

Document: EC 2016/95/W.P.4/Rev.1
Agenda: 6
Date: 14 November 2016
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Proposal for a peer review of the evaluation function at IFAD

Note to Evaluation Committee members

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Evaluation Committee — Ninety-fifth Session
Rome, 28 November 2016

For: Review

Proposal for a peer review of the evaluation function of IFAD

I. Background

1. The option of conducting a second peer review of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) and the evaluation function at IFAD was discussed by the Evaluation Committee at its ninety-third session. A timeline for the review was presented to the Committee by IOE at the subsequent session.
2. This note is submitted to the Evaluation Committee for consideration as per its request at the ninety-fourth session on 13 October 2016.
3. The previous peer review of IOE was conducted in 2009 by the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the Multilateral Development Banks, covering, inter alia, the then "Office of Evaluation" as well as IFAD's self-evaluation systems.
4. The decision to undertake that peer review was taken by IFAD's Executive Board in December 2008. The approach paper was presented to the Committee in July 2009 and again in September 2009 to incorporate the Committee's comments. The Committee provided comments to a draft report at its sixty-first session in January 2010. The final report was discussed at the Committee's sixty-second session in April 2010 and presented to the Executive Board in April 2010.

II. Main aspects to be taken into consideration

5. IOE welcomes the proposal for a second peer review but notes that three factors should be borne in mind in determining the timeline: (i) the time required to conduct the exercise; (ii) the additional workload that will be generated for both IOE and IFAD Management; and (iii) the cost of the exercise.
6. Required time to undertake the exercise. A decision needs to be taken by the Executive Board in response to the Evaluation Committee's recommendation. An approach paper will then be developed and submitted to the Evaluation Committee for its review. The paper will be subsequently finalized and resubmitted to the Committee for approval.
7. The ECG will need to be informed well in advance of the exercise in order to assign responsibility to peer organizations and recruit senior consultants.
8. Additional workload generated by the exercise. Peer reviews are highly demanding of staff time and the work programme will need to be adjusted accordingly. At its ninety-fourth session, the Committee endorsed a results-based work programme and budget for IOE that will fully absorb staff and non-staff resources in 2017, notably due to the planned corporate-level evaluation of IFAD's financial architecture.
9. The Director, IOE, will chair the ECG for 2017. This will include the organization of two major meetings by the ECG to be held in Rome during the year. The Director, IOE, has also been elected Vice-Chair of the ECG for the thematic topic "use of Evaluation" for 2016-2018 which will have workload implications.
10. Financial resources required for the exercise. An exercise of this level will require significant financial resources, notably due to the need to recruit senior experts and conduct consultation missions to Rome and elsewhere. The first peer review – undertaken seven years ago – had a budgeted cost of US\$300,000. Costs are likely to be higher today and will need to be introduced into the IOE budget for submission as a one-time budget line item.

III. Proposed timeline

11. For the above reasons, IOE proposes that the peer review be initiated in 2018 and that the draft terms of reference be discussed at the Evaluation Committee's second session of 2018. The peer review report could be discussed at the Committee's second session of 2019 and presented to the Executive Board at its September session in 2019.
12. As with the last peer review, the exercise would be conducted by the ECG, of which IOE is a member. The ECG has guidelines in place for such reviews. Similarly, as with the last review, the scope of the review would cover: (i) the performance of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD; (ii) the content and application of the Evaluation Policy; (iii) the performance of the self-evaluation system of IFAD; and (iv) the performance of the Evaluation Committee in discharging its responsibilities as per its terms of reference.
13. Finally, IOE acknowledges the Committee's proposal that such peer reviews be conducted at regular periods, for example every 10 years. This would promote better incorporation of new institutional developments as well as developments in the field of evaluation.
14. An overview of the proposed timeline is provided below for the Committee's consideration.

Timeline overview

<i>Item</i>	<i>Date</i>
Approval by the Executive Board	April 2018
Review of approach paper by the Evaluation Committee	Second Evaluation Committee session in 2018
Approval of final approach paper by the Evaluation Committee	Third Evaluation Committee session in 2018
Peer review report submitted for review by the Evaluation Committee	Second Evaluation Committee session in 2019
Final peer review report submitted to the Executive Board	September 2019