

# Guidelines to avoid conflict of interest related to evaluation officers in the IFAD Office of Evaluation

## I. Background

1. The management and staff of IOE are committed to producing excellent evaluations with independence, impartiality and integrity. In this process, they are committed to avoiding conflicts of interests in their work.
2. The Peer Review recognised that the IFAD Office of Evaluation (IOE) has comprehensive guidelines for avoiding conflict of interest of consultants<sup>1</sup> it employs for evaluation work. It recommended that the division also develop similar conflict of interest provisions for IOE staff members.
3. The aim of this note therefore is to outline the guidelines to avoid conflict of interest of IOE staff. It relates to the conflict of interest of **professional staff** only, who ultimately are responsible for forming evaluative judgements and preparing evaluation reports related to IFAD-supported policies, strategies, business processes and operations. These guidelines build on similar existing guidelines used by evaluation outfits in other multilateral development organisations.

## II. The Guidelines

4. IOE staff will recuse themselves from evaluating any IFAD-funded policy, strategy, or operation they may have worked on, such as the design, implementation or supervision of an IFAD-financed project. Such staff, may however, be part of internal peer review processes within IOE, which are undertaken to ensure high quality evaluation deliverables.
5. Moreover, an IOE staff previously worked in a regional division within IFAD's Programme Management Department will generally not be entrusted evaluations in the same regional division, for a specific period of time to be defined on a case by case basis, after joining IOE.
6. IOE staff is invited to participate in in-house design processes, with the aim of clarifying lessons and recommendations emerging from previous evaluations. An IOE staff designated to evaluate a policy, strategy or project for which s/he may have provided such type of inputs at design stage shall not constitute a conflict on interest.
7. IOE staff will not be allowed to take up an assignment (as staff or consultant) in an IFAD regional division of the Programme Management Department in which s/he may have had major responsibility for the overall management and contents of an evaluation. The Director IOE will examine the case of individual IOE staff wanting to take up assignments in the Programme Management Department, and on a case by case basis take a decision accordingly.
8. With regard to the aforementioned, IOE Director expects a staff member to disclose if s/he plans to seek employment in an IFAD regional division. This will allow the Director to take this into account in assigning (or reassigning) responsibilities for evaluation work.
9. An IOE staff member should offer to recuse him/herself from evaluating, supervising or managing the evaluation of an IFAD-funded project if s/he (or immediate

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<sup>1</sup> Which are included in Annex 6 of the IOE Evaluation Manual.

family member) was previously employed in a decision-making position at a non-IFAD entity (e.g., an NGO) that was included in an IFAD-funded project.

10. In a case when the potential conflict of interest or perception of conflict of interest is identified after an evaluation has started, IOE Director will decide if the assigned evaluator should thereafter recuse him/herself from the evaluation and, if so, whether the evaluation should be continued using the work undertaken to that point or restarted.

11. Causes of possible conflict of interest that may emerge from working with governments and/or partners in borrowing countries will be evaluated on a case by case basis, and a decision accordingly taken by the Director IOE.

### **III. Responsibility and implementation**

12. The Director IOE would manage the guidelines and keep track of the issues and their resolution.

13. In any case, the IOE Director and staff are required to exercise sound professional ethics and personal good judgement in applying these guidelines to themselves. IOE Director and staff are therefore responsible for conforming with the intent and spirit of the guidelines in all matters not specifically stated above. Should evaluators have any doubts with regard to their proper course of action in any matter related to a conflict of interest issue, they must seek advice of Director IOE.

14. These guidelines extend to all IOE professional staff and will become effective immediately.

*Date: 15 November 2010*