



منظمة الأغذية
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Organización
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Naciones
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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-third Session

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Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE)

Report of the Council Committee for the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (CC-IEE) to the 133rd Session of the Council

INTRODUCTION

1. At its 129th Session in November 2005, the FAO Council, in a decision endorsed by the Conference at its 33rd Session later that month, decided upon final arrangements for the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE), including agreement on terms of reference for the evaluation and establishment of the Council Committee for the IEE (CC-IEE). Its terms of reference¹ state that the CC-IEE:

“will provide overall oversight for the management and operation of the evaluation, including on financial matters and adherence to standards of quality and independence. It will ensure that the terms of reference are adhered to in a timely manner, with quality and independence of process and outputs and within budget. Drawing on the advice of the quality assurance advisers, Committee comments on findings and recommendations will thus be restricted to quality assurance, i.e. that the findings and recommendations are analysis and evidence based.”

2. With this, its final report to the Council, the CC-IEE is pleased to present the report of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO. The evaluation report was transmitted to the Chairperson of the Committee by the team leader (see transmittal letter Annex I) and considered by the CC-IEE at its meeting on 18-19 October 2007. It is attached to this report in full. In considering the IEE evaluation process and the report, the Committee also had the benefit of the views of its quality assurance advisers which are provided as Annex II to this report. A summary

¹ CL 129/10 para. 18.

of the financial contributions to the IEE trust fund and the use made of those resources is provided as Annex III.

3. In presenting the report, the CC-IEE extends its appreciation to all those consultants who have worked on the IEE. Very particular thanks are owed for the diligence and commitment of the IEE core team members. The FAO Secretariat and Director-General have provided their full support and the Committee thanks its own Chair and Committee secretariat who have also made the completion of the evaluation against a tight time schedule possible.

CC-IEE STATEMENT²

4. This is probably the most comprehensive and wide-ranging evaluation conducted of a UN organization. Having considered the report of its quality assurance advisers, the CC-IEE finds in common with them that the IEE fully meets its terms of reference, in line with the agreed Inception Report, and:

- a) followed a sound methodology, which was consultative of the views of the main stakeholders;
- b) is comprehensive and evidence-based; and
- c) provides forward looking findings and recommendations for the future of FAO which are well documented and grounded in analysis.

5. The Council Committee for the IEE is thus pleased to commend the IEE report to the Council and Conference for their consideration.

² Further information on all aspects of the IEE can be found on the Evaluation website <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html>.

ANNEX I

Leif E. Christoffersen,
Team Leader
Independent External Evaluation of FAO

21 September 2007

Dear Ambassador Perri,

I have the pleasure and honour to submit the final report of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

This final report has benefited greatly from the new information and suggestions made on the draft by FAO member delegations and the secretariat. It is a final product of the whole core team, to which we all have collectively and individually expressed our support. In preparing the report, inputs have been provided by many consultant regional specialists and experts in various fields of the technical work of FAO, administration, governance and the multilateral system. With vigorous dialogue in the core team itself, the work and the evidence presented has been rigorously triangulated against the sometimes divergent conclusions of individual consultants, country visits, survey findings, previous evaluations, additional information provided by the secretariat and the literature on best practice. Thus, all members of the core team have on occasion expressed divergent views on certain aspects during the process of developing a final report but all have given their support to this final report. Of great assistance in compiling the final report was the input of the former team leader, Dr. Keith Bezanson, whose continued membership of the core team had been welcomed by the Council and who despite continuing health problems was able to support the core team as principal author.

In strengthening the report, we have made a special effort to clarify the main issues and messages in Chapter 1. However, the team's one regret in providing its final report is that we were unable, in the short time available, to tighten up the report from the point of view of readability and length as much as we would have liked. This holds a danger that members will focus on specifics in our recommendations without fully considering the main messages and the identification of problems and opportunities which led to our conclusions. This notwithstanding, it was very evident to us that delay at this stage in a search for further improvement would have rendered the evaluation of significantly less practical use to the membership and the management as you move towards decisions in the November FAO Conference. In Chapter 1, we have thus provided a synthesis of the main messages rather than a conventional evaluation summary.

As you will see from the report, we have found much that FAO has done and that it does well. We have also found a great need for change. The world needs a renewed FAO. That renewal is predicated on '*Reform with Growth*' which requires both substantive reforms in the directions discussed in this evaluation and additional resources. The two must move hand-in-hand and neither will be possible without the other. Indeed, an absence of reform will almost certainly condemn the Organization to accelerating decline: a decline for which the world will be a poorer place, as the challenges mount for overcoming hunger and malnutrition and managing agriculture's contribution to the economy at a time of

continued population growth, pressure on the environment, and increasing climatic change and instability.

In carrying out our work, we have received commendable support from FAO staff at all levels of the Organization and in all locations. The FAO Evaluation Service, as expressed in the acknowledgements, has particularly strongly supported all aspects of our work. The quality assurance advisers appointed by the Council Committee provided us with valuable insights and guidance. Your personal support and encouragement have been invaluable.

Above all, the evaluation team would like to convey our appreciation and thanks for the commitment, support, openness and ideas we have received from the members of FAO, both in-country and here in Rome and appeal to the membership to continue the spirit of dialogue in which this evaluation has been conducted to seize the opportunity and renew FAO.

With appreciation to the FAO membership for entrusting us with this challenging, and above all critically important evaluation, and supporting us through it,

On behalf of the evaluation team,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leif E. Christoffersen', with a stylized, flowing script.

Leif E. Christoffersen

Team Leader,

Independent External Evaluation of FAO

ANNEX II: STATEMENT BY THE IEE QUALITY ASSURANCE ADVISERS

1. The Quality Advisors congratulate the Team of the Independent External Evaluation for a very readable and comprehensive Report, which contains a wealth of information. The Report is evidence-based, as was required. The evidence is presented throughout the Report, especially in the chapters 3-8.
2. We conclude that the Terms of Reference for the IEE have been fully met by this report. There are some minor issues where fine-tuning could be undertaken, but in general we are confident that the Final Report will fully meet the Terms of Reference.
3. We note that extensive consultations were held with all stakeholders of FAO as part of the process. In the opinion of the Quality Advisors this has fully informed the evaluation without in any way compromising the independence of the Team. We are fully satisfied that the Team has done the evaluation in an independent way and that the evidence, conclusions and recommendations have not been inspired or influenced by any stakeholder group in FAO.
4. The quality of the Report can be described as “robust”. The evidence has been gathered through solid and valid methodologies and analyzed thoroughly. Our comments dated August 30 on the draft report have to some extent been taken up by the evaluators in the final report, but not to the full extent. In the paragraphs below we touch upon these issues.
5. We proposed to turn the first chapter of the draft report into an Executive Version of the report which could stand on its own. We notice that the Team found that with an evaluation of such broad scope it was not possible to present a completely free standing summary of the evidence, the analysis and the conclusions in a more concise manner. This is regrettable, but the report does contain all the detailed evidence and analysis.
6. We notice with appreciation that the first chapter now contains the evidence on the financial trends that the FAO needs to face, as we suggested.
7. The Report is not a regular, standard evaluation report in that it looks forward much more than backwards and is formative rather than summative, which has led to the formulation of a great number of detailed recommendations. This is in accordance with the Terms of Reference, as was specifically required. We suggested prioritizing the recommendations and this was successfully done.
8. We would like to stress that FAO operations at the country level are crucial for the organization to establish that it is fully relevant to its members. The report demonstrates the need for change in Headquarters on many issues – the Quality Advisors would like to stress that in our view any emerging process of change must be guided by the ultimate question whether the FAO can deliver at the country level, and can support its members in improving the lives of their citizens. The report contains some evidence on the changed circumstances in member countries, for example where it is noted that the FAO now tackles issues beyond the mandate of the Ministries of Agriculture that are the traditional point of entry for FAO into a country. However, although elements are touched upon in several chapters, we would have liked to see an overall synthesis of the new country level potential for FAO and how the Organization could address that. For example, the important section on country level partnerships in Chapter Five (in the section on FAO and the United Nations), deals almost exclusively with UN issues on the country level. Another example is recommendation 6.22, which seems to focus much more on criteria for a country presence of FAO, than on how FAO’s services can help and support member countries on the country level. As the report states, there is no need for FAO to have a physical presence in the country to improve its

services on the country level – but there has to be full acknowledgement of the changed environment in member countries, which the report does not fully synthesise.

9. The second issue that has not been synthesised completely is that of the environment and climate change in particular. In principle FAO could make a very important contribution to the issues of biodiversity, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants, water management and fisheries. On these issues, FAO is now able to directly access funding of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Yet the GEF is not discussed as a possible global partner for FAO, and the Report contains a paragraph that seems to imply that the GEF should probably not be a priority for FAO, at least not for large projects. On the other hand, the Report also claims that especially climate change is an up-coming priority which should receive more attention. Again, FAO would have a lot to offer, especially in the relatively new area of adaptation to climate change. If it does not connect to the GEF and to UNEP on these issues, it will not succeed in becoming fully involved in the sustainable development agenda that is currently emerging. The report acknowledges the potential of involvement, but does not contain a full analysis. We raise this issue because such a full analysis would need to be part of the process of addressing FAO's role on global environmental issues.
10. The last point concerns impact evaluation, for which the Terms of Reference require the evaluation to come up with a path forward. The current draft contains all the elements to do so, but the argument has not been put together in one place, even though improvements are noted vis-à-vis the draft report. First of all, the Report concludes that FAO's monitoring systems are not functioning well. Without monitoring, impact will be very difficult to establish, because no baseline and trend data will be available. Secondly, impact evaluations are usually undertaken by the independent evaluation function in an organization, and while applauding the strength of that function at FAO, the Report also concludes that that function needs further strengthening and a higher level of independence. The Evaluation Office of FAO has only recently initiated impact studies, but the need for such evaluations provides a further argument for strengthening that Office and its position. We note with satisfaction that the report contains a recommendation to set aside an annual budget for thematic impact assessments and contains many worthwhile recommendations on strengthening the evaluation system in FAO. These recommendations should be taken very seriously. After all, international organizations such as the World Bank and several regional Banks, which have well funded and highly regarded independent evaluation functions, tend not to have to depend on expensive and complex overall evaluations to reflect back to their governing bodies how the organization is performing and what its impacts are.
11. We encourage the members of the FAO to take the evaluation report very seriously, examine its evidence, and take up its recommendations. For us it was a privilege to be able to support this huge and demanding effort and we hope that our advice has been useful to the Council Committee, the Evaluation Team and the Secretariat of the Evaluation.

Mary Chinery-Hesse

Rob D. van den Berg

16 October 2007

ANNEX III: IEE FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY SITUATION

The extent of contributions and expenditures under the revised IEE budget of US\$ 4,663,000 has been kept under continuous review by the CC-IEE which established a special working group of the Bureau for this purpose. Receipts and expenditures to the close of the IEE are summarised in the table below. This includes a small proportion (US\$ 70,000) of hard estimates, largely for expenditures already incurred but not yet posted under translation, interpretation and consultant costs³.

³ The summary does not represent a financial statement but the best estimates at the time of writing. A financial statement will be issued following trust fund closure.

Funding Situation 15 October 2007 and Expenditure Estimates to 31 December 2007 (US\$)				
	Total Receipts		IEE Expenditure Summary	
	ISWG	IEE	Cost item	Expenditure
AUSTRALIA	50,000.00	80,000.00	IEE management support	
AUSTRIA		5,000.00	(professional and GS)	281,328.00
BELGIUM		63,751.51	Research assistance	233,337.89
BRAZIL (Government of Brazil covering full costs of the Chair)			Consultants	2,050,242.54
BURKINA FASO		4,498.18	Travel	1,003,935.02
CANADA	23,179.25	358,701.49	Equipment and supplies	35,109.76
CZECH REPUBLIC		5,000.00	Interpretation & meetings	86,375.22
CYPRUS		5,000.00	Translation	731,508.90
DENMARK		128,165.36	Printing	14,987.20
ESTONIA		26,142.72	General operating expenses	13,929.39
FINLAND	20,000.00	247,929.82	Support costs	
FRANCE		120,000.00	(CC-IEE only)	279,001.78
GERMANY		507,587.00		
GREECE		68,306.01	Total	4,729,755.70
ICELAND		10,000.00		
INDIA	9,990.00	49,990.00	Balance	0
IRELAND		92,529.08		
ITALY	100,000.00	200,000.00		
JAPAN		308,531.00		
KOREA (Rep)		100,000.00		
LITHUANIA		19,048.46		
LUXEMBOURG		19,989.00		
MAURITIUS		4,982.07		
NEPAL		1,000.00		
NETHERLANDS	18,025.43	360,000.00		
NEW ZEALAND	19,975.00	39,950.00		
NORWAY	19,409.00	200,000.00		
PERU		5,000.00		
SAUDI ARABIA	20,000.00			
SPAIN		110,270.50		
SWEDEN	31,520.50	138,018.99		
SWITZERLAND	43,489.31	130,000.00		
TANZANIA		4,798.31		
UK	26,055.00	508,516.20		
USA	25,000.00	625,000.00		
Carry-over from ISWG		40,000.00		
Accumulated Interest (CC-IEE only)		102,050.00		
Total	406,643.49	4,729,755.70		