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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

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

### **Comments by the Independent Office of Evaluation**

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**For: Review**

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

## Comments by the Independent Office of Evaluation

### I. General Observations

1. This is the tenth PRISMA submitted by IFAD Management to the Evaluation Committee and the Executive Board for their review. In accordance with the IFAD Evaluation Policy<sup>1</sup>, the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) of IFAD hereby provides its comments on the report for consideration by the Committee and the Board.
2. It is worth highlighting that IFAD's Management Response system as captured in the Evaluation Policy – including the Agreement at Completion Point instrument, the PRISMA document and the fact that IOE is required to prepare written comments on PRISMA – is considered an international good practice among development agencies<sup>2</sup>. In this regard, the evaluation departments of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and European Investment Bank fielded a dedicated mission to IFAD headquarters in May 2013 to learn from and gain a deeper appreciation of IFAD's Management Response system, as they themselves are planning to develop a more systematic approach in this area.
3. The 2013 PRISMA is a very well prepared and succinct document. It analyses the implementation status of the recommendations contained in nine evaluations released in previous years<sup>3</sup>.
4. In particular, IOE acknowledges the improvement in the response by IFAD and partners reported in this year's PRISMA, which is partly attributed to more relevant and strategic evaluation recommendations. This is supported in the first footnote of the document, which says that "no recommendations were disputed by either PMD or the Governments in this year's cohort".
5. IOE appreciates the effort in this year's PRISMA to address many of IOE comments to the previous edition; for example, by also including actions taken to follow up on recommendations in the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI), and on tracking recommendations not agreed upon, not yet due or pending, even though some remain to be fully addressed.

### II. Specific Comments

6. **Geographic Targeting.** Paragraph 22 (a) describes the actions taken to address the recommendations on this topic. In this regard, it is useful however to highlight that some evaluations of past country strategies (both previous and recent ones not covered by this PRISMA, such as the Brazil, Mali, India and Indonesia CPEs) found that projects often are implemented across a wide geographic area, spread too thinly across the country (which is especially a concern in larger countries), or cover non-adjointing states/provinces within countries. Evaluations have found that such geographic targeting has constrained effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and is therefore an issue that merits attention in the design of future COSOPs and projects.

<sup>1</sup> See paragraphs 11 and 31 (j) of Revised IFAD Evaluation Policy (EC 2011/66/W.P.8).

<sup>2</sup> As recognised by the Peer Review of IFAD's Evaluation Function by the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the multilateral development banks (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Two additional evaluations conducted primarily in 2011 and included in ARRI 2012 (Jordan and Uganda CPEs) are not included in this year's PRISMA either because the Agreement at Completion Points (ACP) were not available at the time of the PRISMA review, or not enough time was available to allow for meaningful follow-up.

7. **Private sector and markets.** Paragraph 23 underlines the increased attention IFAD is devoting to value chain development, including ensuring linkages with the private sector and promoting access to markets. This is indeed important to enhance incomes, food security and nutrition. At the same time, some evaluations are noting that there is the need to further sharpen approaches to ensure that the interests and participation of the rural poor are safeguarded so that they can be at the centre of the benefits stream.
8. **Corporate-level evaluations.** IOE appreciates the response to recommendations from the Corporate Level Evaluation (CLE) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2010). With regard to paragraph 29, IOE welcomes management's efforts to develop a methodology for *ex post* tracking of allocation of IFAD's resources towards gender. However, recognising the concerned challenges, it might be useful to also develop an approach to track the allocation of resources *ex ante* (both administrative budget, and investment and grant resources) that can be monitored over time, to ensure adequate resources are earmarked right from the beginning.
9. Management efforts to ensure better policy dialogue appear to be moving in the right direction (see section E in the PRISMA). IOE notes in paragraph 34 that "IFAD focus has been on policy issues that have a significant bearing on IFAD-supported projects...IFAD's strategy is to bring its knowledge and experience to bear on issues that emerge from, and have an effect on, its projects." IOE agrees with this. However, IOE believes IFAD policy dialogue efforts at the country level could also contribute to wider policy transformation in the agriculture and rural sectors beyond the realms of individual IFAD-supported projects (e.g., by preparing national agricultural strategies). This is essential also to ensure scaling up by others of successful innovations promoted through IFAD operations.
10. IOE takes notes of the efforts made (see paragraphs 35-36) to strengthen IFAD's capacity to engage in policy dialogue, including enhanced focus on policy dialogue as part of the quality enhancement process. In this regard, IOE recommends that greater focus also be devoted to assess the engagement and emerging results on policy dialogue throughout the COSOP and project life cycle, as well as to ensure that staff are held accountable and have the required incentives for policy dialogue work. This is critical to achieve the IFAD9 commitments of more "active engagement in national policy dialogue on agriculture and rural development".
11. As indicated in IOE's comments last year, it is recommended that, in view of the CLE's strategic importance and far-reaching character, in the periodic follow-up to the recommendations reported to be not due or under implementation, PRISMA includes a dedicated section tracking a complete list of recommendations emanating from past CLEs as well.
12. Moreover, with regard to IFAD Management Responses in general, IOE recommends that in future all CLEs include an action plan matrix similar to the one annexed to the IFAD Management Response for the Joint Africa Evaluation (2009) and the one under preparation for the CLE on IFAD's efficiency providing more information on deliverables, timelines and entities responsible within IFAD for follow-up on evaluation recommendations.
13. **ARRI recommendations.** The report responds to specific recommendations provided in the ARRI 2012.
14. In the future, the PRISMA should apply the same implementation status categories used for recommendations emanating from IOE evaluations (e.g. full follow-up, ongoing, partial, etc.) to ARRI recommendations, and assess implementation status accordingly.