

Document: EB 2011/104/R.5
Agenda: 5(a)(i)
Date: 21 November 2011
Distribution: Public
Original: English

E



Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

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

Note to Executive Board representatives

Focal points:

Technical questions:

Luciano Lavizzari
Director, Independent Office of Evaluation
of IFAD
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2274
e-mail: l.lavizzari@ifad.org

Dispatch of documentation:

Deirdre McGrenra
Head, Governing Bodies Office
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2374
e-mail: gb_office@ifad.org

Executive Board — 104th Session
Rome, 12-14 December 2011

For: Review

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

1. This report covers the deliberations of the Evaluation Committee during its sixty-ninth session held on 7 October 2011.
2. All Committee members attended the session (Burkina Faso, Canada, France, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico and Norway), with the exception of Nigeria. The Committee welcomed the representative for Norway, who replaced the Netherlands representative in the Committee following its sixty-eighth session. The Committee also welcomed the new representatives for Canada, France, Indonesia and Mexico.
3. Observers were present from Brazil, China and Cyprus. 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, Asia and the Pacific Division (APR); and other IFAD staff.
4. The following eight agenda items were discussed: (i) the draft minutes of the Evaluation Committee's sixty-eighth session; (ii) IOE results-based work programme and budget for 2012 and indicative plan for 2013-2014; (iii) country programme evaluation for Yemen; (iv) project completion report validation of the Post-Crisis Programme for Participatory Integrated Development in Rainfed Areas in Indonesia; (v) synthesis report on IFAD's direct supervision and implementation support of IFAD-financed projects; (vi) progress report on the action plan for implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Peer Review of IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation and Evaluation Function; (vii) oral presentation by Management on the preparation of the IFAD gender policy; and (viii) other business.
5. **Draft minutes of the sixty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee.** The Committee discussed document EC 2011/69/W.P.2, containing the minutes of the sixty-eighth session of the Evaluation Committee for approval by members. The minutes were adopted with some changes to paragraph 6, as suggested by the delegate for Canada. These are captured in the session verbatim report.
6. **Independent Office of Evaluation's results-based work programme and budget for 2012 and indicative plan for 2013-2014.** The Committee discussed document EC 2011/69/W.P.3, containing the IOE results-based work programme and budget for 2012 and indicative plan for 2013-2014, before its final submission to the Audit Committee in November and the Executive Board in December 2011.
7. The Committee took note that IOE's proposed objectives, divisional management results, and work programme and budget for 2012 had previously been discussed by the Evaluation and the Audit Committees and the Executive Board in September 2011, and that broad agreement had been expressed with the proposal.
8. In response to a query by the Committee, IOE clarified that a new evaluation criterion on gender equality and women's empowerment was introduced in 2011, requiring each evaluation to report on the performance of IFAD-funded projects and country programmes in this area. In addition, IOE informed the Committee of its plans to prepare a synthesis report on gender, in follow up to the workshop on gender organized in the context of a meeting of the Evaluation Cooperation Group of multilateral development banks in Washington, D.C. in November.
9. On the issue of the country programme evaluation (CPE) budget, IOE clarified that a differentiated approach was used to allocate funds for each exercise of this nature. The factors considered in the allocation included: (i) size of the country portfolio; (ii) country context; (iii) availability of evaluative evidence; and (iv) regional representation.

10. On learning and knowledge management, IOE underlined the importance it attached to strengthening its contribution to these areas to ensure that evaluation recommendations and lessons feed into the formulation of new operations, policies and strategies in a timely manner. For example, following each CPE, IOE organizes an in-country national round-table workshop to provide a basis for the preparation of the new country strategic opportunity programme (COSOP).
11. IOE cited a number of initiatives being pursued in support of evaluation capacity development, for example: involving national officers in evaluation missions for learning purposes; contributing to regional evaluation initiatives such as SHIPDET (Shanghai International Programme for Development Evaluation Training); and providing methodological inputs to strengthen the capacity of the impact unit at the Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan, in the context of the related CPE.
12. **Yemen Country Programme Evaluation.** The Committee considered the Yemen CPE, together with the comments of IFAD Management. The Committee commended IOE for preparing a high-quality report under challenging country circumstances, and IFAD Management and the relevant partners for developing and supporting operations in a country that has been affected by severe conflict over a prolonged period.
13. Members recognized the challenges of working in fragile states, and the complications that arose in such an environment. In this regard, the Committee recommended that IFAD undertake more comprehensive risk analysis at the time of design, including assessing the risks of non-engagement.
14. IOE clarified that each evaluation includes a rigorous evidence trail to enable the reader to appreciate how recommendations are anchored in the main conclusions of an evaluation, and how these conclusions are based on the main findings in the evaluation report. Members' attention was drawn to the clear cross-referencing of paragraph numbers in the Yemen CPE, linking together the recommendations, conclusions and findings.
15. The improved performance of recent operations in Yemen was noted by the Committee, including the greater emphasis on employment generation, value chain development and public-private partnership.
16. Finally, IOE described the thorough approach used in attributing ratings to each evaluation criterion, which involved, inter alia, rigorous peer review within IOE to minimize inter-evaluator variability and discussions among all members of an evaluation team before report finalization.
17. **Project completion report validation of the Post-Crisis Programme for Participatory Integrated Development in Rainfed Areas in Indonesia.** The Committee considered document EC 2011/69/W.P.5 – the project completion report validation (PCRVR) undertaken by IOE of the Post-Crisis Programme for Participatory Integrated Development in Rainfed Areas in Indonesia.
18. The IOE Director first provided an overview of the purpose, objectives and methodological aspects of this new type of project evaluation. The Committee welcomed the discussion of the validation report, the first one submitted for the Committee's consideration since the adoption of the new approach to project evaluations.
19. A discussion took place on how to provide ratings across evaluation criteria in the context of PCRVRs in the case of insufficient evidence pertaining to achieved results. The Committee noted that this was an important topic meriting further reflection.
20. IOE informed the Committee that the forthcoming Annual Report on the Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI), to be submitted to the Committee and the Board later this year, would include a section on systemic issues related to the preparation of project completion reports, which would help Management improve the quality of these documents in the future.

21. **Synthesis report on IFAD's direct supervision and implementation support of IFAD-financed projects.** The Committee discussed and welcomed the synthesis report on direct supervision and implementation support of IFAD-financed projects. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the synthesis report would feed into the forthcoming corporate-level evaluation (CLE) of direct supervision and implementation support, to be undertaken by IOE in 2012-2013.
22. In expressing its appreciation for a good report, the Committee made a number of observations. These are summarized below, together with additional clarifications provided by IOE and IFAD Management:
- (a) Commending IFAD on the implementation of the Supervision and Implementation Support Policy, the Committee suggested that IOE, in the course of the CLE, assess whether the Fund should pursue a standardized approach to direct supervision or if the approach should be tailored to regional/country needs. Direct supervision should also cover the grant programme;
 - (b) The issue of whether the forthcoming CLE should assess the supervision of the country programme as a whole rather than focus solely on project supervision;
 - (c) The Committee was reassured that the risk dimension of supervision in fragile states was currently taken into account at project design; and
 - (d) The Committee was informed that the CLE would also look at a possible paradigm shift, that is, whether direct supervision provided the best option for the Fund.
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 2011/69/W.P.7, 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 2011/104/R.7.
24. **Oral presentation on the preparation of the IFAD gender policy.** IFAD Management gave an oral presentation on the preparation of the IFAD gender policy.
25. Management informed the Committee that the IFAD gender policy would be submitted to the December 2011 sessions of the Evaluation Committee and of the Executive Board, respectively.
26. Management cited some issues being addressed in preparing the policy: in particular (i) the difficulty of identifying good practices in terms of gender equity; (ii) the extent to which gender issues at headquarters and at country level should be addressed; and (iii) the difficulty of identifying partners conversant with gender issues in agriculture and rural development.
27. The Committee welcomed the presentation and urged the Fund to devote the necessary time to produce a quality document in a timely fashion for submission in December 2011.
28. **Other Business.** The Committee discussed the proposal to postpone the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee from Monday, 5 December to Friday, 9 December 2011.
29. The Committee agreed to move the seventieth session of the Evaluation Committee to 9 December 2011 as suggested.