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Revised proposal for a peer review of the evaluation function at IFAD

Note to Evaluation Committee members

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Evaluation Committee — Ninety-sixth Session
Rome, 23 March 2017

For: Review

Revised proposal for a peer review of the evaluation function at 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. The previous peer review of IOE was conducted in 2009 by the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the Multilateral Development Banks.
2. IOE prepared a note on the review, which was discussed at the ninety-fifth session of the Evaluation Committee, along with comments from IFAD Management. It was agreed that the issue would be deferred to the next Evaluation Committee session for further discussion and that IOE would prepare a revised proposal to support the discussion.
3. This revised proposal is submitted to the Evaluation Committee for consideration at the ninety-sixth session on 23 March 2017. Inter alia, it takes into account discussions held at a meeting of the ECG in London in December 2016.

II. Main aspects to be taken into consideration

4. IOE welcomes the proposal for a second peer review. It notes that three elements should be borne in mind: (i) the time and workload implications of conducting the exercise; (ii) the cost of the exercise; and (iii) the modality and content of the review.
5. Time and workload implications. Peer reviews are highly demanding of staff time and the IOE work programme will need to be adjusted accordingly. The results-based work programme and budget for IOE in 2017 will fully absorb staff and non-staff resources for the current year.
6. The Director, IOE, will chair the ECG for 2017. Among other activities, this role will entail organizing two major ECG meetings in Rome this year. In addition, the Director, IOE, has been elected Vice-Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) for the thematic topic "use of evaluation" for 2016-2018, which will also have workload implications for IOE.
7. For the above reasons, IOE proposes that the peer review be initiated in 2018 and that the draft approach paper be discussed at the Evaluation Committee's second session of 2018. The peer review report could be discussed at the Committee's September session in 2019 and then presented to the Executive Board session, also in September.

Timeline overview

<i>Item</i>	<i>Date</i>
Approval of the peer review exercise by the Executive Board as a part of IOE's work programme for 2018	December 2017
Review of approach paper by the Evaluation Committee	Second Evaluation Committee session in 2018
Approval of the approach paper by the Executive Board	Executive Board September session in 2018
Peer review report submitted for the review of the Evaluation Committee	Evaluation Committee September session in 2019
Final peer review report submitted to the Executive Board	September 2019

8. 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. A similar budget envelope can be foreseen for the second review although efforts will be made to contain costs. The cost of the peer review will need to be added to the 2018-2019 IOE budgets for submission as a one-time item, below the budget line.
9. Modality and content of the peer review. At the last ECG meeting, the evaluation offices of other international financial institutions (e.g. the African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank) expressed interest in peer reviews overseen by the ECG, which has elaborated guidelines for such reviews. As suggested at the Committee's ninety-fifth session, the peer review at IFAD could be conducted by the ECG and carried out under the supervision of the Evaluation Committee of IFAD. Following past practice for reviews of multilateral organizations, the peer review could include the participation of external consultants and representatives from the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
10. As was the case for the previous review, the scope of the second would cover: (i) the performance of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD; (ii) the content and application of the Evaluation Policy; and (iii) the self-evaluation system of IFAD. The latter point is fundamental as the characteristics of an organization's independent evaluation system are linked to that organization's self-evaluation system.
11. Finally, IOE acknowledges the Committee's proposal that such peer reviews be conducted at regular periods. This would promote incorporation of new institutional developments as well as developments in the field of evaluation. In this respect, IOE proposes a 10-year interval between peer reviews.