

IFAD's Decentralization Experience

Corporate-level Evaluation

Overview

1. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) conducted a corporate-level evaluation (CLE) of IFAD's decentralization experience this year, following the decision of IFAD's Executive Board in December 2015. The evaluation was undertaken within the framework of the IFAD Evaluation Policy (2011) and followed the methodological principles set out in the second edition of the Evaluation Manual (2015). This evaluation will inform the preparation of the corporate decentralization plan that IFAD Management will present to the Executive Board in December 2016.
2. With a view to strengthening future strategies and plans, the overarching **objectives** of this CLE were to assess and generate learning on: (i) IFAD's decentralization experience, efforts and underlying assumptions; (ii) the contribution of IFAD decentralization to better operational performance and better development results; and (iii) costs of the decentralization process in relation to the results achieved.
3. **Evaluation methodology.** There are both formative and summative aspects of this evaluation because IFAD is still rolling out its decentralization strategy. A distinguishing feature of the formative aspects was the attention devoted to learning and promoting dialogue with IFAD Management and other concerned stakeholders at key stages in the evaluation process, particularly through regional consultation workshops. As for the summative part of the evaluation, with the passage of over a decade of operations for some IFAD country offices (ICOs), data on operational performance and development results are available to assess the extent to which anticipated outputs and outcomes have been produced and results achieved. This provided the basis for an overall assessment of IFAD's decentralization efforts and generated lessons for the future.
4. The CLE covered the period from 2003 through mid-2016. It was anchored in three internationally recognized evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The evaluation used mixed methods and collected both quantitative and qualitative information and data from a range of sources, including:
 - (i) a desk review of key documents prepared by IFAD and comparator organizations (multilateral development banks and the Rome-based United Nations agencies);
 - (ii) analysis of quantitative data, including from the Annual Report on the Results of IFAD Operations database and other IFAD databases;
 - (iii) an electronic survey targeted at IFAD staff and stakeholders. Survey questionnaires were sent to a total of 1,987 recipients (both IFAD staff and external). The total response rate was 62 per cent;
 - (iv) key informant interviews in IFAD with representatives of governing bodies, Senior Management and staff;
 - (v) four regional consultation workshops held between May and July 2016 at headquarters for the Near East and North Africa region, in Lima for the Latin America and the Caribbean region, in Nairobi for both the East and Southern Africa region and the West and Central Africa region, and in Hanoi for the Asia and the Pacific region, attended by project managers, representatives of governments, international organizations and IFAD Management and staff;
 - (vi) selected case studies in 13 countries (with and without an ICO): Burkina Faso, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Georgia,

India, Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam.

5. **Timeline.** The evaluation was carried out in a record time. The Evaluation Committee considered the approach paper in March 2016. Preliminary findings were shared with Management in July 2016. The draft report was shared with Management in early September and finalized in early October 2016. The final report is presented for the consideration of the Evaluation Committee in November, and will then be presented to the 119th session of the Executive Board in December 2016. This timeline was driven by the need to inform Management's corporate decentralization plan to be presented to the Executive Board in December 2016.
6. **The IFAD context for decentralization.** When the decision was taken to establish IFAD in 1974, a highly centralized structure was envisaged. The Fund would work through arrangements with international agencies rather than establish country offices. It was further to the Consultation on the Fifth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources that, in 2003, the Executive Board approved the Field Presence Pilot Programme (FPPP) for the period 2004-2006, leading to the establishment of 15 country offices. Following a CLE of the FPPP and further expansion of the programme, the Board approved the IFAD Country Presence Policy and Strategy (2011- 2013), capping the number of country offices at 40. Later, the IFAD Country Presence Strategy (2014-2015) raised the cap to 50. As of mid-2016, 41 country offices had been established of which 39 were operational.
7. IFAD's country presence has included four major configurations. The first was based on a national staff member – country programme officer – leading the office under the supervision of an international staff member based in Rome. The second was based on an international staff member – a country programme manager – outposted in a country and supported by national staff. The third to emerge was a subregional office led by an international staff member, providing services to neighbouring countries as well. The fourth was that of a regional office – established only in Kenya – led by an international staff member and with some decentralized financial functions covering the East and Southern Africa region and part of the West and Central Africa region.

Main findings

Relevance

8. **The objectives for the decentralization process were broadly valid.** Objectives did not change significantly after the 2007 Activity Plan for Country Presence which stated that country presence would enhance IFAD's development effectiveness notably by allowing IFAD to: (i) better adapt project designs to the country context and provide cost-effective implementation support; (ii) play a catalytic role in non-lending activities (policy dialogue, partnership-building and knowledge management); (iii) better align itself with country strategies and donor coordination mechanisms; and (iv) participate in the One United Nations Initiative.
9. **Some assumptions were not realistic.** Three interrelated assumptions were critical: (i) cost-neutrality; (ii) experimentation with country presence modalities without a clear standardized corporate approach; and (iii) expansion of country presence without headquarter reforms.
10. The first assumption (that decentralization could be cost-neutral) was not supported by the experience of many other international financial institutions and United Nations agencies, which pointed to improved organizational and development effectiveness but also to increased costs. Linked to this assumption was the "light touch" approach to country presence (i.e. very small country offices with limited staff and financial resources) despite high expectations in terms of functions to be performed (e.g. supporting portfolio implementation, engaging in non-lending activities and contributing to the one United Nations). It should be

noted that IFAD-funded projects are often located in remote areas. This implies that a significant part of country office staff time is spent travelling and visiting these areas, reducing the time available for non-lending and other activities. In sum, there was a mismatch between expectations and the resources made available to country offices.

11. The second assumption was that each regional division could experiment with different modalities for country presence without an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of alternative options or a structured corporate approach. With a clearer corporate approach and an analysis of resource needs and expected benefits of different country presence modalities, common lessons and good practices could have been identified earlier.
12. The third assumption was that changes should focus on country presence expansion without significant adjustments and reforms being made at headquarters. Experience at comparator organizations shows that decentralization requires both central and peripheral changes. Country offices require different types of support (e.g. administrative, operational, technical and financial) and the locus and focus of such support need to be reviewed through a functional analysis that may result, inter alia, in transfer of staff and authority from headquarters to the field. This aspect was acknowledged late in the decentralization process.
13. **The internal enabling context.** The Executive Board has been updated at least once yearly on the evolution of the decentralization process and has taken all major decisions. However, the Board has not been supported by an adequate system to monitor and report on operational performance, results and cost-efficiency of country presence. The monitoring indicators for ICOs were inadequately defined, lacked cost and efficiency indicators and were not well integrated into IFAD's information management and reporting systems.
14. Initially, headquarters staff were reluctant to move or see their roles reduced and regional divisional directors resisted a reduction in direct control. More recently, middle managers and staff have been more supportive. Although strategic workforce planning has taken account of decentralization, Management has been disinclined to implement a major adjustment of staff at headquarters or to re-examine the overall organizational model.
15. **Use of learning from previous evaluations and the experience of other agencies was not optimal.** The 2007 CLE on FPPP indicated that, without significant institutional reorganization, decentralization would have incremental costs. This aspect initially received limited attention as, at that time, increasing country presence was considered as the priority. The 2007 CLE also stated that subregional models could have significant cost-efficiency benefits and should be piloted. Management was not fully convinced of this recommendation at that time but the model is now being actively considered.
16. The experience of other international organizations also pointed to the need to re-organize the headquarters and the relationship and locus of a number of activities between headquarters and the field. By 2013, based on its own experience and potential to achieve economies of scale, IFAD could have undertaken a more structured functional analysis of what was best done at headquarters and what was best done at the country level, leading to a more informed approach.

Effectiveness

Contribution to improved operational performance

17. **The establishment of country offices contributed to better design and performance of country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs).** The analysis of country programme evaluations shows that the presence of ICOs is associated with more relevant COSOPs that better respond to country priorities and local needs. Country presence brought about better understanding of the

institutional and policy context of countries and led to more regular and in-depth consultations with partners.

18. **Country presence has notably contributed to project implementation support which, in turn, has enhanced project effectiveness.** Even well-designed and -managed projects are bound to face blockages during implementation. The presence of IFAD staff to interact with stakeholders on demand allows for enhanced responsiveness and problem resolution while avoiding protracted correspondence and delays.
 19. Ratings for project effectiveness were found to be significantly higher in countries with ICOs (where an ICO was operational for at least two years before completion) than in those without. While many factors other than the work of ICOs influence project performance, CLE interviews and case studies convincingly illustrated how country offices facilitated these results by strengthening implementation support.
 20. **Regarding non-lending activities, the contribution of country presence to partnership-building was notable but was more limited with respect to knowledge management and policy dialogue.** In terms of partnerships with governments, the improvements in frequency and quality of dialogue with national counterparts were remarkable. Country presence was positively correlated with higher domestic financing. It also contributed to better information sharing and to IFAD's participation in sectoral donor coordination groups. For selected multilateral donors (e.g. the European Union and African Development Bank), ICOs contributed to mobilizing additional international financing.
 21. Country presence helped establish more regular contact with Rome-based and other United Nations agencies but did not strengthen substantive and programmatic collaboration. IFAD staff viewed their participation in United Nations initiatives as a lower priority, given that IFAD's operating model is different and closer to that of multilateral development banks (MDBs).
 22. With regard to knowledge management, the contribution was more limited. Project teams and ICOs have organized some knowledge initiatives and products; however, several factors constrain the flow of knowledge, notably: (i) weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems; (ii) the absence of a platform that simplifies search and retrieval of knowledge products prepared by country offices and project teams; and (iii) limited human and financial resource availability at the country office level.
 23. Although there are positive examples of country-level policy dialogue involving ICOs, this has not happened systematically. Relatively little ICO staff time has been allocated to policy dialogue because of the size of the offices and competing priorities. Country office staff generally understand that 50 per cent of ICO time should be devoted to operational matters but expectations for work on policy, knowledge management and in-country dialogue have been growing.
 24. Coverage of policy dialogue issues in COSOPs and project design documents was largely determined by the interests, experience and initiatives of country programme managers (CPMs). Staff performance assessments are more heavily driven by project approvals, successful implementation and ensuring sound fiduciary matters than by non-lending activities. That is one reason why over-stretched country office staff allocate relatively little of their time to policy dialogue. In addition, expectations are not sufficiently differentiated across the ICO categories. Country programme officer-led ICOs have a lower level of human and financial resources than CPM-led ones and cannot be expected to engage in the same envelope of activities.
- Contribution to development results**
25. **There is some evidence that country presence supported IFAD's efforts to reduce rural poverty and enhance gender equality.** IOE evaluation ratings for

household incomes and assets and for food security and agricultural productivity were significantly higher in countries with ICOs. Although many other external factors intervened, there is some plausible association between the work done by country offices in supporting portfolio implementation, problem-solving and facilitating contacts with national counterparts and these development results.

26. Moreover, independent project evaluations found that gender equality results were better in countries with an ICO and this was reflected in significantly higher average ratings for gender equality and women's empowerment. As an explanation for attributing these project-level results to the country office, the CLE found that ICO staff had an important role in sensitizing project managers and government staff on IFAD's objectives in terms of gender equality and, in a broader sense, on the importance of gender equality for enhancing rural development and project impacts.
27. **Country presence was also associated with better prospects for sustainability of benefits, innovation and scaling up.** The analysis of independent project evaluations suggests that country presence was associated with higher ratings for sustainability of benefits. In addition, country presence was associated with two drivers of sustainability identified in the 2015 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations: integration of project objectives into national development strategies and setting clear and realistic strategies for gender mainstreaming. Project evaluation ratings for innovation and scaling up were significantly higher in countries with ICOs. This may be partly explained by the enhanced opportunities provided by stronger partnerships with government and other international organizations, notably donors.
28. **Differences between country offices led by international and by national staff.** Contrary to initial expectations, while there were instances when offices led by international staff delivered better results, for many indicators, there was no observable difference between the two models. It is to be recognized that few offices led by international staff have been in operation for a significant number of years and, in some ICOs, there has been turnover of international staff. Moreover, experienced senior national staff may be more familiar with the history of projects, specific issues with the government and local context, while international staff are working on a learning curve.
29. However, this CLE recognizes that outposted international staff have responsibilities that cannot be assumed by national staff, and international staff often have a higher formal level of access to the government and the international community than national staff. In any case, the implication of the above findings is that national staff play an important role in helping IFAD deliver better operational performance and development results.

Efficiency

Management of costs

30. **While opening country offices implies additional costs, this has not led to an administrative budget escalation.** Between 2007 and 2011, an important factor was the termination of the agreement with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) on project supervision and the shift to direct supervision by IFAD in 2007. This important transition allowed IFAD to use the budget previously dedicated to UNOPs-led supervision and overhead costs for funding IFAD direct supervision and country presence expansion costs. Further expansion of country presence was funded out of a flat Programme Management Department (PMD) budget between 2011 and 2015, until 2016 when IFAD acknowledged that decentralization entailed higher costs. Overall, IFAD has been able to contain the costs associated with decentralization.
31. However, two qualifications can be made. First, not all the available options for headquarter reorganization and cost reduction have been explored, and resources

could have been freed up to buttress country presence. Second, one consequence of maintaining a flat budget while expanding country presence was the limited staffing and resourcing of country offices with respect to the range of activities that they were expected to carry out. The findings of this CLE on effectiveness suggest that country offices were equipped with sufficient capacity to work on country programme and project design and on implementation support, but far less so on the non-lending activities.

32. **PMD headquarters staffing levels have remained almost unchanged since 2008.** The total number of PMD budgeted positions grew from 194 in 2008 to 305 in 2016, while the number of ICO staff has increased over the same period from 5 to 107: this reflects a slight increase in staff at headquarters. Readjusting headquarters functions and staff was an avenue to provide more resources to the country offices and reap cost-efficiency gains, but IFAD has not pursued this to a significant extent, with the exception of outposting international country programme managers.
33. **An assessment of the cost of managing a country programme under a different country presence modality could have provided IFAD with early feedback on the most efficient options for expanding country presence.** In order to optimize the benefits of decentralization under budget constraints, an important exercise, as a part of an overall functional analysis, was to assess the cost of managing a country programme under different modalities (e.g. headquarters management, as traditionally done; management by a country office; and management under different country office configurations).
34. The cost of managing a country programme is higher than that of running a country office (i.e. country office staff and non-staff costs), as it includes travel costs and, importantly, imputed costs of the staff time at the headquarters supporting the country programme. This assessment of costs had not been conducted before at IFAD and has been attempted by this CLE for the first time. One of the constraints was that the costs were not easily available as they were fragmented under various rubrics (e.g. staff costs, non-staff administrative costs, staff travel) in different databases. Moreover, imputed headquarters costs had to be worked out through assumptions under different configurations of country presence. The main report (tables 5 and 6) presents the results of the estimation of average programme management costs per country and per project, disaggregated by different country presence configurations.
35. **The subregional hub configuration is competitive compared to other forms of country presence in terms of average costs per country and per project, and presents organizational advantages.** In terms of costs, the advantage is that subregional hubs can serve multiple countries (typically 3 or 4) without having to replicate the country office structure in each of them. In other words, even if a subregional hub has higher staffing and administrative costs compared to an office led by a national or an international staff member that covers a single country, a hub displays economies of scale and scope that lead to efficiency gains when calculated on a per country or a per project basis.
36. As observed during this CLE from country studies and from conversations with government representatives, project managers and IFAD staff during the regional workshops, subregional hubs also have organizational advantages. Strategically, they facilitate cross-border approaches and engagement in subregional forums and initiatives. They provide better continuity and flexibility in serving countries, despite staff turnover. They enhance rationalization of staff and consultants and could host regional or subregional technical advisers. However, there is a danger of a drift towards hubs based on the present structure without a functional analysis of the tasks to be performed by hubs and those to be performed at headquarters.

37. Therefore, opportunities exist to strengthen country presence from both an organization and an operational perspective, while realizing efficiency gains. This CLE further validated the above findings by conducting a modelling exercise (see main report, annex VII) which simulated a reorganization of the current country office configuration that relies more on subregional hubs and entails some reorganization at headquarters (e.g. transfer of junior international staff to the field, reduction in General Service staff at headquarters and increase in national General Service staff). The modelling exercise illustrated possible savings in budgeted staff costs.
38. **The case for opening additional country offices requires better justification.** As of July 2016, the 39 functioning ICOs covered 76 per cent of IFAD's active project portfolio. If 10 additional country offices were added (according to the plans described in the update provided to the Board in April 2016), then the country offices would cover 83 per cent of IFAD's active portfolio, an increment of only 7 per cent, while incremental costs would be in the order of US\$2.5 million (about 15 per cent of the recurrent country office costs).
- Institutional structure and organizational arrangements**
39. **There have been considerable differences in decentralization modalities between regions.** Each regional division faces a different situation in terms of size and distribution of lending portfolio, fragility situations, communication infrastructure, airline accessibility and availability of qualified national staff. However, each division has developed its own modalities without a common reflection on options to strengthen country presence, contain costs and delegate authority to the field. More recently, all divisions have become interested in the hub modality but with different understandings of what this implies in practice.
40. **IFAD has not implemented a significant reorganization of headquarters staff** including, notably, adjustment of GS (General Service) staffing. The Asia and the Pacific Division (APR), the East and Southern Africa Division (ESA) and West and Central Africa Division (WCA) have now slightly more budgeted regular staff in the field than at headquarters. However, there is scope for further adjustments: 68 per cent of Professional staff remain at headquarters. Only WCA has more international staff in the field than in Rome. Two thirds of General Service staff are still located at headquarters. The potential cost-savings of greater restructuring have not yet been realized.
41. Reorganization and decentralization have been undertaken in most of the MDBs and much of the United Nations system. Measures have often included a mixture of incentives (including for early retirement, severance pay), and willingness to terminate staff and adjust job profiles. International programme staff in most operational United Nations agencies are expected to move at least once every five years and there are similar requirements in some international financial institutions (IFIs). In 2016, the Human Resources Division and PMD have been implementing a pilot mobility programme within PMD to evaluate the applicability of a structured approach and to report to Senior Management by the end of the year.
42. **IFAD has introduced a number of improvements in the support functions to the country offices. However, the envisaged process of delegation of authority has progressed slowly.** The Field Support Unit in the Corporate Services Department has performed a valuable function and its support is appreciated by country offices. The Field Support Unit manages the capital costs of opening offices, the host agency service agreements and the host country agreements. It is responsible for security and provision of capital investments for security in ICOs. It has also prepared the ICO Handbook, which is a guide to the corporate policies and procedures of most relevance to ICOs.
43. There have been significant improvements in information and communications technology with respect to connectivity to the Internet, voice and video

conferencing and corporate systems. The main challenges to full fruition of these advancements relate to local infrastructure in the concerned countries and practical organizational issues at IFAD (such as the timing of seminars and workshop vis-à-vis time zone differences).

44. The 2011 Country Presence Policy and Strategy envisaged stronger delegation of authority. In the past five years, progress has been limited. As an example, budget-holder responsibility remains with the regional directors. A six-month pilot initiative of decentralized budget-holding and other administrative responsibilities to the Viet Nam hub started in 2016. The Viet Nam office expressed general satisfaction and the assessment of the pilot initiative will be an important factor before extending arrangements to other offices. Senior country programme managers who are outposted understand the size of the supervision budget available and use it effectively but they must negotiate with the front office of their division, leading to inefficient use of time. Delegation of authority for communication is another area of concern for many CPMs heading ICOs, as they feel it has led to delays, lost opportunities and time-consuming discussion with headquarters.

Conclusions

45. **The overall objectives and evolving design of the decentralization process were relevant to the achievement of enhanced development results but there are significant areas for improvement.** Many assumptions were well justified. However, some were not entirely valid, such as in the case of the “light touch” approach and cost-neutrality, as had also been the experience of comparator organizations. Adhering steadfastly to these assumptions created a mismatch between the aspirations for ICOs on the part of both IFAD and its clients and the ability of small offices to deliver the full range of desired services, notably non-lending activities. Moreover, the expansion of country presence had not benefited from a functional analysis to identify options that could maximize support to the country programme while containing unit costs, and was not accompanied by a commensurate attempt to reform or adjust arrangements at headquarters, which is a key element of a decentralization process.
46. **Findings on operational performance and development results attest to significant improvements at the portfolio level.** There is evidence that country offices played an important role in better aligning IFAD’s country strategies and programmes with local needs and priorities. Staff based in ICOs ensured follow-up, continuity of support and problem-solving capacity to project teams, which helped to enhance implementation quality. In terms of development results, the presence of country offices was associated with improvements in impact on household income and household food security and agricultural productivity, gender equality and women’s empowerment. Improvements were also noted in sustainability of benefits, innovation and scaling up and overall project achievements.
47. **However, non-lending activities – also a part of the country programme – were supported to a lesser extent.** Non-lending activities are ultimately expected to benefit the IFAD-funded portfolio and the country programme as a whole. There is evidence of notable improvements in partnerships with governments and increased participation in donor coordination groups. Contacts with Rome-based agencies and United Nations organizations have become more regular but this has not been reflected in a significant increase in overall programmatic collaboration.
48. Improvements in knowledge management and policy dialogue have been more limited, to a large extent due to the limited additional resources available to country offices for these activities and to the absence of a platform to facilitate access to country/project-specific knowledge products. Because of limited resources and competing priorities, relatively little ICO staff time was allocated to

knowledge management and policy dialogue and there was no specific administrative budget line for country offices allocated to non-lending activities. Attention to these areas was largely dependent on the interest of country office staff and policy dialogue experience was not one of the criteria adopted for their selection.

49. **IFAD managed to expand country presence and avoid cost escalation. Yet, not all opportunities for cost-efficiency gains have been explored.** In particular, from 2011 until 2015, PMD absorbed cost increases with a flat budget in nominal terms. This does not appear to have compromised country strategy and programme management but it constrained non-lending activities. As noted, there has been no in-depth analysis of how to best assign functions between headquarters, ICOs and international/ national professionals at the country and subregional level.
50. While the number of country office staff has increased significantly, PMD staffing levels at headquarters have not been reduced. Moreover, under certain conditions, the twin objectives of strengthened country presence and greater efficiency gains could be achieved through the subregional hub modality. However, this needs to be based on a functional analysis and be accompanied by reorganization at headquarters.
51. IFAD's new business model initially emphasized expanding country presence, turning only recently to decentralization. **The priority is shifting from explaining the benefits of decentralization towards justifying continuing with centralized organization, authority and processes.** Despite the expectations set out in the 2011 Country Presence Policy and Strategy, this CLE noted the limited delegation of authority to senior CPMs for country budget-holding authority and communication.
52. Moving forward, if the volume of IFAD's programme of loans and grants experienced a sustained increase in the coming years, decentralization would need to be deepened and strengthened in order to be able to respond to the increasing demands and challenges and maintain/enhance the quality of operational performance and development results.

Recommendations

53. **Recommendation 1. Consolidate IFAD's country presence while enhancing cost-efficiency.** The need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the decentralization process was identified already by the 2013 CLE on IFAD's institutional efficiency. IFAD should strengthen its country/subregional presence and capacity in the field by building a "critical mass" and concentrating human and financial resources, rather than scattering them across an increasing number of offices. The subregional hub model has the potential to support such concentration and achieve economies of scale, if properly applied.
54. As a complementary effort to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, IFAD needs to implement a plan, based on functional analysis, to reduce staff at headquarters and increase the number of staff working near the country programmes, i.e. ICO staff, particularly where programmes are relatively large.
55. **Recommendation 2. Increase support for non-lending activities through decentralization to achieve stronger development results.** IFAD needs to introduce a more selective agenda for non-lending activities in its country strategies, based on consultation with national development partners. It should differentiate the non-lending agenda according to type of country office and their resource capacity and establish a dedicated budget line.
56. **Recommendation 3. Enhance delegation of authority.** Based on the assessment of the experience of the pilot in Viet Nam, IFAD should prepare a plan for delegating budget-holding authority to country directors, including provisions

for training. It should also define a framework for further delegation of authority in relation to communication and for establishing a platform to facilitate access to analytical and knowledge products prepared by country offices and project teams.

57. **Recommendation 4. Enhance staff incentives and capacity to operate in a decentralized environment.** There is a need to strengthen incentives for outposted staff, particularly if more staff are moved out of headquarters. It will be important to expand and better structure the orientation and mentoring programme, particularly for new staff with little previous exposure to IFAD. National staff need more recognition and empowerment, and in the case of national Professional staff, clearer post-grading criteria.
58. **Recommendation 5. Improve the quality of data, monitoring and self-assessment.** The IFAD accounting system needs to be adjusted so as to monitor more comprehensively the cost of country programme management under different ICO configurations. Indicators for ICO monitoring should be simplified and integrated into IFAD's management information and reporting systems. Finally, the new corporate decentralization plan should allow for periodic revision and reporting to the Executive Board for further guidance.

