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Procedure for drafting, clearance and sharing of records of Evaluation Committee sessions

Note to Evaluation Committee members

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Evaluation Committee — Ninety-first Session
Rome, 29–30 March 2016

For: Approval

Recommendation for approval

The Evaluation Committee is invited to approve the additional information on the proposed timeline for sharing session minutes with members.

Procedure for drafting, clearance and sharing of records of Evaluation Committee sessions

I. Preamble

1. At its ninetieth session, the Evaluation Committee approved the proposed procedure for drafting, clearance and sharing of records as contained in document EC 2015/90/W.P.7. In so doing, the Committee requested the Secretariat to provide additional information on the timeline for providing Evaluation Committee minutes to Committee members. Accordingly, the proposed timeline is provided in paragraphs 14 to 16 of this document, for approval by the Committee.

II. Background

2. At the eighty-fourth session of the Evaluation Committee, held on 2 July 2014, Committee members requested that a review be undertaken of the preparation and approval of the records of Evaluation Committee sessions.
3. At that time, the reporting practice was as follows:
 - (a) Summing-up notes were drafted by the Office of the Secretary in-session and cleared by the Chairperson for the review of members prior to the closure of the session in question. These summing-up notes were then revised to reflect the comments provided by members during the in-session review. These notes were used as the basis for the written Report of the Chairperson and the minutes, which were formally approved at the subsequent Evaluation Committee session.
 - (b) The preparation of summing-up notes had been introduced at the sixtieth session of the Evaluation Committee with a view to ensuring that the Report of the Chairperson reflected the consensus of the Committee to the greatest extent possible.
4. The review concluded that while the practice of drafting summing-up notes in-session provided the opportunity to agree on a basic text during the session, a number of issues related to the process called for its discontinuation:
 - (a) Time constraints may affect the quality of the summing-up notes;
 - (b) Review of the notes at the end of a particular session is a time-consuming exercise with related opportunity and efficiency costs;
 - (c) Attendance of all members during the in-session review is not guaranteed;
 - (d) The notes represent an additional document, not foreseen by the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board; and
 - (e) The notes are prepared in English only.
5. The review resulted in the current procedures as contained in document EC 2014/86/W.P.8/Rev.1, which was adopted by the Evaluation Committee at its eighty-sixth session in November 2014.

6. Under the current procedure, a draft Report of the Chairperson is prepared by the Office of the Secretary as soon as possible after the conclusion of an Evaluation Committee session, bearing in mind proximity to the following Board session. The draft report, after review by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD and other interested parties within IFAD, is submitted to the Chairperson for approval. The Chairperson, under normal circumstances, circulates this report to other Committee members prior to its submission to the Executive Board.
7. The Office of the Secretary prepares draft minutes of Evaluation Committee sessions. These are reviewed by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD and other interested parties within IFAD and, upon approval by the Chairperson, are circulated to Evaluation Committee members as soon as possible after the conclusion of each session. A period of two weeks is allowed for the receipt of any corrections. Should no request for corrections be received, the minutes are deemed approved and are disclosed on the Member States Interactive Platform. Should a request for corrections be received within the specified period, the draft minutes and proposed corrections are submitted for discussion at the following Committee session.

III. Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee

8. The Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee were revised in 2011, with the intention of aligning them with those of the Executive Board. The previous Rules of Procedure provided as follows:

Rule 8: Documentation and Reports. In line with IFAD's disclosure policy, all reports and documents presented to the Evaluation Committee will be disclosed to the public. The key issues and recommendations of the Committee shall be recorded in a report, which the Chairperson shall prepare after each session and submit for approval to the Executive Board (see Rule 9). This document, too, will be disclosed to the public through the IFAD website. In consultation with ES [Office of the Secretary], OE [the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD] shall prepare minutes after each Evaluation Committee session and send them in draft form to all participants for their clearance before finalization.

Rule 9: Reporting to the Executive Board. The Committee Chairperson shall provide a written report of its deliberations to the Executive Board after each Evaluation Committee session. The reports will be focused and issues-oriented, and identify the most relevant issues and recommendations for the Board's information and approval, as required. This report should be translated into IFAD's official languages and dispatched to Board members as early as possible for their timely review, ahead of the relevant Executive Board session. The Chairperson may, in addition, provide an oral report during each Board session, as and when s/he considers necessary.

9. The current Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee of the Executive Board (EB 2011/102/R.47/Rev.1) provide as follows:

2.3. The Evaluation Committee shall not vote but shall set out the views expressed by its members in the reports it submits to the Executive Board. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Chairperson shall attempt to secure consensus in order to present in its reports to the Board, as far as possible, the unanimous views of the Evaluation Committee. In the absence of consensus, the minority views and opinions shall be reflected in the reports.

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2.5. The official record of the discussion and recommendations adopted during Evaluation Committee meetings shall be the Evaluation Committee

minutes. The minutes shall be approved by all participating members and may be submitted to the Executive Board. The Chairperson will report to the Board on the deliberations of Evaluation Committee meetings.

IV. Current issues and recommendations

10. It should be noted that the current rules provide that only the minutes are an official record of the Committee session, and do not require the preparation of a written report by the Chairperson. Although the rules state that the minutes “may be submitted to the Executive Board”, this has not been the practice.
11. The Evaluation Committee may consider whether it is useful to continue to prepare two documents – the Report of the Chairperson and the minutes – which are more or less the same. The Committee will note that the oral presentation made by the Chairperson to the Executive Board at its sessions is a summary of what is contained in the minutes.
12. In the interests of simplicity and consistency, as well as conformity with the revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, the Office of the Secretary proposes that only one formal document – the minutes – be prepared for future sessions of the Committee.
13. Under this proposal, the Office of the Secretary will endeavour to finalize the minutes in time for submission to the subsequent session of the Executive Board and share them as provided for in paragraph 11 of document EC 2014/86/W.P.8/Rev.1. It is to be noted that this proposal would imply that, depending on the proximity of the next Evaluation Committee and Executive Board sessions, Committee members may not always have two weeks to review the minutes (as set forth in EC 2014/86/W.P.8/Rev.1). The time required to review the minutes will thus be determined by the Office of the Secretary based on the process followed to finalize the document.
14. Based on the above, should an Evaluation Committee session be held in close proximity to an Executive Board session, the Secretariat will endeavour to post the draft minutes at the earliest opportunity possible given internal clearance and language processing timelines. Members will have very limited time to provide comments given the need to post the minutes, should they be approved by the Evaluation Committee, for the Executive Board session. This will provide eight working days within which to process and post the document; therefore, members will be requested to provide their comments within two days.
15. For Committee sessions held with a more flexible time frame in relation to the next Executive Board session, the draft minutes will be shared according to the existing procedure as set out in document EC 2014/86/W.P.8/Rev.1. Evaluation Committee members will be given the standard two-week deadline by which to provide their comments.
16. Should comments be made by Evaluation Committee members, these will be discussed at the following Evaluation Committee session and, once approved, the minutes will be submitted to the next Executive Board session.
17. At Executive Board sessions, the Chairperson will present an oral report¹ summarizing the contents of the minutes.

¹ In the event that the minutes are not approved, the Chairperson will present an oral report based on the draft minutes, mentioning this fact to the Board.