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Investing in rural people

Minutes of the eighty-second session of the Evaluation Committee

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Evaluation Committee — Eighty-third Session
Rome, 2 June 2014

For: Approval

Minutes of the eighty-second session of the Evaluation Committee

1. All Committee members attended the session; Angola, Finland, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria and Norway. Observers were present from China, France and the Netherlands. The Committee was joined by the Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Officer-in-Charge, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE); the Secretary of IFAD (SEC); and other IFAD staff.
2. The provisional agenda contained nine items for discussion, as follows: (i) opening of the session; (ii) adoption of the agenda; (iii) minutes of the eighty-first session of the Evaluation Committee; (iv) revision to the procedures for handling disciplinary measures following integrity investigations, as contained in the IFAD Evaluation Policy; (v) corporate-level evaluation on the achievements of IFAD replenishments; (vi) country programme evaluation for Madagascar; (vii) approach paper for the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's engagement in fragile states; (viii) project performance assessment of the Rural Poverty Reduction Programme in Mongolia; and (ix) other business.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda

3. Committee members agreed to the proposal that two agenda items, namely **the Madagascar country programme evaluation (CPE) and the Mongolia project performance assessment (PPA), be deferred to the next Committee session scheduled for 2 June** on the understanding that deferring consideration of these items would not impinge on any institutional process. **The agenda, thus revised, was duly adopted.**
4. Some members proposed that the issue on the revision to the procedures for handling corrective or disciplinary measures following integrity investigations of the IOE director or IOE staff be held in closed session, while others considered this to be unnecessary. In conclusion, it was agreed that deliberations on this matter would take place in open session.
5. Some members also expressed a preference for longer meetings to allow coverage of more agenda items rather than shorter, more frequent meetings. Referring to the additional session of the Evaluation Committee foreseen for 2 June, it was noted that June was a particularly busy month for representatives covering all three Rome-based agencies, considering the timing of the World Food Programme Executive Board, the Consultation on the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10) and the FAO Council. This concern was noted and **every effort would be made to ensure more efficient and effective meetings in the future.**

Agenda item 3: Minutes of the eighty-first session of the Evaluation Committee

6. **The Committee considered and adopted the minutes without amendment.**

Agenda item 4: Revision to the procedures for handling disciplinary measures following integrity investigations, as contained in the IFAD Evaluation Policy

7. Management presented the document on the Revision to the procedures for handling disciplinary measures following integrity investigations, as contained in the IFAD Evaluation Policy, clarifying that it set out the reasons for the proposed changes and the revised text. It was noted that the changes were supported completely and without qualification by IOE and IFAD Management as they filled an important procedural gap that had required extensive discussion by the Executive Board at its closed session on 18 September. The proposed revisions aimed to:

- (a) Ensure the smooth functioning of the Executive Board;
 - (b) Provide clarity and certainty to current and prospective IOE staff about IFAD disciplinary procedures; and
 - (c) Help ensure that the procedures followed to impose any disciplinary action would withstand scrutiny upon review, should a disciplined IOE staff member file an appeal.
8. The proposed revisions set out the procedures to be followed, and they also specifically reserve for the Board the ultimate authority to take other measures on its own initiative, should it so decide. In accordance with the request of the Committee, a review of practices in similar organizations had been undertaken. The findings revealed that disciplinary decisions pursuant to the outcome of integrity investigations of allegations against staff or heads of independent offices of evaluation were handled in exactly the same manner as for all other staff.
 9. In response to a query, Management clarified that under normal procedures, to protect staff confidentiality, disciplinary sanctions applied to staff are totally confidential. Therefore, once the Board has delegated to the President responsibility for imposing sanctions in this instance, the sanctions applied would be undertaken confidentially and would be known only to the staff member in question.
 10. Committee members expressed their agreement with the proposed changes and revised text and welcomed the support of both IOE and Management in this regard.
 11. **In conclusion, the Committee endorsed the recommendation contained in document EC 2014/82/W.P.2, which would be considered by the Executive Board at its session in April 2014.**

Agenda item 5: Corporate-level evaluation on the achievements of IFAD replenishments

12. The Committee considered the corporate-level evaluation on the achievements of IFAD replenishments together with Management's response thereto. Presentations were made by both IOE and Management. The senior independent advisers' report was also introduced.
13. Members thanked IOE for the timely report and underscored its importance for the IFAD10 Consultation process. The general view was that the replenishment process functioned well; members welcomed in particular the recent introduction of an external chair and the presentation of the midterm review, both of which had enhanced transparency and trust. Further clarity was requested on the difference between the strategic framework and replenishment commitments and an alignment in this regard was suggested. The Committee noted that the senior independent adviser raised some critical issues related to the Replenishment processes and their strategic implications for IFAD in the future, which merit further study.
14. Several members underscored the opportunity to increase efficiency and strategic clarity by moving towards longer replenishment cycles. It was proposed that greater flexibility would be required to enable the Fund to address strategic issues between sessions, should this change take place. Shifting to longer replenishment cycles would not reduce the volume of contributions; however, such a shift would necessitate larger contributions per cycle. A decision in this regard would require consideration and agreement of membership.
15. With regard to the balance between core and additional resources, members reiterated the importance of core resources as the most important and flexible funding tool. A number of members remarked that additional funding had strategic value and could contribute to achieving Replenishment targets and goals. In fact, many international financial institutions had a considerable amount of trust funds. IFAD had also been devoting major efforts to mobilizing supplementary funds. The

institution was considering a strategic approach to mobilize additional resources including setting up trust funds in line with its specific mandate.

16. While agreeing that the List system was a governance issue that would require review, it was suggested that this discussion be delinked from the replenishment negotiations. Some members saw this as a topic that could benefit from more in-depth discussion in a working group. Questions were posed with regard to the reduced involvement of some List B countries, the relevance of the historical burden-sharing arrangements, etc. Management confirmed that efforts were being made to encourage increased engagement with these Member States, including through promoting larger representation among IFAD's human resources, providing reimbursable technical assistance and acting as a knowledge partner.
17. The important role of Board members and Member State representatives, including those in capitals, in promoting IFAD's cause, relevance and comparative advantage in championing the smallholder farmer was regarded as crucial. This was particularly relevant in view of the increased competition for resources.
18. The need for consistency between the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) and the Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD's Operations (ARRI) was also raised. It was clarified that the RIDE was based on evidence arising from self-evaluation, while the ARRI presented results based on independent evaluation. While the methodology used for both was consistent, a slight disconnect was visible in the ratings. On impact evaluation, the Committee welcomed IOE's clarification that an additional evaluation of this kind was foreseen in its work programme for 2014 and the results would be shared with the Committee.
19. The senior independent adviser stated that this was a good evaluation and underscored that the scaling-up process was vital to ensuring a successful replenishment process, a more ambitious level of IFAD financing and a constructive engagement in terms of the post-2015 development agenda. They also indicated issues of strategic significance that would merit assessment in a follow-up evaluation.
20. **The Committee thanked IOE for its comprehensive and extremely useful and timely report and expressed appreciation for the comments provided by Management and the senior independent advisers.**

Agenda item 6: Approach paper for the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's engagement in fragile states

21. The Committee considered the Approach paper for the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's engagement in fragile states and welcomed it as a timely evaluation which would be of great relevance to the discussions on this matter during the IFAD10 Consultation. Members looked forward to reviewing emerging findings at the October session of the Consultation.
22. In terms of process and definitions, clarification was requested with regard to the definitions of fragile and conflict-affected states (FCS), including with respect to the classification of Member States in terms of low-income countries, middle-income countries and FCS. It was suggested that, given experience already gained in evaluating IFAD projects and programmes in these countries, IOE's orthodox evaluation methodology could be sufficient for an evaluation of this topic. In addition, the inclusion of information on data limitations and budget estimates in approach papers for corporate-level evaluations would be appreciated.
23. Members agreed that capacity development and simplified and appropriate project design would be vital to ensuring successful portfolios in FCS. It was suggested that both positive and negative lessons learned be specifically addressed in the final report. The specific focus on gender was welcomed. Members also requested a particular emphasis on how IFAD can strengthen the resilience of its programmes in

conflict situations. The evaluation should also identify IFAD's specific niche in the process of transitioning from fragility to development.

24. As progress from humanitarian response to long-term development involved a range of actors, it was suggested that the report be clear on the added value of IFAD and the role of other institutions. The evaluation should also take into account the work of the Rome-based agencies in this regard.
25. It was noted that constraints were related more to institutional and capacity development rather than being resource-centred. Management looked forward to positive results from the pilot being undertaken with a grant to FAO in support of capacity-building and the intention was to establish a multi-donor trust fund to support such activities in the future. While funds were needed, Management did not foresee any revision of the performance-based allocation system for the purpose of channelling additional resources to FCS. The strategic use of grant resources in this respect, especially to build institutional capacity, should also be taken into consideration. In this context, the forthcoming findings of the corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's grant policy were regarded as important. Management also clarified that FCS were accorded higher priority when setting up country offices.

Agenda item 7: Other business

26. The Committee bade farewell to Michael Bauer and Hideya Yamada, respectively the Evaluation Committee members for Germany and Japan, and to Kevin Cleaver, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Division and expressed appreciation for their valuable contribution to the Committee's work.