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Investing in rural people

A new harmonization agreement – refining the delivery process and a new time line

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For: Information

A new harmonization agreement - refining the delivery process and a new time line

I. Background

1. As required by the IFAD Evaluation Policy (2011) and as agreed by the Executive Board in December 2014, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) and IFAD Management (represented by the Programme Management Department [PMD]) had committed to preparing a new harmonization agreement.
2. The agreement ensures that IFAD's independent evaluation and self-evaluation methods and systems are aligned, and that both IOE-led and IFAD internal project/country self-evaluation and reporting tools generate complementary information that affords comparability and compatibility across reports. The agreement is also meant to clarify and enhance the interactions and communication flows between IFAD Management and IOE during the diverse independent evaluation processes.
3. Proposed actions towards the new agreement would include, inter alia, a review of: previous harmonization agreements (2006 and 2011); the IFAD Evaluation Policy (2011); the second edition of the Evaluation Manual (2015); specific guidelines for self-evaluation (e.g. project completion review guidelines, supervision and implementation support guidelines, the Results Measurement Framework [RMF] and impact evaluation sourcebook); reports to the Executive Board (Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness [RIDE], Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations [ARRI] and President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions [PRISMA]); and processes for overall Management/IOE interaction during the independent evaluations.
4. Similar harmonization agreements in other international financial institutions and regional development banks are also being reviewed, and discussions are ongoing with representatives of IFAD Management and concerned staff at headquarters.

II. Rationale for new delivery process and time line

5. PMD/IOE agreement on key determinants and implementation principles has advanced and good progress has been made towards roll out in 2017. However, before implementation in 2017, submission of the agreement, originally scheduled for the Evaluation Committee session in October 2016, is best postponed to 2017 owing to various interlinked, cross-cutting issues currently under discussion and refinement by Senior Management.
6. Most of the operational areas relating to the harmonization exercise fall under the responsibility of PMD. However, there are significant corporate-wide implications that go well beyond the remit of PMD. Other divisions and departments, particularly the Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD), would be affected by the agreement, given their work on impact assessment, the RIDE and the RMF.
7. Moreover, through the development effectiveness framework currently under development by Management, several key self-evaluation guidelines and processes are being adjusted (e.g. the Results and Impact Management System [RIMS], supervision reporting and impact assessment). Thus it is advisable to wait until these revisions are finalized to ensure that they are taken into account in the new harmonization agreement.
8. Given the foregoing, preparation of the new agreement will need to be based on an extensive review and consultative process involving stakeholders well beyond PMD, from across the organization. This necessitates a revised agreement development and delivery plan – with the planned roll-out in 2017 remaining unchanged.

9. More time accorded for a thorough and participatory review and articulation – including improved, streamlined processes for interdepartmental and IOE interactions and Executive Management Committee approval – will definitely produce a better and more meaningful agreement in terms of thoroughness and wider ownership of content and process – including IOE, itself, and IFAD Management.

III. Way forward

10. In view of the above, it is proposed that the item on review of the harmonization agreement be removed from the agenda of the ninety-fourth session of the Evaluation Committee, scheduled for October 2016, and included in the agenda of the ninety-sixth session in March 2017.
11. Immediately following the current session of the Evaluation Committee, once Committee members have agreed to the postponement of the item, the invitation letter and provisional agenda for the ninety-fourth session will be posted. Finally, the provisional agenda for the Evaluation Committee's 2016 sessions will be revised and issued, including all changes agreed to by the Committee.