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Investing in rural people

## Evaluation synthesis on IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples - Management response

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For: Review

## Evaluation synthesis on IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples - Management response

### Overall comments

1. Management thanks the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) for an accurate synthesis of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples. Management believes, however, that given the breadth of evaluative evidence used in this report, more could have been done to present best practices in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Helping to advance the frontiers of knowledge by answering questions that were previously unanswered by individual evaluations – given their limited scope – is the primary function of synthesis reports.
2. IFAD has long experience in advancing the interests of indigenous peoples in the development process, having delivered its first loan in support to indigenous peoples in 1979. The past decades have seen substantial improvement in the understanding of indigenous peoples in development and in IFAD's efforts to advance their interests. Management has taken steps to strengthen IFAD's role in promoting indigenous peoples, inter alia, by taking over the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) from the World Bank in 2007. Today, IFAD's objective remains the same: to ensure that the benefits generated by IFAD-financed projects are tailored to the specific social and cultural needs of the indigenous peoples they may affect.
3. Management acknowledges IOE's recognition that IFAD has translated broad commitments about indigenous peoples' welfare into corporate and operational strategies, guidelines and policies, including the introduction of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples in 2009, in line with international standards. Management shares IOE's view that making this guidance operational throughout the project cycle is a continuous endeavour: IFAD staff have learned more about the implementation of the policy and related instruments and the policy has been communicated to borrowing Member States and applied in various country contexts.
4. Management underscores that IFAD's targeting strategy focuses on the most vulnerable communities, which often include indigenous peoples. This targeting strategy accommodates the unique vulnerabilities faced by indigenous peoples through the incorporation of additional steps, in line with the indigenous peoples policy. Management notes that rather than providing specific guidance on addressing these specific vulnerabilities, the synthesis report's recommendations are focused on targeting in general.

### Recommendations

5. The following table provides Management's responses to the specific recommendations highlighted in the synthesis report.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Management response</i>
<p><b>Recommendation 1: Revisit the main objectives and strategies of IPAF.</b> The key, and not mutually exclusive, contributions and roles of IPAF could be to: (i) finance small projects designed and implemented by indigenous peoples' communities to promote indigenous peoples' well-being and empowerment; (ii) identify potential credible partners for IFAD or country programmes; (iii) promote innovations to be scaled up in investment projects; and (iv) build capacity of regional indigenous peoples' organizations in project management and</p>	<p>IFAD's regular loan programme continues to be the primary instrument for targeting indigenous peoples, complemented by its grant programme, including IPAF. All instruments are used in the context of national strategies at the country level and those of IFAD, following a demand-driven approach. Because the country situations of indigenous peoples, including national legal frameworks, vary considerably, keeping appropriate strategic flexibility has allowed Management to ensure adequate development effectiveness within the scope of country-led programmes. In the case</p>

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<p>strengthen their networks. IPAF's strategy, instruments and operational modalities would need to be adjusted depending on which of these roles should receive the greatest attention. If IFAD intends to continue supporting IPAF in the medium term, opportunities for increasing and stabilizing funding for IPAF need to be explored, including the possibility of mobilizing supplementary financing through IFAD or catalysing direct contributions to IPAF's partners by other financiers.</p>	<p>of IPAF, this flexibility has reinforced the positive effects of the decentralization of IPAF management to regional organizations with a prominent role in setting priorities. This has added value in terms of: (a) improvement of the selection process; (b) improvement of monitoring and supervision of small projects; (c) strengthening of regional and subregional indigenous peoples' networks and linkages with the global network.</p> <p>Management agrees that IPAF, despite its small size, has gained significant recognition across the indigenous peoples' movement, and options should be explored for making it more financially sustainable.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2: Pay greater attention to key project design elements and provide adequate implementation support (especially for investment projects), ensuring effective participation of indigenous peoples throughout, supported by a team member with an understanding of and skills in working with indigenous peoples' issues.</b> The key project design elements would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Institutional analysis and measures to ensure sufficient implementation capacity, duly recognizing the time and resources required in project implementation and the need for flexibility.</li> <li>(ii) Targeting strategies and approaches in the design with: (a) sound socio-cultural and vulnerability analysis of different social groups; and (b) tailored and differentiated approaches to build on the culture, identity and knowledge of the indigenous peoples' communities.</li> <li>(iii) Focus on gender issues in indigenous peoples' communities to tailor the design to their specific needs, priorities and potential.</li> <li>(iv) Solid basis for monitoring disaggregated data in design (by social group and by gender), also incorporating specific indicators that can better capture the results and outcomes related to indigenous peoples' well-being.</li> </ul>	<p>Management agrees that indigenous peoples must be considered throughout the project cycle. In fact, this is the spirit of the indigenous peoples' policy and is made operational through the implementation of the targeting strategy of each project. Thus, socio-economic and targeting experts (already included in most design teams) consider issues related to constraints and capacities of indigenous peoples' communities. Management encourages good design practices systematically, such as the undertaking of institutional analysis, gender sensitivity analysis and disaggregated monitoring. Given that many of these issues pertain to the country's policy, institutional, and legal framework for indigenous peoples, specific considerations will be reflected in the results-based country strategic opportunities programmes (RB-COSOPs) whenever relevant. Finally, in the spirit of recommendation 4 below, Management believes that all country team members should have the necessary knowledge and skills to address the needs of indigenous peoples whenever they are not adequately taken into consideration by broader targeting strategies.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3: Provide guidance on how FPIC can be best operationalized.</b> Clarification is needed on implementation of the FPIC requirement, both at the design stage and during implementation. It is fundamental to emphasize that FPIC is in essence about effective beneficiary participation throughout the project cycle (project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and enhancing project results and impact. It is also important to increase staff understanding of how to approach this in a practical and pragmatic manner and in what contexts and how the design can facilitate effective participation and the application of FPIC during project implementation.</p>	<p>With regard to staff training on free and prior informed consent (FPIC) and indigenous peoples' issues, Management believes that this would be most efficiently delivered through structured training modules, which may also include M&amp;E. IFAD could also proceed through existing resources, thereby avoiding duplication of investments by developing these tools. As noted by IOE, "how-to" notes are already under preparation, in compliance with the indigenous peoples' policy. Management is developing a specific module on FPIC in the context of the Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) training modules.</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 4: Enhance staff understanding of indigenous peoples' issues.</b> A change of staff can have a significant impact on the nature and orientation of the country programme, depending on their knowledge and experience. It is fundamental that incoming country programme managers without much exposure or understanding of the topic become acquainted with indigenous peoples' issues and their social and cultural values. Systematic and stronger partnerships with in-country partners – including indigenous peoples' organizations – could contribute to this process and facilitate continuity. The responsible staff should understand that it is possible to engage with those who self-identify as indigenous peoples following the spirit and principles of IFAD's policy on indigenous peoples by using local terms and applying context-specific approaches.</p>	<p>Management agrees on the importance of continuously raising awareness of the indigenous peoples' policy and guidelines among staff, particularly among country programme managers. As noted above, staff knowledge of the indigenous peoples' policy has improved.</p> <p>Management cannot guarantee the application of the principles underlying the indigenous peoples' policy and guidelines where indigenous peoples' issues are not recognized in national legal frameworks. In particular, the identification process outlined in the policy uses the country's domestic legislation as the starting point for the general identification of indigenous peoples, complemented by upstream reviews. In addition, as part of its targeting strategies, Management can ensure that poor and vulnerable communities possessing the characteristics listed in IFAD's definition of indigenous peoples are treated equally and that their participation in project decision-making processes is respected.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5: Strengthen knowledge management, taking advantage of IFAD's substantial experience, lessons and knowledge on engagement with indigenous peoples.</b> Based on IFAD's rich experience with indigenous peoples, there is scope for undertaking a study to capture and analyse best practices and lessons in a comprehensive manner to be widely shared as an IFAD flagship publication. Capturing the perspective and voices of indigenous peoples in this process would be crucial.</p>	<p>This is a valid suggestion for indigenous peoples, as well as for work in other areas. Several knowledge management products are already available on good practices related to the inclusion, consultation and decision-making of indigenous peoples in IFAD's instruments, such as IPAF and the Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD through videos and publications. In the context of the development of the medium-term plan and the revamping of IFAD's knowledge generation function, Management is considering a programmatic plan for knowledge products, including issues related to indigenous peoples.</p>