking.

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[10] EB 2003/80/R.6/Rev.1.
[11] EB 2000/69/R.12.

75. At the corporate level, IFAD presented the new Rural Finance Policy to the Board in April 2009, which approved it for implementation.[12] At the micro level, the policy states that IFAD should support the productive poor and their organizations, while at the same time reaching the poorest through income transfers, safety nets, direct microenterprise promotion, graduation programmes and targeted schemes. It also indicates that IFAD should support the development of efficient financial-sector infrastructure by building both human and institutional capacity. IFAD will also work with governments and development partners to develop more conducive national policies and an enabling framework. The policy emphasizes: (a) supporting a variety of financial services; (b) promoting a wider range of institutions and delivery channels; (c) supporting demand-driven and innovative approaches; (d) encouraging market-based approaches; (e) developing long-term strategies focused on sustainability and poverty outreach; and (f) participating in policy dialogue. Recognizing remittances as a crucial tool for poverty alleviation, IFAD also supports a demand-driven facility to promote innovative approaches to remittances in rural areas.

Training and capacity-building

76. Recommendations on training and capacity-building have focused both on project management units and on the capacity-building of grassroots and community-based organizations. Recommendations have proposed training for local organizations such as credit unions, village or women's organizations, and extension officers; enhancing the management and technical capacities of implementing agencies; and, from time to time, training for IFAD staff is also recommended.

77. Most recommendations related to capacity-building in the field are addressed through IFAD coordination with government or other service providers. Training in income-generating activities designed specifically for the local context has been adopted in a number of projects and has yielded benefits. Capacity-building at the level of project management units will receive progressively more attention through the increased number of country offices and direct supervision missions.

78. With regard to the recommendations related to in-house training, often the division or department concerned has agreed to the recommendation, but priorities or budgets of other departments have not allowed execution of training programmes. The number of training opportunities available has increased in the last few years, especially with regard to managerial skills and competencies. Seminars and brown-bag lunches are organized regularly as a means of disseminating learning from projects and from other institutions. Instead of organizing all training in-house, there is perhaps scope for interaction and collaboration with other organizations to provide even more opportunities to staff.

Targeting and beneficiary participation

79. Targeting is a key area of focus for IFAD. Recommendations related to targeting propose a range of actions such as improving inclusion of the marginalized and poorest groups, designing activities specifically for women and youth, increasing geographical focus on vulnerable areas, establishing clear criteria for the selection of geographic areas for project intervention, developing specific measures for sections of the population that cannot take advantage of commercialization, and understanding the cultural context for appropriate targeting.

80. A number of recommendations also focus on participation by beneficiaries and suggest, for example, developing participatory diagnostic tools to ensure the poorest are identified and their needs addressed, increasing the range of stakeholders participating in project planning, enhancing community participation through poverty profiling and local capacity-building, reinforcing support for civil society organizations, and securing the participation of people's representatives in decision-making.

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[12] EB 2009/96/R.2.

81. In the individual projects or country programmes, these concerns have been addressed through, for example, the identification of areas using comprehensive indicators covering socio-economic aspects, relative poverty, infrastructure and social capital. Responses have included setting up income-generating activities targeting women, designing project activities specifically for young people, and capacity-building for small-scale farmers initially unable to participate in commercial activities.

82. Responses addressing the need for more participation have included conducting participatory rural appraisals to identify beneficiaries more effectively, recruiting community mobilization officers to carry out social assessments and land use mapping to gauge community interest, institutionalizing civil society participation in governance, and consultations at local levels and with local leaders to design projects.

83. The recent decline in ratings for targeting warrants reflection and a renewed focus on targeting within the portfolio. Internal reviews of the portfolio yield interesting findings and examples for potential replication. A number of projects across the portfolio have successfully implemented innovative and effective targeting strategies without compromising on efficiency and costs. Participatory diagnoses have used a range of techniques such as tracking income of beneficiaries across years, ranking of well-being to determine project benefits, ranking of project services by beneficiaries, trend analysis of different factors, and mapping of women's roles and responsibilities in communities to refine gender strategies.

84. While most projects do not move beyond geographic targeting that focuses on poorer districts, some have considered innovative criteria such as food deficit villages, vulnerability of communities, crop dependence in areas that are trying to move out of former government support, endowment of natural resources, and presence of civil society. Similarly, the instruments used for targeting could be extended beyond landholding to include locally relevant criteria. Participatory wealth rankings have served projects well. Other projects have focused on gender or ethnicity. In some cases, traditionally deprived communities or professions have also been targeted.

85. For beneficiary participation some projects have relied on extensive communications campaigns such as radio or other media in local languages. Another aspect that should be emphasized further is social targeting. Very few projects have been targeted in terms of social differentiation and most projects are blind to ethnic or social disparities. Some projects in Latin America and a few in Asia have focused on indigenous regions. But this is an aspect that could be more consciously factored into project and programme design.

86. One difficulty in focusing on the marginalized in the recent portfolio is the recent emphasis on value addition and the focus on supporting intermediary organizations that contribute to local growth and employment. Value chain components in projects indicate that geographical targeting alone would be inadequate. Instead, an examination of the opportunities within the chain, and in and among accompanying sectors and actors would be needed to direct benefits to the poorest. Also sometimes the need to focus on the productive poor (as mentioned in the Targeting Policy) is misinterpreted and project design neglects the poorest or the marginalized.

87. Overall, there is growing recognition of the need to emphasize targeting and to document and disseminate best practices within PMD and to the projects. In-house seminars have been organized on reconciling value added approaches with good targeting by the Technical Advisory Division (PT). The Quality Assurance reviews also increasingly focus on development benefits and each newly approved project is examined in terms of identification of the target group and an assessment of the project benefits to the rural poor.

D. Implementation status for key corporate evaluations

88. In addition to providing opportunities to improve operations and strategies by responding to individual recommendations, corporate-level evaluations have often covered areas of reform that have subsequently been addressed and improved across the organization. Key insights have been delivered and IFAD Management has been committed to reform and improvement on a number of issues. As an illustration, this section addresses two key evaluations conducted: the Direct Supervision Pilot Programme covered in the 2006 ARRI and the Field Presence Pilot Programme covered in the 2007 ARRI.

Direct Supervision

89. The Direct Supervision Pilot Programme (DSPP) was introduced in 1999 to enable the Fund to acquire first-hand knowledge from supervision activities and incorporate lessons learned from ongoing activities into project design. OE conducted a corporate-level evaluation of the DSPP in 2004-05[13] to assess the overall impact; the evaluation concluded that direct supervision had great potential to enhance development effectiveness; to increase the level of attention directed at the country programmes; and to develop IFAD's knowledge base and strengthen country-level coordination. In response to the recommendations of the DSPP evaluation the main policy actions taken included:[14]

- amending the Agreement Establishing IFAD (Governing Council resolution 143/XXIX), which allowed IFAD to entrust loan administration and project implementation to a variety of institutions or entities (in addition to the international cooperating institutions originally envisaged);

- amending the lending policies (Governing Council resolution 143/XXIX), to allow project appraisal and the supervision of project implementation to be entrusted to a variety of institutions or entities and, on a selective basis, to allow project implementation to be supervised directly;

- approving the continued direct supervision of the projects under DSPP;

- approving the IFAD Policy on Supervision and Implementation Support,[15] allowing IFAD to adopt supervision by both IFAD and cooperating institutions;

- approving a revised framework for results-based COSOPs,[16] describing how IFAD will manage diversified supervision arrangements.

90. The SADEV assessment also noted that the DSPP evaluation was timely and its recommendations fed directly into the development of the new policy. In response to specific recommendations, IFAD has ensured that the determination of supervision modality for a project emerges from an analysis of the country context including: (a) national capacity; (b) nature, size and complexity of the programme; (c) learning and knowledge sharing potential; and (d) availability of appropriate resources. Selection of the modality starts with the analysis during the preparation of the COSOP. The policy also allows for the possibility of relying on national/ regional institutions, as recommended.

91. The concept of "supervision" has been internalized in IFAD, as suggested, and signifies two mutually reinforcing and interlinked processes.[17] Supervision focuses on "the administration of loans, for the purposes of the disbursement of the proceeds of the loan and the supervision of the implementation of the project or programme concerned" and ensures compliance with loan covenants, procurement, disbursement and the end-use of funds. It is an effective tool for promoting

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[13] Direct Supervision Pilot Programme Corporate-Level Evaluation, Report No. 1687, November 2005.
[14] EB 2007/90/R.31.
[15] EB 2006/89/R.4/Rev.1.
[16] EB 2006/88/R.4.
[17] EB 2006/89/R.4/Rev.1.

economy, efficiency and good governance. Implementation support focuses on development impact based on an assessment of progress against agreed indicators, joint identification of problems with recipients and implementers, and agreement on suitable actions to achieve the project's development objectives. Where needed, this is strengthened by project-specific technical support, policy dialogue, innovations and programme and/or design adjustments to improve effectiveness. Attention is maintained on social and environmental dimensions, including improved targeting and mainstreaming of gender issues.

92. IFAD has developed systems and procedures for areas such as the definition of corporate quality standards for loan disbursements, inter-departmental agreements on work flows, issuance of the Direct Supervision Guidelines, and a harmonized and upgraded format for project supervisions.

93. Benefits of direct supervision have already been observed with regard to the quality and management of the portfolio. The quality of performance analyses, especially in the case of problem projects, has improved. Divisions and country programme managers (CPMs) have identified problems that were not earlier uncovered by cooperating institutions. This has allowed earlier and easier identification of performance-related risks. IFAD's engagement in the field with borrowers and stakeholders has also improved significantly.

94. IFAD has undertaken a series of training and capacity-building measures, including a five-day intensive supervision training. The basic supervision training programme provided an overview of supervision procedures and processes in the different phases of the project cycle. The main focus was on fiduciary responsibilities (mainly annual planning and budgeting, procurement, loan administration and financial management), in addition to technical aspects for preparing and conducting supervision missions. Since September 2007, the training has been delivered to 191 staff members, including 25 participants from country offices.

95. In the last two years IFAD has ramped up the direct supervision in projects, in view of the benefits and improved development effectiveness emerging from this change. As at April 2009, 226 projects had gone through direct supervision. This includes the 15 pilot projects, the 68 projects that were newly approved with the provision of direct supervision arrangements and 143 projects that were converted from cooperating institution supervision to direct supervision.

Country Presence

96. Field presence was the focus of a key corporate-level evaluation conducted in 2006. A separate corporate-level evaluation was released on the evaluation of the Field Presence Pilot Programme (FPPP).[18] Over and above the 15 countries covered under the pilot, three satellite countries (covered by the field presence officer in addition to his country of residence) and countries with out-posted CPMs and proxy field presence[19] were included in the evaluation.

97. As part of the recommendations, it was suggested that country presence should be established in tandem with other initiatives such as direct supervision. This has been taken on board. Country presence staff members routinely participate in supervision missions, in divisional retreats and in regional implementation workshops. Other recommendations include increasing the outposting of CPMs. In addition to the earlier outposted CPMs in Colombia and Panama, IFAD has outposted CPMs in Viet Nam, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Sudan.

98. The evaluation suggested negotiating direct hosting agreements with the governments and exploring hosting arrangements with other United Nations agencies. IFAD has negotiated and signed three host country arrangements (with Colombia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam) and is finalizing three

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[18] EB 2007/91/R.6.
[19] Under proxy field presence, IFAD normally recruits a consultant locally who can undertake a range of activities in support of the country programme.

other agreements (with Ethiopia, Kenya and Panama). IFAD has entered into nine hosting agreements with the United Nations Development Programme and two with the World Food Programme.

99. At a strategic level, it was suggested that the next phase of country presence should incorporate the four dimensions contained in the pilot (i.e. implementation support, policy dialogue, partnership building and knowledge management). This is being addressed and work programmes of specific country offices are being tailored to the requirements of country programmes. Progress reports specifically cover all the key dimensions.[20]

100. With regard to programme design and implementation support, country presence staff members participate frequently in supervision missions, and in mid-term reviews and project design. They have been involved in the preparation of COSOPs. Country offices also play a central role in the review of key administrative processes such as annual workplans, withdrawal applications and procurement documents.

101. With regard to knowledge management, the examples of activities undertaken by country offices include:

- In Viet Nam, a knowledge fair was organized to exchange and disseminate experiences.
- South-South learning events have been organized, such as Bolivian microentrepreneurs visiting Colombia to exchange lessons with their Colombian counterparts.

102. With regard to policy dialogue and partnership building in the countries, country officers are well placed to participate in these processes at the national level. Some examples include:

- Country office staff members are routinely requested by governments to participate in government-led working groups and meetings.
- In India, the Meghalaya Rural Development Society has been recognized as the platform for convergence of all government programmes in one of IFAD's project areas (Himalayas).
- The IFAD country officer in the United Republic of Tanzania acted as the chair of the Food and Agriculture Sector Working Group, comprised of government policymakers and donor stakeholders. The Country offices have also provided IFAD with an opportunity to meet more regularly with its partners in-country.
- IFAD is a full member of the United Nations Country Team in six countries (in some countries, IFAD is represented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) while in others the United Nations Country Team is not active).
- The office in Egypt has participated extensively in joint forums; it has contributed to the UNDP/Egyptian Government Joint Programme on Climate Change Risk Management in Egypt, the Donor Assistance Group subgroup on renewable natural resources, and the United Nations Subcommittee on Nutrition.

103. The recommendation suggested that the country offices would benefit from a clearer delegation of authority and access to corporate instruments. In terms of defining responsibilities and authority, all country officers are part of the country programme management team and are actively involved in programmatic aspects of the operations. Further new corporate-level instruments being developed all consider access and compatibility with country presence.

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[20] The most recent progress report was submitted to the Executive Board in December 2008 (EB 2008/95/R.9/Rev.1).

104. Overall, country presence is viewed in IFAD as an integral part of the organization and its mission. Looking ahead, country offices will be crucial in developing an understanding of the changing conditions of rural poverty through interactions at grassroots level. They will help to design country strategies and projects that are more appropriate to the country context. IFAD will be aligned more closely with the Paris Declaration and could build stronger partnerships with stakeholders.

105. The ARRI, in its synthesis of the evaluations conducted in 2007, concluded that country presence has been highly beneficial in countries in which CPEs were conducted. However, it noted that while country presence was well established, it was not sufficiently institutionalized, and recommended that the presence should be "adequately skilled, fully mandated, properly resourced and well supported by a flow of information and knowledge from headquarters."[21] These suggestions will remain priorities as IFAD expands country presence further.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

106. The follow-up to recommendations agreed in the context of the six evaluations undertaken during 2007 and covered in this report has been satisfactory. Follow-up has been consistent with about two thirds of the evaluation recommendations reviewed in the last four years. Significantly, the number of pending recommendations is negligible. Performance across regional divisions and across levels is satisfactory. Follow-up by partner governments has not been as vigorous, however.

107. This PRISMA also reviewed the two learning themes highlighted in the ARRI: country context and M&E. IFAD has developed approaches to enhance relevance in varying contexts. The approaches recognize the vulnerability and weakened institutions in fragile states, together with the need to deliver greater value and diversity in products in MICs. With regard to project-level M&E, IFAD is undertaking a number of initiatives to stimulate demand from the project level, to simplify processes for the sake of project adoption, and to follow up robustly in the assessment of impact across projects and countries.

108. The two key corporate evaluations of direct supervision and field presence conducted within the last four years have contributed significantly to IFAD's changing operating model. These changes enable IFAD to understand country context better and improve development effectiveness. Both initiatives have been mainstreamed at the corporate level and the associated reform processes are being closely monitored by IFAD Management.

109. The assessment of the IFAD Management response system conducted by SADEV found that the ACP process has been implemented effectively in terms of outputs and the management response system has also achieved most of its objectives at the outcome level. The objectives of management response and its structure are relevant to IFAD and its priorities. The PRISMA was noted for its effect on accountability and transparency.

Recommendations

110. Evaluation recommendations have become fewer in number and more strategic in nature; this has helped IFAD to follow up more consistently. One area where there is possibly scope for improvement in the evaluations is in the resolution of ACPs, which could be more timely. Several evaluations that could have been included in this year's review had to be omitted because the ACPs were finalized too late or too close to the time of the review to allow for follow-up. Admittedly, delays could be the result of difficulties in arriving at consensus within government. This might indicate the need for ensuring a robust consulting process with all critical stakeholders from the start of the evaluation process through to its completion.

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[21] EB 2008/95/R.7.

111. Since gender equity and empowerment is an area of priority for IFAD, increased attention to gender in the evaluations and the subsequent recommendations would help greatly in understanding the nature of the issues and actions required. This will facilitate more effective mainstreaming of gender into projects and programmes.

112. Finally, it is clear from the foregoing analyses that the implementation of agreed recommendations by government authorities is lagging behind. Both for this year and for the last four years in aggregate, government authorities have fully implemented less than half of the recommendations on an annual and four-year basis. The share of pending recommendations is higher for the government level than for all the other levels combined. This is also a reflection of complicated government structures and political constraints. However, a relative lack of commitment or agreement with the recommendations could also explain at least part of the problem. This should be addressed by achieving greater consensus within the Core Learning Partnership, especially with external or government stakeholders, and obtaining the firm commitment of governments. Governments should be encouraged and facilitated to participate throughout the entire evaluation process. In more operational terms, the holding of in-country stakeholder workshops relatively early and using the occasion to formulate the ACPs with the active participation of all stakeholders, is of critical importance.

The Office of Evaluation's comments on the PRISMA 2009 Report

A.   General Observation

1.   The 2009 PRISMA is a well prepared document and analyses the implementation status of the recommendations contained in six evaluation reports. It should be noted that this does not correspond to the number of evaluations undertaken by OE in 2007. The lower number of evaluations reviewed in this year's PRISMA is the result of the decision by Management to postpone the follow-up of selected evaluations[22], where no major country strategy or project development activity was undertaken since the finalization of the corresponding evaluation, as well as those that have been recently completed and there has not been enough time to initiate activities to implement the agreed recommendations.

2.   In this edition of the document, new sections have been introduced including: (i) the examination of progress of recommendations contained in selected corporate-level evaluations (CLEs); and (ii) the analysis of the evaluation recommendations over the period 2004–2007. In addition, as agreed with the Board, the PRISMA continues to include a response to the recommendations in the Annual Report on Results and Impact (ARRI) produced by OE. Finally, as suggested by OE previously, the document includes an overview of the implementation status of evaluation recommendations disaggregated according to the five IFAD regional divisions.

B.   Specific Comments

3.   **The *why* analysis**. The PRISMA gives a good account of follow-up actions undertaken, but it could be further strengthened by including a more detailed explanation of why some recommendations have been only partially implemented or are no longer applicable. For example, the document notes that "it was not possible to undertake" the study in Pakistan proposed by the recommendation (see paragraph 36), but the reader is not provided with sufficient information to understand why this was the case.

4.   **Recommendations not yet due**. Around 15 per cent of the recommendations have been reported as *not yet due* (see tables 5, 7 and 8)*.* it is important that future editions of the PRISMA cover the implementation status of such recommendations as well.

5.   **Sequence of evaluation and new policies, strategies and project design.** The usefulness of the CLEs conducted by OE on IFAD's Direct Supervision Pilot Programme (DSPP) and Field Presence Pilot Programme (FPPP) is underlined by the PRISMA, which notes that these evaluations have had far-reaching implications for the Fund's operating model and development effectiveness. The DSPP and FPPP evaluations were particularly important and timely, especially because they preceded the development of the Fund's policy or approach on the corresponding topics. This raises the importance of ensuring due sequencing, to the extent possible, of evaluations by OE and the development of new policies, strategies and design by Management.

6.   **Recommendations on corporate processes relating to design.** OE agrees that recommendations on corporate processes relating to design should be addressed mainly through specifically formulated CLEs (see paragraph 18), since it is not feasible to draw conclusions about corporate processes affecting the entire portfolio from a single project evaluation. However, over a period of time, project evaluations could repeatedly bring up findings on a similar issue (e.g., inadequate

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[22] As suggested by OE in its comments to the 2008 PRISMA.

attention to project-level monitoring and evaluation in the quality enhancement process), which may therefore merit being treated in a systemic manner by Management.

7. **Classification of recommendations according to thematic blocks and thematic areas.** With reference to table 6, the PRISMA has developed 4 thematic blocks for classifying and tracking the implementation of recommendations. These are further subdivided into 24 thematic areas. Future PRISMAs may wish to reflect further on this classification framework. For example, policy dialogue and partnership thematic areas are currently classified in the "Technical Areas" block together with rural finance, infrastructure, markets, and so on. Recommendations related to knowledge management are instead under the "cross-cutting" block. The next PRISMA may consider developing a thematic block on "Non-Lending Activities" (covering policy dialogue, knowledge management and partnership-building) for classifying and tracking pertinent evaluation recommendations in the future. This is important given the increasing emphasis on non-lending activities in COSOPs and CPEs, as well as the value of non-lending activities for the achievement of development objectives at country level.

8. **Gender.** The PRISMA correctly recognizes the importance of gender issues in IFAD-financed operations. As agreed with the Evaluation Committee during the discussions in December 2008 on the new evaluation manual, gender aspects are addressed within the different evaluation criteria (e.g., under the human and social capital and empowerment rural poverty impact domain) covered in each OE evaluation. This is consistent with the thinking of experts in IFAD and beyond with regard to treating gender as a cross-cutting theme in country strategies and project design, rather than as stand-alone components in investment activities. This explains the reasons why gender issues are embedded in – for example – the "beneficiaries" and "organizations of the poor" thematic areas (see table 6 and paragraph 76) in the PRISMA.

9. Finally, as decided by the Board, OE is embarking in 2009/10 on a CLE on gender, which is expected to further sharpen the focus by OE, IFAD Management and the Governing Bodies on this critical topic.

10. **Government performance is critical.** Evaluations are increasingly finding that government performance, for example in terms of timely allocation of counterpart funds and sound management of IFAD-financed development operations, is critical to ensuring positive project performance. Therefore, it is of concern that only around 46 per cent of recommendations addressed to governments have been fully implemented. This was an issue also raised in OE's comments on the PRISMA in 2008, and may require systemic attention by IFAD Management. On OE's part, efforts are made to ensure due participation of Government representatives and other concerned stakeholders at key intervals during the evaluation process, as a mechanism to build participation and ownership in evaluation findings and recommendations. On the IFAD Management side, as the ACP reflects a commitment between the IFAD Management and partner country government to implement agreed recommendations, the PRISMA should specify the instruments used by IFAD to promote and follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

11. **Timely finalization of the agreement at completion point (ACP).** The introduction of the new OE evaluation manual in 2009 lays out in detail the steps to be followed in the preparation of ACPs, and the corresponding roles and responsibilities of Management, government and OE in the process. Given that the ACP contains an agreement by Management and the government on the main findings and recommendations contained in an evaluation, the active and timely cooperation of both Management and government counterparts is a critical ingredient in ensuring a timely completion of the ACP process.

Implementation status of evaluation recommendations by theme (2009 PRISMA)

(percentage)

Theme	Full	Not yet due	Ongoing	Partial	Pending	Not applicable	Total
Analysis, studies and research	-	-	-	100	-	-	**100**
Beneficiaries and stakeholders participation and consultation	50	38	-	13	-	-	**100**
Project design and formulation	33	17	33	-	-	17	**100**
Decentralization	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Policy dialogue	100	-	-	-	-	-	**100**
Country presence	100	-	-	-	-	-	**100**
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Human resources	100	-	-	-	-	-	**100**
Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Innovation and replication	100	-	-	-	-	-	**100**
Knowledge management	67	-	33	-	-	-	**100**
Natural resource management	100	-	-	-	-	-	**100**
Organizations	67	-	-	33	-	-	**100**
Partnership	83	-	-	17	-	-	**100**
Project management and administration	43	-	29	14	-	14	**100**
Private sector, market and enterprise development	100	-	-	-	-	-	**100**
Rural finance	17	-	-	33	-	50	**100**
Results monitoring, evaluation	50	17	-	33	-	-	**100**
Strategy	25	50	-	25	-	-	**100**
Supervision	50	50	-	-	-	-	**100**
Sustainability	40	20	20	20	-	-	**100**
Training, capacity-building	75	-	25	-	-	-	**100**
Targeting	50	38	-	-	-	13	**100**
Total (percentage)	**57**	**16**	**8**	**13**	**0**	**7**	**100**

Note: the percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Sources of responses to ACP recommendations

Country/project/programme evaluated	Response	
	Project/programme level	Country/corporate level
Interim evaluation		
Burkina Faso: Community-Based Rural Development Project	Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRD), approved in December 2004 Community Investment Programme for Agricultural Fertility (PICOFA), approved in September 2003 Rural Business Development Services Programme, approved in April 2009	
Completion evaluations		
Albania: Mountain Areas Development Programme	Sustainable Development for Rural Mountain Areas (approved December 2005) Mountain to Markets Programme (approved September 2008)	
Belize: Community-Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management	Rural Finance Programme (approved December 2008) Building Pro-poor Capacities for Local Development and provision of Rural Finance (grant, approved in December 2006)	
Pakistan: Dir Area Support Project	Same project- DASP (evaluation conducted before actual project completion) Strengthening Local Institutions in Dir areas (grant, approved in December 2008)	
Romania: Apuseni Development Project	No further projects or programme in Romania	
Country programme evaluations		
Brazil	Semi-arid Sustainable Development Project in the State of Piaui (Viva o Semi-arido), under design Cariri and Serido Sustainable Development Project in the State of Paraiba, under design Institutional Consolidation of the Commission of Family Farming of the Common Market of the South (grant, approved in September 2008)	COSOP approved in September 2008
Corporate-level evaluations		
No corporate-level evaluations included		