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Revision to the IFAD Evaluation Policy: Revised timeline for the Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations

Note to Evaluation Committee members

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Evaluation Committee — Eighty-eighth Session
Rome, 26 June 2015

For: Review

Revision to the IFAD Evaluation Policy: Revised timeline for the Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations

1. Background. The IFAD Evaluation Policy requires the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) to produce the Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI) every year. The ARRI is IOE's annual flagship report presenting an account of the performance of IFAD operations based on evaluations conducted in the previous year. It also identifies lessons and recommendations that can contribute to better performance. IFAD Management prepares a written response to the document, which is considered by the Board together with the ARRI.
2. The first edition of the ARRI was produced in 2003. The report was presented to the Executive Board at the latter's September session in 2003 and 2004. However, as agreed with the Board at the time, the ARRI has been presented annually to the Executive Board in December starting from 2005. Before consideration by the Board, the ARRI and the IFAD Management response are discussed in a session of the Evaluation Committee, which is usually held at end-November.
3. Moreover, starting from 2007, IFAD Management has produced the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE). In line with the Evaluation Policy, IOE prepares its written comments on the RIDE, which is considered together with the RIDE by the Board at its December session. The RIDE with IOE comments is also discussed in the Evaluation Committee in November before its consideration by the Board.
4. It is important to recall that the ARRI and IFAD Management response as well as the RIDE with IOE comments are discussed together in the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board, given that they both provide an account of performance and lessons learned. This has helped enhance the efficiency of IFAD's governing bodies, and improved discussions on performance and the treatment of systemic issues raised in the respective documents.
5. Issue. Based on a request of – and in consultation with – IFAD Management, the purpose of this document is to seek the Evaluation Committee's agreement to propose to the Board an amendment to the Evaluation Policy changing the timing of presentation of the ARRI and RIDE from the December session to the September session of the Executive Board, starting from 2016. This would imply discussion of the ARRI and the RIDE at an Evaluation Committee session before the September Board.
6. The main reasons prompting a review of the timing of presentation of the RIDE and ARRI to the governing bodies are:
 - With regard to the RIDE, to provide the Board with more current data and a fully aligned year-end reporting cut-off date, in line with best practices. A September presentation of the RIDE would make it possible to move to a nine-month reporting time lag for all indicators, as opposed to the present situation in which different reporting cut-off dates are used and the time lag for many indicators is of 12 months.
 - To streamline and seek efficiencies in the internal data collection and lesson-learning processes to ensure timely submission of the RIDE to the Evaluation Committee, avoiding the delays that sometimes occurred in the past.
 - To lighten the load of the December Board.
7. Shifting the presentation of the ARRI from December to September would have limited implications for IOE, given that the ARRI is based on evaluations done in the previous year. The main implication is that IOE would have about three month less to produce the ARRI each year. Presenting the ARRI to the April Board would not be

possible for IOE, given that it would give very little time (i.e. about one and a half months) to undertake in-depth analysis and produce the document at the beginning of each year.

8. Presenting the RIDE to the April session would entail different year-end reporting cut-off dates (and therefore data misalignment issues) and time lags, ranging from 4 to 16 months. The risk of delayed submission to the Office of the Secretary (SEC) and governing bodies is considered high.
9. Implications for the Evaluation Committee. As mentioned above, the ARRI and the RIDE are considered by the Evaluation Committee at its last session of the year, held usually in November. The presentation of these documents to the Board in September would require holding an additional Evaluation Committee session in early September, or rescheduling one of its existing meetings to September.
10. Given that introducing an additional Committee session would have cost implications, IOE proposes to shift the session currently held in end June/early July to early September. This would not have any implications for other standing documents – in particular the preview of the IOE work programme and budget for the subsequent year and the President’s Report on the Implementation Status of Management Actions on Evaluation Recommendations (PRIMSA) – that are normally presented to the session in June/July. These documents can also be presented to the Committee in September, before their consideration by the Board in September as per normal practice.
11. The proximity of an eventual September Committee session to the September Board session would leave relatively limited time to prepare and dispatch in all languages the Report of the Evaluation Committee Chairperson for the September Board. However, shifting the Committee session from end-June/early July to early September could minimize additional costs, bearing in mind that this would require the Chair and Committee members to expeditiously provide their inputs on the draft report prepared by SEC.
12. In any case, should there be need for an additional Evaluation Committee session from 2016 onwards solely to discuss the ARRI and RIDE, SEC agrees to absorb the costs associated with organizing the session (e.g. interpretation, etc.). The Committee is therefore invited to share their views with IOE and Management on this issue, so that the number and timing of Evaluation Committee sessions from 2016 onwards and the corresponding agenda can be established accordingly.
13. Recommendation. The Evaluation Committee is invited to recommend to the Board a shift in the presentation of the ARRI and RIDE from the December to the September Board session, starting in 2016. This will require a corresponding amendment to paragraph 54 of the Evaluation Policy (2011), which currently states: “Every year, IOE shall present the ARRI to the IFAD Management, and thereafter to the Evaluation Committee and Executive Board in their December sessions.” The Evaluation Policy will not need to be amended for a change in the timing of the RIDE, as the policy does not tie the presentation of the RIDE to any particular session of the Board. Finally, the above-proposed change does not affect in any manner the objectives or substance of the Evaluation Policy on the topic.