

Document: EB 2011/103/R.3
Agenda: 4(a)(i)
Date: 19 August 2011
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee

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Executive Board — 103rd Session
Rome, 14-15 September 2011

For: Review

Report of the Chairperson on the sixty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its sixty-eighth session held in July 2011.
2. All Committee members attended the session (Burkina Faso, Canada, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands and Nigeria) with the exception of France. Observers were present from Brazil, China, Cyprus, Egypt and Sweden. The Committee welcomed Mr Danny Rahdiansyah, Second Secretary (Multilateral and Political Affairs), Alternate Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia; and Mr Ronald Elkhuizen, Counsellor, Chargé d'affaires, a.i., from the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Committee was joined by IFAD's Associate Vice-President, Programmes, Programme Management Department (PMD); the Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE); the Secretary of IFAD; the Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division (LAC); and other IFAD staff.
3. The following nine agenda items were discussed: (i) the draft minutes of the sixty-seventh session of the Evaluation Committee; (ii) the draft minutes of the sixth special session of the Evaluation Committee; (iii) the Preview of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) results-based work programme and budget for 2012 and indicative plan for 2013-2014; (iv) the Interim evaluation of the Sustainable Development Project for Agrarian Reform Settlements in the Semi-arid North-east (Dom Hélder Câmara Project) in Brazil; (v) the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) with comments by IOE; (vi) the Costed action plan for further development of the self-evaluation system; (vii) the Progress report on the action plan for the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function; (viii) the Status of agreements at completion point; and (ix) other business.
4. **Draft minutes of the sixty-seventh session of the Evaluation Committee.** The Committee discussed document EC 2011/68/W.P.2, containing the minutes of the sixty-seventh session of the Evaluation Committee for approval by members. The minutes were adopted with some changes to paragraph 25, as suggested by the delegate for Nigeria. These are reflected in the session's verbatim report.
5. **Draft minutes of the sixth special session of the Evaluation Committee.** The Committee discussed document EC 2011/68/W.P.3, containing the minutes of the sixth special session of the Evaluation Committee for approval by members. The Committee approved the minutes of its sixth special session without any change.
6. **Preview of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD results-based work programme and budget for 2012 and indicative plan for 2013-2014.** The Committee discussed document EC 2011/68/W.P.5/Rev.1, containing the Preview of results-based work programme and budget for 2012 and indicative plan for 2013-2014 of the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD.
7. The Committee expressed its broad agreement with IOE's proposed objectives, divisional management results, work programme and budget for 2012. While agreeing with IOE's proposed emphasis on knowledge management and learning, the Committee invited IOE to further reflect on the title of the second strategic objective when preparing the next iteration of the document.
8. IOE clarified that its budget would also be reviewed, as in the past, by the Audit Committee in September and November 2011, as well as by the Executive Board in September and December 2011. The IOE budget would be approved by the Governing Council in 2012, together with IFAD's administrative budget.

9. IOE and Management explained that it would be beneficial to undertake the evaluation of the IFAD Policy on Grant Financing in 2014-2015, given that by that time it would be easier to assess the results on the ground of grant-funded activities since the adoption of the policy in December 2009.
10. Following a query by the Committee, IOE explained that country programme evaluations are normally undertaken in countries with large portfolios and to support Management in preparing a new country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP).
11. The Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that – as in the past – IOE has prepared the preview of its 2012 budget based on the budget parameters suggested by IFAD's Budget Unit, including the inflation factor for staff and non-staff costs and exchange rate. In this regard, IOE will continue consulting closely with the Budget Unit to obtain the final parameters in order to develop the 2012 IOE budget proposal for consideration by the Committee in October.
12. In light of the corporate change and reform agenda, IOE will take part in the IFAD-wide job audit exercise. More generally, IOE will analyse its needs for human resources development, and reflect any requirements in the budget proposal presented to the October session of the Evaluation Committee, including a provision for training.
13. The Committee requested IOE and Management to keep it informed of any key in-house learning events related to evaluation that members could attend in the future, in order to strengthen the evaluation feedback loop between IFAD and its governing bodies.
14. **Interim evaluation of the Sustainable Development Project for Agrarian Reform Settlements in the Semi-arid North-east (Dom Hélder Câmara Project) in Brazil.** Committee members appreciated the discussion on the Dom Hélder project evaluation, particularly because it provided them with an opportunity to recall their field visit to the project in May 2011, as part of the Committee's 2011 annual country visit.
15. Members noted the project's overall satisfactory rating, and in particular its impact on human and social capital and empowerment, as well as on food security and productivity.
16. Two areas of moderately satisfactory performance were efficiency and sustainability. Committee members noted the challenges of working in remote areas, such as the semi-arid region of the north east of Brazil. At the same time, members encouraged IFAD to continue its efforts to increase economic efficiency and sustainability of benefits in IFAD-funded projects.
17. Given the positive achievements of the Dom Hélder Câmara Project, the Committee underlined the importance of documenting these experiences more widely and sharing them with other countries, within and beyond the Latin America region.
18. Finally, the Committee was pleased to note the project's focus on gender, rural youth and ethnicity, and encouraged Management to include such components in other projects funded in Brazil and elsewhere.
19. **President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions with IOE's comments.** The Committee considered document EC 2011/68/W.P.8/Rev.1, the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA) with comments by IOE, together with Volume II, Agreement at completion point, recommendations and follow-up actions taken by the Programme Management Department (EC 2011/68/W.P.8/Add.1). Both documents had been reviewed by the Committee prior to their presentation to the Executive Board in September.

20. The Committee:
- (a) Expressed its appreciation for Management's preparation of the report and for the constructive comments provided by IOE; these represented an important tool for improving the learning loop between evaluation and operations over time;
 - (b) Noted a steady improvement in full follow-up on evaluation recommendations (from 57 per cent in 2009 to 71 per cent in 2011);
 - (c) Requested and received clarification on, inter alia, the issues of timely resolution of agreements at completion point, the sharing of generally applicable recommendations in-house and the large number of non-applicable recommendations in the Asia region;
 - (d) With regard to the performance of governments and government agencies, noted the increase in full follow-up on country-level recommendations. The Committee requested Management to include more information about the measures being deployed to enhance government follow-up and areas for improvement;
 - (e) Welcomed the special focus on sub-Saharan Africa in this edition of the PRISMA, while noting the difficulties encountered in the partnership between IFAD and the African Development Bank (AfDB). On this latter point, the Committee encouraged Management to reconsider its collaboration strategy in order to ensure efficient cooperation and gain maximum benefit from the partnership. The Committee offered its assistance in conveying feedback to the Executive Board of the AfDB;
 - (f) Recognized that the inclusion of coverage and dedicated reporting on gender evaluation criteria introduced in 2011 already was an important step in the preparation of specific gender recommendations in evaluations and took note that IOE will continue to emphasize this issue.
21. **Costed action plan for further development of the self-evaluation system.** The Committee considered document EC 2011/68/W.P.9, the Action plan for strengthening the self-evaluation system. In accordance with the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function (EB 2010/99/R.6) and the response by IFAD Management (EB 2010/99/R.6/Add.2), this document presented a costed action plan to allocate funding and staff time from existing resources to strengthen the self-evaluation system, mainly to improve knowledge management and the quality and use of the project completion report process.
22. The Committee took note of the document, commenting that this type of document would have benefited from a more timely distribution to the Committee members.
23. **Progress report on the action plan for the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function.** The Committee's discussions on document EC 2011/68/W.P.4, Progress report on the action plan for the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function are reported on separately in document EB 2011/103/R.4.
24. **Status of agreements at completion point.** The Committee considered document EC 2011/68/W.P.7, the status of agreements at completion point.
25. The Committee took note of the document and the contents contained therein.
26. **Other business.** The Committee discussed the proposal to postpone the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee from Friday, 2 December to Monday, 5 December. The proposal was made to accommodate a request from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a result of the

possible postponement of the 143rd session of the FAO Council in November by one week.

27. In the spirit of collaboration among the three Rome-based organizations, the Committee agreed to move the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee to 5 December 2011.
28. The Committee expressed deep gratitude to the outgoing representatives of Indonesia (Mr Purnomo Ahmad Chandra, Counsellor Multilateral Affairs, Alternate Permanent Representative and Mr Danny Rahdiansyah, Second Secretary Multilateral and Political Affairs, Alternate Permanent Representative) and Mexico (Mr Diego Alonso Simancas Gutiérrez, Second Secretary, Alternate Permanent Representative), who will take up new assignments outside Italy. Members conveyed their appreciation to the representatives for their excellent contribution to the work of the Committee. The Committee also noted the insightful contribution of Mr Ronald Elkhuisen, Counsellor, Chargé d'affaires, a.i., who attended the sixty-eighth session on behalf of the Netherlands. The Netherlands has been elected as member of the Audit Committee, and thus has agreed to release its seat on the Evaluation Committee following the sixty-eighth session.