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Investing in rural people

## Progress Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation

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For: Information

## Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms	ii
I. Purpose	1
II. Background	1
III. IFAD's evolving institutional architecture for SSTC	1
IV. Key SSTC activities at the corporate level	2
A. BAPA+40	2
B. Mainstreaming SSTC within COSOPs	2
C. China-IFAD SSTC Facility	2
D. Rural Solutions Portal	3
E. Partnerships with the Rome-based agencies	3
F. Partnerships with countries	3
G. SSTC database and dashboard	4
H. SSTC events	4
V. SSTC highlights from IFAD's regional portfolio	6
A. Asia and the Pacific	6
B. East and Southern Africa	6
C. Latin America and the Caribbean	7
D. Near East, North Africa and Europe	7
E. West and Central Africa	8
VI. Implementation of the SSTC Strategy	8
VII. The way forward	9

## Abbreviations and acronyms

BAPA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BAPA+ 40	Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEM	Global Engagement and Multilateral Relations Division
NEN	Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia
RBA	Rome-based agencies
RSP	Rural Solutions Portal
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
WFP	World Food Programme

# Progress Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation

## I. Purpose

1. The main purpose of this document is to brief the Executive Board on IFAD's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) activities in the last two years, highlight key lessons and challenges, and seek guidance from the Board on the way forward. The document will be made publicly available on IFAD's website since it may be of interest to a wider audience in the agriculture and rural sectors.

## II. Background

2. SSTC is a key development instrument within IFAD's business model to further the organization's mandate of achieving sustainable and inclusive rural transformation. IFAD's attention to SSTC is enshrined in the Fund's Strategic Framework (2016-2025) and SSTC Strategy, which was reviewed by the Executive Board in December 2016. Moreover, SSTC was a key priority agreed with Member States in the Tenth (2015-2018) and Eleventh (2019-2021) Replenishments of IFAD's Resources (IFAD10 and IFAD11 respectively).
3. In addition, the Brasilia Declaration and Action Agenda<sup>1</sup> on SSTC, adopted at the international conference organized by IFAD and its partners in November 2017, is a critical reference for leveraging SSTC to improve food security, incomes and nutrition in developing countries.
4. IFAD's increasing attention to SSTC is timely since SSTC provides IFAD with an additional development instrument to further its mandate, complementing the Fund's traditional interventions through loans and grants. This is significant as countries transition from low-income status to middle- and upper-middle income status, allowing IFAD to utilize an expanded package of mutually reinforcing development instruments for reducing rural poverty.
5. SSTC has also emerged as a key actor in Rome-based agency (RBA) collaboration and within the ongoing United Nations Development System reform process. Both RBA collaboration and United Nations reform recognize SSTC as an important tool for promoting multilateralism and partnerships among a variety of actors for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
6. For IFAD, SSTC is not an end unto itself, but a means to achieve rural transformation. It is important to highlight that SSTC is complementary to North-South collaboration, which remains a critical means of achieving the SDGs.

## III. IFAD's evolving institutional architecture for SSTC

7. Through the Operational Excellence for Results initiative, IFAD has introduced numerous reforms in the past year to ensure that the organization is fit for purpose to deliver on its mandate. These reforms include organizational decentralization and realignment of the Fund's organizational structure at headquarters, along with reforms to its financial architecture and the introduction of a strengthened business model.
8. The Fund's institutional architecture for SSTC has also been strengthened. This includes the establishment of a dedicated SSTC unit in the Global Engagement and Multilateral Relations Division (GEM), and three regional SSTC and knowledge centres in Addis Ababa, Beijing and Brasilia; the terms of reference for these

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<sup>1</sup> Brasilia Declaration and Action Agenda, adopted at the International Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation "Leveraging Innovations from the Global South to Support Rural Transformation" in November 2017: [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714174/40212353/Brasilia+declaration+and+action+agenda\\_21NOV2017.pdf/256b4a83-dea0-42ee-928d-647421b9e670](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714174/40212353/Brasilia+declaration+and+action+agenda_21NOV2017.pdf/256b4a83-dea0-42ee-928d-647421b9e670).

centres have already been identified. To strengthen their human resource capacity, all three centres will be assigned a dedicated SSTC and knowledge officer. An inter-departmental working group on SSTC has been created to coordinate actions and share information across different organizational units. The Strategy and Knowledge Department also has a fundamental role to play in furthering IFAD's SSTC agenda in newly established regional hubs and IFAD Country Offices.

9. The planned merger between GEM and the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Office will offer greater opportunities for coordinating SSTC and other functions that the new division is expected to undertake, including those related to private-sector engagement, resource mobilization and partnership building.

#### IV. Key SSTC activities at the corporate level

##### A. BAPA+40

10. The Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) will be held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019. This conference will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which adopted the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). The conference will be an opportunity for the international community to review trends in SSTC and identify opportunities and challenges in leveraging it to achieve the SDGs.
11. In 2018, IFAD has actively engaged in the BAPA+40 preparatory process, which is being led by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). Among other activities, IFAD is making efforts to ensure that the BAPA+40 outcome declaration being prepared for adoption at next year's conference recognizes the essential role of investing in smallholder agriculture and rural development for achieving food security, enhancing nutrition and eliminating hunger and rural poverty. To this end, the RBAs have planned a joint meeting before the end of 2018 with Member States to discuss BAPA+40 and solicit their support in shaping the conference's outcome declaration.

##### B. Mainstreaming SSTC within COSOPs

12. Embedding SSTC in IFAD country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) is fundamental to ensure that IFAD's lending and non-lending activities utilize SSTC to achieve results. IFAD agreed with its Member States to include an articulated SSTC narrative in 50 per cent of new COSOPs developed during IFAD10. The same commitment was reiterated for the IFAD11 period, but with a target of 66 per cent.
13. In order to mainstream SSTC into new COSOPs, IFAD developed guidelines on SSTC in 2018, which have been included in the new COSOP guidelines for presentation to the Board in December 2018. This will help country directors and their teams to consider how SSTC can be integrated into new COSOPs prepared from 2019 onwards. In the meantime, SSTC has been given special attention in COSOPs for Armenia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Viet Nam and Zambia.
14. One of the challenges of mainstreaming SSTC into COSOPs is the need to reconcile the timelines of COSOP preparation with the research and analysis required to develop a coherent SSTC approach. This challenge is being addressed through improved forward planning of SSTC analysis at the country level based on estimated timelines for new COSOP preparation and their presentation to the Board.

##### C. China-IFAD SSTC Facility

15. In 2018, the Government of China and IFAD established the Fund's first facility devoted to SSTC. This landmark achievement will help IFAD to enhance its SSTC activities towards the SDGs. The facility includes a US\$10 million initial

supplementary fund contribution from China to finance SSTC projects from 2019 to 2021.

16. The facility complements SSTC activities undertaken by IFAD through its loans, grants and administrative budget. It also allows IFAD to pilot activities that can later be scaled up. All IFAD divisions and partners may access funding from the facility, provided their proposals are consistent with the criteria agreed by China and IFAD. The facility is managed by GEM in cooperation with the IFAD Country Office in China.
17. A critical challenge is ensuring the timely approval of projects and the implementation of activities within the three-year time frame covered by the facility. For this reason, the SSTC facility manager has developed a detailed roadmap of activities with deadlines, roles and responsibilities, which will enable the facility to monitor progress and promptly take corrective action.

#### D. Rural Solutions Portal

18. In June 2018, IFAD launched the Rural Solutions Portal (RSP). This web-based platform collects and disseminates successful agriculture and rural development solutions from IFAD operations, and those of other development institutions. Currently, the RSP includes 31 solutions from IFAD operations in all five regions. Efforts are being made to encourage other organizations to provide their solutions to the portal.
19. Although other portals sharing development solutions and lessons are available, the RSP is distinct in that it is exclusively devoted to smallholder agriculture and rural development. Efforts are ongoing to link the RSP with portals maintained by other organizations so that users can enjoy access to a variety of tested development solutions, lessons and good practices that can be replicated and scaled up.
20. Moving forward, it will be a challenge to ensure wide access to the RSP at the grassroots level so that beneficiaries and their organizations can benefit from the knowledge it contains. IFAD Country Offices and IFAD-supported projects have been asked to share information about the RSP at the national and local levels, and sensitize farmers' associations, women's groups and grassroots organizations.

#### E. Partnerships with the Rome-based agencies

21. SSTC is one of the key provisions in the memorandum of understanding on RBA collaboration signed on 6 June 2018 by the principals of the three RBAs. A series of joint activities has been undertaken in 2018 and many others are planned.
22. The RBAs launched a joint roadmap to strengthen their collective efforts to mobilize SSTC for achieving the SDGs by 2030. This roadmap – Towards BAPA+40: strengthening collaboration among Rome-based agencies on SSTC – outlines joint mechanisms and shared priorities for achieving zero hunger globally through collaborative action.
23. However, the RBAs and the wider development community face challenges related to gaps in the assessment of, and reporting on, the results of SSTC in agriculture and rural development – beyond merely covering inputs and outputs. In order to fill these gaps, IFAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have been developing a methodology and procedures for assessing the contributions of SSTC to development results. This work will be completed in 2019.

#### F. Partnerships with countries

24. IFAD is actively exploring partnerships with interested countries on SSTC. In addition to the partnership with China on the SSTC facility, at the end of 2017 IFAD and Brazil signed a letter of intent to cooperate on SSTC. The focus of this partnership is to seek opportunities for mutual technical cooperation, with a view to

enhancing the capacities of governmental and non-governmental institutions to design, implement and evaluate rural development policies and programmes. IFAD and Brazil are currently assessing a list of potential IFAD-supported projects in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Rwanda where a pilot initiative could be implemented to launch this cooperation.

25. In October 2018, IFAD and the Government of Indonesia signed a letter of intent on knowledge, policy engagement and development cooperation to strengthen cooperation on the IFAD11 priority areas of rural youth, gender, climate change and nutrition, and promote SSTC for sustainable and inclusive rural transformation. The focus of this partnership will be on leveraging knowledge and policy engagement as vehicles for enhancing rural transformation in developing countries.
26. Discussions are also ongoing with the Government of India to develop a partnership on SSTC, which may entail the provision of supplementary funds. SSTC is a major priority for India's Government, and this planned partnership focuses on leveraging the Fund's experience to improve the food security and incomes of rural poor people in Africa and other developing countries.
27. One of the main challenges in developing partnerships is ensuring that Member States are actively engaged in discussions about IFAD's SSTC activities. IFAD has briefed country representatives from all Lists about its work on SSTC and sought feedback to understand their interests and priorities.

#### G. SSTC database and dashboard

28. IFAD is developing an SSTC database and dashboard to capture and share information on the Fund's SSTC activities and corresponding resources invested at the headquarters, regional and country levels. Systematically capturing and storing information and data on IFAD's SSTC activities will also allow the Fund to monitor and classify these activities, and conduct analysis based on reliable SSTC data. In addition, it will facilitate internal and external reporting on SSTC. The database and dashboard will be launched in 2019.
29. The database will be a repository of all SSTC activities implemented by IFAD at the headquarters, regional and country levels, and will be available only to IFAD staff. In order to facilitate effective monitoring of SSTC activities, reduce workloads and ensure data quality, the database will be integrated into existing information systems such as the Operational Results Management System, Grant and Investment Projects System and Quality Assurance Archiving System.
30. The dashboard will be a user-friendly instrument that allows for quick access to aggregated information and data on SSTC activities. By capturing data and information from the SSTC database, and existing information platforms, it will constitute a business intelligence tool that informs the development of reports on SSTC activities. Unlike the database, the dashboard will be available to Member States representatives as well as IFAD staff.

#### H. SSTC events

31. This section provides an overview of IFAD's major engagement in SSTC-related events during 2018.
32. India-Africa partnerships for food security and capacity-building. In January, IFAD participated in the India-Africa partnership for food security and capacity building event in Mumbai organized by the Observer Research Foundation and the University of Mumbai in cooperation with India's Ministry of External Affairs. The conference provided an opportunity for IFAD to present its SSTC activities and future directions, and explore potential collaboration with India on SSTC. As a follow up to the event, IFAD prepared the foreword to the conference report, which was disseminated as a publication summarizing the main discussions and outcomes. IFAD's foreword to this report highlighted the importance of the

India-Africa partnerships and SSTC as an instrument for capacity-building and promoting food security.

33. Preparing rural communities to cope with climate change through SSTC. In March 2018, IFAD and the Government of Pakistan organized a one-day seminar in Islamabad on preparing rural communities to cope with climate change through SSTC. Its main objective was to share innovative solutions, experiences and knowledge of climate change adaptation and mitigation practices relevant to rural communities and smallholders. Through RBA collaboration, the Director of FAO's Climate Change Division and the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council spoke at the event. Participants in the seminar noted that climate change-related solutions can be embedded within national development frameworks, policies and strategies, as well as financing mechanisms. IFAD published a brochure<sup>2</sup> capturing key lessons and good practices shared at the event, which was widely circulated in Pakistan and beyond. The outcomes of the seminar will inform the design and implementation of IFAD-supported projects in Pakistan and other countries.
34. Promoting partnerships and knowledge sharing to meet SDGs 1 and 2. On 5 June, IFAD co-hosted an international workshop on global poverty reduction partnerships together with FAO, WFP, the International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC) and the China Internet Information Centre. The event provided an opportunity to engage national governments and development partners in discussions about enhancing knowledge sharing and establishing efficient knowledge-exchange mechanisms towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular SDGs 1 and 2. The main outcome of the workshop was the Joint Communiqué on Strengthening Partnership for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Knowledge Sharing, Exchange and Cooperation,<sup>3</sup> in which the organizers formally committed to working together to achieve the SDGs by exchanging knowledge and technical assistance, and through project cooperation. Key messages included the need to: strengthen synergies on the exchange of development solutions and best practises among the RBAs and China; and develop joint contributions to BAPA+40.
35. Commemoration of the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation. This year's commemoration of the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation was organized with the other RBAs and held at FAO headquarters on 10 September. The event focused on SSTC and climate change, providing an opportunity for the RBAs to highlight their efforts to address climate change as an important element of the 2030 Agenda. The main message from the event was that SSTC is a powerful instrument to improve climate change adaptation and mitigation, and increase the resilience of small farmers. The RBAs play a major role in this effort, and speaking with one voice is crucial to ensure that food security and nutrition are priorities for the international community when implementing the 2030 Agenda.
36. Ministerial Forum on Global South-South Cooperation in Agriculture. On 1 and 2 November, IFAD participated in the Ministerial Forum on Global South-South Cooperation in Agriculture in Changsha, China organized by China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and FAO. The forum presented an opportunity to discuss how innovations in SSTC can contribute to achieving the SDGs in agriculture.
37. Sixth Brazil-Africa Forum. Through the partnership between IFAD and Brazil, IFAD took part in the sixth Brazil-Africa Forum in Salvador, Brazil in November. The theme of this year's event was youth empowerment: transformation to achieve sustainable development. This forum provided an opportunity for IFAD to

<sup>2</sup>Preparing Rural Communities to Cope with Climate Change through South-South and Triangular Cooperation: [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40321822/sstc\\_pakistan.pdf/ef116cb1-66d7-4379-bb73-4afed3a93667](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40321822/sstc_pakistan.pdf/ef116cb1-66d7-4379-bb73-4afed3a93667).

<sup>3</sup> [https://intranet.ifad.org/documents/20143/3050355/communiqu%C3%A9\\_A9\\_5june\\_event.pdf/8cdac784-dbd4-b970-b40e-f223b6df028c](https://intranet.ifad.org/documents/20143/3050355/communiqu%C3%A9_A9_5june_event.pdf/8cdac784-dbd4-b970-b40e-f223b6df028c)



participate in high-level discussions and share ideas, experiences and opportunities for young people in Brazil and Africa, particularly from the rural development perspective. In addition to participation in the plenary session, IFAD organized a side event in which it showcased the RSP.

38. UNOSSC Global South-South Development Expo. Organized annually by UNOSSC, the Global South-South Development Expo brings together participants from a range of organizations in all regions. IFAD participated in the 2018 expo at United Nations headquarters in New York in November, jointly organizing a session on fragility and the role of SSTC in fragile situations with the other RBAs.

## V. SSTC highlights from IFAD's regional portfolio

### A. Asia and the Pacific

39. The Mekong-wide Knowledge and Learning Fair was held in Hanoi in July 2018 and was attended by government representatives from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam along with over 100 participants from IFAD-funded projects and partner organizations. In addition, project staff from China and Lao People's Democratic Republic visited IFAD cofunded projects in Viet Nam to exchange experiences and learn from good practices in value-chain development and the promotion of pro-poor public-private-partnerships.
40. An event on successful experiences in rapid rural poverty reduction – learning from China and Ethiopia was organized in Rome by IFAD's Beijing office, showcasing China's experiences in reducing rural poverty, highlighting contributing factors and sharing lessons learned and challenges. In addition, IFAD and the International Poverty Reduction Center in China co-hosted a side event on International Poverty Day, which provided an opportunity to share experiences from Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam. A forum in Sri Lanka brought together 12 countries from across Asia and Africa to discuss innovative models for inclusive and sustainable public-private-producer partnerships. In Jakarta, IFAD and the Government of Indonesia held a high-level forum on empowering communities and strengthening resilience, bringing together all countries collaborating with the South East Asia and the Pacific sub-regional office.
41. With an increasing number of middle-income countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, IFAD will focus on non-lending activities, playing the role of facilitator of technical assistance to Member States, with a focus on South-South learning and policy engagement.

### B. East and Southern Africa

42. In the context of the design of a new COSOP for Mozambique, GEM and the Regional Office for East and Southern Africa jointly organized an SSTC scoping mission for the region in April 2017. During the mission, the Government of India expressed an interest in strengthening collaboration with IFAD on possible SSTC initiatives in Mozambique, including on technical cooperation and investment promotion.
43. In July 2017, a feasibility study for Mozambique on an IFAD SSTC investment project was finalized. It aimed to assess the technical and economic feasibility of promoting SSTC in investment projects. In November 2017, IFAD's first conference on SSTC in Brasilia was attended by 15 ministers and deputy ministers from countries in East and Southern Africa. In December 2017, staff of the Pro-Poor Value Chain Development Project in the Maputo and Limpopo Corridors had the opportunity to interact with researchers at Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) centres on semi-arid agriculture and manioc and fruticulture.
44. In January 2018, an IFAD SSTC and knowledge centre was established in Addis Ababa to strengthen linkages among the Fund's country, regional and global

activities. This region also participated in the first call for proposals for the China-IFAD SSTC Facility by submitting four proposals.

45. Under IFAD10, SSTC study tours proved to be an effective means for promoting knowledge transfer. With the establishment of the SSTC and knowledge centre in Addis Ababa, it is foreseen that SSTC-related regional forums will be organized in the region in collaboration with IFAD's West and Central Africa, and Near East, North Africa and Europe (NEN) Divisions.

### C. Latin America and the Caribbean

46. In Latin America and the Caribbean, IFAD contributed to the development of SSTC activities related to policy engagement and targeting. In 2003, the Policy Dialogue Platform for Family Farming within the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) was created with IFAD's support. This platform aims to: facilitate policy dialogue between Member State governments and small farmers' organizations within MERCOSUR; increase their participation in markets; and address regional policy issues related to family farming. A similar IFAD-supported regional policy dialogue platform, financed and supported by IFAD in Central America since 2007, developed the Regional Policy in Family Farming in July 2018; the policy was subsequently approved by Central American Integration System member countries.
47. In November 2017, a workshop to strengthen gender equality was held in Guatemala City. Staff of IFAD-funded projects in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico discussed ways to strengthen gender inclusion in IFAD projects. In addition, the Promoting Young People's Entrepreneurship in Poor Rural Territories programme supported young people participating in IFAD-funded projects in poor rural areas of Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This programme sustained the development and expansion of rural networks through a management committee.
48. Experience in this region shows that the inclusion of SSTC activities in IFAD-supported projects promotes increased government ownership of these initiatives and more efficient use of resources. In addition, a combination of reimbursable and non-reimbursable resources has allowed IFAD and participating governments to capitalize on available resources to maximize results. The establishment of the SSTC and Knowledge Centre in Brasilia in September 2018 cleared the path for more coordinated and effective activities in the future.

### D. Near East, North Africa and Europe

49. SSTC is a key component of the NEN portfolio and is streamlined throughout COSOPs, investment projects and regional grants. Recently developed results-based-COSOP documents for Armenia, Egypt, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, and Uzbekistan include dedicated sections on IFAD's strategy of fostering SSTC through activities led by governments and NGOs. SSTC is also a flagship theme in the NEN grant portfolio, as reflected in its increased importance in the development of regional grant proposals.
50. NEN's grant portfolio includes four ongoing large regional projects focused on cross-regional technical cooperation and knowledge exchange; these projects are implemented by United Nations agencies, government institutions, international research centres and NGOs. Cooperation between IFAD and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was the driver of grant-financed SSTC activities within the Uplands Rural Development Programme for Turkey, which was approved in December 2017. Within the framework of the Atlas Mountains Rural Development Project in Morocco, planning has been initiated for grant-financed activities in sub-Saharan African countries on technology transfer and sharing best practices in agricultural development. IFAD has also supported the International Labour Organization (ILO) through the regional grant on strengthening gender

monitoring and evaluation in rural employment, which included a regional knowledge forum on youth unemployment held in Cairo.

51. IFAD will continue streamlining SSTC into its country strategies and regional operations within NEN. Along with governments, country teams are exploring opportunities for expanding SSTC further in countries within and outside NEN. This progress will be reflected in future results-based-COSOPs and investment projects during IFAD11. The NEN Regional Office will aim to select SSTC as its preferred implementation modality for IFAD's rural youth employment agenda.

## E. West and Central Africa

52. SSTC is a crucial strategy underpinning rural development in West and Central Africa. SSTC activities in the region have included IFAD's participation in a regional trade seminar in Burkina Faso in October 2017 aimed at identifying cross-border trade opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa that could be promoted by regional economic communities. This was followed by a presentation at the West and Central Africa Regional Forum in March 2018. In September 2018, IFAD initiated a project to create a value chain finance institution in Togo modeled on the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending, which provided technical assistance.
53. IFAD's West and Central Africa Regional Office and Evaluation Cooperation Group are developing the SSTC-based initiative Climate and Commodity Hedging to Enable Transformation (CACHET), a pioneering hedging mechanism aimed at protecting smallholders against price volatility in international markets, especially in the context of climate change. CACHET offers smallholders a simple, low-cost and innovative revenue protection solution by setting a floor for prices paid to smallholder agricultural producers. This mechanism is being piloted in Nigeria and Senegal, and will eventually be scaled up to ten African countries. The Multi-Commodity Exchange of India, a partner in this initiative, will share in-depth knowledge of commodity markets and smallholder agriculture with IFAD and its partners in pilot areas.
54. With its grantee Procasur, the Regional Office organized learning tours in Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Regional learning opportunities included field training with seven teams from IFAD-supported projects in Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. One of these tours shared experiences from Niger on adaptation to climate change for improved resilience of rural communities in other West and Central African countries. Learning exchanges focused on: adaptation practices to climate change in agricultural production; the importance of partnerships in project implementation; technical skills and improvement schemes for local communities; and community-based adaptation approaches. As a result, six innovation plans were designed and the majority are being implemented.

## VI. Implementation of the SSTC Strategy

55. IFAD's SSTC Strategy aims to: (i) share rural development solutions and knowledge, and promote investments among developing countries; and (ii) establish and support partnerships and other collaboration for improved rural livelihoods.
56. This section provides a short overview, based on a qualitative analysis, of progress in meeting these objectives. In the future, the qualitative assessment should be complemented by a quantitative analysis, but this will only be possible once methods and procedures for assessing the results of SSTC have been developed and made available next year.
57. Knowledge sharing and investment promotion. Recent activities towards IFAD's objective of sharing relevant rural development solutions and knowledge include: launching the RSP; the Fund's organization and participation in key

events; and the publication of experiences from the field. Moreover, the establishment of the China-IFAD SSTC Facility to exchange expertise, knowledge and resources, and promote business-to-business links and investments across developing countries is a critical step towards achieving this objective while strengthening critical partnerships.

58. Establishment of partnerships. IFAD's partnerships with Brazil, China and Indonesia are helping to further the objective of the strategy. Partnership with the RBAs not only creates synergies among the agencies, but leverages the comparative advantages of each agency, contributing to the strategy's second objective. While IFAD enjoys a strong partnership with UNOSSC, it is exploring ways to expand cooperation on SSTC with other partners in the future, including the private sector, international financial institutions, farmers' organizations and national governments.

## VII. The way forward

59. This section summarizes four broad areas that deserve special attention in the next year and beyond, which will be a focus of IFAD's future SSTC activities.
60. The need to customize SSTC interventions. There is ample evidence that one size does not fit all development contexts, and that customizing development approaches and interventions is fundamental. Efforts will be made in COSOP design and implementation to tailor SSTC activities according to country context, income status, policy environment and degree of fragility. In countries with weaker institutional capacities, IFAD's SSTC activities may be focused on providing technical assistance and knowledge, while in other countries, SSTC could be oriented towards investment promotion and establishing business-to-business linkages.
61. SSTC in the context of IFAD's decentralization. IFAD is an organization on the move, and is undergoing unprecedented decentralization in order to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. Within an expanded decentralized organizational architecture, it will be fundamental that SSTC activities at the headquarters, regional and country levels are properly supported and coordinated to avoid duplication and achieve desired outcomes. GEM, the interdepartmental working group on SSTC and the three SSTC and knowledge centres play a central role in working together to take this institutional agenda forward in a harmonized manner.
62. Monitoring, assessing and reporting on SSTC. IFAD is committed to demonstrating the usefulness and value for money of its SSTC activities in promoting sustainable and inclusive rural transformation. In order to achieve its objectives, the Fund cannot afford to maintain business as usual in assessing SSTC results. Efforts are ongoing to develop a methodology for qualitative and quantitative assessment of IFAD's SSTC and its contribution to results. This work will also be useful to the broader development community and will serve as a more robust basis for reporting, identifying lessons and engaging governing bodies and others on SSTC.
63. Engagement with the private sector. The private sector is a huge potential contributor to rural transformation. Moving forward, IFAD will increase its efforts to engage the private sector – including large and small companies – in its SSTC agenda. Through SSTC, IFAD will not only identify private-sector entities that can provide technical assistance and knowledge to smallholder farmers along the value chain, but will explore opportunities for private-sector financing. By nurturing such partnerships, IFAD will support smallholder farmers – particularly women and youth – in moving beyond household nutrition and food security to connect with high-value markets, access decent employment and sustainably improve their livelihoods.