

Notes on the Third Meeting of Convenors and Friends in 2020

29 May 2020

1. The third meeting for 2020 between Convenors and Friends and the President of IFAD took place on Friday, 29 May 2020. In light of restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom video-conferencing.

Agenda item 1: Opening remarks by the President and adoption of the agenda

2. The President welcomed participants to the third meeting this year. Friends in attendance were for sub-List C1: Mr Médi MOUNGUI, from Cameroon; and, for sub-List C3: Ms Patricia Rodríguez, from the Dominican Republic.

Agenda item 2: Proposal for the creation of the Rural Resilience Programme (RRP) consisting of:

a. ASAP+;

b. Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa (3S Initiative); and,

c. Green Climate Fund Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Programme (GCF-GGW)

3. Management provided an overview and background for the proposed creation of the rural resilience programme, consisting of three pillars: ASAP+, the 3S Initiative and the GCF GGW, underlining the similarities and complementarities among them and the central role they could play in ensuring that rural people were not left behind in the global post-COVID green recovery agenda on resilience and beyond. Feedback was sought from Convenors and Friends as regards the proposal that IFAD establish an umbrella rural resilience programme, encompassing the three initiatives and maximizing their combined impact. This would streamline governance and management of the Programmes, ensuring all synergies were captured.
4. Convenors welcomed the proposal and expressed support in principle for all three pillars, and the overriding umbrella. The List C Convenor endorsed the suggestion that IFAD create an umbrella with the three pillars and suggested that future resilience-related initiatives could also be included under this umbrella to maximize impact and benefit from synergies.

5. Management acknowledged the challenges around implementing modalities and governance aspects. In response to questions on these and the associated legal issues, Management reassured the group that it would carefully examine possible liabilities, including those related to staff, and explore mitigating actions.
6. Management explained that the aim would be to have a joint inter-divisional coordination unit to oversee the day-to-day operations of the three initiatives. There was no expectation that IFAD would subsidize the management of the initiatives. There would possibly be a pre-investment by IFAD with costs recovered at a subsequent stage, in line with common practice in other agencies.
7. While noting that discussions with 3S Secretariat and co-chairs and GCF regarding the GGW proposal were at the initial phase, Management informed that on GCF-GGW, IFAD's role would include leading the coordination of the umbrella programme as well as some sub-projects. A number of sub-projects would also be led by other GCF accredited entities. Unlike the ASAP+ and 3S, the GCF GGW proposals would not require IFAD EB approval but rather GCF Board approval. It would be included as part of the coordination efforts under the broader RRP umbrella programme. Co-financing to the GGW, in addition to a potential GCF contribution, could also be managed under the RRP. Members welcomed this clarification on IFAD's role.
8. Responding to a question on lifecycles, Management advised that ASAP1 was expected to reach completion in 2023. The duration of the 3S initiative would be longer term, possibly around 10 years, depending on the success of its implementation. It was foreseen that the GGW would be a 10-year programme. ASAP+ did not have a firm lifecycle, as this would depend on the amount of resources mobilised.
9. Another question was posed on the criteria and eligibility of countries to access funds, and in particular African countries which are largely affected by climate change. Management reassured the group that, in line with the UNCCD and the UNFCCC mandate, all African countries affected by land degradation and climate shocks that were part of the 3S initiative and the Great Green Wall would be eligible for support, irrespective of income classifications. While these two pillars focussed on Africa, ASAP+ would remain a global programme.

10. Management elaborated on the links between the three proposed initiatives and the ongoing Replenishment process, the mainstreaming themes and the results framework. With regard to the ASAP + Trust Fund proposal, Management informed the group that the purpose of the discussions was to lay the groundwork for amendments to the ASAP Trust Fund to create either the RRP umbrella Trust Fund or the ASAP+ Trust Fund.
11. Turning to the next steps, Management advised that an informal seminar would be organized in the coming weeks to provide additional information to the Board and seek guidance, and a draft proposal would be circulated for comments beforehand. A subsequent proposal, inclusive of Member State feedback, would be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration at its September 2020 session. Approval of the proposal in September would start the momentum towards the announcement regarding the 3S initiative at the EU-African Union summit, tentatively scheduled for November. Management added that Executive Board approval in September would not preclude any decision in relation to the IFAD 12 Replenishment Consultation process, be it on an additional window, additional pledges from Member States or any other considerations.
12. Management committed to advancing discussions on the proposals with a view to continuing to seek feedback and advice of the Executive Board in informal and bilateral discussions going forward.