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Investing in rural people

Republic of Zimbabwe

Country Strategic Opportunities Programme

2020 – 2025

Addendum

Management's Response to Member States' Comments

Executive Board — 130th Session
Rome, 8-11 September 2020

For: **Information**

Comments from Canada	Management response
Overall, Canada believes that this proposal corresponds to local priorities and we echo comments from Japan on the potential of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe, especially with the right investment into the provision of resources and alignment of skills.	This is well noted, with thanks.
The proposal could be strengthened further with more details on the mechanisms that ensure sustainability of results, and further consultations with intended beneficiaries.	We agree that there is scope to expand on the mechanisms that ensure sustainability of results, but due to word limitation, all the information was not included therein. The sustainability of the results is assured through cost sharing and adhering to a value chains approach. Participatory involvement of farmers is critical to ensure that programmes are demand driven. The farmers should be allowed to decide how and what they want to be involved with. Care will be taken to involve and consult with vulnerable groups independently so that their voices are heard – and these will include youth, women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.
In addition, we think the COSOP could further consider how to strengthen target group interest (notably youth) in small-scale farming.	<p>The Country Delivery Team (CDT) welcomes this comment and fully concurs that the country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) should consider strengthening target group interest (notably the youth) in smallholder farming. The CDT notes that youth are generally not attracted to primary agriculture but could have other interest higher up the nodes of the value chain. Since young men and women want quick returns, within the framework of this COSOP, the value chain (VC) approach, will provide opportunities for youth involvement in various VC activities (e.g. logistics and marketing).</p> <p>Under this COSOP, strategies to interest youth in small-scale farming will include the direct targeting of young men and women, who will be involved in community-level participatory VC development consultations, in order to select VCs that meet their interests and are attainable in terms of capital and skills' requirements.</p> <p>In the ongoing Smallholder, Irrigation Revitalization Programme (SIRP), 2,000 young women and men are targeted for training in irrigation operation and maintenance and manufacture of post-harvest technologies for sale. SIRP is also promoting youth participation in enterprises such as bee-keeping, which capture high youth interest.</p> <p>IFAD's upcoming investment project in Zimbabwe, i.e. the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project (SACP), scheduled for consideration by the Executive Board in 2021, will use innovative ways to gauge youth interest during value chain development. This will include sending out youth-specific calls for proposals to scope the kinds of enterprises that youths are interested in. In selection of VC tailored for youth, SACP will prioritize ventures that have low capital and skill requirements, and provide quick and high returns: short cycle crops (such as beans); mobile processing units (such as peanut butter and <i>maputi</i> [popcorn] making machines and mobile solar dryers); as well as mobile marketing services. Other strategies will include skills transfer and training of youth; creation of conditions that foster participation of young women; youth role models and mentorship; fostering youth innovation and capturing the voice of the youth for policy engagement on issues of youth participation in agriculture, among others.</p>
As with most proposals, we think the climate resilience aspect will be quite critical as climate change has created the need to consider shifting some of the agricultural production to more traditional drought-resistant crops in Zimbabwe. We encourage IFAD to continue deepening the climate focus in their proposals.	<p>Climate change is indeed affecting the country, and in turn resulting in increased food insecurity due to prolonged droughts, floods and cyclones. The Government of Zimbabwe is already promoting drought-resistant crops, such as small grains, and where possible, rainwater harvesting. Conservation agriculture and good agricultural practices are also being promoted.</p> <p>Through SIRP, youth are being supported to engage in climate resilient and income generating quick win value chains such as horticulture. SIRP's Natural Resource Management Facility is providing grants to women and youth groups, which demonstrate that their interventions have a climate resilience focus.</p> <p>The CDT concurs that there is need to deepen the climate focus, since this is affecting all parts of the country even in the previously good agricultural potential zones. In this context, within SIRP, there are successes and lessons to be learned on youth engagement in the various climate-focused interventions, including: conservation agriculture; good agricultural practices;</p>

Comments from Canada	Management response
	water use efficiency in irrigated and rainfed farms, agroforestry and reforestation and the use of climate resilient irrigation infrastructure/technologies.
Comments from the United Kingdom	Management response
It is good to see nutrition as a strand throughout the COSOP, and the criticality of water management. We also support the partnership with HarvestPlus.	This comment is well noted, with thanks.
The UK welcomes the explicit reference to improving nutrition within the strategic objectives, and later in the document through improving nutrition in rural food systems.	This comment is well received, with thanks.
Can IFAD consider how it might also strategically support agriculture and food systems generally, also at an urban level (as food security is often worst in urban locations for the poorest) such as innovative micro-production at the household level?	There is growing evidence, notably from the SADC region, that COVID-19 has had disproportionate impacts on the urban populations through disruption of livelihood activities of the majority of the people in the informal business sector. Urban food security has indeed become a priority area. In Zimbabwe, urban and peri-urban farming is a major contributor to food security among poorer households. The planned projects, under this COSOP, will seek to build strong rural-urban market linkages, which will supply affordable, high quality and nutritious foods from irrigation schemes, supported by the SIRD, and small and medium enterprises supported through the upcoming SACP, to high density urban and peri-urban communities.
Improving nutrition outcomes is, however, more than market access to food – although maybe SO2's intent goes further than this. For example, many farmers don't grow more nutritious food given water access challenges and perceived affordability of seeds. It can be that rural households are less likely to buy sufficient quantities of nutritious food that they think they could produce themselves – but don't.	The CDT welcomes this comment and fully concurs that rural households are less likely to buy sufficient quantities of nutritious food. Indeed, even with increased incomes, it is not automatic that households will buy nutritious food. Hence, interventions in all projects under this strategy will be accompanied by nutrition education, social behaviour change and women empowerment to promote the use of income to purchase nutritious foods and complement own production. In addition, both SIRD and the upcoming SACP will promote nutrition gardens for the production of diverse nutrient dense foods for household consumption. Water supply challenges will be addressed through irrigation infrastructure as well as rooftop water harvesting among others.
Even in vegetable production there is a strong emphasis on hybrid seed. Improved OPV and community seed systems are critical for better productivity and local input affordability. This ties into SO1 – access to local inputs (including OPV seed) – however, seed systems and local input substitution are not referenced in the document as priorities.	The CDT agrees on the need to strengthen seed security for smallholder farmers, with a special focus on open pollinated varieties and community seed systems especially for nutritious crops. Seed multiplication is already envisaged as part of irrigation revitalization, through SIRD in partnership with HarvestPlus to establish seed multiplication centres in SIRD districts. These centres will enable the local production of seeds for nutritious foods such as improved OPV and biofortified seeds and orange sweet potato vines in 16 irrigation schemes. During the SACP remote design mission consultations, HarvestPlus indicated keen interest to partner with SACP and to expand into SACP target districts to increase production, processing and utilization of commercially viable nutrient-rich biofortified staple varieties – such as vitamin A and zinc maize, iron pearl millet, vitamin A sweet potato and iron beans – and other nutrient-rich commodities. The benefits that HarvestPlus will bring to SACP target areas include development of district-level farmer-led seed/vine multiplication centres for supply of biofortified seeds or vines to other local farmers. This will ensure input substitution of quality and affordable locally produced seed for smallholder farmers.
Other policy or regulatory instruments can also distort agricultural markets, creating further uncertainty in the commercial system. Have these also been considered since it is a significant structural barrier to improved productivity and food security?	In its policy engagement with the Government of Zimbabwe, IFAD will take cognisance of findings and recommendations from the analytical work conducted by other development partners (including the World Bank, and the Staff Monitored Program of the International Monetary Fund [IMF]) to ensure alignment. The IMF is recommending comprehensive reforms to ongoing agricultural support programmes to make them more market-led, reduce market distortions and alleviate the burden on the fiscus.

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Comments from the United Kingdom	Management response
<p>What advocacy role will IFAD play and how will IFAD influence domestic policy beyond Command Agriculture?</p>	<p>IFAD will continue the engagement of government on policy issues through project steering committees and platforms for policy review set up by the Government.</p> <p>Market-led approach. IFAD is committed to transforming smallholder farmers into viable small to medium-scale entrepreneurs that are generating decent jobs and actively participating in the market for income. Country-level policy engagement (CLPE) will leverage on, complement, support and draw on any planned sector analytical work and lessons from ongoing projects.</p> <p>Specific value chain studies, joint monitoring missions, and project evaluations, to be carried out under both SIRP and the upcoming SACP, will identify and document market-related structural barriers to improve productivity and food security in the small and medium-scale farming sectors, and recommend policy solutions, which will be appropriately packaged and presented to the Government for consideration. The cost of these distortions will be quantified together with the benefits of addressing them. In order to enhance buy-in, the studies will be done in a participatory manner, with the Government actively involved in setting both the thematic and policy research agendas right, from the outset. In this regard, IFAD will forge strategic partnerships with key ministries and agencies leading the formulation and implementation of agricultural marketing policies so that they are actively involved in both the analytical work and subsequent policy reform processes.</p> <p>Water policy. In addition to reforms to agricultural marketing policies, CLPE will support the development of water pricing policy and the legalization of water user organizations, the introduction of smart subsidies in the Command Agriculture Programme and the development of viable VC models and supportive policies. IFAD will also contribute to the formulation of the new National Nutrition Strategic Plan and to the organization of biennial dialogue platforms with various partners in order to facilitate innovation and experience-sharing and to identify complementarities. IFAD will support the participation of women and youth in policy formulation and dialogue and will help to leverage South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) to inform policy discourse.</p> <p>Irrigation and water management models. SIRP has been promoting policy engagement, in particular as regards irrigation and water management models and systems. The history of schemes being supported for revitalization, and the diagnosis of the problems that have been observed provide information on techniques, policies and procedures which has led to failure of schemes. Learning from these challenges as well as from best practices is providing useful inputs for policy development.</p> <p>Natural resource management. Policy dialogue will also be championed on the issue of participatory and community-led natural resources management. The Natural Resources Management Facility, under SIRP, seeks to provide grants to communities for natural resource management-based income generation activities and interventions. These grants will also be used to build capacities of communities to better manage their natural resources. The successes and lessons learned will inform policy dialogue under SIRP's Greater Scheme Agricultural Plan.</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming. IFAD's Zimbabwe country programme has also been active in promoting gender equality and in giving visibility to the role of rural women in development initiatives, for example by leading the organization of yearly celebrations of the international day of rural women. Economic empowerment of women has been identified as key policy engagement area for the COSOP period.</p>
<p>IFAD could definitely play a coordinating role around SHF and horticulture exports (where SHF are most active versus grain). This is a crowded donor space where identifying synergies would be helpful.</p>	<p>The CDT agrees that coordination with other development partners will be crucial in all areas targeted by the COSOP. Geographical targeting of SIRP together with the selection of districts for SACP carefully considered the presence of programmes funded by other development partners in other districts. Currently SIRP has an ongoing partnership with Matanuska producing bananas in the irrigation schemes.</p> <p>Special value chain studies will inform final selection of commodities to be supported under SACP. Coordination of horticultural exports through strategic collaboration with ZIMTRADE is envisaged so as to fill gaps in local production of export-oriented commodities in high demand. IFAD will participate in all key coordination platforms for agriculture, food security and nutrition.</p>

<p>Is IFAD considering the possibility of doing more work on integrating biofortified crops into wider seed systems and programming in Zimbabwe? This would help ensure quality and availability of produced seed and could be through direct partnership with HarvestPlus.</p> <p>The latter is identified as a learning partner but is there scope for deeper partnership to do additional systemic work?</p>	<p>Doing more work on integrating biofortified crops into wider seed systems and programming in Zimbabwe has been incorporated in the country strategy. SIRP is partnering with HarvestPlus not only to seek to increase nutrition knowledge, but also to expand production capabilities of smallholder farmers through setting up of seed multiplication centres of improved seeds and planting materials for biofortified crops, such as iron-rich beans, vitamin A maize and sweet potato vines, in 16 irrigation schemes.</p> <p>During the SACP remote design mission consultations, HarvestPlus indicated keen interest to partner with SACP and to expand into SACP target districts to increase production, processing and utilization of commercially viable nutrient-rich biofortified staple varieties – such as vitamin A and zinc maize, iron pearl millet, vitamin A sweet potato and iron beans – and other nutrient-rich commodities. The benefits that HarvestPlus will bring to SACP target areas include development of district-level farmer-led seed/vine multiplication centres for supply of biofortified seeds or vines to other local farmers. This will ensure quality and availability of locally produced seed for smallholder farmers.</p> <p>The CDT fully concurs on this comment relating to the scope for deeper partnership with HarvestPlus. A grant proposal for the Norwegian Agency for the Development Cooperation (NORAD) is currently being finalized and would provide supplementary financial resources to strengthen the implementation of the ongoing nutrition-sensitive interventions, while at the same time complementing them with additional activities which will include: (i) in-depth analysis of the nutrition gaps in the areas targeted by the programme; (ii) inventory of locally available food species that can fill nutrient gaps of the population; (iii) identification of food commodities with both nutrition and market value; (iv) increase the number of seeds and agricultural inputs (traditional crops, locally available nutrient-rich vegetables, medicinal plants); (v) promote labour-saving technologies to save time for production and preparation of food; and (vi) to promote low-cost post-harvest management and processing technologies (solar driers) and youth training on their management. Furthermore, both SIRP and the upcoming SACP will coordinate with Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) network, United Nations agencies and multi-sectoral coordination for the delivery of nutrition-sensitive activities and to facilitate policy dialogue.</p>
<p>Given scarce and stressed water resources, IFAD could play a key role supporting quality integrated watershed management and water resource planning (technical, policy and regulatory space). The document references water in many places, so clearly this has been considered. More efficient, equitable and innovative water use in agriculture is of great need.</p>	<p>This is well noted, with thanks. IFAD has gained experienced with promoting integrated watershed management schemes where we have been instrumental in building institutional capacity to support these schemes, provided technical assistance and advocacy for policy change. We have promoted micro catchment systems with water storage in the soil for dry spell mitigation. Schemes that maximize infiltration, reducing rain splash erosion, surface runoff and evaporation and improving soil water availability. Macro catchment system that promote water harvesting and conservation with water storage for inter- and intra-seasonal supplementary irrigation and ground water recharge. Newer IFAD projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho and Rwanda have embedded in their designs efficient, equitable and innovative water use approaches such as promotion of payment for ecosystem services. SIRP and SACP will endeavour to learn from these initiatives.</p>
<p>We note though that the proposed interventions themselves could have a stronger strategic perspective overall. Zimbabwe's challenges frequently stem from macro issues which must be tackled alongside any small direct interventions for SHF. IFAD could do much more here than described.</p>	<p>The CDT agrees with the need to recognize the macro policy issues and provide inputs when possible. Both strategic objectives (SOs) will mainstream policy-strengthening activities and leverage on SSTC and local civil society partnerships to address the key fragility factors constraining smallholder agriculture. Specifically, knowledge management will strengthen evidence on the effects of the systemic drivers of the fragility on performance of smallholder farmers, and SSTC will identify global good practices to inform policy (e.g. on-farm input subsidy, national food reserve and increasing investments in agriculture and rural development).</p>
<p>Donor coordination will be critical and could be better articulated in the document (with active conversations with all the main players – beyond attending one mixed UN-donor coordination platform) – most development actors are already doing similar work, often in similar areas. There is good value in IFAD layering additional service offer and/or complementing what is being offered and proven to have impact.</p>	<p>The CDT welcomes this comment on donor coordination concurs with the recommendation of complementing what other donors, outside the United Nations system, are doing.</p> <p>Allow us to recall that IFAD's country team for Zimbabwe participates in the United Nations Country Teams. This COSOP has been endorsed by the UN-Resident Coordinator for Zimbabwe.</p> <p>IFAD also participates in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) "Food and Nutrition Security Technical Group", the "Early Recovery Group" of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the "Food Assistance Working Group" of the World Food Programme (WFP). Following cyclone Idai, IFAD contributed to the drafting of the early recovery assistance plan for Zimbabwe. Under this COSOP, IFAD will work with WFP on nutrition-sensitive programming and on linking up smallholder farmers with the WFP's "Global Commodity Management Facility" to enable them</p>

	<p>to aggregate and market the commodities that they produce. The FAO Country Programming Framework 2016-2020 provides an opportunity for collaboration on agricultural VCs and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.</p> <p>Furthermore, IFAD is a member of the Agriculture Development Coordination Partner Group, chaired by FAO. The group meets on a bi-monthly basis and participants include: USAID, the World Bank, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Union, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Netherlands. The international NGOs include Practical Action, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, CGAIR, Caritas and CARE International. This Group's mandate is to coordinate agricultural activities among donors as well as share knowledge and lessons learned.</p> <p>In addition to the United Nations system, SIRP complements other donor-funded programmes including the DFID-funded Livelihoods and Food Security Programme (LFSP), which is implemented by FAO. The LFSP, which is implemented in eight districts of Zimbabwe, within the following provinces: Manicaland, Midlands and Mashonaland Central provinces. LFSP aims to increase agricultural productivity, increase incomes, improve food and nutrition security, and reduce poverty in rural Zimbabwe. While SIRP is targeting different districts in Manicaland province, it has benefited, through lessons learned, from LFSP interventions, notably on the nutrition component (implemented through HarvestPlus). SIRP has also collaborated with LFSP through exchange visits to Guruve district on training on the Gender Action Learning System.</p> <p>Through SIRP, IFAD also collaborated with the European Union- and Swiss Agency for Development-funded Smallholder Irrigation Support Programme, which was also implemented by FAO. This programme was completed in 2018 and lessons learned have been useful in the design and implementation of the SIRP.</p> <p>Again through SIRP, IFAD has collaborated with Japan International Cooperation Agency on two of its programmes: (i) the programme on construction of Nyakomba Irrigation Scheme in Manicaland province; and (ii) the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Promotion Programme (SHEP). The latter programme is being implemented through Agritex, whose staff have received training in Japan. Some of the Agritex officers, specifically responsible for the implementation of SIRP, have also received training in the SHEP approach and are promoting the approach.</p> <p>Brazil SSTC programme; SIRP signed a Memorandum of Understanding to assist with demonstration plots to grow Brazilian fodder. If successful, farmers will multiply the seeds, which will be replicated in other parts of the country.</p> <p>Zimbabwe country programme has been in communication with the Nordica countries. SIRP is also implementing a two-year nutrition programme funded by NORAD. The programme is promoting nutrition gardens, production of small grains.</p> <p>The Zimbabwe country team has interacted with the European Union-funded Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme. This programme is focusing on the livestock value chain in 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. Collaboration will be expected through the upcoming SACP.</p> <p>IFAD will continue facilitating active engagement with other donors on key issues affecting the smallholder farmers sector and promote an effective policy-advocacy agenda. IFAD will actively seek to develop common evidence-based positions with other development partners funding agricultural and rural development initiatives and build synergies and pursue a common advocacy agenda to change policies adversely affecting smallholder farmers.</p>
<p>It would be interesting, therefore, to have more information on how IFAD will bring something new to the table and address the risk of duplication through different partners' activities, where buying into existing work-strands could amplify impact. As noted, effective coordination will be key (point 68 does not really address this) and omission would be a missed opportunity to derive better value for money from the proposed investments. Working with other donors to reduce duplication and potentially layer additional services would be helpful, also in not undermining market-led approaches promoted by other partners.</p>	<p>This comment is welcomed by the CDT. In order to avoid duplication of different partners' activities, for the upcoming SACP, the Government has selected districts which are relatively less supported by current initiatives of other donors in order to reduce duplication of efforts.</p> <p>Most donor-funded projects in agriculture do not have sufficient resources to cover all wards in a district, let alone all farmers in a ward, hence there is ample room for IFAD to complement other donors.</p> <p>In addition, IFAD interventions both under SIRP and the upcoming SACP are market-led and are designed to revive the private agri-business sector. Concrete and operational partnerships are constantly pursued. As mentioned above, the CDT has interacted with the European Union-funded Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme. The programme is focusing on the livestock value chain in 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. Collaboration will be expected with the upcoming IFAD-funded SACP project. SIRP also collaborated with the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development-funded Smallholder Irrigation</p>

	Support Programme that was also implemented by FAO. The programme was completed in 2018 and lessons learned have been useful in the design and implementation of the SIRP.
<p>Climate change is registered as 'high' in the risk matrix and we welcome that the range of possible interventions related to climate change mainstreaming (#49) is reported as being in line with Zimbabwe's NDC commitments related to adaptation and mitigation. We support the COSOP building on lessons from previous and ongoing interventions. SIRP (Smallholder Irrigation Revitalization Programme), which is ongoing, seems to be a major part of IFAD's contribution to climate change adaptation and it would be helpful to have any information on how SIRP is sharing lessons with ASAP projects focused on small-scale irrigation – for example, in Ethiopia (PASIDP II) and Malawi (PRIDE).</p>	<p>The CDT agrees on the need for SIRP to share lessons on climate adaptation, with Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) funded projects. Indeed, SIRP has good lessons to share with IFAD's ASAP funded projects in the East and South Africa region. In particular, PASDIP II in Ethiopia and PRIDE in Malawi could learn lessons from SIRP's investments and strategies on climate-proofing irrigation infrastructure, promotion of good agricultural practices among irrigating farmers and adjacent rainfed farms. There are also lessons to be learned on enhancing water use efficiency, through utilization of water saving irrigation technologies and systems, as well as promotion of drought tolerant crop varieties among irrigating and rainfed farmers.</p> <p>Additionally, SIRP will share lessons in catchment management and sustainable land management, through promotion of agroforestry, reforestation, conservation agriculture, soil erosion management among other sustainable land and water management practices. SIRP has established a Natural Resource Management Facility (NRMF) that feeds into Zimbabwe's Greater Scheme Agricultural Plan, as a mechanism to enhance climate resilient and sustainable natural resource management focused income generation activities among farmers. The sustainability potential offered by the NRMF, and lessons generated during its development and implementation, will be shared with PASDIP II and PRIDE.</p> <p>As part of the feasibility assessments of the existing schemes that SIRP will invest in, localized climate risk analysis and recommendations on mitigation actions have been a key feature of the feasibility reports. As such, SIRP has lessons to share on the process and implementation aspects of these two areas.</p>
<p>We welcome the quality SECAP annex that includes some analysis of climate trends and risks as well as a description of Zimbabwe's agro-climatic zones and their constraints and potential. In describing NDC commitments, it refers to those for adaptation as well as mitigation which is well noted.</p>	<p>The CDT appreciates the positive feedback.</p>
<p>The inclusion of mid-term milestones are a welcome addition in the Results Management Framework (RMF) in the standard format, nested in country strategies, UNDAP, SDGs and IFAD strategic objectives, and we note that it would also be useful if indicators could be cross-referenced to the core indicators defined in RIMS/ORMS/.</p>	<p>Out of the 11 outcome indicators presented in the COSOP Results Management Framework (RMF), seven (63 per cent) are either core indicators or indicators, which are almost identical to the core indicators (minor differences in wording). These core indicators are included in the Operational Results Management System (ORMS) log-frames of the ongoing SIRP and of the SACP currently under design, thereby facilitating the collection of data and the translation of project results into results at COSOP level.</p>
<p>Sustainability is a recurring area highlighted where IFAD needs to improve. How will sustainability of the proposed interventions(s) be assessed?</p>	<p>Financial viability will be assessed during the monitoring missions, as well as at mid-term and end of project evaluations. Project sustainability indicators will be included in the RMF for each project and agreed upon at project inception.</p> <p>A number of closed IFAD-supported projects have demonstrated that participatory planning processes contribute to increased project ownership and sustainability. All planning processes will therefore engage with beneficiaries. In addition, a specific indicator, "Number of SACP-supported cluster infrastructure investments identified through local-level participatory planning processes involving private sector and civil society that are successful", has been included in the COSOP RMF to track the application of this lesson learned from previous experience.</p> <p>In addition, IFAD will put in place a mechanism to obtain regular feedback from target groups. This will improve the quality of interventions and promote full buy-in by beneficiaries, thereby improving the likelihood of project results.</p>

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<p>Finally, there is little reference to the impacts of COVID-19 on operations or requirements – how will this be considered as part of interventions and new requirements for response?</p>	<p>The impacts of Covid-19 are included in the COSOP's risk matrix as well as in appendix IV (SECAP). COVID-19 mitigation strategies will be developed for each project under preparation. The Government of Zimbabwe has also formulated a draft proposal to access IFAD's 18-months funding under IFAD's Rural Poor Stimulus Facility. The draft proposal includes: (i) distribution of seed input packs; and (ii) provision of personal protective equipment, hygiene materials (water and storage and soap) as well as hygiene and nutrition education.</p> <p>In response to COVID-19, IFAD is, under SIRP, supporting investments in: (a) radio programmes and mobile phone applications (including WhatsApp) in the project areas to facilitate e-extension, buying and selling, receiving climate information, promoting good agricultural practices and food safety, sensitizing small and medium-scale rural enterprises on investments they can make to capitalize on COVID-19-related opportunities and monitoring of IFAD interventions; (b) social media for youth depending on feasibility (power supply and internet connectivity) for dissemination of information on opportunities arising from the IFAD projects; (c) wider use of mobile money for efficiency, security and safety of transactions; and (d) dissemination of information on COVID-19, through all available channels.</p> <p>Partnerships are also being explored with the UNDP and the International Labour Organization on the mitigation of the impact of COVID-19 on the food supply chain and to ensure household food security.</p>
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Comments from France	Management response
<p>France appreciates the proposed country strategic opportunities programme 2020-2025 for Zimbabwe. We commend the focus on family farming, on food security and nutrition, as well as the on support to export-oriented value chains.</p>	<p>The CDT appreciates this positive feedback.</p>
<p>We praise IFAD for adopting gender transformative approaches under the COSOP and the decision to conduct a Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index survey to identify area of focus.</p>	<p>The CDT appreciates this positive feedback.</p>
<p>While a strong focus on the private sector is a contextually appropriate choice, we regret that some activities such as farmer advisory or extension services do not rely on existing public structures, such as Agritex.</p>	<p>The CDT recognizes the importance of leveraging existing public structures such as Agritex for provision of advisory services. Indeed SIRP works with Agritex as an implementing partner in the delivery of extension and advisory services. Specifically, SIRP is providing capacity-building to Agritex in a number of areas including: business services, enterprise development, and mainstreamed topics. In all its districts, SACP will also make use of the well-developed Agritex extension network for extension, nutrition education and implementation support.</p>
<p>France would like to highlight the need to ensure specific consideration is given to fiduciary and elite capture risks. We would welcome more details on the considered mitigation measures.</p>	<p>The CDT welcomes this comment and fully concurs with the need to ensure specific consideration is given to fiduciary and elite capture risks. As such, the fiduciary risks will be mitigated through the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rapid changes in the official currency poses risks which affect the flow of funds. The projects will include measures such as direct payment mechanism to ensure that the suppliers are paid in time. • Proper and timely planning as well as treasury management is important to foresee liquidity needs and ensure that funds are availed when needed. • To attract and retain qualified finance staff is important. The single project implementation unit in which skills are shared promotes at the same time learning addresses this issue. • The choice between the Office of the Auditor General and the independent private auditors to perform external audit, is assessed during the designs. The financial management guidelines and especial auditing guidelines from IFAD will provide a framework for these assignments.

Comments from France	Management response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computerized accounting software. • IFAD will monitor the timely submission of procurement plans, frequently supervise procurement activities and ensure that the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Activities and Operations is applied together with the relevant national anticorruption and fraud laws. • Technical assistance provided both remotely and in-country by the East and South Africa procurement team and/or Procurement Specialists recruited by the projects, will improve project procurement, in terms of quality of procurement documents and speed of procurement processes. • Staff training on procurement needs to commence from the start-up and continue with periodic assessments of staff training needs. <p>The elite capture risks will be mitigated, using the following approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making information on beneficiary selection and financing widely available; • Requesting the Ministry of Agriculture to provide an anticorruption plan for the programme for approval by the anticorruption commission; • Setting up a complaints mechanism and creating a provincial mechanism for the resolution of grievances; • Self-targeting: the activities and services will respond to the priorities of each category to ensure that they will not be attractive to those better off economically or socially; • Defining eligibility criteria that makes use of inclusion and exclusion criteria that ensure that only those targeted for the specific action benefit; • Triangulation of the beneficiary targeting, identification and selection process. The Government's beneficiary classification system will be used to guide targeting, while identification through local independent short-term Community Mobilization Specialist, in consultation with local communities, organized farmer groups and local authorities, will rebuild confidence in state systems; and • Beneficiaries, including smallholder farmers, women's and youth groups and community-based, civil society and development organizations, will be engaged throughout the project cycle in order to mitigate elite capture. Beneficiary feedback and grievance mechanisms will be established. The country programme will support government ownership of country-level stakeholder engagement and feedback processes.
<p>The document identifies land tenure insecurity as one of the main challenge for agriculture. In order to foster sustainable impact, we would like to stress the importance to take this issue into account and facilitate farmers' access to land ownership.</p>	<p>The CDT agrees that land tenure issues should be taken into account in order to foster sustainable impact. In this regard, the Zimbabwe IFAD country programme will establish partnerships with other members of the International Land Coalition (ILC) and the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL) in order to harmonize support for tenure security measures. Non-lending activities and loan or grant financed projects will analyse the land tenure framework in Zimbabwe and where appropriate adopt and promote relevant land tenure security solutions. Proposed interventions within the projects will be informed by the country's Land Policy Framework in the country and focus will be placed on issues affecting women and youth participation.</p>
<p>Finally, we are surprised the document does not mention the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), which plays a central role in setting prices in a context of hyperinflation and depreciation of the local currency to the benefit of the USD.</p>	<p>The CDT agrees that the Grand Marketing Board (GMB) should have been mentioned explicitly in the COSOP especially due to its central role in price setting in the staple food market. GMB interventions, including through Statutory Instrument 145 /2019, which prohibited farmers from selling their maize directly to private buyers except the GMB, adversely curtailed supply of maize to processors, and livestock producers soon after the harvests of 2019 and 2020. Floor prices set by the GMB in local currency, in a hyperinflationary environment, often subsidize commercial maize millers and consumers at the expense of producers. The role played by GMB in the market in the past two marketing seasons has contributed to the decline in maize production, exacerbated staple food shortages and increased the country's dependence on imports.</p>

Comments from the Netherlands	Management response
The Netherlands thanks IFAD for the comprehensive COSOP for Zimbabwe. Please allow us to share with you the following questions:	The CDT is appreciative of this positive comment.
Issues of land tenure. The current land tenure system has transparency issues and highly politicized tenders. How will IFAD ensure that the issue of land tenure will be addressed/taken into account?	<p>The issue of land tenure remains political and volatile in Zimbabwe. In appendix IV, the CDT has articulated some strategies for addressing this issue. A partnership will be explored with ILC. IFAD projects will explore opportunities for understanding the land tenure framework in Zimbabwe and where appropriate adopt and promote relevant land tenure solutions.</p> <p>Proposed interventions within the projects will be informed by the Land Access Framework in the country and focus will be placed on issues affecting women and youth participation. Zimbabwe's policies have no provisions excluding women or youth from accessing land under any of the tenure systems. Under the 2000 fast-track land reform programme, the policy was that women should constitute 20 per cent of all those allocated large-scale farming land, also known as A2 farming land. Women were also entitled to apply for agricultural land in their own right under the A1 village schemes. Women account for 18 per cent of the beneficiaries of the A1 scheme and for 12 per cent of the A2 scheme. The "letter of offer" issued for the A2 scheme provides for joint allocation of land between spouses which protects women in case of husband's death. Following the land reform programme, the Government established the Zimbabwe Land Commission to investigate the country's land ownership patterns and to ensure accountability, fairness and transparency in the administration of agricultural land. The Land Commission initiated a land audit, which has been ongoing. In 2019 the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Rural Resettlement launched the formulation process of a comprehensive land policy which is expected to enhance access to land, land use planning and management, productivity and sustainable utilization of land.</p> <p>In addition, IFAD will engage with other development partners, who have specific programmes directly addressing the land tenure policy question to develop a common strategy for capacitating the Government to address issues of land policy and administration.</p> <p>In order to address the challenges in the policy, legal and institutional framework resulting from reconfiguration of land use and ownership, the European Union, together with UNDP, in collaboration with World Bank and FAO, have been supporting the Government to improve land governance. Progress was made in particular in institutional capacity-building and establishing the precondition for compensation of farmers, but policy and legislative reforms were slower. The project (<i>EU/UNDP programme [2013-2018]</i>) ended in December 2018 and a new EUR 6.5 million project has been formulated under the European Union/Government of Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme, with the overall objective of strengthening institutions to develop and implement an institutional and regulatory framework for land governance in Zimbabwe. This project will: (i) develop a land administration framework for Zimbabwe; and (ii) based on the framework, implement a pilot land governance and administration system at the level of one or two pre-selected districts of Zimbabwe. IFAD will engage and coordinate with the European Union and UNDP through this land governance project, and provide complementary technical support on land titling.</p> <p>IFAD anticipates forging strategic partnerships with the World Bank and the African Development Bank as and when they avail funds for addressing land governance issues in Zimbabwe.</p> <p>Working with the southern Africa hub, IFAD's Land Tenure Desk will help to review the current policy framework to identify challenges and opportunities and to formulate proposed interventions either in current or pipeline projects or as non-lending activities. IFAD will also provide support in identifying what other intergovernmental organization and NGO ILC members and members of the GDWGL are doing in Zimbabwe and help facilitate linkages with these efforts.</p>
Import/export costs. On the production side, the strategy mentions an intention towards export. Zimbabwe's production	The CDT welcomes this comment and agrees that the costs of production are higher when compared to neighboring countries such as Zambia and South Africa. The CDT, through the donor coordination group, will ascertain whether a regional export

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<p>costs are very high compared to neighboring countries like Zambia, South Africa etc. the cost of importing maize from Zambia, for example, is cheaper than producing locally. Can IFAD make a regional comparative analysis on this?</p>	<p>and import comparative analysis study has already been conducted or alternatively if there is such a study in the pipeline or whether there could be an appetite to initiate this study amongst the donors. Subject to availability of resources, the CDT through IFAD's Southern African Hub could also consider commissioning such a study during the course of the COSOP duration.</p> <p>Farmers who are exporting to Europe at the moment are making profit growing horticultural crops such as mangetout, runner beans, baby corn, oranges, macadamia and so forth. These are the types of crops that that will be targeted for export and maize will mainly be for staple food.</p> <p>Private sector engagement and the fact that selection of value chains is not rigid makes it possible to constantly identify new market opportunities in which the products have a comparative advantage.</p>
<p>Risk of politicization. The agriculture sector in Zimbabwe tends to be politicized and therefore measures to isolate/protect agricultural programmes from political pressure could be desirable. What measures does IFAD foresee to ensure that the programme will not be politicized?</p>	<p>The risk of politicization of agriculture is, according to us, not only a risk in Zimbabwe, but across many countries and regions. This is discussed for example in an article entitled "Neither sustainable nor inclusive: a political economy of agriculture policy and livelihoods in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia"; Journal of Peasant Studies, 4 March 2020. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03066150.2019.1708724.</p> <p>IFAD's strategy to mitigate against the risk of politicization IFAD-funded projects in Zimbabwe, will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive recruitment processes, with clear terms of references; • Clear targeting strategy including geographical targeting and clear criteria for allocation resources to the most profitable initiatives in a transparent manner; • Participatory involvement of key stakeholders, notably IFAD's primary target group. IFAD country programme in Zimbabwe is increasingly making use of beneficiary consultation mechanisms. Also grievance mechanisms are developed. In the upcoming SACP, the project target group engagement and grievance redress mechanism is elaborated; • Innovative technologies: Modern technologies can be used to share information in a timely manner, increasing awareness of opportunities and implementation mechanisms; and • Private sector involvement.
<p>On to the second strategic objective 'Improved market access for smallholder farmers (SHFs) of nutritious foods', the document states that the consultations are done with different private sector companies and organizations. Next to engagement with Econet in the IT sector, what does IFAD do to simulate retail partners to ensure the farmers have a ready market for income sustainability?</p>	<p>The CDT welcomes this comment and is pleased to confirm that SIRP facilitates market linkages and information access for the smallholder farmers.</p> <p>Specifically, SIRP engages with the different value chain actors to ensure that farmers produce what the markets demand in terms of quantity, quality and frequency. To achieve this, SIRP has contracted a Business Development Service Provider (BDSP), which is a private firm with ample experience in Zimbabwe to:</p> <p>(i) Establish farmer business groups: Farmers in each scheme are grouped into business groups of 5 to 15 members for better engaging with the markets. Appropriate business models are chosen for each scheme based on distance to markets, group cohesion and experience. Different modalities of supply contracts are discussed including the provision of high-quality inputs in line with market demand, either on a cash upon delivery or credit basis, as well as forward contracts specifying volumes, qualities and prices;</p> <p>(ii) Establish value chain platforms: The value chain platforms are housed at scheme or cluster level, occupy a physical space where producers, buyers and financial institutions can meet. Regular meetings of stakeholders increase understanding of the market and improve the quality and adherence to supply contracts. This space has been equipped with the necessary hardware to facilitate the club's activities; and</p> <p>(iii) Improve information flow between the different value chain actors: SIRP's focus is on improving the capacity of farmers to access market information in a timely manner. This is achieved by adopting already existing information technology</p>

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	<p>communication platforms at national level and by helping farmers to actively participate in the electronic market platforms available.</p> <p>Finally, the BDSPP Empower Agritex presence at the scheme level to: assist farmers in measuring and reporting the correct information regarding production volumes, crop development, and product quality. SIRP through Agritex is in the process of introducing an electronic platform called "Kulima" in order to improve the functioning of the market.</p> <p>The upcoming SACPP will utilize a private sector-led value chain approach for climate-smart and commercially viable smallholder development, which relies on organizing smallholders into well-governed and well-functioning cohesive groups and associations; connecting them to profitable value chains and markets; developing smallholders' capacity in climate-smart production and in marketing and business skills; and revitalizing market access infrastructure.</p>

Comments from Japan	Management response
Japan shares the view that Zimbabwe has huge potential in agricultural production.	The CDT welcomes this comment and fully concurs.
We believe construction/revitalization of agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation system is a promising approach for improved and climate shock resilient crop production in Zimbabwe. We are also supportive to market-oriented approach which will incentivize smallholder farmers to produce crops with high value.	The CDT welcomes this comment and fully concurs.
We would like to highlight that for effective and sustainable implementation of the approach, provision of extension services is important and could be a window for women empowerment and promotion of youth engagement.	<p>SIRP includes capacity-building and modernization of Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement extension services. The staff is receiving training not only in entrepreneurship, post-harvest issues, climate-smart production and mainstreamed topics, in particular in youth inclusion and gender mainstreaming.</p> <p>In addition, although the majority of decision makers in Agritex are men, the fact the most of the local extension officers are women, benefits women participation in particular.</p>